



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 9, 2016

Good Shepherd Food Bank and Full Plates Full Potential Award Grants to Expand Summer Food Service Program

Auburn, ME – Good Shepherd Food Bank, the state’s largest hunger relief organization, and Full Plates Full Potential, a statewide coalition working to end child hunger, have partnered to award grants to expand the summer meals program in Maine.

Thirteen grants totaling \$17,000 will be distributed to organizations that are sponsoring or operating the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) in 10 counties across the state. The awardees are:

- AOS 92 (Waterville & Winslow)
- Bath YMCA
- City of Eastport
- Healthy Lincoln County
- Lake Region Schools
- MSAD 72 (Fryeburg)
- RSU 54 (Skowhegan)
- RSU 3 (Unity)
- SAD 15 (Gray/New Gloucester)
- Saco Schools
- Skowhegan Community Center & Parks & Recreation Department
- Trinity Jubilee Center (Lewiston)
- Windham Parks & Recreation Department

“We are thrilled to be able to offer funding to help grow the summer meals program in Maine,” said Kristen Miale, president of Good Shepherd Food Bank. “In 2015, our grantees served an additional 11,500 meals over the previous year thanks to these modest grants. We expect this year’s awardees will see ever greater success.”

Grants will support sponsors seeking to increase the number of meals served at sites in their communities through innovative ideas or tried-and-true best practices. Examples of funded projects include equipment needed to launch new sites in popular summer locations for youth, transportation costs associated with bringing meals to children or children to meal sites, enrichment activities, and marketing efforts. All grant recipients plan to increase the number of children participating in the program; some expect increases of up to 100 percent.

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), a program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, ensures that low-income children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. This summer, USDA plans to serve more than 200 million free meals to children 18 years and under at approved SFSP sites nationwide.

In Maine, more than 85,000 children depend on the National School Lunch Program during the school year. Despite the availability of funding from USDA, less than 25 percent of those students receive meals during the long summer break, due to a variety of obstacles such as lack of program awareness and accessible sites. In addition, children who are not yet school age (younger than 5) are also at risk of hunger during summer months.

“We are excited about partnering with Good Shepherd Food Bank and Full Plates Full Potential to increase access to meals during the summer,” said Gail Lombardi, SFSP Coordinator at the Maine Department of Education Child Nutrition department. “These mini-grants provide the opportunity for sponsors to take the next step of increasing participation and adding meal sites at locations convenient for children.”

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About Good Shepherd Food Bank

As the largest hunger relief organization in Maine, Good Shepherd Food Bank provides for Mainers facing hunger by distributing nutritious food to more than 400 partner agencies across the state, including food pantries, meal sites, schools, and senior programs. Together with its network, the Food Bank leads a statewide effort to combat the root causes of hunger by engaging in advocacy, nutrition education, and strategic partnerships. In 2015, the Food Bank distributed more than 19 million meals to families, children, and seniors in need throughout Maine. Website: www.feedingmaine.org; Phone: (207) 782-3554; Facebook: www.facebook.com/feedingmaine; Twitter: www.twitter.com/feedingmaine.

About Full Plates Full Potential

Full Plates Full Potential is a new way to partner for innovation and success. No child should grow up hungry, but one in four children in Maine struggles with hunger. We’re working to end child hunger in Maine by connecting kids to effective nutrition programs like school breakfast, lunch, and summer meals. This work is best accomplished through a network, made up of private citizens, government officials, nonprofits, business leaders, and others providing innovative hunger solutions in their communities. These partners work together, implementing solutions that break down the barriers that keep kids from accessing healthy food. Website: www.fullplates.org; Facebook: www.facebook.com/FullPlatesFullPotential.