



SHARE OUR
STRENGTH®
NO KID HUNGRY

NO KID HUNGRY

TACKLING SUMMER HUNGER:
**ENSURING NO KID GOES HUNGRY
WHEN SCHOOL IS OUT**



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STRENGTH®
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: This report was prepared by Courtney Smith and Sara Gold and edited by Cate Puzo.

We would like to thank the staff at the Children’s Alliance, Florida Impact, Hunger Free Colorado, and Maryland Governor’s Office for Children for their contributions to this report and for their tireless efforts to ensure that children have access to nutritious food during the summer.

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About Share Our Strength: Share Our Strength®, a national nonprofit, is ending childhood hunger in America by connecting children with the nutritious food they need to lead healthy, active lives. Through its No Kid Hungry® Campaign—a national effort to end childhood hunger in America by 2015—Share Our Strength ensures children in need are enrolled in federal nutrition programs, invests in community organizations fighting hunger, teaches families how to cook healthy meals on a budget and builds public-private partnerships to end hunger, both nationally and at the state level. For more information, visit www.strength.org.

TACKLING SUMMER HUNGER: ENSURING NO KID GOES HUNGRY WHEN SCHOOL IS OUT

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SUMMARY:

Summer is a critical time for children's and youth's academic and physical well-being. During the summer students typically lose several months of learning in mathematics and low-income students tend to fall behind in reading. Children are also at a higher risk of both obesity and hunger when they are not in school. Summer meals programs, which include the Summer Food Service Program and the National School Lunch Program, can become an important source of nutritious food for children and youth during this time. Summer meals are also an incentive for children to participate in summer enrichment programs, which means that children are not only well-fed, but in a safe environment engaged in academic and recreational activities.

Despite all of the benefits of summer meals programs, they are severely underutilized. Only about 16 percent of low-income students who eat free or reduced-price lunch at school during the year participate in summer meals programs.¹ That means that **14.7 million students who rely on free or reduced-price meals during the school year don't have access to them when school is out.**

¹ *Hunger Doesn't Take A Vacation: Summer Nutrition Status Report 2010*, Food Research and Action Center, Washington, D.C., June 2010. Available at http://frac.org/pdf/summer_report_2010.pdf

There are several reasons for this gap, but they generally fall into two categories: First, communities lack enough accessible summer meals programs and second, families are not aware of the existing programs.

With these challenges in mind, this summer (2010) Share Our Strength worked to increase access to summer meals program in three ways:

- 1) Through our state No Kid Hungry® Campaigns, we partnered with other organizations to launch aggressive summer meals outreach and marketing campaigns. These campaigns each aimed to increase the number of summer meals sites, the number of families that knew how to access the programs, or the number of kids who ate summer meals.
- 2) We provided more than \$500,000 in grants to anti-hunger organizations across the country that were running or starting summer meals programs. We provided money for the vital infrastructure that makes summer meals possible.
- 3) We raised awareness about the importance of summer meals through our Web site (Strength.org), blog (Strength.org/blog) and social marketing efforts.

This report provides more details about the summer meals program and how Share Our Strength and our partners are successfully tackling summer hunger.

**THESE EFFORTS PAID OFF.
DURING SUMMER 2010:**

- **COLORADO** served 202,962 more meals than in 2009, an increase of 26.4 percent.
- **ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA** had a 33 percent increase in the number of children served over 2009; 2,400 additional children ate free summer meals.
- **IN MARYLAND**, the average daily attendance at summer meals sites was 10 percent higher than in 2009—almost 90,000 kids and youth ate a free summer meal each day compared to fewer than 81,000 the year before.
- **IN WASHINGTON STATE**, 1,000 more children received free summer meals than the year before.



SCHOOL'S END SIGNALS LOSS OF NUTRITIOUS MEALS FOR MILLIONS OF CHILDREN

For many kids, summer vacation is a much deserved reward for a year of hard work in the classroom. For some who rely on free and reduced-price school meals, however, the summer months can be difficult. When school is out, these kids no longer have access to school meals and their families' budgets are often stretched to the breaking point. In fact, studies show that kids are at a higher risk for both obesity and hunger during the summer months. Many families also face the stress of providing safe, supervised and affordable places for kids and teens to socialize, play and continue to learn.

It doesn't have to be this way. Summer meals programs, which include the Summer Food Service Program and the National School Lunch Program, help kids who rely on free and reduced-price school meals to continue receiving healthy food during the summer. Summer meals programs are funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA); administered by state agencies, such as state departments of education; and run by public and private organizations, including schools, community centers and faith-based organizations.

