

Fresh produce fills school lunches in Washoe County

By Jackie Green, Reno Gazette-Journal

Each week, select Washoe County elementary schools receive a bounty of fresh produce, including apricots, grapes, squash and grapefruit, cut into snack-sized servings.

What started in 2002 as a way for the U.S. Department of Agriculture to boost produce consumption and help farmers has become a tool for the nation's schools to fight obesity and raise healthier students. The goal of the Fresh Fruits and Vegetable Program in Washoe County is to introduce children to a wider variety of fresh foods than they might ordinarily get the chance to try.

The program, first introduced in the district three years ago, this year has expanded to 21 elementary schools. The district's Nutrition Services department works with the University of Nevada Reno Cooperative Extension to provide nutritional and supplementary information about each week's snacks for classroom discussions.

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