



all faiths
food bank

IMPACT REPORT

Summer Hunger 2014: Feeding Children & Families



FILLING A NEED



During the 2013-14 school year, there were 21,000 Sarasota County students (50%) eligible for free and reduced lunch. When school is out, those kids - and their siblings and families - may go without meals. All Faiths Food Bank introduced the *Campaign Against Summer Hunger* to help feed children during the time of year that they are most likely to experience hunger. This report goes beyond the success of the campaign and describes how All Faiths Food Bank and its partners worked hard to build a better system, create and expand summer food assistance programs, and reveals how many children and families received food thanks to the efforts of a community united against hunger.

FACING CHALLENGES

Historically, the summer months have presented the greatest challenge for All Faiths Food Bank. The seasonal nature of the region's economy creates a perfect storm of decreasing supplies and increasing demand. By September, the Food Bank's shelves are nearly bare, impacted by the departure of snowbirds who donate and volunteer only while they are here. Meanwhile, when seasonal residents head north, local employment opportunities decrease and incomes drop, meaning more families turn to the Food Bank for support.

A 2013 gap analysis of homeless services in Sarasota County conducted by Dr. Robert Marbut, a national expert on homelessness, acknowledged this challenge. His report recommended:

A seasonally targeted program should be developed to address seasonal shortages in food supplies within the All Faiths Food Bank. This effort should promote cash and food donations before seasonal residents move north for the season. This "empty your pantry before you go north" program should be promoted through a comprehensive public service campaign.

The extent to which hunger affects children's lives also came into sharper focus through a local child-hunger study commissioned by All Faiths Food Bank, with support from the Gulf Coast Community Foundation. Released in March 2014, "On the Edge" gathered information about issues of food and nutrition directly from the perspective of children. The analysis included 14 Title I schools—those where more than 40 percent of students come from low-income families—in Sarasota County. It found that many children realized they were eating poor-quality food at home because their families were running out of money. A parallel study of DeSoto County, where all students are offered free breakfast and lunch, found even more worry and cheap foods at home, as well as food actually running out and kids eating less because of it.



MOBILIZING A COMMUNITY

In response to the Child Hunger Report findings, All Faiths Food Bank—in partnership with others—initiated the *Campaign Against Summer Hunger*, a community-wide effort to raise awareness, food, and funds in order to feed children and their families during the summer. The Campaign, which commenced April 1 and ended with the National Letter Carriers Food Drive on May 10, raised nearly \$1.2 million and 800,000 pounds of food. Just as important was the hard work that All Faiths and its partners did to build a better system to feed more children and families this summer, and beyond.



INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES

In order to reach our goal, All Faiths Food Bank established a set of objectives to guide our work and ensure that the model was sustainable. In summary, the objectives of the summer feeding program were:

- Ensure that All Faiths and its partners had the infrastructure and capacity to store, transport, and distribute food.
- Convene and collaborate with partners to coordinate efforts and align resources.
- Target areas with the highest concentration of children and least access to services.
- Create and expand innovative, efficient summer feeding strategies.
- Provide nutritious, healthy food in safe, accessible sites.
- Create a comprehensive outreach strategy and measurable outcomes.

It is a struggle to reach children with food service during the summer. They are dispersed throughout the county, and few gather in one place. Many areas lack public transportation or agencies that provide services. The need is there, but it is hidden from view. Given these barriers, we needed to be innovative and efficient, and explore new strategies, partners, and locations to increase access. We also needed to enhance existing programs that had proven effective in reaching children and their families.

In 2014, strategies included expanding our Mobile Pantries, implementing new Summer Backpack and Snack programs, enhancing the role of our agency partners, partnering with the school district to support and increase the federally-funded summer food-service program, “Summer BreakSpot,” and offering different meal options. We also recruited new sites and partners, opened new locations, and experimented with new hours for food distribution.



MOBILE PANTRIES: 303,309 MEALS

Mobile Pantries proved to be one of our most effective tools in the fight against summer hunger. A Mobile Pantry is a method of direct distribution to clients using All Faiths' refrigerated trucks, which travel to unserved and underserved communities to provide fresh and nonperishable food. Mobile Pantries increase the number of people fed, remove barriers that prevent access, and allow flexibility in the delivery of fresh products in an effective, expeditious way. Mobile Pantries extended our reach by bringing food directly to concentrated areas of low-income children.

