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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Summer Meals Reaching 1 in 8 Low-Income Children in Michigan**

FLINT, Mich. – A new report finds that participation in the Summer Nutrition Programs increased in Michigan, with 67,500 low-income children receiving summer meals on an average day in July 2013. This was a significant increase of 8 percent from the previous summer. Center for Civil Justice noted that summer meals reached only 12 students for every 100 low-income children who got regular school year school meals in the 2012-2013 school year.

The report, "Hunger Doesn't Take A Vacation," is released annually by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). It measures the success of Summer Nutrition Programs at the national and state levels by comparing the number of children receiving summer meals to the number of low-income children receiving school lunch during the regular school year.

The FRAC report finds that summer meal participation nationally reached nearly three million students on an average day in July of 2013, up 161,000 children or 5.7 percent from July 2012. This represents the first considerable increase in participation in a decade, providing welcome momentum for the Summer Nutrition Programs.

"When the school year ends, too many of Michigan's children lose a primary source of nutrition," said Marybeth Laisure of Michigan Hunger Solutions. "Summer meals are a great way to ensure low-income children have adequate nutrition so that when the return to school in the fall, they are healthy, active and ready to learn."

Center for Civil Justice and Michigan Hunger Solutions advocate for various anti-hunger programs and policies, and both organizations hope to see participation continue to increase. Even with the 8 percent increase from 2012 to 2013, there is still room for improvement. Low participation means missed meals for children. In order for Michigan to feed 40 children with summer food for every 100 low-income children who get school lunch during the regular school year, Michigan would have fed an additional 161,000 low-income children every day this July.

"The national increase in summer food participation is good news, but Congress will need to fix some of the underlying barriers in the 2015 Child Nutrition Reauthorization to truly repair the Summer Nutrition Programs," said FRAC President Jim Weill. "Congress needs to act to strengthen the programs so they are able to reach more low-income children, and help the program more effectively address hunger and meet increased need."

Summer Nutrition Programs, include the Summer Food Service Program and the National School Lunch Program. These programs provide free meals at participating summer sites at schools, parks, other public agencies, and nonprofits for children under 18.

- More -

Michigan families can find nearby summer meal sites here <http://www.mcgi.state.mi.us/schoolnutrition/> or by calling the United Way at 211. New this year from USDA is “SummerFoodRocks,” a free web-based application that features a site locator and search tool, and works on devices such as iPads, iPhones, Blackberrys, and Androids.

Contact:

Justin Rumenapp  
Center for Civil Justice  
Communications Specialist  
(810) 244-8044  
[jrumenapp@ccj-mi.org](mailto:jrumenapp@ccj-mi.org)

Marybeth Laisure  
Michigan Hunger Solutions  
Executive Director  
[mlaisure@uwmich.org](mailto:mlaisure@uwmich.org)

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