

# Summer Meals



**TEXASHUNGER**  
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## Overview

The federally-funded Summer Meals program is designed to fill the summer hunger gap when children and teens are out of school and most at risk of going hungry. In Dallas County more than 70% of children rely on meals during the school year but less than 15% participate in Summer Meals, in spite of the more than 1,000 Summer Meals locations. When congregations and communities get involved by volunteering at or “adopting” a Summer Meals site, they raise awareness of the program and increase participation by creating more comfortable and fun environments. Ultimately, this involvement has the ability to have a dramatic impact on child hunger.

## Impact on Hunger

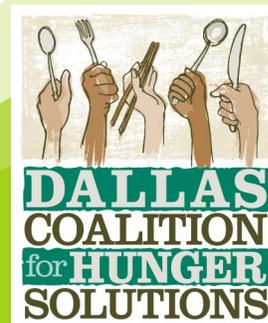
- ◆ Increases utilization of federal child nutrition program
- ◆ Increases number of children and families aware of available free meals
- ◆ Decreases risk of child food insecurity
- ◆ Increases opportunities for safe and fun meal environments for children and teens

## How to Help

**Donation Drive:** The easiest way for a faith community to get involved with a Summer Meals program is by hosting a donation drive. The best way to ensure that kids stay on site and eat their entire meal is to provide activities and games while on-site. Programs are always in need of more bubbles, water balloons, soccer balls, jump ropes, face paints, coloring books, temporary tattoos — you name it!

**Volunteering:** A step above the donation drive is for congregations to volunteer with a Summer Meals program episodically throughout the summer. This opportunity is great for youth groups, small groups and even older adult groups.

**Adopt-a-Site:** The most advanced opportunity is for a faith community to “adopt” a Summer Meals site (or number of sites in a neighborhood). Dedicating consistent, dependable volunteers to support and/or manage a Summer Meals site is an excellent way to keep the faith community engaged in service for an extended period of time. “Adopting” a site or sites is also a great way to have both groups and individuals impact hunger in their own community.



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## Testimonials

"I'm from Africa originally and when I came to the US, I received a lot of help from people. And just because I can't help the people who helped me, doesn't mean I can't help other people. I'm doing this to pay back the people who have helped me in my life. Jesus helped the children, why not help kids who don't have what I have daily? It's something I feel like I have to do in my heart because I have a big support group and it's a blessing. It pays when you see the smile on a child's face."  
*Noella, from Austin, TX, on a mission trip with her youth group*

"The youth look forward to this mission week every year. We've connected with the AmeriCorps members and wonder if some of the youth might consider AmeriCorps in their future. You get to connect with kids that you wouldn't meet otherwise and provide hope beyond their sometimes difficult world by bringing freshness and fun to their games and mealtime." *Ryan, Pastor at Central Presbyterian Church in Austin, TX*



## Contact

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