



Northeast Georgia Food Allergy Support Group
Advocating. Educating. Supporting.

Founders: Jennifer Addington & Sandy Shinpaugh
Mission: Committed to being an advocate & raising awareness in the local community by encouraging, educating & supporting families affected by food allergies

Website: www.northeastgafoodallergy.org

Email: jennifer@northeastgafoodallergy.org

February 14, 2020

City of Blue Ridge
Mayor Donna Whitener
480 West First Street
Blue Ridge, GA 30513

Dear Mayor Whitener:

On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of food allergic residents of our state and a few hundred within the City of Blue Ridge, I am writing to request that a proclamation be issued this year for **FOOD ALLERGY AWARENESS WEEK**, May 10-17, 2020.

Food allergies are a life-threatening illness that affects as many as 15 million Americans, and the prevalence is increasing among children. One in every 13 children has food allergies, or approximately two per classroom. Food allergy results in more than 200,000 Emergency Department visits each year, and since 2007, there has been a 377 percent increase in the number of food allergy reactions requiring emergency treatment.

There is no cure for food allergies, and rapid-onset reaction can result in anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is a severe, whole-body allergic reaction. Symptoms develop quickly, often within seconds or minutes, and may include: hives, vomiting, respiratory distress, swelling of the throat, a precipitous drop in blood pressure, shock and death.

With your support in declaring **FOOD ALLERGY AWARENESS WEEK**, we can continue to increase public awareness about food allergies. It is our objective to help educate schools, restaurants and the citizens of our state on the serious and potentially life-threatening nature of food allergies.

Please find an attached draft of a proposed Proclamation for **FOOD ALLERGY AWARENESS WEEK** for the week of May 10-17, 2020 to help build recognition and support for food-allergic citizens. You may send the proclamation to:

Northeast Georgia Food Allergy Support Group, C/O Jennifer Addington
jennifer@northeastgafoodallergy.org

On behalf of all the families who must struggle with food allergies, thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Addington, Co-Founder of Northeast GA Food Allergy Support Group



BY THE CITY OF BLUE RIDGE, GEORGIA
FOOD ALLERGY AWARENESS WEEK
PROCLAMATION



WHEREAS, Food allergies are a growing public health concern. An estimated 15 million people in the United States have food allergies, including 6 million children under the age of 18. Furthermore, research indicates that the prevalence of food allergies is increasing among children; and

WHEREAS, eight foods account for most food-allergic reactions: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish, and shellfish. Reactions typically occur when an individual unknowingly eats food containing an ingredient to which he or she is allergic, as very small amounts of an allergen can cause a reaction, which may result in hives, swelling of the throat, or respiratory distress; and

WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, food allergy results in more than 200,000 ambulatory care visits a year involving children under 18. Reactions typically occur when an individual unknowingly eats a food containing an ingredient to which they are allergic. 4% of students are affected by food allergies, and the incidence is increasing. 1 in 5 students with food allergies will have a reaction while at school. 25% of severe food allergy reactions at school happen to students with no previous known food allergy; and

WHEREAS, there is no cure for food allergy, and scientists do not understand why. Strict avoidance of the offending food is the only way to prevent an allergic reaction; and

WHEREAS, Eating away from home can pose an increased risk to people affected by food allergies, as research suggests that food served in restaurants or other food service establishments triggers almost half of fatal food allergic reactions; and

WHEREAS, Strict avoidance of food allergens and early recognition and management of allergic reactions to foods are important measures to prevent serious health consequences, including anaphylaxis, a serious allergic reaction that is rapid in onset and may cause death; and

WHEREAS, Failure to promptly treat food anaphylaxis with epinephrine is a risk factor for fatalities, and prompt administration is crucial to successfully treat anaphylactic reactions; and

WHEREAS, There are many state and national organizations, including *Northeast Georgia Food Allergy Support Group, The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Connection Team, and Food Allergy Research and Education*, are dedicated to ensuring the safety and inclusion of individuals with food allergies while educating the general public, schools, restaurant management, daycares, and food allergic individuals about life threatening allergic reactions, risk management procedures, and how to enact an emergency action plan. Northeast Georgia Food Allergy Support Group works in Fannin, Gilmer and Union counties to increase both awareness and education about food allergies, anaphylaxis, asthma, and other related conditions; now

THEREFORE I, Donna Whitener, Mayor, do hereby proclaim **May 10-17, 2020**, Food Allergy Awareness Week in the City of Blue Ridge, Georgia, and encourage city residents to increase their awareness of causes and symptoms of food allergies and anaphylaxis.


City of Blue Ridge, GA Mayor, Donna Whitener