9 NEW MOBILE PANTRIES



GAVE OUT 177,590 POUNDS OF FOOD



PROVIDING 147,992 MEALS



TO 3,559 PEOPLE AND 2,877 CHILDREN



9 new Mobile Pantries were added during the 2014 summer:

Riverview High School
Gocio Elementary
Fruitville Elementary
Englewood Bible Church
South Venice Baptist Church
Atwater Community
Cranberry Elementary
Arcadia Housing Authority
Nocatee Elementary

During the summer of 2014, the nine new pantries distributed 177,590 pounds of food, for a total of 147,992 meals. In three short months, the new Mobile Pantries had 43 distributions, serving a total of 6,436 people. Over one-third of them—2,877—were children. Combined with our existing pantries, All Faiths offered a total of 75 distributions.

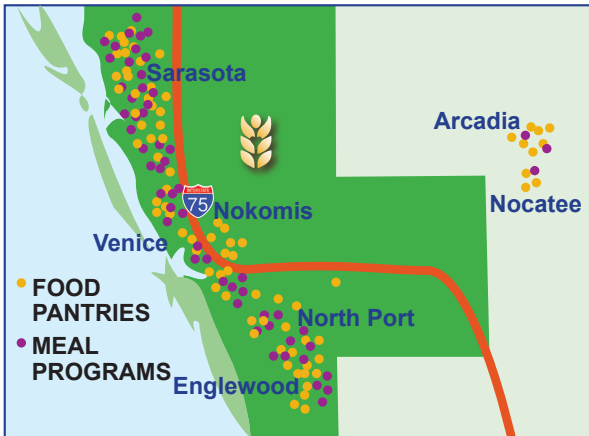
Our 16 Mobile Pantries fed a total of 10,377 people, including 4,309 children, who received 363,647 pounds of food, or the equivalent of 303,039 meals. We found that attendance at Mobile Pantries grew exponentially over time, attributable in great part to the extensive outreach efforts.



As a little girl, Linda McCloud knew what it was like to be hungry. And this summer, as principal at Cranberry Elementary School in North Port, McCloud made it her mission to feed kids. At the first Mobile Pantry, she was surprised that only 38 clients attended. Using the school district's Connect-Ed phone system, she called every family with children at Cranberry Elementary. "It was a new distribution," McCloud said, "and families simply didn't know about it." Every week, she faithfully called parents with a reminder. By summer's end, 295 clients were receiving food.

DYNAMIC GROWTH

We experimented with new hours of distribution and opened pantries in the afternoon, from 4 to 6 p.m. We chose this time based on the Hunger in America 2014 study, funded locally by Gulf Coast Community Foundation, which indicated that more than 60 percent of households that use our services have at least one person working. The afternoon distributions were so successful that we will be changing hours at other distribution sites.



3,449 CHILDREN SERVED: BACKPACKS & SNACKS

More than 21,000 children in Sarasota qualify for the free or reduced-price meal programs. What happens when they go home over the weekend? For more than seven years, All Faiths' BackPack Program has been helping children get the nutritious and easy-to-prepare food they need over the weekend. Chronically hungry children, identified by school personnel, are given backpacks filled with food to eat on weekends and over school holidays. Our Director of Nutrition Education, a registered dietitian, prepares the menu to ensure that the food is nutritious and kid-friendly. During the 2013-14 school year, dozens of donors and hundreds of volunteers helped distribute over 80,000 backpacks.



The BackPack program had not previously operated during the summer. This year, All Faiths Food Bank established new Summer BackPack and Snack programs to help fill the nutrition and meal gap that so many children experience during the summer. We partnered with 18 sites and more than 14,850 backpacks were distributed to 2,549 children. Through the BackPack Program, the children received 44,550 meals this summer. The Snack program provided 900 children with a total of 16,400 tasty, nutritious snacks.



SPROUT: 84,000 LBS OF FRESH PRODUCE



Sprout is the area's first Mobile Farm Market, and it delivers fresh fruit and vegetables. Launched by All Faiths and its partners in January 2014, Sprout was a powerful addition to the summer feeding programs. Over the summer, Sprout was deployed to "food deserts" and neighborhoods where there were few or no ways to obtain produce. In its inaugural summer, Sprout delivered nearly 84,000 pounds of fresh produce to 3,460 people, including 1,032 children.

We learned from our child-hunger study that children were aware of, and concerned about, the poor quality of food they were eating. Families with limited incomes are forced to make difficult choices about the type of food they can buy. To stave off hunger, parents choose foods that are filling but are low in nutritional value. For so many of these families, the cost of fresh fruit and vegetables is out of reach. Sprout made it possible to address this need.