Summer meals programs can provide an important source of nutritious food for America's youth during the critical summer months. The availability of free meals is also an incentive for children to participate in summer enrichment programs, which means that children are not only well-fed, but in a safe environment engaged in educational and recreational activities that can, in turn, help return them to school ready to learn.

Despite all of the benefits of summer meals programs, they are severely underutilized. Only about 16 percent of kids who eat free or reduced-price school meals also receive meals during the summer.² That means that **14.7 million students who rely on free or reduced-price meals during the school year do not have access to them when school is out.** Share Our Strength is working to change this by investing in summer meals programs in communities across the country.

² *Hunger Doesn't Take A Vacation: Summer Nutrition Status Report 2010*, Food Research and Action Center, Washington, D.C., June 2010. Available at http://frac.org/pdf/summer_report_2010.pdf

A young girl with long dark hair is smiling warmly at the camera. She is holding a variety of fresh vegetables in her hands, including broccoli, asparagus, carrots, and a small ear of corn. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with greenery and a wooden fence. A vertical orange bar is on the right side of the image.

14.7 MILLION STUDENTS WHO RELY ON FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE MEALS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THEM WHEN SCHOOL IS OUT.

SHARE OUR STRENGTH INVESTMENTS INCREASE ACCESS

There are several reasons why so few kids participate in summer meals programs, but they generally fall into two categories: First, communities lack enough accessible summer meals programs and second, families are not aware of the existing programs.

Additionally, federal guidelines make it difficult for summer meals sites to operate in some areas. For example, a site can participate in the summer meals program without individually documenting each child's household income if at least 50 percent of the area's children are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. Many needy areas—particularly in rural communities—do not meet the 50 percent threshold but still have a large proportion of low-income children who rely on free or reduced-price meals during the school year.

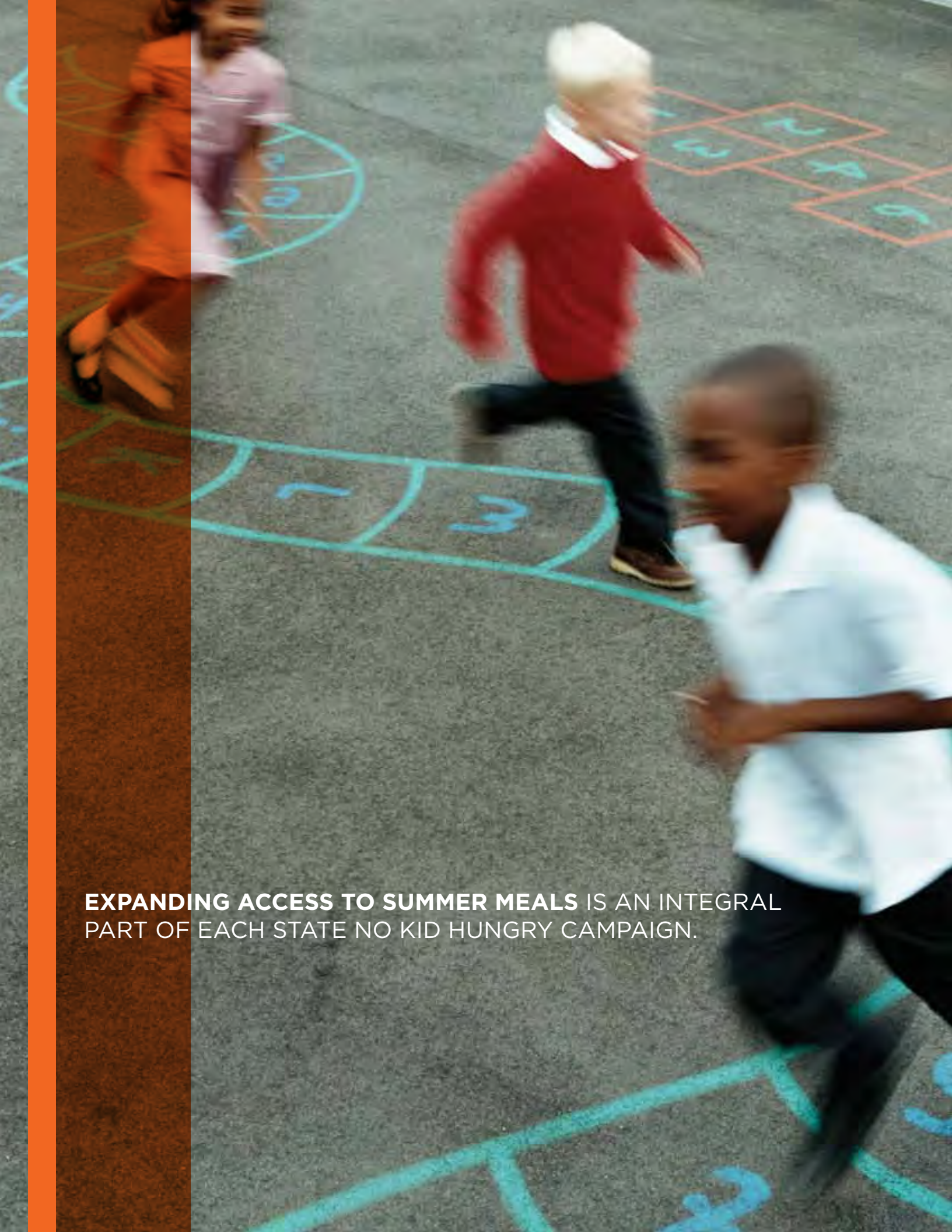
There are also limitations on what federal funding can cover. Federal reimbursements pay for meals but quite often organizations need additional support to make the program work. For example, they often need help with marketing and outreach, staffing costs, transportation to get the children to the meals, refrigerated trucks to bring the meals to the kids, and purchasing refrigerators or coolers and cooking equipment to store and prepare meals. Summer meals programs also need additional investments to improve meal quality to make sure kids are getting *nutritious* food, not just *enough* food.

