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U-46 Food and Nutrition Services to be Honored for Achievement

Department recognized for important work during COVID-19 ahead of National School Lunch Week

ELGIN - In a year that has demonstrated the importance of school meals, School District U-46's Food & Nutrition Services department will be honored with an "Accent on Achievement" during Monday night's Board of Education meeting. The honor comes just ahead of National School Lunch Week, being celebrated Oct. 12-16, 2020.

In a normal year, U-46 serves 3.35 million lunches annually, with an average of 18,700 students eating a school lunch each day. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March — and the transition of school to Distance Learning — U-46 has distributed more than 2.2 million free meals to children at school sites, and starting in September, community sites including parks, apartment complexes, and parking lots.

"Just like other employees in U-46, staff in the Food & Nutrition Services department have risen to the challenge posed by COVID-19," said U-46 Superintendent Tony Sanders. "They have been flexible and creative and formed community partnerships to guarantee we can meet U-46 families where they are."

All total, U-46 is now distributing a free breakfast and lunch, packaged to take home, [at nearly 80 sites every weekday](#). The meals are for children 18 and under; no paperwork is required, and the children do not need to be present. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has granted schools free meal waiver flexibility through Dec. 31.



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President John K. Kennedy created National School Lunch Week in 1962 to promote the importance of a healthy school lunch in a child's life and the impact it has inside and outside the classroom. The federally-funded National School Lunch Program (NSLP) serves more than 30 million children every day.

"We know that nutritious meals in schools are important for students' concentration, behavior and mood," said Elena Hildreth, Director of Food & Nutrition Services. "That doesn't change when children are learning remotely. We're proud that we have been able to support our U-46 families who are struggling with financial hardship and other difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic."

Hildreth will join Monday's Board meeting to accept the "Accent on Achievement" certificate for the Food and Nutrition Services department at 7 p.m. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, the Board will be participating electronically using a Zoom Webinar which the public may join live at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87925441011>. Members of the public will be able to issue public comment through the Zoom application during the public comment portion of the meeting. The meeting will also be live streamed on the District's [YouTube Channel](#).

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School District U-46 serves families in 11 communities: Bartlett, Elgin, Hanover Park, South Elgin, Streamwood and Wayne, as well as portions of Carol Stream, Hoffman Estates, St. Charles, Schaumburg, and West Chicago. In total, the District encompasses 90 square miles within the Fox River Valley, approximately 45 minutes west of downtown Chicago, and includes communities within Cook, DuPage and Kane counties. More than 38,000 pre-K through 12th graders attend the 57 District schools and programs. To learn more, visit the U-46 [website](#), or like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).