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Free Summer Meal Sites Available for Children 18 and Younger

Second Harvest's summer meals locator tool makes it easy for families to find a convenient meal location close to home

Highlights:

- Free summer meals are now available and any child who is 18 or younger can get a nutritious meal at more than 70 sites in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties – no registration is required.
- At some sites, parents and guardians are also eligible to receive low to no-cost meals to eat alongside their children.
- Second Harvest's online locator tool makes it easier than ever to find a convenient summer meals site. Visit <https://www.shfb.org/mealsforkids>.
- For additional help finding a summer meals site, text "Summer" for English, "Verano" for Spanish, "Muahe" for Vietnamese, "夏天" for Chinese or "Лето" for Russian to 876-876 or visit www.shfb.org/getfood.

SAN JOSE, Calif., June 16, 2023 – During the summer months, thousands of low-income children in our community face increased risk of hunger when they lose access to the free meals they receive during the school year. With food insecurity on the rise again due to the end of pandemic-era CalFresh benefits, layoffs, as well as record-high housing and food prices, Second Harvest of Silicon Valley is working to raise awareness of the federally-funded summer meals program so every child who needs a nutritious meal can receive one.

Any child 18 or younger can get a free nutritious meal at summer meal sites in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties with no advance registration or documentation required. Select locations will additionally offer free breakfast and afternoon snacks for children. The food bank is collaborating with school districts, libraries, community centers, summer camps, social service organizations and other nonprofits to promote the meals being served at their sites from June until the second week of August. This year, meals must be eaten on site.

To make it easy for families to find a summer meals location near them, Second Harvest has launched a free summer meals locator tool on its website. Families can go to www.shfb.org/mealsforkids/ and enter their address, city or zip code. A map with icons will show the closest summer meals sites with real-time updates to reflect schedule changes. When users click on the icon, they see location details, meal times and contact information. At some sites, parents and guardians are also eligible to receive low to no-cost meals to eat alongside their children.

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“Free summer meals are especially important during this time of increased need in our community when we see more families tightening their food budgets in response to inflation, rising food costs and recent cuts to their CalFresh benefits,” said Leslie Bacho, CEO of Second Harvest. “Many of the most vulnerable members of our community, including the 1 in 3 kids in Silicon Valley who are at risk of food insecurity, are being impacted by economic and policy changes that are outside of their control and we want to do everything we can to ensure they have the nutritious food they need to grow and thrive during the summer and all year around.”

Summer meals help kids thrive

Summer meals are important because [studies](#) show that kids who don’t get enough nutritious food to eat have trouble concentrating, are sick more often, and are more likely to suffer emotional and physical effects that can last a lifetime. They are also at risk for what educators call the “summer slide,” where students lose ground academically when they are not in school.

The federally funded [Summer Food Service Program](#) is designed to replace school breakfast and lunch, filling a nutrition gap that exists for thousands of children during the summer. Funded through the USDA Food and Nutrition Service and administered by the state, the Summer Food Service Program reimburses lunch providers like schools, libraries and summer camps that serve free healthy meals and snacks to children and teens in low-income areas.

For more information about free summer meals or food assistance:

In addition to the summer meals locator tool online, families who need help finding a site serving summer meals near them can text “Summer” for English, “Verano” for Spanish, “Muahe” for Vietnamese, “夏天” for Chinese or “Лето” for Russian to 876-876. For help accessing other food resources and assistance, call Second Harvest’s multilingual Food Connection hotline at 800-984-3663 or visit www.shfb.org/getfood to use the Food Locator tool to find free grocery sites.

About Second Harvest of Silicon Valley

Founded in 1974, Second Harvest of Silicon Valley is one of the largest food banks in the nation and a trusted nonprofit leader in ending local hunger. The organization distributes nutritious groceries through a network of nearly 400 partners at drive-thru and walk-up sites across Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. Due to the prohibitively expensive cost of living in Silicon Valley, the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the rise in inflation, Second Harvest is now serving an average of 460,000 people every month. Second Harvest also connects people to federal nutrition programs and other food resources, and advocates for anti-hunger policies on the local, state and national levels. To learn more about how Second Harvest is responding to the incredible amount of need in Silicon Valley, visit shfb.org.

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