The extent to which organizations market summer meals programs varies tremendously across localities and states. Because summer meals programs typically have very limited resources for marketing, many families and youth do not know they are available or how to find a program near them.

With these challenges in mind, this summer (2010) Share Our Strength worked to increase access to summer meals program in three ways:

- Through our state No Kid Hungry Campaigns, we partnered with other organizations to launch aggressive summer meals outreach and marketing campaigns. These campaigns aimed to increase the number of summer meals sites, the number of families that knew how to access the programs, or the number of kids who ate summer meals.
- We funded anti-hunger organizations across the country that were running or starting summer meals programs. We provided money for the vital infrastructure that makes summer meals possible.
- We raised awareness about the importance of summer meals through our Web site (Strength.org), blog (Strength.org/blog) and social marketing efforts.





EXPANDING ACCESS TO SUMMER MEALS IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF EACH STATE NO KID HUNGRY CAMPAIGN.

NO KID HUNGRY CAMPAIGNS LAUNCH SUMMER MEALS OUTREACH AND MARKETING EFFORTS

Share Our Strength is launching No Kid Hungry Campaigns—public-private partnerships—in states and cities to develop and implement comprehensive plans to end childhood hunger. A No Kid Hungry Campaign brings together private funders, public officials and nonprofit organizations to create a campaign plan, with measurable goals, to end childhood hunger in a particular state or locality. Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry Campaigns seek to include governors and mayors, nonprofit partners, those who have experienced hunger, state agency leaders, private funders, and the culinary, business and faith-based communities. During summer 2010, we had active partnerships to end childhood hunger in four states: Washington, Maryland, Colorado and Florida.³

Expanding access to summer meals is an integral part of each state No Kid Hungry Campaign. In 2010, each state partnership launched a summer meals campaign to focus on marketing and outreach for summer meals as well as increasing the number of available meals sites. The summer meals campaigns continue to succeed by drawing from the expertise of existing local coalitions, leveraging multiple sources of funding, and coordinating work among related initiatives to make sure kids have access to healthy meals all year long.

³ Since summer 2010, Share Our Strength has partnered with lead nonprofit organizations and policymakers to launch No Kid Hungry Campaigns in Arkansas, Connecticut, Los Angeles, Greater New Orleans, New Mexico, and New York City. Share Our Strength also has a partnership to end childhood hunger in Washington, D.C.

CAMPAIGN TO END CHILDHOOD HUNGER IN COLORADO CELEBRATES RECORD NUMBER OF SUMMER MEALS

In November 2009, Governor Bill Ritter signed an Executive Order creating the Campaign to End Childhood Hunger in Colorado. The campaign, a collaboration of the Governor's Office, Share Our Strength, and Hunger Free Colorado, is spearheading the effort to end childhood hunger in Colorado by 2015. The campaign identified increasing access to summer meals as one of its top three priorities for the first year. In 2009, only six children ate summer meals for every 100 who ate a school lunch, a statistic that ranked Colorado 47th out of all states for participation in summer meals programs.

In 2010, the campaign launched a summer meals outreach campaign with the goal of serving summer meals to 10,000 more children than the previous summer. To increase access to meals across the state, the campaign concentrated on increasing the number of summer meals sites and building awareness of summer meals through intensified outreach.



