

**CHANCELLOR WALCOTT, JOINED BY THE NY YANKEES,
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, ELECTED OFFICIALS AND NON-PROFITS,
ENCOURAGES FAMILIES TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE FREE
SUMMER MEALS FOR CHILDREN 18 YEARS AND YOUNGER**

Free Meals Available at More Than 1,000 Pools, Parks, and other locations from June 27 through August 30

Chancellor Dennis M. Walcott, joined by the NY Yankees, government agencies, elected officials and non-profit organizations, today encouraged families to take advantage of free breakfast and lunch for their youngsters as part of the annual summer meals program. Summer meals are provided from June 27 through August 30 in more than 1,000 locations throughout the five boroughs, including schools, pools, parks, libraries, public housing sites and soup kitchens. In addition to these locations, the Department of Education (DOE) is operating mobile refrigerated trucks that provide meals to children at Orchard Beach in the Bronx, Flushing Meadows Park and the Queens Public Library. Last summer, more than 7 million meals were served.

To help promote summer meals, the American Dairy Association has partnered with the NY Yankees, and several Yankee alumni will visit summer meals locations next month. In addition, Share Our Strength, a national non-profit that focuses on eliminating childhood hunger, is helping City agencies and the DOE get the word out that breakfast and lunch are available all summer to children.

“The bottom line is that there’s an obesity epidemic in this city and our children have got to eat healthier meals,” Chancellor Dennis M. Walcott said. “We’re determined to create a sea-change in our students’ eating habits, and that’s not going to stop this summer. Our summer meals program provides children who are 18 years old or younger with free healthy options, and they can enjoy them without interrupting their summer activities. I want to thank all our partners for their efforts in making the summer meals program a success.”

Chancellor Walcott made his comments during a press conference at one of the summer meals locations, M.S. 131 on the Lower East Side. He was joined by NY Yankee In-fielder Jayson Nix, Mayor’s Food Policy Coordinator Kimberly Kessler, Deputy Chancellor of Operations Kathleen Grimm, Share Our Strength Chief Strategy Officer Josh Wachs, American Dairy Association Vice President of School Marketing Andrea Thompson, City Council Members Robert Jackson and Margaret Chin, First Vice President of the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators Randi Herman, and New York City Coalition Against Hunger Director Joshua Ankerberg.

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Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 25, 2013
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“Since Share our Strength began our involvement in New York we have seen major growth in the summer meals program, but there is still work to do to make sure no child goes hungry in this City,” said Share Our Strength Chief Strategy Officer Josh Wachs. “We are proud to stand with our partners and the DOE to make sure every child knows that free, healthy meals are available to them.”

“The American Dairy Association is working with Yankees to raise awareness of the summer meals program by having alumni players visit sites in July,” said American Dairy Association Vice President of School Marketing Andrea Thompson. “Players will have lunch with kids and hold drawings for Yankee merchandise and game tickets to reward families for making healthy choices. Dates and locations of visits will be posted on our website at www.adadc.com.”

“Summertime shouldn't be hungry time for our children,” said US Department of Agriculture’s Regional Administrator James Arena-DeRosa. “The Summer Food Service Program provides free nutritious meals to low-income children when the school doors close. Just as learning does not end when school lets out, neither does the need for healthy food.”

“The Summer Meals Program is an invaluable resource for children throughout our city,” State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver said. “By providing healthy, nutritious meals at no cost, the Department of Education is helping kids stay healthy and providing much-needed relief to hard-working families. I encourage families throughout my Lower Manhattan community to take advantage of this excellent program. I want thank Chancellor Walcott for his commitment to our city’s children.”

“My office, in partnership with City agencies and community stakeholders, works hard to promote this important program and ensure that all children have access to healthy, nutritious foods throughout the summer,” said Food Policy Coordinator Kimberly Kessler. “Working with stakeholders to promote this program has resulted in increased participation, a trend we aim to continue for the thousands of children who rely on the ability to receive a free, healthy breakfast and lunch after the end of the school year.”

“We want to make sure youngsters maintain a healthy lifestyle during the summer months, and what better way than through free breakfast and lunch that meet our nutritional standards and are low in fat and sodium,” Deputy Chancellor of Operations Kathleen Grimm said.

“The students at MS 131 enjoy the meals during the year and also enjoy them in the summer,” Principal Phyllis Tam said. “The summer meals program also brings our community closer together.”

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“Free summer meals ensure that children have access to healthy and nutritious food even when the school year is over for most students,” said City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn. “I want to thank the Department of Education, as well as all partnering city agencies and non-profit organizations that have worked to promote summer meals, and together, we will continue providing children with free and healthy meals. This program is a vital component to combating hunger and helping our students remain healthy and active throughout the summer.”

“As the school year ends, the need for access to free nutritional meals continues,” City Council Member Robert Jackson, who is chair of the Council Education Committee. “On behalf of the many children around the city who need a solid breakfast to kick start their day and a balanced meal at lunchtime to keep their engine going, I thank the DOE for offering schools as a nutritional hub. This is a great program that supports parents and local youth groups during the summer months.”

“While students may be on vacation, skyrocketing rates of heart disease and obesity are on the move, and the need for more wholesome meal options is apparent now more than ever,” said Council Member Margaret Chin. “New York City’s Summer Meals Program seeks to encourage healthy eating habits in children at an early age, laying the foundations for a health-conscious lifestyle. By providing nutritious options to parents and children, the Summer Meals Program takes a bite out of malnutrition in New York City.”

“Thousands of children become disengaged from their studies due to hunger,” Randi Herman, First Vice President of Council of School Supervisors and Administrators. “By offering children summer meals, we are providing students with an important source of nutrition and an incentive to participate in recreational and academic summer programs. Hopefully, in the near future we can offer free meals to all students year-round.”

“Summer meals are vital to ensuring that low-income children receive adequate nutrition in the summer months,” said New York City Coalition Against Hunger Executive Director Joel Berg. “We must increase the usage of federally-funded summer meals for low-income students. I encourage those interested to visit <http://www.nyccah.org/summermeals> for a map of summer meals sites across the city.”

To find a location nearby, parents can call 311, log onto the DOE’s homepage, schools.nyc.gov or Share Our Strength’s website, or contact NYCFood at www.nyc.gov/nycfood. Parents also may text “nycmeals to 877877, or visit the Parks Department’s website for locations in parks and pools. Breakfast is served from 8:00 a.m. to 9:15 a.m. and lunch is served from 11:00 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. During the weekends only lunch is served and mobile food trucks are operational

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during weekends only at Flushing Meadows – Corona Park. Weekend lunch hours at pools and parks vary according to individual sites. The DOE’s summer meals program, which is administered by the Office of SchoolFood, has been operating for more than 30 years.

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