



## *Summer Food and Fun: Working with the Community to Get Your Sites “Activated”*

Summer meals sites offer a great space for children to connect with their peers in a welcoming and safe environment. Providing activities and programming in addition to meals at sites can also provide families with a place to socialize together and help to reduce stigma so ALL children and their families feel welcomed. This has been shown to increase children’s likelihood of returning on a regular basis.

Throughout Connecticut, many sites have provided a summer calendar that is full of activities for little to no cost on their part through strategic community partnerships. In an effort to help you provide activities and programming at your sites, we have compiled some best practices from around the state and country. The following are some recommendations for possible community partners and how they can assist you in providing a hunger-free summer full of activities for your children. Attached you will also find example activity calendars from other summer meals sites in Connecticut.

Who to reach out to:	How they can help:
<b>Library</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide books for kids to engage in Summer Reading Programs</li> <li>• Have kids write stories or organize a play to reenact their favorite stories</li> <li>• Possible location for summer meals sites</li> <li>• <b>Additional ideas:</b> storytelling, writing workshops, read-alouds, scavenger hunts, nutrition education, container gardening</li> </ul>
<b>Art Shops</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach an art lesson</li> <li>• Provide inexpensive arts/craft supplies for art projects on site</li> <li>• <b>Additional ideas:</b> face painting, make a mobile, tie dye, origami, jewelry making, paper mache, coloring, bean mosaics, making musical instruments</li> </ul>
<b>Parks &amp; Recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide picnic tables if needed at your site</li> <li>• Utilize parks, sports fields, and courts for physical activities and games</li> <li>• Organize a basketball tournament, for example, to maintain participation throughout the summer months</li> <li>• Possible location for summer meals sites</li> <li>• <b>Additional ideas:</b> water wars, learn to juggle, jump rope, relay races, obstacle courses, yoga, yo-yo, tag games, nature hikes, charades, Simon Says, heads up 7-up, hula hooping, kickball, soccer, Frisbee, baseball, hacky sack, volleyball, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Churches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit volunteers to assist with daily activities</li> <li>• Look for community members who specialize in unique interests and would be willing to organize an activity with the kids</li> <li>• Possible location for summer meals sites</li> </ul>
<b>Martial Arts Center</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite to host a martial arts demonstration at your site</li> </ul>

<b>Community Gardens</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field trip to community gardens in your area</li> <li>• Coordinate a “Create your own garden” activity in a donated plot or in reusable containers kids can take home with them</li> </ul>
<b>Farmers’ Markets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donate tickets for children to “purchase” certain amount of produce</li> <li>• Connect with nutrition educators to encourage children to buy foods based on what they have learned in their lesson</li> <li>• Possible location for summer meals sites</li> </ul>
<b>Bike Shops</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lessons on bike safety or repair</li> </ul>
<b>Farms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farm tour field trips</li> <li>• Invite farmers to talk to kids about what they do</li> <li>• Bring baby animals to sites if appropriate</li> <li>• Connect farmers’ crops with nutrition lesson</li> </ul>
<b>Sports Teams</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite players to visit your site and offer a sport clinic with the kids to promote staying active</li> <li>• Ask mascots to come for a “Mascot Day”</li> <li>• See if they will donate tickets to their games for weekly or monthly drawings</li> </ul>
<b>Museums</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• History lessons with interesting artifacts</li> <li>• Field trips with a tour of their museum</li> </ul>
<b>Girl and Boy Scout Troops</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize a science/art project through troop leaders</li> <li>• Engage kids in sign-ups to join their troops</li> </ul>
<b>Nutrition Students</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit students from nearby universities to engage kids in nutrition lessons and activities</li> <li>• Coordinate with guest farmers or chefs to focus lesson on their seasonal produce</li> <li>• <b>Topic ideas include:</b> foods in that day’s meal, MyPlate food groups, recipe activity, taste testing (ie: prepare vegetable in 3 different ways and have kids choose which they like best)</li> </ul>
<b>College/High School Students</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greek life and youth employment programs are great opportunities to seek out staffing help and volunteers to help coordinate supervision and carry out activities at your site</li> </ul>
<b>Fire Department</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire safety lesson</li> <li>• Fire truck visit/tour</li> </ul>
<b>Police Station</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations on crime prevention and other awareness activities</li> </ul>
<b>Local Restaurants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host a cooking lesson and partner with a nutrition program</li> </ul>

\*Additional Resources at [www.ctsummermeals.org](http://www.ctsummermeals.org)