BREAKSPOTS: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & SUPPER



Offered through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Summer Food Service Program "Summer BreakSpot" provides students the opportunity to enjoy a free breakfast and lunch five days a week, to kids 18 and under, regardless of income status. The program is designed to ensure that children have access to the nutritious meals they need to grow, learn, and play during the summer months and maintain healthy and strong bodies and minds for the upcoming school year.

All Faiths convened state and national stakeholders to identify best practices among Summer Food Service Program implementations. We learned that the Sarasota County School District's Food and Nutrition Services, which administers Summer BreakSpot in our community, is one of the best in the country. With an eye toward supporting and expanding this program, All Faiths and the School District's Food and Nutrition Services developed a joint strategy to increase the number of summer meal sites, included targeting communities with highest need.

In 2014, the number of breakfasts served more than doubled compared with 2013: 52,672 vs. 25,143. Lunches increased as well, from 100,000 to 112,397 in 2014. This year, a new supper and snack program was offered and 1,911 meals were served and 156 snacks were provided. The DeSoto County School District served 6,910 meals to 469 children through Summer BreakSpot sites.



ADDITIONAL SUMMER MEAL PROGRAMS

Children receive meals through a variety of additional programs in our community and we wanted to show how much impact they had this summer as well:

- YMCA Englewood served lunch and snacks to 160
- YMCA Venice served lunch and snacks to 746
- Boys & Girls Clubs in Sarasota, Venice and North Port served breakfast and lunch to 1,228
- Girls Inc. of Sarasota, which partners with the Food Bank year round, served lunch and snacks to 150

Applying a bit of our ingenuity and adapting effective practices from around the country, All Faiths experimented with offering kids the option of a Subway box lunch. 278 children were able to participate and they loved it!

ROOM TO GROW

The summer food programs and expansion of Summer BreakSpot required additional vehicles and equipment to transport food and hot meals. All Faiths invested in multiple large heating cabinets and coolers. With a grant from the William G. and Marie Selby Foundation, we purchased a refurbished 36-foot refrigerated truck.



We also leased six additional trucks. Because our summer feeding program is a long-term commitment, the investment in equipment will allow us to sustain and expand the summer feeding programs in future years. Additional staff and volunteer support were also needed. All Faiths hired 13 supplemental personnel, many of whom would otherwise have been unemployed this summer, including school employees. The summer programs would not have been possible without our 175 volunteers, who worked a total of 1,247 hours.



SPREADING THE WORD

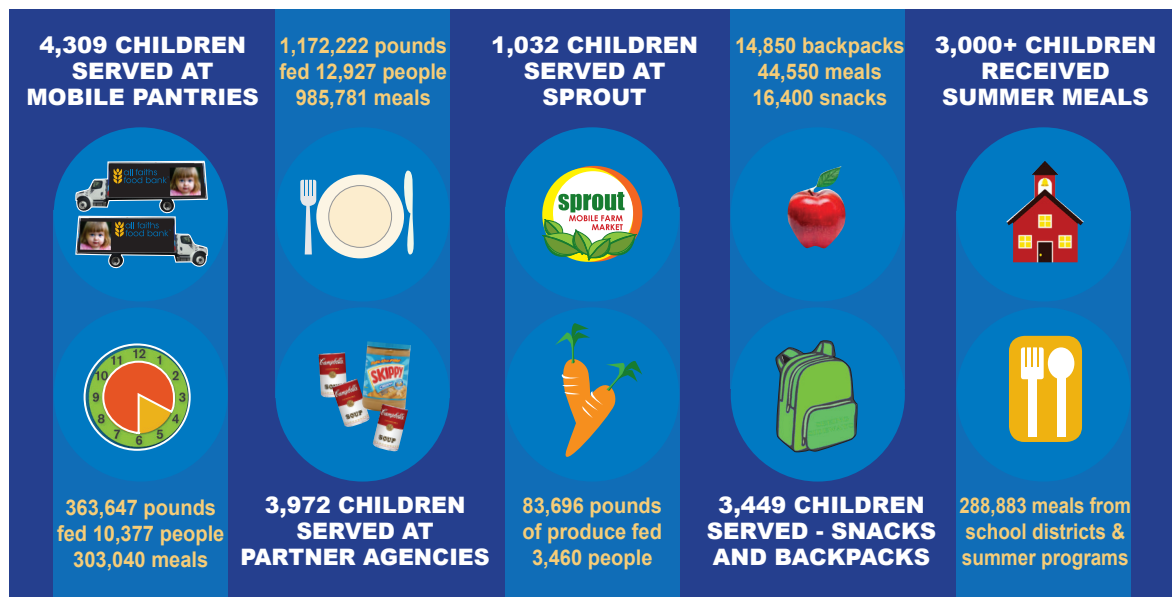
One of the major roadblocks to feeding hungry children during the summer is awareness, as families in need often don't know about the programs available to them. All Faiths and partners made exhaustive efforts to reach families. A press conference was held on June 4 at Riverview High School to announce the plans for feeding children and families over the summer. More than 20,000 schedules listing the dates and times of All Faiths' 60 different distribution sites and the school district's meal sites were created in Spanish and English and distributed at schools, churches, social-services organizations, government agencies, All Faiths Mobile Pantries and partner-agency sites, Summer BreakSpots, and in Summer BackPacks.