Business cards in English and Spanish

INCREASING PUBLIC AWARENESS

Marketing and outreach activities included:

- A new Web site *SummerFoodColorado.org* with a unique mapping feature to help families locate summer meals close to their homes and downloadable promotional materials available for all summer meals sites to customize. Materials included business cards, posters and yard signs.
- A bilingual Summer Meals Hotline to help families find their closest summer meals sites.
- Outreach materials with program information such as a postcard sent home with every student across the state and business cards sent to organizations that serve low-income populations.
- Automated calls recorded by the governor that directed families to the Summer Meals Hotline and Web site.

OPENING ADDITIONAL SITES

To reach its goal, the campaign focused on opening additional summer meals sites in underserved areas. The campaign mapped summer meals sites across the state to identify gaps in services, conducted grassroots outreach to recruit additional sites and sponsors, and provided financial support to sites that were starting or expanding summer meals programs.

Several factors contributed to the campaign's success:

- The state provided grants using federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) emergency funds and community block grant monies to support summer meals sites. Colorado was one of only four states that used federal TANF funds to expand access to summer meals.
- Share Our Strength provided start-up grants to organizations opening new summer meals programs.
- The Food Bank of the Rockies secured a waiver from USDA to increase the number of sites they sponsored in 2010. USDA requires that private nonprofit summer meals sponsors such as the food bank serve no more than 25 summer meals sites unless they receive a waiver.

As a result of these efforts, the campaign increased the number of summer meals sponsors from 55 to 63 and opened 106 more sites, a 52 percent increase from 2009. The impact was immediate. **By the end of the summer, schools, agencies and public and private organizations had served almost a million free summer meals, an increase of over 26 percent from 2009.**⁴

In 2010, 309 sites provided free summer meals to children throughout Colorado—106 more sites than in 2009. One of these new sites was in the rural eastern plains. On the site's opening day, the site manager expected 30 children. Instead, 60 showed up, including two children who had walked eight miles with their mother to reach the site.



Governor Ritter celebrates summer meals

⁴ In 2010, the SFSP served 970,854 summer meals compared to 767,892 in 2009.

FLORIDA PARTNERSHIP TO END CHILDHOOD HUNGER TARGETS SUMMER HUNGER IN ORLANDO AND PALM BEACH COUNTY

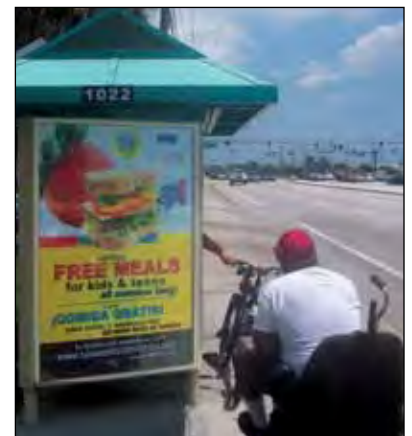
The Florida Partnership to End Childhood Hunger is an initiative of Florida Impact and Share Our Strength, and brings some 50 organizations together to end childhood hunger in the state. Expanding access to summer meals is an integral part of the partnership's strategy.

Florida Impact has a long history of working to improve access to summer meals. In 2005 the Summer Food Service Program was only reaching a tenth of Florida's children in low-income families. That left the great majority of the state's 1.2 million school-aged children who depend on free or reduced-price school meals at risk of hunger over the summer break. With significant input from Florida Impact and its partners, the Florida Legislature mandated summer meals programs in all elementary school zones that serve low-income neighborhoods. Thanks to this legislation, the total number of summer meals served increased 15 percent statewide in just one year, feeding an additional 21,000 children. **By 2006, all 68 counties had a summer meals sites, up from 30 in 2004.**

Despite this good work, by 2008, still only about 12 percent of children eligible for free and reduced-price school meals in Florida were participating in summer meals programs. Though the number of summer meals programs had increased, the partnership believed that without an aggressive, targeted marketing campaign, many children would not know there were programs to help them during the summer. In 2009, the partnership responded by piloting an extensive summer meals outreach campaign in the Orlando area. The Florida Dairy Farmers, Inc., Publix Supermarkets and the Orlando Magic joined in to help.

Outreach and marketing efforts included:

- Development of a user-friendly Web site *SummerFoodFlorida.org* that linked to the Department of Education's searchable database of summer meals programs.
- A television commercial featuring Orlando Magic player Rashard Lewis.
- Bilingual summer meals business cards distributed to county workforce and food stamp/Medicaid offices, county health/WIC departments, and the local food bank for distribution to clients.
- Signs advertising the summer meals program in grocery stores and bus shelters in high-needs areas.



