



MEDIA RELEASE

Kicking Off Summer: Free Summer Meals Mean Arkansas Kids Won't Go Hungry This Summer



NORTH LITTLE ROCK, AR - (May 25, 2016) More than 288,000 Arkansas kids receive free or reduced price school meals. During the summer, many of these kids are at risk of not getting nutritious meals every day. The Arkansas



Hunger Relief Alliance, lead partner for the No Kid Hungry campaign in Arkansas, Pulaski County Special School District, and representatives from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Arkansas Department of Education, Arkansas Department of Human Services, Pepsico, Cabot High School Cheerleaders and guests gathered at Harris Elementary School in North Little Rock to raise awareness about the availability of free summer meals for kids when school is out. The theme for the day was letting parents know how to find free summer meals in their communities. Parents can text FOOD to 877 877 and receive a list of sites near them.



The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance is the lead partner in Arkansas for the No Kid Hungry campaign.

For more information contact:
Nancy Conley at
nconley@arhungeralliance.org,
501.399.9999 or 501.912.3194



Harris Elementary School principal Darnell Bell and District Deputy Superintendent Laura Bender told guests that the need in the district made it an easy decision to be a summer meals sponsor.

"We feel a responsibility for our students throughout the year, not just when school is in session," said Bender. "So providing children with nutritious breakfast and lunch in the summer is just part of that commitment."

Sandra Moody, of USDA's Food & Nutrition Division for the Southwest Region, said USDA works with agencies and organizations like the Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign to help build sustainable, summer programs that will help assure kids get nutritious meals that will keep them healthy and ready to learn when school begins again in the fall. Patty Barker, Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign director, reminded guests and the media that the "summer slide," a knowledge retention deficit that effects low-income children when they don't get adequate nutrition during summer vacation, is a problem we can eliminate by making sure children have access to healthy, nutritious meals during the summer and anytime school is not in session.

"Kids may get the summer off, but working parents don't," said Nancy Conley, Alliance communications director. "Making provisions for their children's safety and nutrition can be stressful. "It costs an average of \$300 to feed children in the summer who would otherwise eat meals at school. That is a serious burden for low-income families that are struggling to make ends meet. Free summer meals in safe locations in cities and towns across the state mean parents can feel confident that their children will be getting nutritious food in a supervised environment."

Harris Elementary School, with an 89% free/reduced price student population, will be one of hundreds of free summer meals sites around the

state this year. Sponsoring organizations like schools, faith based organizations, churches, Boys & Girls Clubs, libraries, and other non-profit organizations will feed children 18 years of age and younger during the summer. The authorized summer meals sponsors are reimbursed by USDA for meals they feed to children under either the Summer Food Service Program or the Seamless Summer Program. Children do not have to register or present identification in order to eat a nutritious meal at any authorized meal site.



Today's kick-off event included a visit from SNACKman to remind kids that snacks can be healthy. Students at the event were also invited to get up-close and personal at the Cooking Matters vegetable petting zoo.



Weird and wonderful produce like eggplant and pomegranate shared the stage with familiar offerings like corn and sweet potatoes.

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Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, lead partner in Arkansas for the No Kid Hungry campaign, is a non-profit collaborative network of more than 480 hunger relief organizations across Arkansas. Our founding members include the Arkansas Foodbank in Little Rock, the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas in Jonesboro, Harvest Texarkana Regional Food Bank in Texarkana, Food Bank of North Central Arkansas in Norfolk, Northwest Arkansas Food Bank in Bethel Heights and River Valley Regional Food Bank in Fort Smith. The Alliance is dedicated to reducing hunger through direct relief, education and advocacy. We invite you to visit www.ARhungeralliance.org for details on hunger relief programs, donor and volunteer opportunities.

About the No Kid Hungry campaign

No child should grow up hungry in America, but one in five children struggles with hunger. Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry campaign is ending childhood hunger in this nation by ensuring all children get the healthy food they need, every day. By connecting kids in need with available USDA nutrition programs and teaching their families how to cook healthy, affordable meals, the No Kid Hungry campaign surrounds children with healthy food where they live, learn and play.

About Food for Good (FFG)

Food for Good is PepsiCo's award-winning purpose-driven business initiative that tackles child hunger - a nationwide challenge in the U.S. - by making healthy food physically and financially accessible for low-income families. FFG collaborates with a wide range of partners across PepsiCo's brands and employees, external community and nonprofit organizations, and local, state, and federal government organizations, including the USDA, Share Our Strength, and the YMCA. FFG creates delicious and healthy pre-packaged meals - that meet USDA standards and ensure a balanced diet - to students from low-income families.

Summer Meals Talking Points

- More than 60% of Arkansas students depend on school breakfast and lunch during the school year. When school is not in session, too many of these kids are not getting free summer meals which puts them at risk of not getting enough to eat.
- Kids often make unhealthy choices when they are hungry, opting for sugary drinks, chips and other fatty foods.
- Not getting enough to eat over the summer adds to the "academic decline" that many kids show when school starts again. They don't retain what they learned in the previous school year.
- The Summer Meals programs, funded by the US Department of Agriculture and administered by the Arkansas Department of Human Services and Arkansas Department of Education, provides free nutritionally balanced meals for kids 18 years of age and under at safe locations.
- Family budgets are under added pressure in the summer when their children are not getting the free or reduced price meals they rely on during the school year.

- Families with low incomes report that it takes an average of \$300 to feed their kids in the summer.
- Sites are often sponsored by schools, faith based organizations, churches, community centers, Boys and Girls Clubs, libraries, housing authorities, municipal agencies, food pantries, food banks, and other authorized non-profit organizations.
- There is no registration or identification required and will not effect other benefits families may be receiving.
- Parents and care givers can find a summer meals site in their communities by:

Going to <http://www.fns.usda.gov/summerfoodrocks> where they will find meal sites in their communities

Calling 1-866-3-HUNGRY or 1-877-8-HAMBRE (a live operator will ask for their address and give them a list of sites

Texting FOOD to 877 877 (they will be asked for their zip code and a list of sites in their area will be texted back in seconds.)

USDA Nutrition Requirements

Breakfast

- 1 serving of milk
- 1 serving of fruit or vegetable
- 1 serving of whole grains

Lunch or supper

- 1 serving of milk
- 2 servings of fruits and/or vegetables
- 1 serving of grain
- 1 serving of meat or protein alternative

Snack (must include 2 of the following)

- 1 serving of milk
- 1 serving of fruit or vegetables
- 1 serving of grains
- 1 serving of protein