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**Food for Thought:
How to Implement
a Weekend Food
Program**


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**Presenter:
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Learning Objectives


Upon completion of this webinar, participants should be able to:

- Develop a weekend food program plan for your school.
- Identify possible funding options for a weekend food program.
- List strategies on how to increase attendance and promote student achievement via the food program.
- Include nutrition, gardening, and counseling into your weekend food program plan.

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Demographics



- Creekside Elementary School
 - Franklin, Indiana
 - About 20 miles south of Indianapolis
 - Grades K-4
 - 586 students
 - 40% Free/Reduced Lunch population
 - Two trailer parks feed into the school
 - Biggest achievement gap
 - Primarily Caucasian
 - One school counselor and one principal

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Find Your WHY

- Why do you want to start a weekend food program?
 - Determine a need
 - Data-driven



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Question


- Do you already have a weekend food program?
 - YES, looking for new ideas
 - NO



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Data Collection


- Survey teachers and staff
 - Student behavior
 - Hiding or stealing food
 - Symptoms of malnourishment
 - Increased behavior issues on Mondays?
 - Talk to school nurse and have her/him collect data
 - Visits to the clinic for hunger or related symptoms



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Data Collection



- Survey students
 - Enough food to eat?
 - Bed to sleep in?
- Survey parents
- Use Free/Reduced Lunch Data



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Data Collection


- Use an existing survey or create your own
 - Online
 - Paper and pencil
 - Have parents complete it at the school during a popular school event
 - Back to School Night
 - Registration
 - Have students complete the survey during class time
 - Notify parents, offer opt-out

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Funding

- Partner with a local food bank
 - In Central Indiana: Gleaners' Backsacks: Weekend Food for Kids Program
 - <https://www.gleaners.org/programs/youth/>
 - Bag of shelf-stable food that does not need refrigeration
 - Enough for 6 small meals and a snack



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Funding

- Partner with local food bank
 - Also offer a School-Based Pantry
 - Housed in-school
 - Run by school staff
 - Summer Food Program



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Funding

- Partner with an established non-profit organization
 - Boomerang Backpacks in Northern Indiana
 - <http://www.boomerangbackpacks.org/>
- Contact local churches
 - Blessings in a Backpack
 - Food donations
 - Volunteers

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Funding

- Apply for grant funding
 - Community Foundation
 - Education Foundation
 - Local Grants from Organizations
- Local donors



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Meet with Key Stakeholders

- Administration
 - Permission, protocol
 - Program expansion
- Cafeteria staff and manager
 - Food storage
 - Help identifying children in need
 - Coordination of efforts



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Meet with Key Stakeholders

- Custodians
 - Food storage
 - Deliveries
 - Clean-up
 - Weekly help
- Secretaries
 - Field questions and phone calls
 - Attendance secretary
 - Applications for new students
 - Notify you if someone is going to withdraw
 - Help when students stop by with questions



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Meet with Key Stakeholders

- Teachers and staff
 - Information
 - Help identifying children in need
 - Find one staff member to partner with
 - Take over if you are absent or ill
 - Help you think outside of the box
 - Help advocate for the program

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Ordering Food

- Food Bank
 - Chose the food and filled the bags prior to delivery
- Non-profit organization
 - Provided two options for ordering food at a discounted rate
 - School was responsible for monitoring supply, monitoring budget, and choosing food items

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Decide on Bag Type: Reusable Bags

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pros <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Earth friendly – Attendance incentive – Sturdier, won't break – If at the elementary level, good for practicing numerical order 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Cost – Lost bags – Smelly bags – More work for you – Must refill
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Reusable Bags



- Tracking down missing bags
 - Determine student with missing bag by assigned number
 - Ask student
 - Send home letter to parents
 - Make phone call home
 - Send home food anyway?

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Reusable Bags




- Dismissal from the program
 - Missing bag on multiple occasions
 - Lack of parent involvement
 - Lack of need

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Decide on Bag Type: Disposable Bags

- Pros
 - Less work
 - Filled by Food Bank
 - More sanitary
 - Easier to deliver and monitor
 - Usually free
- Cons
 - No attendance incentive
 - Bad for the environment
 - May rip or break
 - No collaboration



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Disposable Bags




- Check attendance on Friday and adjust the number of bags to be delivered
- Easier to keep confidential if using volunteers

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Selecting Participants

- Decide on best method of initial communication based on level of supply and demand
 - If you have a small supply and high demand:
 - Start by targeting free/reduced lunch population
 - If you have a large supply that meets the demand:
 - Contact entire school population



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Selecting Participants

- Interest letter
 - Ask for families to return the letter if they want to participate.
 - If you receive more interest than anticipated, you will have to narrow the selection.
 - Second step that includes information such as:
 - Family income
 - Employment
 - F/R lunch status
 - Federal assistance received
 - Other hardships

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Dear Parent:

Purpose: To support your Community Partner. The Student Center Community Foundation. The Student Center Community Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. We are currently seeking Community Partners to help support the program. If you are interested in participating, please contact the program manager at (910) 342-4559 or email at info@scsfoundation.org. We will contact you about the program and next steps. Please send any questions to the program manager at (910) 342-4559 or email at info@scsfoundation.org.

