



**THE VERMONT CAMPAIGN TO  
END CHILDHOOD HUNGER  
HUNGER AND NUTRITION E-UPDATE  
APRIL, 2008**

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**VERMONT NEWS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

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**VERMONT NEWS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

**1. Opportunity to Offer Cooking for Life: Youth Classes**

Cooking for Life: Youth, a hands-on cooking and nutrition program for low-income youth, ages 11-14, is looking for schools and organizations that want to offer this program. Do you coordinate an after-school program that serves a large number of low-income youth? If so, your program or school may be eligible to receive funding to offer a Cooking for Life: Youth series for free! We have four spots remaining and are looking to schedule these by the end of April. More information about Cooking for Life: Youth can be found on our website: [www.vtnohunger.org/info/cooking.php](http://www.vtnohunger.org/info/cooking.php). To schedule a series, contact Rebecca O'Reilly at [roreilly@vtnohunger.org](mailto:roreilly@vtnohunger.org).

## **2. Gardening Mini-Grants Available for Schools and Communities**

Friends of Burlington Gardens will award a total of \$15,000 in mini-grants to assist up to 75 school and community gardens statewide. Awards will range from \$100 to \$500 and cover costs for garden improvements such as fencing, signs, bulletin boards, and water systems. The mini-grant program is designed to encourage the development of new and existing community and school gardens. Deadline is April 16, 2006. To access the mini-grant application form, guidelines, and grant writing tips, please visit:

[http://www.burlingtongardens.org/2008\\_mini\\_grants.html](http://www.burlingtongardens.org/2008_mini_grants.html).

## **3. Feeding Kids in the Summer Easier for Vermont Communities**

Providing meals to low-income Vermont children during the summer months just got easier, due to new federal guidelines. The Simplified Summer Food program, which is used to provide up to two healthy meals or snacks to low-income kids during the summer months, is now available nationwide. The new program cuts paperwork and eliminates the complicated accounting measures that were previously required.

Last summer, approximately 5,500 Vermont children received summer meals at just under 100 summer food sites throughout the state. “Summer nutrition programs help families keep hunger at bay by making sure children retain access to healthy meals when school is out. Teachers report that when kids get nutritious meals and supervised activities during the summer, they return to school ready to learn in September,” said Robert Dostis, Executive Director of the Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger.

Contact Sarah Kunz at 802-865-0255 or [skunz@vtnohunger.org](mailto:skunz@vtnohunger.org) for more information or assistance with starting a summer food program.

## **4. Legislation Passed in the Vermont House Would Make Breakfast Free for all Low-Income Students**

H.333, a bill that would make school breakfast free for the 7,500 reduced price eligible Vermont students (in households that make 130-185% of poverty) passed the Vermont House of Representatives on April 3, 2008. The bill now goes to the Senate for approval. Senator Bartlett, Chair of Senate Appropriations, supports the bill and is optimistic that the Senate will find the funding to pass the bill. If H.333 becomes law, then Vermont will be the 3rd state in the country to provide free school breakfast to these low income children. Coverage of the bill by WCAX TV can be viewed at:

<http://www.wcax.com/Global/story.asp?S=8101926&nav=4QcS>.

Editorial: Bill Aims to Provide More Free Breakfasts

([Burlington Free Press](#), February 26, 2008)

## **5. Northfield Savings Bank/VTCECH Partnership Shows Progress in Hunger Fight** ([Montpelier Times-Argus](#), March 17, 2008)

The partnership between the Northfield Savings Bank Foundation and the Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger, now in its second year, has created notable results in many areas. “Thanks to the support from Northfield Savings Bank, we’re seeing more kids participating in school breakfast, more retailers accepting food stamps and a growing emphasis on nutrition in schools and daycare centers throughout the region,” said Robert Dostis, Executive Director of the Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger. “This is really an effort of incremental improvement, but when the economy is making it even more difficult for children to get access to healthy meals, we can’t help but be excited to see things moving in the right direction.” Visit [www.vtnohunger.org](http://www.vtnohunger.org) for more.

