



News Release

For Immediate Release
June 11, 2013

Kari Johnson
(559) 600-6251

CENTRAL LIBRARY JOINS THE FIGHT AGAINST SUMMER HUNGER

The Fresno County Public Library is proud to announce that the Central Library will distribute free meals to youth throughout the summer. Weekdays from June 17th to August 9th at the Central Library, anyone—regardless of income—between the ages of 1-18 can eat a healthy lunch for free at the Central Library from 12-1pm. Provided by program sponsor Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission, lunches are available on a first come, first served basis.

The **Lunch at the Library** program, in partnership with the California Library Association and the California Summer Meal Coalition, brings together the Library's longstanding summer reading tradition with a lunchtime meal, in an effort to combat summer learning loss and summer hunger.

Studies show that malnourishment can diminish a child's overall learning potential. Of the Fresno County children who are eligible for free lunches during the school year, just 1 in 10 have access to it during the summer. Add to that the fact that children who don't read over the summer lose on average one month of academic progress. By middle school, those who haven't read during the summer may have lost as much as two years' worth of achievement.

"The *Lunch at the Library* program gives children and teens the physical foundation they need to keep their minds sharp and open to learning, and the summer reading program encourages them use that fueled brainpower," said Laurel Prysiazny, County Librarian. "Together, the programs allow traditionally disadvantaged youth to return to school in the fall at the same or higher level than when summer began. That's a significant achievement."

To supplement the lunch program, the Library sought out and received two grants that will further support Fresno County youth. Fresno State's Humanics Department has awarded the Library \$4,000 and the assistance of a student intern to help with the program. Dollar General has awarded the Library \$1,000. In both cases, the money will be used to give books away to lunch recipients.

For more information, please contact program coordinator Kari Johnson at (559) 600-6251.

###