

# Bridging the Summer Gap:

*Keeping Kids Healthy and Engaged When School is Out*



# USDA Summer Nutrition Programs

- USDA Summer Nutrition Programs = opportunity to stop gap left by school's summer closure
  - Free, healthy meals for kids 0-18 in low-income neighborhoods
- **Sponsors** act as fiscal/administrative agent; besides summer school, **sites** can include churches, parks, schools, Boys & Girls Clubs, libraries, WIC, migrant camps...many options! **Must be located in low-income area or serve low-income children**



- Need for free/reduced-price (FRP) lunch does not disappear in summer
- Food insecurity associated with developmental, cognitive, behavioral and physical issues
- Harder for low-income families to make ends meet in summer
- In CA, only 17% of those receiving FRP lunch participated in a summer meal program:
  - Programming and site safety are key to attracting kids
  - Loss of summer school=loss of summer meal sites

**Making the connection between summer + school year**

Sources: California Food Policy Advocates, 2013; Leadership for Healthy Communities, 2012; Texas Hunger Initiative, 2012

## Making the connection between academics + health

- Lack of access to healthy food and safe places to play also increases risk of childhood obesity
  - Kids may gain weight 2-3x faster during the summer than during the school year
  - Lack of emphasis on nutrition during the summer can undermine nutrition promotion efforts during the school year
- Low-income kids may experience greater summer learning loss than more affluent peers
  - Loss in grade level math AND reading skills
  - 6 weeks = \$1,500 per student re-teaching

*(Sources: National Summer Learning Association, 2012; Summer Matters, 2013)*

# Focus on California

- California becomes one of five target states in 2013
  - Goal: Increase participation by 10%
  - Actual: 8% increase
- Site visits and partner meetings in Southern CA
- Support continues in 2014; new states selected
- President Obama visits Fresno; highlights need for summer meals in drought-affected areas



# Community kick-off

- Hosted kick-off event at the Sacramento Public Library in conjunction with USDA Summer Meals Awareness Week
  - Leaders from USDA, CDE, CA State Library, Elk Grove USD, Sacramento Public Library
  - Nutrition education activities
  - Free farmers market
  - Resources for families
  - Storytime
  - Summer reading signups
  - Visits with fire and police
  - Face painting, activities
  - Info about Affordable Care Act



# Lunch @ the Library

- **Collaboration with California Library Association to partner summer meal providers and public libraries**
  - Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission + Fresno Public Library
  - Feeding America San Diego + San Diego County Library
  - Elk Grove USD + Sacramento Public Library
  - Los Angeles Regional Food Bank + Los Angeles Public Library
- **Modeled on partnership between Oakland Public Library, the City of Oakland, and the Alameda County Food Bank**
- **Support provided by David and Lucile Packard Foundation**



# Program Impact

- Libraries were successful summer meal sites:
  - Served 13,348 lunches and 432 snacks
  - Expanding to more branches in 2014
  - Developing intentional programming
  - Working on national expansion
- Increase in summer reading sign-ups and library card issuance
- New families visiting the library
- A shift in library behavior

Help us improve the summer library meals program. Thank you!

1. Which of these things can you do at the library? (Please check all that apply)

- Read books and magazines
- Borrow books
- Borrow DVDs and CDs
- Get lunch
- Talk to a librarian
- Learn to read better
- Find information
- Get help with homework
- Use the computers
- Play with games and toys
- Do projects or crafts
- Go to storytimes
- See shows
- Join a club
- Join a teen advisory group
- Other: please tell us get Free Books at Lunch time.

How do you feel right now? (Please check all that apply)

- I feel good
- I feel happy
- I feel safe
- I feel like the food I ate is good for me
- I feel like people are nice to me at the library
- I feel relaxed
- I feel respected
- I feel like I have energy
- I feel like I'm using my brain
- I feel like I'm with friends
- Other: please tell us ± Feel Super!

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the library or the library program?

I want to tell you this is the Best Library in the whole univers!

# Bonus Points

- Storytelling, writing workshops, nutrition classes, container gardening, soccer, ping pong, and Zumba!
- Became a youth development program through the recruitment and support of teen volunteers
  - Teens developed job skills
  - Brought in friends
- Strong support from leadership
  - Increased visibility of collaboration among decision-makers
- Staff engagement

*"[This program makes me] feel like the community cares about us."*

*--L@L Participant*



# Additional resources

## ■ [Summerfood.usda.gov](http://Summerfood.usda.gov)

- Webinars
- Toolkits
- Policy memos – please share!

## ■ [Summermealcoalition.org](http://Summermealcoalition.org)

- Newsletter / case studies
- Nutrition ed. connections

## ■ Download Range app

- Windows phone store
- Google Play
- App Store (coming soon)

## ■ CA Dept. of Education



# For more information

## California Summer Meal Coalition

A statewide network representing:

- School districts
- Expanded learning
- Food policy / Anti-hunger
- Youth development
- Nutrition/physical activity /obesity prevention
- Community-based organizations
- CA Dept. of Education, *NEOP*

[www.summermealcoalition.org](http://www.summermealcoalition.org)

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