## **6. Heating and Hunger Linked Among More Low-Income Families in Vermont**

[\(Barre Montpelier Times Argus, February 12, 2008\)](#)

Steeply rising fuel costs are forcing more and more Vermonters to choose heating their homes over maintaining a nutritious diet. As fuel costs have skyrocketed by 30-50 percent, and with Vermonters spending \$800 million more for heat than four years ago, putting off eating for many in the state helps them put off frozen pipes. To battle hunger, low-income residents rely on inexpensive, calorie-dense foods, causing health problems later in life. Assistance may be coming through legislation which will provide weatherization funding to the state's low-income population.

## **7. Funding Available for Gardens for Learning Opportunity**

Food Works at Two Rivers Center is looking for new sites for Gardens for Learning - a summer program that teaches children at risk of summertime hunger how to grow, prepare and cook their own nutritious, fresh foods. There is funding available for gardening and cooking supplies. Additionally, a limited number of stipends are available for sites to cover the cost of staffing the program during the summer months. Priority will be given to sites that demonstrate the highest need and show strong community and organizational support. Contact Michelle Wallace at Food Works at [michelle@tworiverscenter.org](mailto:michelle@tworiverscenter.org) for more information.

## **NATIONAL RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **8. USDA Seeks Nominations for “Hunger Champions”**

The USDA has announced an annual competition to recognize “Hunger Champions” among local offices that provide exemplary service in assisting eligible clients to obtain food stamp benefits. Any individual, agency or organization may nominate a local food stamp office that provides exemplary service to food stamp clients and/or applicants to be honored as a Hunger Champion. Nominations are due by June 30, 2008. For further information, visit:

[http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/coalition/2008\\_hunger\\_champions.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/coalition/2008_hunger_champions.htm).

### **9. Grants Available to Support Participation in Child Nutrition Programs**

Share Our Strength (SOS), a national philanthropic organization that supports anti-hunger causes, has announced it will use the proceeds from its Great American Bake Sale for grants to groups working to increase participation in the child nutrition programs, particularly the Summer Food Service Program, School Lunch Program, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Awards of up to \$10,000 will be made in two categories – grants for program sponsors and grants for advocacy. The application deadline is May 30, 2008. To learn more, go to:

[http://gabs.strength.org/site/PageServer?pagename=GABS\\_grants&pw\\_id=2702](http://gabs.strength.org/site/PageServer?pagename=GABS_grants&pw_id=2702).

### **10. USDA Collects Information on Farm to School Initiatives**

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is collecting information to identify best practices and challenges in operating Farm to School initiatives. FNS held a Farm to School listening session at the FRAC/A2H National Anti-Policy Conference, but additional information is being solicited via email and phone. For more information, check out:

[http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Policy-Memos/2008/SP\\_14-2008-OS.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Policy-Memos/2008/SP_14-2008-OS.pdf)

## **NATIONAL NEWS, RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY**

### **11. Study Finds Food Security Affects Mothers and Infants**

([www.springerlink.com](http://www.springerlink.com), March 26, 2008)

A study titled *Food Security During Infancy: Implications for Attachment and Mental Proficiency in Toddlerhood*, published in the March Maternal and Child Health Journal, has found that household food security affects a child's early development and a mother's positive behaviors with her children. According to the research 1) Food insecurity occurs in more than 10 percent of households with infants; 2) Maternal depression occurs in higher levels when higher levels of food insecurity are present; 3) Food insecurity is a predictor of insecure child attachment and "less advanced" mental proficiency, and "works indirectly through maternal depression and parenting practices" which greatly influence an early toddler's emotional and cognitive development.