Throughout the summer, All Faiths Food Bank staff distributed schedules and flyers at every agency and mobile distribution, public libraries, large employers, association meetings, speaking events, and clubs. Interactive maps and electronic files of the schedules were available on the Food Bank's website. With assistance from the Sarasota County School District and individual school staff, Connect-Ed phone calls were scheduled and placed to all families in the school district, announcing nearby weekly distributions, with excellent results. Attendance more than quadrupled in some instances.

Summer program promotion and media coverage were provided by *The Observer Group*, *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, *Sun Newspapers*, *The Arcadian*, *Siete Dias*, *Tempo News*, and through weekly paid advertising in *The Shopper*. *Sarasota*, *SRQ*, and *Scene Magazine* promoted in print and online, and PSAs aired on WGPU and Comcast. Local radio stations featured PSAs on both English- and Spanish-language radio stations.

Online marketing on Facebook and Twitter showcased volunteers and families at pantries, and encouraged followers to share information about summer programs—and they did. There were 6,000 views on Facebook from sharing request posts alone. Twitter posts tagged corporate sponsors and media outlets, and were retweeted by Sarasota Herald-Tribune, SNN 6, and ABC 7 to name a few, reaching 16,000 Twitter users.

15,500+ CHILDREN RECEIVED FOOD DURING THE SUMMER OF 2014 THANKS TO A COMMUNITY UNITED AGAINST HUNGER



LESSONS LEARNED

During the summer months, we know that children are widely dispersed and do not gather in one place. Some live in areas that do not have public transportation. Children in rural areas are often isolated, without any transportation whatsoever. Our experience in 2014 confirmed what we anticipated: The greatest challenge to feeding children over the summer would be locating them.

We also knew that 2014 would be a learning year and one of experimentation. We built on proven methods, developed different partnerships, and created innovative strategies. One of the lessons learned was that we needed to extend our summer programs into September to make sure children continued to receive food as they transitioned back to school. Other lessons are described below. As we continue to get feedback from our partners and clients, and as we review the 2014 data and experiences, we will gain additional insights that we will use to expand and improve our 2015 summer feeding programs.



MOBILE PANTRIES

Children are widely dispersed throughout the county and, in rural areas, isolated from transportation and agencies that can provide food. Increasingly, All Faiths uses mobile units to provide food in areas with high need that are hard to reach. As we prepared for 2014, we analyzed information to determine pockets of need where the Mobile Pantries would be beneficial. As a result, we added nine new Mobile Pantries that allowed us to increase distributions from 29 to a total of 75.

Lessons Learned:

- Mobile Pantries were one of the most successful initiatives of our summer feeding programs. In fact, three of them will be expanded year-round.
- While our Mobile Pantries were previously open during the day, experimentation with the 4 to 6 p.m. timeframe was an unqualified success. Our client satisfaction survey indicated that 70 percent of respondents preferred the later hours. As a result, we are changing the hours of many of our other distributions year-round. Summer 2015 distributions will also offer later hours.
- Given the capacity and reach of the Mobile Pantries, they might be an effective way to provide boxed or hot meals as well



LESSONS LEARNED



SUMMER BACKPACKS AND SNACKS

The BackPack Program has been successful since its inception seven years ago, so it is not surprising that the Summer BackPack Program was a winning effort. We will continue the program in summer 2015, with plans to expand to other partner sites. The Snack program was an experiment for summer 2014. We did not realize the high level of need, especially during the school year.

Lesson Learned:

The community, All Faiths, and its partners should understand that many children go through the school day without a mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack.