Bus shelter advertising

All 2009 outreach materials directed people to the Summer Food Florida Web site *SummerFoodFlorida.org* where families could get more information about summer meals sites near them. **The pilot marketing campaign succeeded in increasing access to summer meals for thousands more children. In Orange County alone:**

- Organizations served more than 140,000 *additional* meals in 2009, a 16 percent increase over the previous summer.
- Federal reimbursement funding jumped by 25 percent — representing nearly \$450,000 more federal dollars than the previous year.
- More than 7,000 hits to the summer food Web site

In 2010, the Florida Partnership to End Childhood Hunger repeated efforts in Orange County and expanded to Palm Beach County. It reached out to families who applied for unemployment insurance; aired new public service announcements (PSAs) featuring Anquan Boldin, an NFL player from Pahokee, Florida, and a Spanish PSA featuring Orlando Magic announcer Joey Colon; doubled the number of bilingual business cards sent to agencies serving low-income populations; and continued to operate a toll-free summer meals hotline and Web site to connect families to summer meals. Share Our Strength underwrote paid airtime for the 30-second Boldin PSA.

In 2009, the partnership had identified several communities that were underserved by summer meals programs. Among these were Apopka, Ocoee and Winter Garden where, in 2010, Florida Partnership leaders opened five new summer meals sites.

In 2010, summer meals programs brought \$3.6 million in federal reimbursements into the two targeted counties, including almost a half a million more dollars in reimbursement in Orange County than in 2008. Orange County also saw a 33 percent increase in the number of children served over 2009, meaning that 2,400 more low-income children ate free summer meals. Sites increased the number of meals served in both counties over 2009 (54,000 more lunches and 70,000 more breakfasts), and the increased marketing and outreach led to increased traffic to the summer meals Web site: 7,300 first-time visitors in 2010.

SUMMER MEALS IN 2010

- **ORANGE AND PALM BEACH COUNTIES RECEIVED \$3.6 MILLION** in federal reimbursements through the programs, including almost \$500,000 more for Orange County alone than in 2008.
- **ORANGE COUNTY SERVED 2,400 MORE CHILDREN** than in 2009, a 33 percent increase.
- **BOTH COUNTIES SERVED MORE MEALS** than in 2009: 54,000 more lunches and 70,000 more breakfasts.
- **INCREASED MARKETING AND OUTREACH** drove 7,300 first-time visitors to the summer meals Web site.



Sample of English summer meals business cards, Spanish versions were also created

PARTNERSHIP TO END CHILDHOOD HUNGER IN MARYLAND STEPS UP SUMMER MEALS OUTREACH EFFORTS

The Partnership to End Childhood Hunger in Maryland is a collaboration of Share Our Strength and the Maryland Governor's Office for Children. They are joined by multiple private and public organizations who are working together to end childhood hunger in the state by 2015. The partnership, which Governor Martin O'Malley launched in November 2008, continues to make strides in the fight to end childhood hunger in Maryland each year.⁵ Increasing participation in summer meals is one of the six program goals in the partnership's plans.

In 2009, the Maryland Partnership to End Childhood Hunger, with support from Share Our Strength and the Sodexo Foundation, conducted a pilot outreach program in three counties, distributing backpack postcards that promoted the summer meals program to every public school student. Statewide, organizations served more than 250,000 additional meals in 2009, an 11 percent increase over summer 2008. A large majority of those meals (212,000 or 84 percent) were served in the three pilot counties. While there was a decline in the number of children participating in summer meals *nationally*, Maryland had the second largest increase in the country, serving 17.4 percent more kids in 2009 compared to 2008.⁶

In summer 2010, the Partnership to End Childhood Hunger in Maryland worked hard to maintain its momentum. It expanded its pilot program to target children in 17 counties plus the City of Baltimore. The campaign was designed to promote awareness and drive traffic to the summer meals hotline or Web site where parents could be connected to the meals sites closest to them. The partnership intensified its use of both paid and earned media in English and Spanish. Governor Martin O'Malley offered his voice and his support in a PSA to spread the word about the availability and importance of summer meals. Other PSAs included Baltimore Mayor Rawlings-Blake, Baltimore radio personality Kiki Brown, Rosemary King Johnston from the Governor's Office of Children, and Luisa Montero Diaz from the Maryland Multicultural Youth Center.

⁵ See www.nokidhungryMD.org for more information.

