



Calvert County NEWS

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Mobile Summer Meals Pilot Program Feeds Calvert County Youth

PRINCE FREDERICK, Md. – Aug. 27, 2019 – Calvert County’s first mobile summer meals program wrapped up its pilot season with full bellies and full hearts, thanks to close collaboration between the Calvert County Family Network (CCFN) and its community partners. During a six-week period from June to August, the program provided over 400 nutritious lunches to youth and their adult caregivers.

“Too many kids go hungry during the summer,” said Calvert County Community Resources Director Jennifer Moreland. “Helping families meet this most basic need is critical to each child’s health, well-being and ability to learn, and we are grateful to have such incredible support from our community. It truly takes a village.”

CCFN piloted the mobile summer meals program in the Chesapeake Ranch Estates (CRE) supported by funds from No Kid Hungry Maryland, the Governor’s Office for Children and youth meal reimbursement from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. While most summer meal programs serve youth 18 and younger, a partnership with the Department of Social Services enabled coordinators to open the program to adults as well.

Operating at the CRE clubhouse Monday through Thursday for six weeks – 23 days in all – the program provided 299 youth meals and 117 adult meals.

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“The summer meals pilot program is a true reflection of how hard work and seamless collaboration among community partners can improve outcomes for Calvert County’s children, youth and families,” said CCFN Coordinator Julie Mashino.

Calvert County Public Schools (CCPS) staff prepared, delivered and served meals for all but the final day of the program. Participants on the last day were treated to a barbecue lunch donated by Caney Creek Catering. The festive meal featured potatoes, corn and watermelon donated by Farming 4 Hunger.

Prior to the program’s kickoff, Farming 4 Hunger donated tower gardens – a low-maintenance vertical growing system – to the meal preparation site at Mill Creek Middle School, so CCPS food service workers would have access to fresh produce. CCPS purchased a milk cooler for the meal site with grant funds from No Kid Hungry, which will be used for future programs.

Every Thursday, participants received backpacks containing supplemental food for the weekend, provided by Heart F.E.L.T. of Southern Maryland; in total, 180 bags were distributed. Farming 4 Hunger coordinated a weekly food drop with the Maryland Food Bank, providing 3,580 pounds of farm-fresh produce to program participants. LifeStyles of Maryland provided transportation within the neighborhood.

In addition to providing meals at no cost, volunteer agencies and organizations offered enrichment activities designed to keep youth engaged while school is out of session. Activities were provided by members of the Calvert County Interagency Council: Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center, Calvert County Health Department, Calvert County Parks & Recreation, CCPS Head Start, Calvert Library, Calvert Marine Museum, Closing the Gap Coalition, Community Mediation Center, Judy Center, Maryland Health Connection, Pathways Inc., Prime Time Children’s Learning Center and SeedCo. Closing the Gap Coalition gave out 375 books.

Mashino says the team is already making plans to improve and expand the program next summer.

Operating under the Calvert County Department of Community Resources, the Calvert County Family Network partners with county leadership, public and private agencies and businesses to build a community where children and families thrive. Find information on Calvert County Government services online at www.CalvertCountyMd.gov. Stay up to date with Calvert County Government on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CalvertCountyMd.

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