LOCAL KIDS LOOK FORWARD TO HEALTHY SUMMER MEALS
by Madeleine Hennessy, Communications Coordinator

It’s an early Monday morning at Castle Park Elementary in Chula Vista, and Denise and Evan are ready for another day at school, with their backpacks on and smiles across their faces.

Evan is a vivacious, curious 5th grader with red hair and a charming smile who is looking forward to playing with his friends before school. Denise, his sister, has a shy smile and a passion for learning. She likes some of the after school programs the best.

“We get taught new things, and when we’re taught new things, we get smarter in our class,” said Denise.

Both children take part in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) offered at the school during summer break. During the summer months, thousands of children lose access to breakfast and lunch programs, a critical source of nutrition.

Feeding America San Diego works to meet this specific need through direct-to-client programs and our partner agencies, including serving as a sponsor for SFSP sites at Castle Park Elementary and seven other locations. The program, funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and administered by the California Department of Education (CDE), provides free lunches and snacks to children and teens throughout the summer months.

Denise and Evan’s mom, Luz La Croix, is a fulltime student and her husband, Randy, works in the flooring and carpeting business. To make the ends meet, they attend community food distributions and the Summer Food Service Program. She shared, “The food means support, and we’re very grateful for that support.”

A resident of Chula Vista, Luz expresses her concern about lack of healthy options for her and her family. “In this area, it’s very difficult to buy healthy food. The only healthy food is on the other side of the 805. Here, it’s only junk food and fast food.”

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Dear Friends,

As marketing and communications manager at Feeding America San Diego, I have the privilege of sharing the incredible work of our team, raising awareness of the issue of hunger in our community and, perhaps most importantly, telling the stories of the people we serve—stories of hope and restoration. I like to think of my role as a spotlight, bringing the face of hunger into view.

I found FASD when moving back to the San Diego area in 2013. Hunger-relief became a passion of mine when I was working with at-risk youth at a nonprofit in Minneapolis and saw how basic needs affected their success.

On page four, you’ll read more about our current campaign, Fuel for Summer. Did you know that summer is a time of great need for families with children? I didn’t until I started working at FASD. I hope you’ll keep reading to learn why and take this opportunity to get involved like I did nearly three years ago.

Thank you for your partnership and support.

Amanda Schaap

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**FROM MY PERSPECTIVE**
by Amanda Schaap, Marketing & Communications Manager

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**BY THE NUMBERS**

- **58%** of households we serve have a monthly income of less than $1,000
- FASD is providing food for 42 sites this summer
- 35% of our clients water down food and drinks to stretch their food budget
- **24%** of households we serve have a member in poor health
- 32 nutrition interns and volunteers supported our programs last year

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**GETTING TO KNOW: CINDY DALE**

Cindy Dale has been volunteering with Feeding America San Diego for five years. She is married with two grown daughters and lives in her childhood home in Serra Mesa. We sat down with her to learn about her experience and why she so generously gives of her time to help end hunger.

Q. What made you start volunteering with Feeding America San Diego?
A. My youngest daughter was a high school student at the time and her school required service hours. I found FASD and we came together. Then eventually, she couldn’t come anymore, and I like it enough to keep coming.

Q. What keeps you coming back to volunteer?
A. I like the BackPack project because it goes to schools and kids benefit from it. You can see that it’s going to a place that’s needed. When I first started and they said this is what families get over the weekend – it rips you up. Volunteering here is fun and all the people here are great. The volunteers are enthusiastic!

Q. Walk us through the BackPack volunteer shift.
A. You walk to the back of the warehouse and everything is nicely set up with descriptions of what needs to go in the bags. The produce is set up ready to glean and the stations are ready for you to pack the staple goods.

Q. How have you seen Feeding America San Diego change over the past five years?
A. When I first started, you didn’t have a refrigerator, so we didn’t do fresh produce at all. That’s the best improvement—all the fresh foods. And now, just the variety of food has changed. It’s not just your canned tuna. Like today, you’ve got fresh apples and carrots and cereal bars that aren’t just sugar. They’ve also started to emphasize more nutritional food.

Q. Why do you feel it’s important to give back?
A. You have to give back. The hardest thing in anything, whether it’s exercising or changing your diet or community service, is getting started. Once you take that first step to getting started, you don’t feel as apprehensive. Then you realize you can do it and it’s fun!

Q. What would you tell someone who is considering volunteering at FASD?
A. Just come and try it! You’ll be surprised how easy and fun it is. The regular volunteers have become friends; there’s a community here.
DETERMINED EDUCATORS BRINGS SUMMER MEALS TO SOUTH COUNTY STUDENTS
by Martha Vargas, Programs Coordinator

Two years ago, Natalia Jones, K-6 Program Coordinator for Chula Vista Promise Neighborhood, was struggling to find healthy food for summer camp students at Castle Park Elementary. After some research, she learned about the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), a federal program run by the state and sponsored by Feeding America San Diego that provides food to children during the summer months when they no longer have access to school breakfast and lunch. She applied for the program and, in 2015, children were able to receive nutritious summer meals at Castle Park Elementary for the first time, thanks to a partnership between Chula Vista Promise Neighborhood, Feeding America San Diego and South Bay Community Services.

