

Children's Corner



Help Fight Childhood Hunger When School Is Out

(NAPSA)—For kids, summer-time should mean food, friends and fun. For many families fighting to make ends meet, however, summer can mean struggling to stretch tight food budgets even further.

Federal summer meals programs provide a solution. These free, healthy meals are available to kids and teens age 18 and under at thousands of summer meals sites across the country.

Five Facts on Free Summer Meals

1) According to a recent national survey of low-income families by Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry campaign, 43 percent say it's harder to make ends meet during summer months. Families also say, on average, their grocery bills are about \$300 higher every month when kids are out of school.

2) Free summer meals can help. Summer meals sites provide free meals funded by the United States Department of Agriculture, approved by state agencies and run at safe local spots such as schools, churches and community centers. Many sites also offer fun learning and recreational activities along with the food, so kids and teens can stay active and spend time with friends. Kids say the meals are tasty and parents are pleased that they follow USDA nutrition guidelines. There are no applications to fill out and the programs do not require any proof of income.

3) Too many kids are missing out. While more than 21 million kids in the U.S. rely on free and reduced-price school lunches for their nutrition during the school year, just over 3 million get a free summer meal.

4) To help, Share Our Strength—a charitable organization dedi-



Photo credit: Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry campaign

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cated to ending childhood hunger—created the No Kid Hungry campaign. It raises awareness to ensure parents and kids know about the program and works to recruit new sites, with small grants to cover startup costs and outreach staff to help them get up and running. Much of this summer meals work is done through public/private partnerships, including with the Arby's Foundation and Sodexo Foundation, the USDA, governors' offices and others.

5) Finding a nearby site is easy. Go to www.NoKidHungry.org/SummerMeals, text FOOD to 877-877 or call (866) 3HUNGRY to find a site and learn more.

How You Can Help

- **Make a Donation:** The Arby's Foundation will match the first \$100,000 in donations at www.NoKidHungry.org/Summer.

- **Write a letter to the editor** of your local newspaper about where people can find summer meals at www.NoKidHungry.org/Summer LTE.

- **Volunteer to assist** at a site by finding one at www.NoKidHungry.org/SummerMeals.

- **Learn more** at www.NoKidHungry.org/Summer.