⁶ *Hunger Doesn't Take A Vacation: Summer Nutrition Status Report 2010*, Food Research and Action Center, Washington, D.C., June 2010. Available at http://frac.org/pdf/summer_report_2010.pdf



**IN 2010, ALMOST 90,000 KIDS AND YOUTH IN MARYLAND
ATE A FREE SUMMER MEAL EACH DAY.**

THE CAMPAIGN ALSO INCLUDED:

Printed Outreach Materials

- Ads and promotional posters.
- Hanging outdoor banners at select meals sites.
- Billboards and ads on public transportation (buses).
- Bilingual postcards given to schools to place in kids' backpacks at the end of the school year.
- Bilingual business cards with information about summer meals programs and a toll-free hotline to find the closest summer meals sites.



Bilingual summer meals postcard

Interactive Outreach

- A toll-free summer meals hotline to find the closest summer meals sites.
- Automated calls to households with children in the City of Baltimore and Prince George's County to let them know about summer meals.
- Partnership Web site.

Media Outreach

- Extensive earned media radio and newspaper interviews about summer meals.
- Radio PSAs featuring local personalities.
- Paid radio ads in the state's two biggest media markets.

Share Our Strength also provided grants to organizations in Baltimore that allowed them to purchase coolers, recycling bins and equipment for their summer meals programs.

Extended outreach increased participation at summer meals sites across the state. In 2010, the average daily attendance at summer meals sites was 10 percent higher than in 2009—almost 90,000 kids and youth ate a free summer meal each day compared to fewer than 81,000 the year before. The increase in June and August, when summer meals programs are scarce, was particularly impressive: **The average daily attendance was 36 percent higher in June 2010 compared to June 2009 and 45 percent higher in August 2010 than in August 2009.**

In July, Maryland experienced a severe heat wave with numerous code red days which forced many camps and summer programs to close for days. In Baltimore for instance, there were 17 code red days declared and the Baltimore City Housing Department, which administers the summer meals program, estimated they lost more than 65,400 meals due to the extreme heat. In comparison, they served nearly 23 percent more meals in August 2010 than the previous year. There is no doubt that the extreme heat was a significant factor in holding down the total number of meals served to below 2009 levels, even though daily participation increased.

While there was a decline in the number of children participating in summer meals nationally, Maryland had the second largest increase in the country, serving 17.4 percent more kids in 2009 compared to 2008.



END CHILDHOOD HUNGER WASHINGTON CURBS DECLINING PARTICIPATION IN SUMMER MEALS

End Childhood Hunger Washington brings together a network of public and private organizations with interest in ending childhood hunger and is led by the Children's Alliance and Share Our Strength. In 2008, End Childhood Hunger Washington drafted a blueprint to end childhood hunger in Washington by 2015. Because summer meal participation has been historically very low in the state, expanding access to summer meals for kids is a core goal of the plan. In Washington, only 11 children eat a free summer meal for every 100 who eat a free or reduced-price school lunch. In 2009, the partnership set a two-year goal to raise participation in summer meals programs from 11 percent to 20 percent of low-income kids eating school lunches.

Working toward this goal, End Childhood Hunger Washington began convening a Summer Meals Workgroup in fall of 2009. The Workgroup, which included key nonprofit organizations and the state Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Child Nutrition Services, met regularly to ensure there were more summer meals sites in vulnerable communities. Despite the fact that many summer programs were scaling back or not operating in 2009, the efforts paid off. Thirty additional sites offered free summer meals to Washington children in 2010 compared to 2009, bringing the total to 753.

The Workgroup also implemented several strategies to spread the word about free summer meals. With partners including the Washington Dairy Council, Within Reach and OSPI, **End Childhood Hunger Washington promoted summer meals by:**

- Placing messages about summer meals availability on and inside food bank bags during the last weeks of school.
- Providing a summer meals location reminder template for school districts to customize and print on the back of lunch menus during the last week of school.



*Photos from left to right:
Representative Rick Larsen
serving kids at a summer meals
sites in Monroe, Washington*

*Representative Jim McDermott
at Seattle Summer Sack
Lunch Program*



- Using the Washington Family Food Hotline to promote summer meals when families call in looking for help.
- Creating a Summer Meals Sites Finder tool on www.ParentHelp123.org, a Web site that offers help to families in need.
- Printing banners for all summer meals sites.
- Conducting outreach for summer meals with Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and Medicaid participants by placing inserts into WIC check packages and Medicaid mailings.
- Partnering with the Washington Dairy Farmers to place summer meals taglines on the association's summer ads.

End Childhood Hunger Washington also published a summer meals report that documented food insecurity and participation in summer meals programs by county, shared stories from programs around the state, and identified ways that different stakeholders can get involved in improving summer meals.

