

2019 Summer Food Service Program Newsletter

February 2019

Welcome to the Summer Food Service Program 2019!



Food That's In When School is Out!

Your Invited!!

2019 SFSP Kick-Off Meetings

February 26 - St. Louis

February 27 - Cape Girardeau

February 28 - Springfield

March 5 - Kansas City

March 6 - Lake Ozark

Email: sfsp@health.mo.gov for more
information

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) was established to ensure that children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. When school is out, SFSP provides free meals to kids and teens in low-income areas.

The SFSP state team is privileged to witness in this newsletter the outstanding achievements and hard work of the following sponsors: Children's Mercy, The Saint Louis Public Schools, New Heights Community Resource Center, and Operation Food Search.

Please check out our website for sponsor and site supervisor resources and guidance!

<http://health.mo.gov/living/wellness/nutrition/foodprograms/sfsp/resources.php>

If your organization would like to be featured next year, see your 2019 SFSP Orientation Manual for details.

See last page of this newsletter for training information.

SFSP Success Stories

Children's Mercy "Kids Eat Free" Program



Photos submitted by Margo Quiriconi, Director of Community Health Initiatives

According to the 2016 Children's Mercy *Community Health Needs Assessment*, food insecurity is common among the patients and families who visit Children's Mercy Hospital, with almost 20% reporting they sometimes or often worry their food will run out before they have money to buy more. Because of our position as a healthcare provider, we see a diverse population of children. This includes race, religion, and those with dietary restrictions. Providing a free, nutritious, and well-balanced meal helps meet the families' needs. The meals themselves are inspired by a variety of cultural influences, reflecting the diverse population we serve. In our surrounding service area, 35% of children represent a minority or ethnic background. The meals served meet our community's needs, while encouraging healthy eating for all children. Below are examples of menu items served based on diverse ethnic backgrounds:

Asian – Thai Chicken Crunch Salad / Orange Glazed Chicken

Latino/Hispanic – Fish Tacos / Enchilada Corn Meal Chicken Tenders / Cuban Pork Sandwiches

African – Moroccan Chicken

Mediterranean – Greek Shrimp / Italian Ratatouille / Tuscan Tilapia

The food service team includes a variety of colors, flavors, and textures in the meals enhancing all five senses. They creatively pair unfamiliar foods and familiar foods encouraging the children to try the variety of food offered. The meals served are age appropriate, healthy, and the team strives to improve the dining experience for all age groups. In addition, volunteers, hospital staff, including pediatric residents, are available to help families and children identify the various foods and assist in cutting food into bite-size pieces as needed. The children enjoy the option to choose whether they would like a whole apple, orange, or banana. Children delight in having this choice.

During the summer, comment cards are offered to all families at the time of the meal. The comment cards are available in English and Spanish. The comment cards allow families to provide ratings on the overall dining experience and the quality of food served. In addition, families can provide written feedback. Submission boxes for the comment cards are provided in the cafeteria. The feedback received is discussed with the food service staff to celebrate accomplishments and make any necessary improvements.

SFSP Success Stories

Children’s Mercy “Kids Eat Free” Program (continued)

The meals served at our site each day exceed USDA nutrition standards. We encourage children to eat healthy foods by serving a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, which are visually appealing and flavorful. More than one serving of dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, starchy vegetables, and beans or legumes are provided each week. Throughout the summer, children are excited to try new foods. For example, last summer one parent commented she was inspired to buy carrots after seeing how much her son enjoyed eating them. Children choose which type of fresh fruit they would like with their meals. The food service staff and volunteers encourage children to try everything on their plate, and distribute coloring books focusing on nutrition and healthy living habits. A “resource table”, in a high traffic area of the cafeteria, has a wide variety of nutrition-related handouts families can take home.

New Heights Community Resource Center (CRC)

New Heights CRC provides a uniquely designed menu that embraces a multicultural approach to meal planning and incorporates a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. Because low-income children seldom experience fresh fruit beyond the typical apples, oranges, and bananas, we ensure that at least twice per week our participants receive freshly cut fruit such as pineapples, kiwi, cantaloupe, honeydew melon, strawberries, and even mangos. We offer freshly prepared salads twice per week as well. Fresh vegetables on our menu have included carrots, broccoli, zucchini, squash, asparagus, greens, and cauliflower. Most of our produce is delivered from a local wholesaler in the area where most of our youth reside.

