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Libraries Join the Fight Against Summer Hunger

Partnership Unites Summer Literacy and Summer Meal Programs to Keep Kids Healthy, Engaged

San Mateo, CA, <June 3, 2013> – The California Library Association (CLA) and California Summer Meal Coalition have announced a partnership to bring together library summer literacy programs and summer meals in an effort to combat summer learning loss and summer hunger. The partnership will focus its efforts on libraries in Fresno, Los Angeles, Sacramento and San Diego counties.

In many California communities, school’s closure for the summer break can mean an end to learning or enrichment opportunities and limited access to healthy food, an issue with greatest impact on the state’s low-income children. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers summer nutrition programs to enable school districts, municipalities, tribal governments, and nonprofit organizations to serve free, healthy meals to children and teens in low-income neighborhoods when school is out.

“We need to pay greater attention to summer as it relates to childhood obesity, food insecurity and academic readiness by providing continuous access to healthy food, safe places to play, and learning opportunities so that kids return to school in the fall, healthy and ready to learn,” said Patrice Chamberlain, director of the California Summer Meal Coalition. “This partnership demonstrates how communities can come together to provide kids a summer that nourishes their bodies and minds.”

“Libraries are natural spaces for serving meals to children whose access to lunch disappears when school ends and summer begins,” said Derek Wolfgram, CLA President. “Libraries are community spaces that welcome all and provide free access to resources that support lifelong needs. And public library summer reading programs help prevent summer learning loss in our children and teens.”

Partners:

Fresno County Public Library (Central Branch)	Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission
Los Angeles Public Library (Central Library and Pacoima Branch)	Los Angeles Regional Food Bank
Sacramento Public Library (Valley Hi-North Laguna Branch)	Elk Grove Unified School District
San Diego County Public Library (Vista and Lincoln Acres Branches)	Feeding America San Diego

The California Library Association provides leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library services and librarianship. For more information visit www.cla-net.org. The California Summer Meal Coalition is a statewide network united to combat hunger and obesity by helping California’s children in need gain access to free and healthy meals through the USDA’s summer nutrition programs. For more information visit www.summermealcoalition.org. Support for this project is provided by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.