

Half Moon Bay Review

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Thousands of schoolchildren miss meals

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Posted: Thursday, July 18, 2013 10:36 am

4 comments

How important is lunch? If you skip it, are you able to concentrate over the course of the afternoon? How much do you spend on it? Does it cost you \$5? Or \$10? What if you went all summer without a healthy lunch?

As you read this, there are 19,704 children in San Mateo County who are muddling through without the reliable nutritious lunches they enjoy during the regular school year. And you can bet it weighs on their parents.

Last week, California Food Policy Advocates, an Oakland-based nonprofit that lobbies for greater access to nutritious food for all, released startling figures on the number of children across the state who may be going without this summer. It reports that 2.1 million children from low-income families in California are not getting the federally subsidized lunch or breakfast afforded them during the school year.

While that affects 83 percent of the kids eligible for such programs statewide, the news is somewhat better here on the coast. In April 2012, 792 kids in the Cabrillo Unified School District benefited from free or reduced lunches during the school year, and last summer nearly half of them (342) received some federal assistance over the break.

Of course this doesn't mean that thousands of kids are starving today in San Mateo County. No, most of them are eating something. Some of them are undoubtedly even eating better diets than afforded by the federal money. However, that isn't something we want to leave to chance.

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There is growing evidence that healthy food is linked to better academic performance. We know intuitively that students lose a lot of what they have learned if they are intellectually unchallenged over the summer months. Because school districts across the state have rolled back summer school alternatives, many students lose twice between June and September.

There is help available through the Summer Food Service Program and other federally funded work. It's our responsibility to see that money gets to local kids who need it, because a healthy lunch isn't a luxury.

— Clay Lambert



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George posted at 9:28 pm on Sat, Jul 20, 2013.

Posts: 319

"What percentage of students in CUSD does that 792 figure represent?"

From the District website: "The District provides education for approximately 3,400 students. Students come to school with a variety of ethnic backgrounds, languages, learning abilities, and individual needs. Fifty-four (54%) percent of the population served are minority students, primarily Hispanic. Special Education and related services are provided for 400 students. In addition, approximately 24% of students receive English as a Second Language or Bilingual Spanish Immersion instruction. Students live in families representing a wide range of socio-economic groups. In 2008-09 33% of students were eligible for Free or Reduced meals."

I didn't see a breakout of summer and regular school. That doesn't mean it doesn't exist, but I didn't see it.

Maybe this helps understand.

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John Charles Ullom posted at 12:18 pm on Sat, Jul 20, 2013.

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WORKING SUMMER

By Marc Hershon



Phodoodle

10:16 am | [See more](#)

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How does one know which brand new pickup trucks are being driven by people whose kids are getting subsidized school lunch?

Do they put decals on their bumper that say, "My Kids Eats Free at the CUSD!!"?

When I was in school, my Dad drove a new Chevy every three years, my mom too. We lived in a four bedroom two bath split level.

We all got a subsidized school lunch everyday we chose to buy a 25 cent lunch ticket.

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Tyler Durden posted at 8:39 pm on Fri, Jul 19, 2013.

Posts: 301

"... In April 2012, 792 kids in the Cabrillo Unified School District benefited from free or reduced lunches during the school year..."

What percentage of students in CUSD does that 792 figure represent? My guess is a very big percentage. Which is kind of annoying when you see how many brand new pickups and SUVs are driven by the parents of these supposedly "low income" kids.

Not to mention that the family is also likely to be on food stamps at the same time so they are really not missing out on any free meals during the summer as Lambert tries to suggest.

Lastly, from my observation of their body shape, most of these kids are not really suffering from hunger; the statistics on low income youth obesity are simply staggering.

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John Charles Ullom posted at 3:33 pm on Fri, Jul 19, 2013.

Posts: 469

It's our responsibility to see that money gets to local kids who need it, because a healthy lunch isn't a luxury.

No. It is the responsibility of the parents. If they need help, glad to see they can get it but we are not responsible for ensuring parents are responsible for their children.

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