End Childhood Hunger Washington has also been a strong voice advocating for the use of state funds to keep summer sites open and to leverage federal funds that would otherwise go unused by the state.

In addition, Share Our Strength supported Feed Your Brain, a collaborative project of the Children's Alliance, the Discuren Foundation and School's Out Washington. Feed Your Brain provides funding for literacy programs that serve as summer meals sites in rural communities across the state. In 2010, 17 programs each received \$5,000 to support their summer effort.

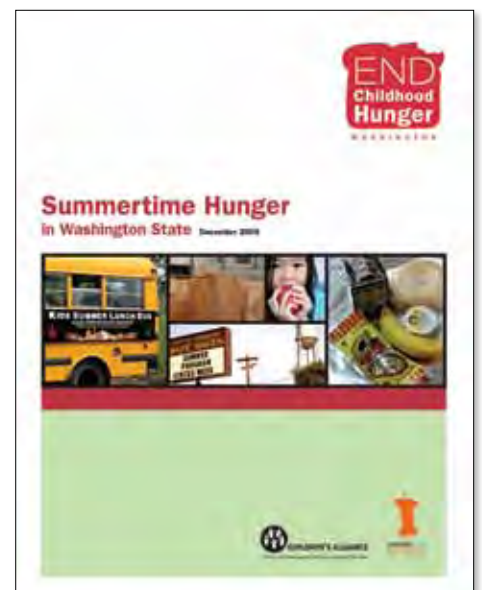
In 2010, a year in which school and community budgets were hurting, 1,000 more children received free summer meals in Washington than the year before. For the 35,000 kids who participated in Washington state's summer meals programs, the 1.5 million meals they received meant more than ever.

MOVING FORWARD IN WASHINGTON

Share Our Strength is investing in a year-round Washington summer meals coordinator. This will ensure:

- Strong summer meals **SPONSORS**
- **MORE SITES** open to serve more kids
- Comprehensive **MARKETING AND OUTREACH** for 2011 summer programs.

Recruitment of new sites and sponsors is already underway in rural and urban communities and United Ways are joining to provide additional resources and connections. Together, the partners in End Childhood Hunger Washington intend to bring more meals to more kids in 2011.



Washington Summer Meals Report



**SHARE OUR STRENGTH GRANTED OVER \$500,000 TO
MORE THAN 50 ORGANIZATIONS TO IMPROVE ACCESS
TO SUMMER MEALS.**

INVESTING IN COMMUNITIES TO ENSURE ACCESS TO SUMMER MEALS

While we supported comprehensive efforts to increase summer meals at the state level, Share Our Strength also invested in community-level programs across the country. In summer 2010, Share Our Strength granted over \$500,000 to more than 50 organizations to improve access to summer meals. Grantees put the funding to good use by hiring new staff members, investing in much needed infrastructure, creating and distributing marketing materials, and expanding their services to reach more hungry kids. For many kids, this investment meant the difference between going hungry and eating nutritious meals last summer.

In many areas of the country where there are numerous families with kids who need summer meals, there are just not enough sites to feed them. Existing programs often would like to expand to serve more kids but lack the necessary funding. The economic crisis has also led to shrinking state and nonprofit budgets which have in turn led to a decrease in the number of summer meals sites. In 2010, organizations and schools in some areas decided to shorten or not to offer summer programming.

HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF HOW SHARE OUR STRENGTH IS INVESTING IN SOLUTIONS TO EXPAND ACCESS TO THE SUMMER MEALS PROGRAMS.

- **Building organizational capacity and infrastructure.** Share Our Strength grants enabled The Familia Center in Santa Cruz, California to hire additional youth program coordinators and America's Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia expanded its summer meal service to three additional rural communities.
- **Investing in outreach.** Organizations including Island Harvest in Mineola, New York, the Kansas Food Bank in Wichita, and the East Boston YMCA have used Share Our Strength funding to help produce or distribute flyers, brochures, banners and other advertising and outreach to increase awareness of summer meals programs.
- **Supporting innovation.** Share Our Strength invested in innovative efforts to connect children with meals during the summer. For example, thanks to grants from Share Our Strength, the New York City public school system leased a mobile summer meals van and the nonprofit Of One Accord was able to feed children in a mobile meals café.

Successful summer meals sites are never one size fits all. They work best when they meet the specific needs of the communities they serve. Likewise, the barriers look different in urban and rural areas, small communities and large. **But the ultimate challenge is the same everywhere: more than 80 percent of kids who depend on free and reduced-price school meals during the school year are not getting meals in the summer.** Share Our Strength and our partners are hard at work to change this and to ensure that children have access to healthy food all year long, where they live, learn and play.



