



THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI  
Governor

January 4, 2008

Dear Summer Food Stakeholder:

Thanks to your efforts and the efforts of thousands across our state, Oregon has made great strides in reducing the number of hungry Oregonians. Even so, there is still much work to be done, and that need becomes even more pressing when it affects the well-being of our state's children.

Currently over 230,000, or roughly 40 percent, of our school-age children live in families whose incomes qualify them to receive free or reduced price meals at school. When school is out during the long summer break, however, those meals are not available. As you've likely heard me say – "hunger does not take a vacation" – which is why I am committed to supporting increased access to, and participation in, the federal Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

The SFSP is designed to reimburse a community for feeding its children. The SFSP helps communities provide reliable, balanced nutrition to children and youth outside of school hours and, consequently, allows families to stretch their food dollars at home. The SFSP is a critical tool that enables us as a state to address the issue of childhood hunger – helping kids be healthy and learn better.

Together, we have made great strides in the number of children who can eat lunch over the summer because of this program. In 2006, over 1.3 million meals were served across Oregon, an increase of 43 percent in four years. Although that increase is nothing short of impressive, the need is so great that those meals represent *less than a quarter* of eligible students. That's why I'm asking for your continued support to grow the number of children who participate in the SFSP in your community.

Childhood hunger, though a real problem in Oregon, is not without a solution. Please take a minute to look over the enclosed resource sheet, which lists four ways individuals and organizations can get involved in the Summer Food Service Program. I strongly encourage you to consider what role you may be able to play, whether that's helping to increase awareness, serving meals at a SFSP site, or giving of your resources. In many communities there are already groups, such as local County Commissions on Children and Families, standing by ready to partner with you in this effort.

Thank you in advance for your commitment to feeding Oregon's children. You have my full support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Theodore R. Kulongoski".

THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI  
Governor

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Enclosure