

Published: Apr 11, 2010 02:00 AM  
Modified: Apr 10, 2010 11:12 PM

Food bank helps fight summer hunger  
When school's out, need rises

BY MARTI MAGUIRE, Correspondent

It's a phenomenon educators know well - students who eat for free at school, but go hungry over weekends and breaks.

The problem only worsens in the summer months, when programs that offer poor children free or low-cost breakfasts and lunches from their school cafeterias end along with classes.

"School is the time when everyone eats," says Cynthia Ervin, the summer food service coordinator for the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services. "They eat at breakfast. They eat at lunch. But what happens when school is closed?"

The answer is that many don't eat at all. And the advocates who aim to feed these children are up for a summer when more children are at risk of going hungry at the same time of year when donations to food banks typically run low.

The long break this summer will leave the roughly 47,000 Wake County students who are poor enough to qualify for federal free or reduced lunch program at risk of hunger. That's up about 7 percent from the year before - part of a rise in need statewide in recent years as the economy worsened. During the 2008-2009 school year, 704,000 students statewide qualified for free and reduced lunch, up from 679,877 the year before, Ervin said.

"That gives us every indication that these children will need the summer food program as well," Ervin said. "The number of organizations wanting to do the

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### Feed The Need 2010

What is it? The N&O's annual community service project to increase awareness about hunger in our region and support the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina.

How can I help? Donate nonperishable foods at area Harris Teeter stores during the food drive, April 1-17. Watch the N&O or The Cary News for Feed the Need ads and send a donation with the coupon in the ad. Go to [feedtheneednc.com](http://feedtheneednc.com) to donate online or volunteer to help on Feed the Need Day.

What is Feed the Need Day? On Saturday, volunteers will sell a special edition of The N&O at select Harris Teeter and Bojangles locations in the Triangle, with proceeds going to the food bank. Please look for them and buy a paper, or make a donation.

How much has Feed the Need helped? In three years, Feed the Need has produced almost 40,000 pounds of food and more than \$168,000 in cash for the Food Bank.

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program doesn't increase as much as the need does."

To raise more awareness of the need for food during the summer months, the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina in June will hold its annual Kids Summer Stock initiative.

The program includes a series of statewide events meant to drive up donations of food and money as summer approaches.

The food bank will host a Kids Summer Stock event at Koka Booth Amphitheatre in Cary on June 12.


The event will be in conjunction with the N.C. Symphony's Summerfest program.

The event includes a food drive that helps feed hungry students during the summer months.

And a portion of the proceeds from ticket sales goes to the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina. Sites where food will be distributed will be posted in June at [foodbankcenc.org](http://foodbankcenc.org).

"The Cary community does a tremendous job in helping support us," said Lee Cheney, who manages special events and food drives for the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina.

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