



*...because no one should be hungry*

# NEWS

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## **Spring Break lunch program to aid local children in need**

Children throughout Marion and Polk counties will be on Spring Break during the final days of March. For some, the break from school may also mean a break from receiving free and low-cost nutritious meals at school. To reduce impact of food scarcity and underscore the SuperFunHappyBreakTime theme, the program will offer free lunch and activities to all children ages 1 to 18.

A community volunteer team from Marion-Polk Food Share is once again coordinating the No Hungry Child Spring Break program, which will take place at 46 sites in Marion and Polk counties. In addition to serving an expected 9,000 meals, thousands of books will be distributed and each lunch site will conduct children's activities. Last year, 8,422 meals were served.

From noon to 1 p.m. March 24-28, 5 sites in Polk County and 41 sites in Marion County will offer a nutritious lunch for free. No registration is required. SuperFunHappyBreakTime distribution

sites will be at area schools, churches, Boys & Girls clubs, apartment complexes, Jefferson Library and Rivenes Park.

The lunch program will take place at sites in Salem, Keizer, Silverton, Scotts Mills, Mt. Angel, Aumsville, Jefferson, Stayton, Hubbard, Brooks, Woodburn, Gervais, Dallas, Falls City and Independence. *(See attached list for specific sites.)*

“We want every child to have a good Spring Break experience that feeds their minds and their bodies,” said volunteer program coordinator Cheryl Wells. “We’re making special efforts this year to make sure every child gets a book every day and has an opportunity to do gardening or crafts activities that reinforce healthy living.”

We know there’s a need because the regional food bank network is currently serving about 16,000 children each month through their emergency food box program. Also, nearly 40,000 children are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch at their schools in our two-county service area.”

SuperFunHappyBreakTime is sponsored by Marion-Polk Food Share, Salem-Keizer Schools Child and Adult Care Food Program, Salem-Keizer Education Foundation, Boys and Girls Club of Salem, Marion and Polk Counties, Salem Housing Authority, Food and Nutrition Services for the Central, Dallas, North Marion and Woodburn school districts, Polk County Service Integration Team and other community partners.

For more information or to donate to this program, call Marion-Polk Food Share, 503-581-3855.

## **FAST FACTS ABOUT LOCAL CHILDHOOD HUNGER**

- In Marion County, 35,532 school-age children are eligible for the federal free or reduced-price lunch program, that’s 58.7% of all enrolled students. Of those, 31,112 are eligible for free lunch. *(Source: Oregon Dept. of Education, 2012-13)*

- In Polk County, 53.7% (3,461) of school-age children qualify for the free or reduced-price lunch program, with 3,032 of those meeting requirements for a free lunch. (*Source: Oregon Dept. of Education, 2012-13*)
- Marion-Polk Food Share's hunger-relief network serves an average of 16,000 children each month through emergency food pantries and meal sites.