### **12. Food Stamp Use Highest Since 1960's**

([The New York Times](http://TheNewYorkTimes.com), March 31, 2008)

The combination of rising food prices, layoffs, and high fuel prices are leading the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to project that the number of food stamp beneficiaries - more than 28 million - soon will be the highest since the program began in the 1960s. Although some of the increase is due to improved outreach by some states, as well as the restoration of access to some legal immigrants, the economic slowdown and the higher cost of prices for basic amenities are mostly to blame. Across the nation, states are reporting surges in requests for benefits, which requires recipients have "near-poverty incomes" in order to be eligible. More than 40 states are experiencing increased numbers, including Michigan where 1 out of every 8 residents are receiving food stamps and New York where 1 in 10 are receiving food stamps.

### **13. Stigma Keeps Teens from Accessing Free Lunch**

([The New York Times](http://TheNewYorkTimes.com), March 1, 2008)

Teens eligible for no-cost lunch in schools are still going hungry because they feel stigmatized by the choices they're offered and the methods by which they're made to pay. While cash-paying students gravitate toward a la carte items, schools separate subsidized meal recipients apart from the more popular snacks and fast food lines. "[It's become a] social justice issue," according to Ann Cooper, director of nutrition services for the public schools in Berkeley, California. The National School Lunch Act prohibits student segregation. California schools are removing the stigma by offering the same food to all students, regardless of financial status. Some schools have instituted debit card systems which keep financial transactions private between student and cafeteria cashier. Others have eliminated the a la carte line altogether.

### **14. Food Costs Jumped by 5.1 Percent in 2007**

([The New York Times](http://TheNewYorkTimes.com), March 15, 2008)

Grocery shopping has gotten more and more expensive as food costs rose 5.1 percent over the past year according to the U.S. Labor Department (DOL), which also reports that milk is up 17 percent, cheese 15 percent, rice and pasta 13 percent and bread 12 percent.

### **15. Families Shop for Outdated and Damaged Food to Make their Dollars Buy More**

([Wall Street Journal/USA Today](http://WallStreetJournal.com), February 22, 2008)

Families battling the high cost of food are finding surplus stores featuring outdated and damaged food items can help them stretch their food budgets, according to a Wall Street Journal article mentioned in USA Today.

### **16. Hunger among Elderly Is On the Rise**

([Bangor Daily News](#), March 6, 2008)

More than 5 million elderly citizens suffer from hunger in the United States, a number that is on the rise, according to a new study. The study, produced by Meals on Wheels, a nonprofit program that provides hot food to low-income elderly and disabled citizens. By 2025, when all of the baby boom generation will be above age 60, almost 10 million American senior citizens will experience hunger, a figure that is 75 percent higher than in 2005, according to the study.

### **17. Breakfast Keeps The Weight Off:**

([Pediatrics](#), March 2008)

A new study shows that teenagers who ate breakfast kept the pounds off. Researchers looked at a diverse group of more than 2,200 adolescents in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area over a five-year period and found that there was a direct relationship between eating breakfast and Body Mass Index (BMI): the more often breakfast is eaten, the lower the BMI. The study mentioned that approximately 25 percent of the nation's teens skip breakfast.

### **18. School Cafeterias Experience Success Working with Healthy Ingredients**

([The Boston Globe](#), March 16, 2008)

Four Boston area schools improving the nutritional value of their menus while providing appealing food to students are profiled in this article. Schools are providing more fresh vegetables and whole grains and a variety of choices.

*The Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger develops programs and advocates policies to prevent hunger and promote good nutrition for Vermont's families. We rely on the support of our members, donors, and business partners to implement our programs and initiate action. For more information on how to become a member, visit: [www.vtnohunger.org](http://www.vtnohunger.org). VTCECH is now able to accept donations online! Thanks to our partnership with JustGive.org you can click the Donate Now link below and make a gift today. We appreciate your support!*



*If you would like to be removed from the mailing list and not receive any more updates, please send a note to: [ehyde@vtnohunger.org](mailto:ehyde@vtnohunger.org).*