

Summer Meal Program Kick-Off Event Highlights

Providers across the state get creative to attract families to summer meal programs



Summer meal providers hosted events throughout the state to promote the start of their summer meal programs. Here is a sampling of events that brought together community partners, nutrition education programs, and a host of creative ideas to get their programs off to a great start.

Redwood Empire Food Bank

Redwood Empire Food Bank (REFB) held *five* events—one every day of the second week of the program. With support from [ConAgra Foundation's Hunger-Free Summer](#), events were held at two of REFB park sites, two Boys & Girls Clubs and one

elementary school. Santa Rosa City Schools held barbecues at two of the sites, while the other three served the regular lunch.

REFB also served up nutrition education by partnering with the North Coast region of the *Network for a Healthy California* to provide two hours of fun activities for kids. Stations were set up for kids including a [Rethink Your Drink](#) tasting station with three kinds of flavored water; the Salsa Bike that relied on human pedaling power to make delicious berry smoothies; and a lettuce head creation station in which children made faces for pots, filled them with dirt and planted lettuce seeds to eventually become the "hair". Kids also participated in relay runs and a watermelon-lifting contest. Kaiser Permanente's Nutri-Beast came to one of REFB's sites and hula-hooped with the kids (that couldn't be easy!).

Also contributing to the events' success were the free ads donated by the *Santa Rosa Press-Democrat* newspaper and the many volunteers from the community that helped at the sites.



San Diego Unified School District

Each year, [San Diego Unified School District \(SDUSD\)](#) is joined by other community agencies on the first day of its summer meal program. The event aims to help families in need access healthy food *and* other community resources. This year, Radio Latina was on-site to provide an emcee and all-day music. The San Diego Padres' Pad Squad cheerleaders and Friar mascot came to mingle with the children and lead them in an Instant Recess routine.

The local YMCA lead Zumba and [Let's Move!](#) dances for everyone to jump in and move. The local Girl Scouts and the *Network for Healthy California (Network)* staff worked together to implement a Power Up Your Summer! program. As part of this effort, Girl Scouts have been trained by the *Network* to take nutrition education activities to every barbecue to keep kids

engaged and active.

As motivation to continue to participate in a summer meal program, children who attend three barbecues throughout the summer will receive a patch and a prize. SDUSD credits Girl Scouts as an essential partner for the volunteer resources that it has been able to provide for the program. SDUSD also raffled bikes, helmets, and backpacks for the kids.

The event also offered a mobile clinic to provide immunizations and provide information about healthcare. Other community agencies were onsite to promote dental services and other community resources. Local police and firefighters brought their vehicles for kids to check out while Feeding America, the local food bank and Mother's brought fresh fruit and veggies for families to take home. Feeding America provided oranges for the *Network* to create a drink alternative to soda using oranges and seltzer water.