AGENCY PARTNERS

Our Agency Partners are a valuable and potent source for increasing the number of children and families we can serve in the summer and all year long. All Faiths shares their experience of limited resources and ever-increasing demand. We know our partners want to provide more but do not have the capacity and have had to restrict the amount or type of food distributed and reduce their hours of operation. During the summer of 2014, we learned that All Faiths can do more to support our agency partners, strengthen the relationships, and help build capacity to better serve the increasing number of children and families seeking assistance.

Lessons Learned:

- In reviewing the participating organizations, we believe there is additional opportunity to partner with the faith-based community to feed children and families next summer.
- The Food Bank needs to work with partner agencies and organizations to assess capacity needs and opportunities for collaboration and/or coordination of services.
- All Faiths can offer capacity-building opportunities to agencies to help them serve more people more efficiently using best practices.
- We have a role in linking partners and other local organizations to reduce duplication, increase collaboration, and identify community and policy priorities.



SUMMER MEAL PROGRAMS

All Faiths worked diligently to identify a variety of summer meal programs. We also partnered with the Sarasota County School District to increase the initial number of Summer BreakSpot sites this summer from 35 to almost 50.

Lessons learned:

- As the summer progressed and we monitored Summer BreakSpot sites, we found that several had only a minimum number of children attending and the decision was made to close them.
- Best practice suggests that attendance improves when children's programs are offered at the sites. In 2015, the sites should offer, and demonstrate their capacity, to provide programs for children.
- Federal and state requirements restrict the hours that Summer BreakSpot can be offered. Advocacy efforts can encourage more flexible hours to include late afternoon and evening meals for low-income families that work.
- Federal and state requirements require that children eat meals at the Summer BreakSpot location. Advocacy efforts can encourage more flexibility and allow children to take meals offsite.
- Transportation to fixed sites may not be an option for children because of safety concerns or the lack of transportation in rural areas. Mobile units can get food to neighborhoods with high concentrations of children or hard-to-reach areas.
- There are agencies and organizations that offer summer meals along with children's programs. However, the tuition—sometimes as low as \$25 a month—may be prohibitive for some families. By providing tuition assistance, we can increase attendance.
- One of the goals in 2014 was to provide a hot meal, understanding that for many children this might be the only hot meal they received that day. However, preparing, transporting, and serving hot meals poses additional challenges. We experimented with a prepared lunch from Subway restaurants and found that children were pleased with a sandwich and fruit option.
- All Faiths' and its agency partners currently have regular distribution schedules that are familiar to clients. Our agency partners have the potential to provide even more meals to children with greater flexibility in terms of location and hours.

MARKETING

A significant part of the challenge in finding children during the summer is communicating the availability of feeding programs to their families. All Faiths and its partners put a tremendous amount of effort into marketing the programs. Clearly, some were very successful. Yet we feel that many families may not have known about the abundance of programs, the locations, or that there was no cost.

Lessons Learned:

- Outreach to families should begin well before the end of the school year.
- Information should be included in every communication from schools to families.
- Strategies among all the partners should be consistent and coordinated.
- Materials need to be culturally and linguistically appropriate, clearly worded, and list sites nearest the family's residence.
- Connect-Ed has been effective; consider enhanced use and outreach in 2015.
- Investigate grassroots outreach in low-income areas with high concentration of children.



TOGETHER WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We set an aspirational goal of providing food to 15,000 children. Today, we celebrate a promise fulfilled and surpassed. More than 15,500 children and their families received food and, with the help of all our donors, partners and volunteers, we distributed enough food to provide close to a million meals during the summer of 2014. We could not have accomplished this without the efforts of a community united against summer hunger.

As we look to 2015 – with your help – we can feed even more children next summer. The solution requires multiple, complementary strategies and engagement of entire community. In order to fill the nutrition gap, it will require programs that offer meals coupled with the distribution of food, fresh produce, meat and dairy.

As the need for food assistance remains at record levels, All Faiths is working to feed more people to meet the growing demand every day, year-round. Through our 195 partner agencies and programs, we change lives by providing families and individuals with nutritious food, hope and dignity. While we can measure the impact of All Faiths Food Bank in pounds of food delivered and meals served, nothing can measure what it means to help everyday people take control of their lives. For them, hope is a hot meal, a bag of groceries, and a well-nourished child.

Join us as we make the 2014 holiday season special – simply by providing food – for the families who need our help, right here at home.



Our Mission

The mission of All Faiths Food Bank is to feed the hungry and educate the community about hunger and nutrition.



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