We have vowed to minimize the use of canned goods to reduce the amount of processed and high sodium menu items. Processed foods and prepackaged items are limited to no more than once per week. All of our protein options are fresh lean meats such as boneless, skinless chicken breasts, fresh ground turkey, and sirloin beef. We maintain a pork-free menu to ensure inclusiveness. Additionally, we prepare fresh entrees such as stir fry, pastas, soul food, and Mexican to create an enriching meal experience.

Our meal service is offered exclusively to school-aged children. As a result, every meal is prepared to the liking of typical school-aged children. Twice per year, we survey the children to determine which meals are favorites and give them the opportunity to make meal options. The sites choose up to 20 random children and staff to complete the survey. We review each completed survey and all favorite items are included on the menu at least once per month.

Periodically, we will introduce a new item. When we do this, we send a small sample to selected sites and encourage them to let some of the staff and youth sample the items. Once we receive their feedback, we determine it’s a “hit or miss.” If it’s a hit, we add it. If it’s a miss, we don’t add it to the menu.

To encourage children to try new and healthy foods, we provide meals for the staff as well. By having the staff eat with the children at meal time, children are more likely to try their food before discarding it.

The Saint Louis Public Schools (SLPS)

The Saint Louis Public Schools (SLPS) Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Department, along with food service management vendor Southwest Foodservice Excellence, are highly in tune with the district’s students and the surrounding communities’ demographics. Nearly 4,400 students in the district are without stable living situations, also known as Students-In-Transition. In addition, the district has more than 2,600 students who are English language learners. They have come to the United States from 61 countries, speaking 50 native languages.

SFSP Success Stories

The Saint Louis Public Schools (SLPS) (continued)

SLPS takes demographics, ethnicity, and religion into consideration when developing menus. Many of our refugee students are vegetarian due to religious beliefs. To accommodate, we serve rice and beans on the menu daily and various vegetarian items throughout the week to serve this population. In addition, because many of our students districtwide do not eat pork for religious reasons, SLPS serves alternatives, such as turkey, beef, and chicken.

To give students a voice and opinion on menu options, SLPS solicits feedback from students. The Health and Nutrition (H&N) team conducts taste-testings and surveys in order to gather feedback on specific menu items and/or items that may appear on future menus. In addition, focus groups are conducted on a monthly basis. Results are interpreted, analyzed, and taken into consideration when building future menus and/or adjusting current menus.

SLPS partners with Gateway Greening, the Saint Louis Dairy Council, and Roving Chef to provide food-and-nutrition-based activities including cooking and nutrition classes at elementary and middle school summer sites. Gateway Greening worked with Nahed Chapman New American Academy (NCNAA) students in their school garden. Students followed Farm to School curriculum to learn gardening and harvesting basics. The Saint Louis Dairy Council offered a nutrition education program. Students learned the benefits of dairy in the context of a healthy diet. The H&N team conducted a series of Roving Chef classes. Students learned the basics of nutritious food preparation, including hand washing, cooking techniques, food handling skills, nutrition facts label reading, how to select healthy snacks, and portion sizes. These programs use a hands-on approach to help students embrace a healthy lifestyle.

Operation Food Search (OFS)

Operation Food Search has found partnerships with local libraries to be a very important factor in a successful SFSP program. The St. Louis area is home to two major library systems, the St. Louis County Library and the St. Louis Public Library, both of which have a vested interest in being more than just a source for books. They strive to provide services and programs that encourage learning and enhance lives. This pairs well with OFS's own goal of filling bellies to fuel minds, preventing a learning deficit commonly known as "summer slide" that occurs when students are out of the classroom and disengaged during summer months.



Together, the organizations prefer to focus on "summer stride" and the learning gains that are possible when kids are engaged in stimulating programming. If providing a meal encourages kids to participate in library activities, it is a win-win for everyone. A healthy meal primes children for success, and continued engagement in structured activities keep kids in low-income neighborhoods on a more level playing field with their peers in higher performing school districts. If the meals and programs result in more books being checked out, all the better!

When OFS began working with the St. Louis County Library back in 2014, it was a natural connection for both organizations, each hoping to expand their scope in serving community needs. The partnership has steadily grown to serving 10,952 meals at nine locations in the summer of 2018. The St. Louis Public Library system joined the action in 2018, providing SFSP at six branches and serving a total of 4,942 meals.

SFSP Success Stories

Operation Food Search (OFS)

Expanding upon the success of summer, OFS continues the partnership by providing an afterschool meals program throughout the school year at many library branches. The library partnership has allowed OFS to expand their meal capacity and has brought an influx of new patrons into the library systems. This relationship demonstrates the mutual benefits reaped when like-minded organizations band together to meet community needs outside their normal scope.

