Harvest of the Month

Harvest of the Month features ready-to-go tools and resources that can be used in diverse applications within the school environment and are based on the 2005 U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans. It provides educators, prekindergarten through grade 12, with materials to give students hands-on opportunities to explore, taste, and learn about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables and being active every day. (See Monthly Elements on reverse side for descriptions of materials.)

Harvest of the Month provides the opportunity for collaboration among educators, child nutrition staff, school administrators, students, parents, the local media, and retail outlets — all of whom are striving toward the goal of increasing knowledge of, access to, and preference for fruits and vegetables and physical activity. It also supports other initiatives of the *Network for a Healthy California*, such as the *Children's Power Play! Campaign*.

A training module guides and supports users on how to effectively use all program materials and resources. This module includes a short DVD providing a visual experience of *Harvest of the Month* in action. Additional tools are included to expand on implementation strategies, explore the kinds of content contained within the monthly educator newsletters, and demonstrate how activities can be linked to several core curricular areas and the *Children's Power Play! Campaign*.

All program materials can be downloaded free at **www.harvestofthemonth.com**. Within this site, the *Educators' Corner* provides teachers with additional activities, lesson ideas, recipes, student assessments, and a wealth of resources to help implement a successful program.

Why Harvest of the Month?

As Champions for Change, we want the best for students — for them to be healthy and more active. Studies show that healthy eating and daily physical activity can have a profound impact on the body and improve the ability to learn and comprehend. The *Network for a Healthy California* developed *Harvest of the Month* to engage students in a variety of settings where nutrition education can have the biggest impact — the classroom, cafeteria, home, and community.

It Works!

"*Harvest of the Month* is outstanding and has made a great difference in both staff eating habits and student preferences. It is one of the most valuable programs we've had. Anytime you can integrate food into curriculum, students become that much more engaged."

– 2nd Grade Teacher

"My son has been telling me about the many fruits and vegetables he tries at school. When we go to the grocery store, I am surprised he knows so many interesting things about fruits and vegetables. I can't believe that he's so willing to try new foods."

– Parent of 8th Grade Student

Harvest of the Month was created for use by low-resource school districts that are partners with the *Network for a Healthy California*, with funding provided by the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the Food Stamp Program). Developed by the California Department of Public Health's *Network for a Health California*, this program also received support and guidance from the California Department of Education, California Department of Food & Agriculture, educators, curriculum specialists, child nutrition staff, agricultural groups, and organizations.

August 2009

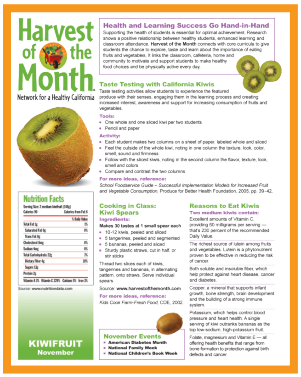
Harvest of the Month

Monthly Elements

The monthly elements are targeted to students, prekindergarten through grade 12, and their families. These elements are designed to promote change in eating behaviors by engaging students in the learning process and building their skills in accessing information, analyzing influences, decision-making, self-management, and advocacy. All elements can be downloaded free at **www.harvestofthemonth.com**. Visit the site to learn which California grown fruits and vegetables are featured each month.

Educator Newsletters:

The monthly educator newsletters are scientifically accurate and provide hands-on activities, tools, and ideas for open-ended study by students, including taste testing and school gardening; sample physical activities to support developmental skills such as listening, reflexes, and hand-eye coordination; and resources for further exploration tied to the core curricular areas.



Links to California Content Standards:

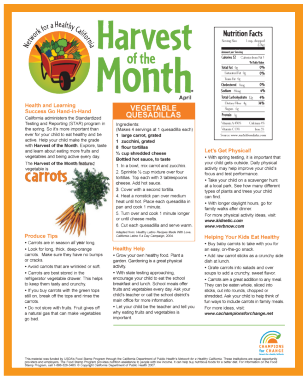
Available by grade level clusters, grids identify links to core curricular areas and demonstrate how *Harvest of the Month* activities support specific content standards. The core curricular areas include: English-language arts, science, history-social science, health education, and mathematics.

Menu Slicks:

Two-sided templates allow district child nutrition staff to insert the monthly school menu. Skills and knowledge learned in the classroom are reinforced with activities that test memory and motor skills, provide information on the health benefits of fruits and vegetables, and encourage consumption of school meals. These are available in English and Spanish. Other languages, translated by local partners, are available in the *Educators' Corner* of the Web site.

Family Newsletters:

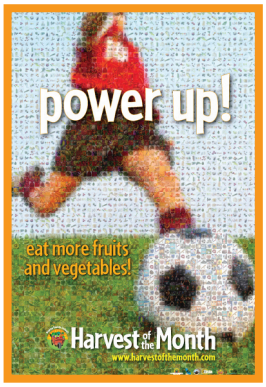
This monthly newsletter reinforces what kids learn in the classroom and provides parents with nutrition information, healthy eating tips, recipes, ideas for being physically active, and tips for selecting, storing, and serving the featured produce. These newsletters are available in English and Spanish. Other languages, translated by local partners, are available in the *Educators' Corner* of the Web site.



Resources and More:

Additional resources that are available to help implement, support, and enhance *Harvest of the Month* include:

- The *How to Grow Healthy Students Guide*, which provides step-by-step instructions and strategies for implementation and collaboration. It can be downloaded from the Web site.
- Four posters featuring California's bounty of fruits and vegetables and promoting physical activity.
- Promotional items developed by the *Network for a Healthy California*, such as school and community tool kits, which can complement activities in the monthly elements.



One of four award-winning posters popular with California students.

Posters and promotional items are available to order through the "On-line Catalog" at **www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net**.

A more complete list of resources can be found in the *Educators' Corner* of **www.harvestofthemonth.com**.

This material was produced by the California Department of Public Health, *Network for a Healthy California,* with funding from the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the Food Stamp Program). These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. In California, food stamps provide assistance to low-income households, and can help buy nutritious foods for better health. For food stamp information, call 877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit www.cachampionsforchange.net. © Copyright California Department of Public Health 2007.

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