Application Information: A complete application should be submitted online to the Student Center Community Foundation. All applications will be reviewed by the program manager. If you are accepted, you will be asked to complete the program. If you are not accepted, you will be notified by email. The program will run for 12 weeks. Please contact the program manager at (910) 342-4559 or email at info@scsfoundation.org.

Registration:

The program will be held on the following dates:

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Employer of Parent/Guardian: _____ Employer of Spouse/Other: _____

Is either Parent/Guardian or Spouse/Other currently in military (check one)? No Yes Branch: _____

Do you receive any of the following? Check all that apply. Documentation may be required:

Food Stamps Medicaid TANF Section 8 (HUD) WIC Energy Assistance

Child Care Voucher

Total monthly household income: enter all that apply. You may be asked to provide proof of income.

Gross Wages \$ _____ + Unemployment \$ _____ + Child Support \$ _____ + Social Security \$ _____ + Other \$ _____ = Total \$ _____

List any special needs you need help this school year: _____

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Rejection Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We appreciate your interest in the program. Unfortunately, due to the limited number of spots available, we are unable to accept all of the applicants who applied. If you would like to be considered for future opportunities, please contact the program manager at (910) 342-4559 or email at info@scsfoundation.org.

Registration:

The program will be held on the following dates:

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Recruit Volunteers!

- Use student volunteers to help run your program
 - Weekly bag delivery
 - If using reusable bags → put them in order and determine which bags are missing

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Monitoring Participants

- Transient population
 - When students move or no longer need assistance, now have open spots
 - May have a big “rush” of new students in need
- Absent students
 - Save food for when students return
 - OR
 - Save food for other students (move-ins, etc.)

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Monitoring Participants

First Name	Last Name	Grade	Teacher	Food Allergies
		0	Damen	
		0	Damen	
		0	Damen	
		0	Erasmus	
		0	Werner	
		1	Oppen	
		1	Oppen	
		2	Bohlers	
		2	Bohlers	
		2	Parker	
		2	Parker	
		2	Parker	
		2	Wagner	
		2	Wagner	
		2	Wagner	
		2	Watts	
		3	Buckley	
		3	EARL WOOD	
		3	McGriff	
		3	McGriff	
		3	McGriff	Peanuts, Tree Nuts, Eggs
		4	Doveil	
		4	Doveil	
		4	Doveil	

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School Breaks


- Fall Break, Winter Break, Spring Break, Long weekends (Labor Day, etc.)
 - Send food home on last student day before break
 - Recommend using disposable bags for all breaks
 - Determine if you can send home extra food
 - Box of pantry items
 - Additional bags of food



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Spread the Word

- Publicize your new program like crazy!
 - Local paper, news outlets
 - Newsletters
 - Social Media
- PR can lead to donations and volunteers!



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Feeding young minds

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Program Expansion: Life Skills

- Partner with your high school's special education program
 - “Life Skills,” “Essential Skills,” etc.
 - Students can help:
 - Organize the bags
 - Fill bags with food
 - Deliver bags
 - Gives students job skills and responsibility
 - Send bags over in the interoffice mail system each Tuesday

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Program Expansion: Life Skills



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Program Expansion: School Garden

- A school garden has many benefits:
 - Focus on nutrition and healthy eating
 - Exposure to fresh food
 - Gives students something to look forward to
 - Increase attendance
 - Helps students feel important and successful
 - Can involve the community



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Program Expansion: School Garden

- Secure more funding
 - Initial start-up \$\$
 - Seeds
 - Plants
 - Planters
 - Soil
 - Gloves, shovels, hoes, etc.
 - Tomato cages, stakes, signs
 - Chickens and coop?



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Program Expansion: School Garden

- Funding each year for seeds and plants and potentially soil, too.
- Decide who will water the plants daily
 - Even in the summer!
 - Difficult if you do not live near your school
- What will you do with the fruit and veggies?
 - Send home with students
 - Eat at school
 - Share with staff

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Program Expansion: School Garden

- Partner with your local Career and Technical Education Center
 - Culinary Arts students can help your students learn to cook the food
- Partner with your local Agriculture students and 4H programs
 - Help in the garden



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Program Expansion: School Garden

- Recruit community volunteers
 - Teach about healthy eating
 - Teach about gardening
 - Get their hands dirty
 - Donate old supplies

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School Garden

- Combine garden with curriculum to work on various topics of need such as self esteem or worry



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AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION

Thank You!

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