Helena Sabala, Early Learning Network Program Director for Chula Vista Promise Neighborhood, states having access to fresh food is a challenge for people in their community. They are surrounded by small convenience stores, which have little to no fresh fruits and vegetables, and the closest grocery store is miles away.

This presents a problem for families facing transportation barriers and tight budgets. However, during the summer months, parents can rest a little easier knowing that fresh milk and nutritious, well-balanced meals will be available to their children. Summer meals help kids stay healthy, physically active and energized, ready to return to school again in the fall.

“I was really happy and excited to have the Summer Food Service Program last year, and this year that was my goal again. I don’t care what hoops I have to jump through, we are getting that program again,” asserts Natalia.

In addition to SFSP meals, Feeding America San Diego provides families with fresh produce like apples, oranges, sweet potatoes and avocados once a week. The children really enjoy taking the produce home, because it’s food they don’t normally see. The school also has its own garden, providing learning opportunities for kids to be exposed to unfamiliar foods. According to Helena, “the more involved they are with growing it and seeing it, the more open they are to tasting it.”

“I believe the partnership we created has really promoted and opened up the doors for parents to come in and see that they are a very crucial part of their kids’ future,” Helena shared.

Currently, Natalia and Helena are working with Feeding America San Diego, preparing to provide nutritious meals to children in need this summer.
Looking forward to summer meals provided through Feeding America San Diego, Luz shared she is always excited to see the healthy food served.

And her kids love it too. Denise told us apples were her favorite and Evan quickly jumped in with his love for tangerines and oranges.

Luz and her family face the uncertainty of food insecurity, yet they still find a way to be generous with what they have. They currently share food with a friend who lost a job. “It’s important to help. Too many people don’t have the money and are too humble to ask for help.”

The La Croix family shared their appreciation for the food they receive and said they consider themselves blessed to have access to food for their kids during the summer.

“My children, every time before we eat, we thank God for the food and the people who provide the food.”

**RECENT HUNGER RESEARCH**

Feeding America publishes a comprehensive Map the Meal Gap study every year, which estimates the rate of food insecurity for both the general population and children under the age of 18. The estimates are calculated at the county and congressional-district level for the entire Feeding America network. The 2016 study, released in April, confirms the critical need in our community.

**2016 HIGHLIGHTS**

- 423,130 people in San Diego County are food insecure (13% of total population).
- 151,440 children in San Diego County are food insecure.
- 66% of children at risk of hunger in San Diego County are not eligible for federal nutrition programs, making this segment reliant upon a charitable response to hunger.
- The average cost of a meal in San Diego County is $3.22.
- The annual meal gap for FASD’s service area is nearly 80 million meals.

Read more about the study and view the interactive map online at feedingamericasd.org/hunger-research.

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**STARBUCKS AND FEEDING AMERICA SAN DIEGO JOIN FORCES TO FEED OUR COMMUNITY**

CBS This Morning correspondent John Blackstone recently reported on a “first in the nation” pilot program between Starbucks and Feeding America San Diego.

The program was inspired by Starbucks employees, who cringed while watching unsold sandwiches, parfaits and food boxes go into the garbage every evening.

Through the Feeding America and Starbucks partnership, the company plans to donate five million meals to individuals and families in need this year, many in San Diego, and hopes to extend the program to all of its 7,600 company-operated stores in the U.S. over the next year.

“If other companies emulate this, think of the exponential impact that it’s going to make around the country. If we can move that needle just a little bit, we’re going to make a real difference in fighting hunger,” said Al Brislain, CEO of Feeding America San Diego.

FEEDINGAMERICASD.ORG/STARBUCKS

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FEEDINGAMERICASD.ORG/STARBUCKS

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**ON THE GO**

**GREETINGS FROM WHEELZ AND THE NUCREW**

Hello Friends,

On a chilly day in January, we headed up to Alpine for a distribution. Our Mobile Pantry truck brought fresh green beans, cereal, apples, oranges, sweet potatoes and onions. One of the Feeding America San Diego staff, Beth, was also able to attend to educate people about the importance of nutrition and the amount of sugar in beverages. Beth shared two recipes, Yogurt Apple Salad and Sweet Potato & Carrot Soup — yum!

200 families attended the distribution and were so happy to receive fresh fruits and vegetables. They were also excited to try the soup recipe — perfect for a cold winter day! Thanks to the distribution, more families were able to rest easy knowing they had food in their pantries.

Time to get back on the road – see you around!

Wheelz and the NUCrew
Join Feeding America San Diego and the 13,000 individuals who dedicate their time to help feed more than 480,000 children, families and seniors every year.

Feeding more than 60,000 children, families and seniors every week, FASD relies on the support of individuals, corporations and community groups. Through our highly organized distribution model, every $1 donated turns into four meals.

In order to achieve a hunger-free and healthy community, FASD advocates on behalf of the food insecure on a federal, state and local level. Lend your voice to the fight against hunger and show your support for hunger-relief efforts on social media.