

Memo

To: Michael Robey, Ed.D.
From: Marisa Raymond, Food Service Coordinator
Date: November 1, 2012
Re: Excess Food Donations

Breakfast in the classroom was implemented at all ten district schools at the beginning of the school year. To this point it has been successful on multiple fronts. Working with Principals, teachers, custodians and Preferred Meal staff helped establish a sustainable and smooth process, and breakfast in the classroom was rolled out. Now students at every school enjoy Breakfast in the Classroom.

After discovering that some children were not finishing all of their breakfast meal, we contacted local food pantries to donate this food and ensure no food goes to waste. We now donate unopened cereal, juice boxes, cookies and muffins to St. Eulalia church food pantry in Maywood; in the future we will be donating to Mount Carmel church and Sacred Heart in Melrose Park. As an additional note, it was a pleasure to learn that we are able to support these organizations as the Chicago Food Depository (which supplies them) has recently had budget cuts resulting in less food donations/deliveries.

The process to supporting these schools and food pantries started with a pilot at Jane Addams. At the time the district was discussing the possibility of starting a donation program, a PTA member from Jane Addams contacted the district and expressed his concern about the food being wasted and offered support in organizing a donation program. At that time we decided to use Jane Addams as the pilot school for this process to allow us to understand the scope of the project and the details into the daily logistics.

The first day of the pilot was on October 9, 2012. PTA members, Frank Mikl, and Marisa Raymond visited the classrooms and explained the program to the students. It was expressed that most importantly the students are encouraged to eat their breakfast. Also communicated to the students was that any unopened leftovers would be donated to local food pantries to help people in need. The students were happy with this idea and expressed their enthusiastic support. After breakfast, students now place any of their leftover unopened items into reusable

bags in the front of the classroom. One bag is for juice boxes and the other is for dry foods. Each bag has the classroom number on it. Teachers then place those shopping bags outside classroom doors, bags are then picked up by the custodians who bring them to the lunchroom where the food is sorted in plastic storage bins by the office clerk. After bags are emptied they are placed in teachers mailboxes for use the following day. The donated food is picked up by St. Eulalia of Maywood on Wednesday and Friday each week.

After three weeks, the results have been very positive. We would like to begin to roll-out this process to the other schools one at a time as each school will need support setting up the process in the first week.

Note: The reusable bags were purchased at Meijer's for \$0.99. In explaining the program they are being used for to the store manager, he stated that Meijer would likely donate any future bags we need. This gets Meijer involved as a supporter of the local community and allows us to both set-up additional schools into the program and replace the existing reusable bags when necessary at no cost.

The Breakfast in the Classroom program has become a win for the schools, their students, and the students' parents, as well as for the broader local community and the church and needy individuals who rely on food donations. Through this program we are able to take the burden off of parents to provide their children with a healthy breakfast every morning, and we are able to donate food to needing individuals in our local community.