



News Release

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USDA Celebrates Summer Food Service Program Week in Georgia – “Food That’s In When School is Out”

ATLANTA, June 9, 2011 – Today, USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Deputy Administrator for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Lisa Pino helped celebrate *National Summer Food Service Program Week: “Food That’s In When School Is Out”* in Marietta, Ga. Pino, FNS Southeast Regional Administrator Donald Arnette, Bright from the Start - Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning Commissioner Bobby Cagle, and Marietta City Mayor Steve Tumlin, commemorated the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) event at the Salvation Army feeding site in Marietta.

“Each summer, millions of disadvantaged families struggle to provide their children with nutritious meals when schools close,” said Pino. “SFSP fills this gap by marshalling resources to curb food insecurity and end hunger for our nation’s children.

At least 17 million children in the United States face a higher risk for hunger during the summer months. Although more than 21 million children nationwide receive free and reduced-priced meals through the National School Lunch Program during the school year, just more than 3 million kids are fed in summer meals programs. Only 9 percent of Georgia children who received free and reduced-price meals during the 2010 school year participated in the Summer Food Service Program.

The Summer Food Service Program which was created by Congress in 1968, is designed to make sure children can get the nutritious meals they need during the summer months so they’re ready to learn when they return to school in the fall. Last summer, USDA invested \$359 million and fed approximately 2.3 million children on a typical day through the Summer Food Service Program. USDA spent the winter and spring reaching out to local governments, faith and community-based organizations, corporate partners, and other federal agencies including the Corporation for National and Community Service, encouraging them to make a commitment to the Summer Food Service Program as sponsors, feeding sites, funders, and volunteers.

Pino added that many more feeding sponsors, sites, and volunteers are needed. “Thanks to cities like Marietta, Ga., who have become SFSP sponsors and organizations like the Salvation Army in Marietta, Ga., who have become SFSP feeding sites, more Georgia children are not going hungry during the summer. Their concerted efforts prepare our children to start the new school year healthy, alert and ready to learn.”

This week, USDA and its partners will redouble efforts to highlight the important nutrition benefits provided by the SFSP and other healthy meal options available for low-income children across the country. This summer:

- *Let's Move! Faith and Communities* (part of First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! initiative) will work with partners to host new feeding sites at congregations and neighborhood organizations;
- the Corporation for National and Community Service's 515 AmeriCorps VISTA Summer Associates will work at anti-hunger organizations across the country to feed more children in programs, including the SFSP;
- sponsors will benefit from new waivers to simplify existing regulations in the SFSP to streamline ways to feed low-income children when school is out;
- several states will test innovative enhancements to the SFSP, including the provision of food backpacks to provide assistance over weekends, and meal delivery to reach children in rural areas.

Improving child nutrition is the focal point of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act signed into law by President Obama in December 2010. The legislation reauthorized the Summer Food Service Program and USDA's other child nutrition programs. The Act allows USDA, for the first time in over 30 years, the chance to make real reforms to school meals and increase access to these critical programs. The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act is also the legislative centerpiece of First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! initiative to end childhood obesity in a generation.

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) oversees the administration of 15 nutrition assistance programs, including the Summer Food Service Program and other child nutrition programs, that touch the lives of one in four Americans over the course of a year. These programs work in concert to form a national safety net against hunger. Visit www.fns.usda.gov for information about FNS and nutrition assistance programs and go to <http://www.fns.usda.gov/ech/> to see how you can help end childhood hunger.

To find a summer feeding site in your community, call 1-866-3-Hungry or 1-877-8-Hambre or visit the National Hunger Clearinghouse resource directory or for Georgia contact the Bright from the Start – Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning or call (toll free) 1-855-550- SFSP (7377).

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