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LIBRARIES AND SUMMER MEALS: A WINNING COMBINATION!

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HUNGER IN VERMONT



1 in 8 Vermonters are food insecure.

1 in 5 Vermont children under 18 live in food insecure households (20%).

Currently, only 1 in 4 low-income youth participate in summer meals.



OUTCOMES ASSOCIATED WITH FOOD INSECURITY

Lower grades

More anxiety and aggression

Increased grade repetition

Greater difficulty getting along with peers

Higher absenteeism & tardiness

More depressive disorders in 15–16 year olds

WHY SUMMER FOOD?



Summer is a time when kids lose access to nutritious school meals available the rest of the year.

When kids lose access to healthy food, the risk for hunger and childhood obesity increases.

Summer meals support activities programming for children, which is essential to classroom success.



FOOD + ENRICHMENT = EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Summer learning loss

- the 'summer slide' -

accounts for **up to 2/3** of the reading achievement gap by the time a child enters high school.

THE SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM (SFSP)



The SFSP is a federal nutrition program designed to fill the summer nutrition gap.

In many cases, all children 18 and under can eat up to two meals/day for free!

**Summer meals can happen anywhere kids can eat together, rain or shine!
Attendance is generally strongest in locations where activities are offered.**

ADVANTAGES FOR KIDS & FAMILIES

Kids benefit from healthy meals and literacy programs at the library – a safe place for them to spend time and socialize with their peers.

Families benefit from free summer meals for their children, thereby offsetting some of the increased food costs families face during summer break.



ADVANTAGES FOR LIBRARIES



Attendance for enrichment activities is higher when families know their kids will also receive healthy meals during the day. This provides increased incentive and raises program retention rates.

Since libraries can partner with established summer food sponsors, most libraries won't need to prepare meals at all in order to serve meals to kids.

2014: VERMONT LIBRARIES ACCEPT THE SUMMER MEAL CHALLENGE!

- **18 'open' library meal sites (compared to 7 in 2013)**
- **24 total library sites ('open' and 'closed enrolled')**
- **With 180+ public libraries in Vermont, opportunities for expansion remain!**

GETTING STARTED SERVING MEALS

Work with Hunger Free Vermont to locate a local summer food sponsor

Contact the sponsor directly

Develop a game plan to integrate meals into your summer enrichment programming

Outreach: make sure the community knows about this new opportunity!

THANK YOU!

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