To engage our mobile meal clients, OFS started a new initiative this year we termed the Family, Food, and Fun Club. The Family, Food, and Fun Club was a one hour food pantry pop-up event that took place immediately before or after summer meal service. Knowing children are often accompanied by adults, these events were an engagement tool for the entire family meant to garner parental trust and increase child participation. A variety of resources were provided, including a selection of fresh produce and a ready-to-prepare family meal kit. Our nutrition education team was on hand to demonstrate the meal kits, provide food samples, and offer recipe suggestions for incorporating produce items. Parents who are often alienated from the summer meals experience felt included and left feeling empowered to create a nutritious meal at home.



Photo submitted by Melissa Weissler, Operation Food Search

SFSP Outreach Ideas

Below are some ideas to help you be creative with your program and how to make your SFSP successful.

- ❖ Invite unique guests such as a magician, grandparent, or favorite teacher to spark interest in your program. You could have activities such as magic shows, storytelling, and arts and crafts.
- ❖ Feature fun and exciting meals like barbeques or lunches served on Frisbees.
- ❖ Ensure kids stay for both breakfast and lunch by keeping them occupied with activities that encourage physical fitness, nutrition, and learning.
- ❖ Partner with local groups, such as Kiwanis, Lions Club, local health department, PTA/PTO, senior centers, VFWs, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs, A+ Program, and community colleges.

2019 SFSP Sponsor Training Dates

| SFSP Sponsor Trainings | | |
|---|------------|------------|
| Location | Dates | Times |
| Branson Public School District Office 1756 Bee Creek Road Branson, MO 65616 | March 22 | 10:00-2:00 |
| Cape Girardeau Southeast District Health Office Room 2 471 Siemers Drive Cape Girardeau, MO 63701 | March 7 | 10:00-2:00 |
| | March 8 | 10:00-2:00 |
| | April 12 | 10:00-2:00 |
| Jefferson City Dept. of Health & Sr. Services 930 Wildwood Jefferson City, MO 65109 | March 7 | 9:30-1:30 |
| | March 19 | 9:30-1:30 |
| | April 3 | 9:30-1:30 |
| | April 17 | 9:30-1:30 |
| | May 7 | 9:30-1:30 |
| Macon Northeast District Office 1716 Prospect Suite C Macon, MO 63552 | March 21 | 10:00-2:00 |
| Mercy Hospital –Cassville 94 Main St. Cassville, MO 65625 | March 12 | 10:00-2:00 |
| Mountain View SBU Mountain View Campus 209 W. First St. Mountain View, MO 65548 | March 13 | 10:00-2:00 |
| Springfield The Meyer Center Ozark Room 3545 S.National Springfield, MO 65807 | March 18 | 9:30-1:30 |
| | March 18 | 1:30-4:30 |
| | April 9 | 10:00-2:00 |
| | April 24 | 10:00-2:00 |
| St. Louis Eastern District Health Office 220 S. Jefferson Ave. St. Louis, MO 63103 | March 14 | 10:00-2:00 |
| | March 22 | 10:00-2:00 |
| | April 3 | 10:00-2:00 |
| | April 4 | 10:00-2:00 |
| | April 11 | 10:00-2:00 |
| | April 12 | 10:00-2:00 |
| April 18 | 10:00-2:00 | |

| SFSP Sponsor Trainings | | |
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| Location | Dates | Times |
| Independence School District Nutrition Services Conference Room North Entrance 14001 E. 32nd St. S. Independence, MO 64055 | March 19 | 9:00-1:00 |
| Kansas City MO Public School District (Parking-Board of Education Lot-29th & Troost) Westport Room 2901 Troost Avenue Kansas City, MO 64109 | March 27 | 9:00-1:00 |
| Raytown Schools Wellness Center Building Community Room 1-2 10301 E. 350 Hwy Raytown, MO 64138 | March 28 | 9:00-1:00 |
| Independence School District Nutrition Services Conference Room North Entrance 14001 E. 32nd St. S. Independence, MO 64055 | April 23 | 9:00-1:00 |
| Independence School District Nutrition Services Conference Room North Entrance 14001 E. 32nd St. S. Independence, MO 64055 | April 24 | 9:00-1:00 |
| Webb City Central United Methodist Church 5 South Pennsylvania Webb City, MO 64870 | March 14 | 10:00-2:00 |