



## The ABCs of DHA

Dr. Alan Greene, pediatrician, is a leading authority in the fields of health education, organic food and pediatric nutrition.

### **A** DHA HELPS SUPPORT CHILDREN'S RAPIDLY GROWING BRAINS.

Between birth and five years, the human brain nearly quadruples in size. As the brain grows, it selects building blocks from among the fatty acids found in foods. Omega-3 DHA—the most prevalent structural fat in the brain—is one of these building blocks.

### **B** DHA IS IMPORTANT FOR KIDS OF ALL AGES.

DHA is especially valuable for young children to support their rapid growth. But DHA is an important nutrient for brain health at every age. Unfortunately, the typical American diet does not contain enough of this valuable Omega-3 fatty acid.

### **C** DHA MAKES GOOD SENSE FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY.

The benefits of DHA don't end in childhood. Scientists and health organizations have recognized DHA for its role in heart health. DHA has also been studied in connection with adult brain and eye function.

Learn more about DHA from Dr. Greene at [www.horizonorganic.com/DHA](http://www.horizonorganic.com/DHA)



Making a world of difference.

## KIWI CLASS LEADERS

*A spotlight on inspiring and successful school food programs*

# Ann Arbor, Michigan

BY ANNE FICKLEN



**F**or the 17,000 children in the Ann Arbor, Michigan, public schools, the end of the week brings a program called Farm Fresh Fridays. On this day the elementary-, middle- and high-school cafeterias in the area serve fresh, free local produce. Rutabaga, yellow watermelon, cherry tomatoes and other straight-from-the-farm-foods are featured, along with pictures of the farmers and the crops growing in their fields.

Initiated at the beginning of the 2007–2008 school year, the program had a rocky start. Says Sara Aeschbach, director of community education and recreation for the Ann Arbor school system, “I am surprised we got this far—it’s an eye-opener to me to see how hard something like this can be.” Farm Fresh Fridays is a project of the Ann Arbor Farm to School Collaboration, and it really came together when the county health department received a grant from the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan to fund a staffer, Ruth Blackburn, to act as coordinator.

The path from local farmer to school has been complex, the challenges varied. The farmers did not have the funds to make the necessary changes to pass rigorous inspections by the district’s food supplier, Chartwells Educational Dining Services, so an existing Chartwells vendor agreed to buy from

the farmers and assume the liability. Next, the produce had to be refrigerated, so a local charity donated a refrigerated truck. And the elementary schools didn’t have knives, so arrangements were made for all produce to be chopped and sliced in a central kitchen and distributed to individual schools. Blackburn and the staff in the schools have continued to find solutions for just about everything.

Only a few months into its first year, Farm Fresh Fridays is going strong—the teachers love the program, and students have given a major thumbs up to local muskmelon and yellow watermelon. Organizers plan to serve fresh produce as long as the fall/winter season will allow but may need to suspend the Fridays until the early-spring crops are harvested.

Aeschbach says it has been more expensive to buy locally but that the school district is now working with a handful of farmers to plan produce needs and logistics for next year, which should help reduce costs. She advises that a school district hire a full-time coordinator to start a program like Farm Fresh Fridays, and that existing staff may need to put in extra time to get it going.

However, the effort pays off—one mom says that her daughter no longer asks for money for a second slice of pizza, she’s filled up with fruits and veggies!



*Check out our April issue to see who won the 2007 KIWI Crusaders Award for Excellence in School Meals!*