

Summer Meals Continues Successful Program

The Vernonia Summer Meals Program is wrapping up another successful season of offering free lunchtime meals to all of Vernonia's kids.

Kathy Meyers is the head cook for the Summer Meals Program, which is hosted by the Grace Family Fellowship Church and sponsored by the Vernonia School District. "This year has been awesome," said Meyers during a recent visit to the program. "We've had more participants this year than we've had in the past. We've had very good volunteers this year. It's just been a really great year."

Meyers noted that the program has received a boost this year with regular deliveries of fresh produce from the Columbia Pacific Food Bank. Meyers says some of that produce was used in the daily salad bar at the program and some was available for families to take home and use. Meyers also mentioned the donations of breads and desserts from Safeway

and Winco that are picked up and transported to the program by volunteers.

"The number of participants does show us that there continues to be a real need here in the community," says Meyers. "It's a blessing that it is here and the community does take advantage of it."

In addition to daily meals at the church at lunchtime, the program has provided snacks for activities at the Vernonia Public Library and lunches for the annual Echoing Evergreen Day Camp for one week. During the final two weeks of the program, young students participating in Kindercamp at the Vernonia Schools will come and get some experience going through a lunch line for the first time.

"We couldn't do all this without all our partners and the other programs that participate," says Meyers.

Kids can visit the program everyday and receive a free meal. There are also occasional activities for them to participate in, like bubbles, chalk art, and puzzles. One wall in the gymnasium where the meals are served is covered with artwork the kids have drawn on paper placed on the tables. Kid volunteers help clean up the tables and chairs at the end of the day.

"It's all hand-in-hand, working for the community," says Meyers.

The Summer Meals Program will continue until August 24.



Vernonia's Voice is published twice each month on the 1st and 3rd Thursday. Look for our next issue on September 6.



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