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CITY PROMOTES FREE ANNUAL SUMMER MEALS PROGRAM WITH NBA AND SHARE OUR STRENGTH

From June 27 to August 29, Nearly 1,000 Parks, Schools, Libraries and Other Sites Across the City Will Provide Free Summer Meals to Children 18-years-old and Younger

NEW YORK – The Department of Education (DOE), the National Basketball Association (NBA), and Share Our Strength (SOS) today announced the 2014 summer meals program, an annual initiative that provides free, healthy breakfast and lunch to millions of children across New York City. Children don't need to be enrolled in summer school to participate in the summer meals program and no application is required. These meals are available at many locations, regardless of where a child lives.

Beginning June 27 through August 29, the program will serve children 18 and younger — regardless of New York City residency— at roughly 1,000 locations, including pools, schools, libraries, parks, public housing sites, community-based organizations, and soup kitchens throughout the five boroughs. The summer meals program, administered by the DOE's Office of SchoolFood, has been operating for over 30 years. Last year, 7.6 million meals were served to children, an increase from the 7.1 million meals served during the previous summer of 2012.

“Ensuring the health of our children is our highest priority - and providing them with quality, nutritious meals is central to that,” said Mayor Bill de Blasio. “I am thrilled to see this partnership with the NBA continue, and I urge all New Yorkers to participate in this free city service.”

“Eating healthful meals is critical for a child's development and well-being, and this program provides all children, of all ages, from all communities, with a nutritious breakfast and lunch,” Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña said. “Last summer, we served more than 7.6 million meals to children and we encourage families across the City to take advantage of this important service.”

NBA draftees were on hand to promote healthy eating and staying active with an NBA FIT clinic for students at PS/MS 111 in Manhattan, while a mobile summer meals truck provided students with a free, healthy summer meal. No Kid Hungry, a national non-profit dedicated to ending childhood hunger in America, is working to connect kids in New York City to the healthy

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food they need this summer. The organization works hand-in-hand with food advocates, city agencies, corporate partners and the Department of Education to make sure low-income families know about the summer meals program. They've also provided the city with a series of mobile meals trucks to help reach more hungry kids.

“Making sure kids get the healthy food they need in the summer feeds more than just their bodies. It feeds their futures,” said Billy Shore, founder and CEO of Share Our Strength. “If we want strong, healthy kids who can hit the ground running when school is back in session this Fall, we need to make sure they're getting the nutrition they need this summer. It's that simple.”

“The NBA Family is thrilled to continue its partnership with No Kid Hungry and the New York City Department of Education on this important program,” said Todd Jacobson, NBA Senior Vice President, Social Responsibility. “Access to free, nutritious meals during the summer months is a vital component to kids living a healthy, active lifestyle.”

Summer meals sites will serve breakfast weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 9:15 a.m. and lunch from 11:00 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. In an effort to make the summer meals even more accessible and convenient, the DOE's Office of SchoolFood will operate four refrigerated food trucks for lunch from 10:30 a.m. to 3:50 p.m., Monday to Friday at Orchard Beach in the Bronx and seven days a week at Flushing Meadows Park Zoo in Queens and the Queens Main Street Library. Weekend lunch hours at pools and parks vary according to individual sites.

This year, parents have many ways to find nearby summer meals locations. Families can call 311, visit 311 online at www.nyc.gov/311, or at the SchoolFood (www.schoolfoodnyc.org) or Share Our Strength (<http://www.nokidhungry.org/>) websites. Parents also may text “nycmeals” to 877877, or visit the Parks Department website (<http://www.nycgovparks.org/>) for locations of parks and pools.

“We are kicking off our summer meals program that offers children healthy meals for breakfast and lunch at locations where they often congregate, such as City pools, parks and beaches,” Deputy Chancellor Kathleen Grimm said. “Children do not need to be enrolled in summer school to participate in the summer meals program, no application is required, and meals are available at many locations, regardless of where a child lives.”

“Our City agencies and nonprofit partners have been working hard to get the word out about summer meals, because we know that the need for healthy food does not go away over summer

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vacation,” said Barbara Turk the Mayor’s Director of Food Policy. “We want children to benefit from this great program.”

“For too long, the City’s summer food program for school kids has been riddled with incomplete information, lack of comprehensive site planning, and without strong inter-agency coordination when it should be a front-line effort in combating hunger,” said Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer. “This summer presents the opportunity for a re-set on summer meals. I am proud of the massive outreach efforts by my office to provide families with site specific information and look forward to working with the Administration and stakeholders to do better for New York.”

“The Department of Education’s program offering summer meals to our youth is very important,” said Council Member Daniel Dromm, Chair of the Committee on Education. “Having nutritious meals available throughout the summer provides them with the continuity and consistency they need to remain healthy and helps to prepare them for a new academic year when they return to school in the fall.”

“Thanks to the Department of Education, the summer meals program is becoming progressively stronger,” said Randi Herman, vice president of the Council for Supervisors and Administrators. “We applaud the DOE, the NBA and Share Our Strength for an upcoming free breakfast and lunch program that will save so many children from physical and emotional suffering and help many of them to have happier, more productive summers.”

This summer’s menu includes some new items such as blueberry granola and zucchini bread, along with long-time favorites like pancakes, fluffy egg omelets, and NY-style bagels for breakfast. New lunch options include grilled chicken dippers and strawberry mango frozen fruit chillers. Other offerings include roasted chicken cheesy beef taco, black bean and corn salad, fresh watermelon, and crispy egg roll. All the meals provided are low in fat, low in sodium, and prepared without artificial colors or sweeteners.

“We are thrilled to have the NBA here giving pointers to our students who love basketball,” Principal Medina said. “This is a great way to kick off the summer meals program and reinforce the importance of healthy eating and staying fit.”

“To be well read, children must be well fed. Summer meals not only reduce hunger and boost child health, but they also they help children retain educational achievement over the long

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vacation,” said Joel Berg, executive director of the New York City Coalition Against Hunger. “That is why we are so grateful that key governmental, private, and non-profit partners are all working together to boost participation in this vital, federal-funded, program.”

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