*Summer meals truck,
New York City*

BRINGING MEALS TO KIDS IN NYC

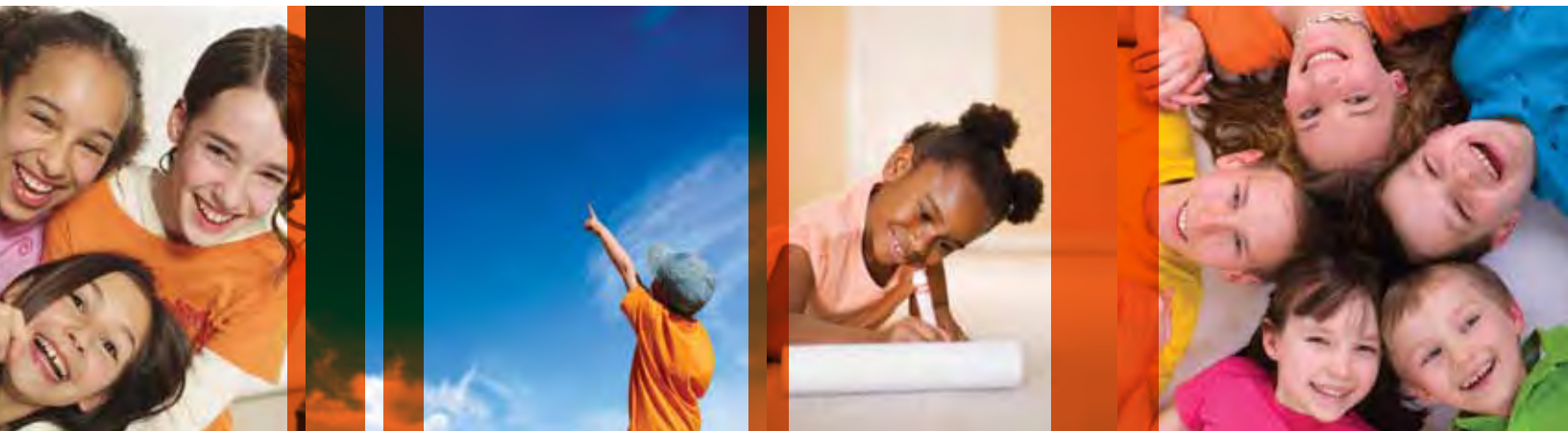
Lack of transportation or safe routes for kids to get to meals sites are barriers that often keep kids from eating summer meals in New York City. Last summer, Share Our Strength partnered with SchoolFood (the largest school food service provider in the country) and the New York City Department of Education to start a mobile summer meals truck. The truck operated much like an ice cream truck, bringing nutritious meals to about 500 kids every day where they gather during the summer: in parks, on beaches and playgrounds.

*The Lunch
Box mobile
cafeteria,
Tennessee*



MAKING SUMMER MEALS WORK IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

In rural Tennessee, transportation is a daily challenge for many families. Share Our Strength supports the work of Of One Accord, an organization bringing summer meals to kids via “The Lunch Box,” a mobile cafeteria that takes meals directly to kids at parks, public pools and trailer home communities. “The Lunch Box” is a converted school bus that provides seating inside where children can eat meals together.



RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT SUMMER HUNGER AND SHARING OUR STRENGTH

Building on the work we have done to expand access to summer meals in past years, Share Our Strength launched a comprehensive social media strategy to support summer meals and engage our network in the process. This summer we unveiled a brand new Summer Meals Web page (http://join.strength.org/site/PageNavigator/SOS/2010_SOS_SummerMeals) that helps families find meals in their communities and features ways for everyone to help spread the word about the program. We also shared first-hand accounts of our work in action across the country on the No Kid Hungry Blog (Strength.org/blog) throughout the summer. **Expanding access to summer meals is not an easy task, but we are working with partners, sharing our strengths and making great progress to ensure that kids don't go hungry during the summer.**



Summer meals Web page on Strength.org



Summer meals blog posts on Strength.org/blog



A VISIT TO LIGHT OF THE VILLAGE IN
ALABAMA VILLAGE

As I peeled an orange for a little girl sitting at a picnic table in the colorful yard outside the center, I tried to make conversation with her. I asked what she usually ate for dinner. She looked at me with a confused look and with an expression indicating that she thought I was a bit clueless, and simply said, “*This.*” It was as if she was saying, “This food I’m eating at 12:30 in the afternoon is my *dinner*. What else would it be?”

- An excerpt from the Strength.org summer meals blog post.



SHARE OUR
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NO KID HUNGRY

NO KID HUNGRY



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