

Summer Lunch Program Big Success; Volunteers Recognized
(KNZA)--Community volunteers were recognized on the final day of the No Hunger Summer Initiative lunch program held at the Brown County Sheriff's Office on August 12th.

The recognition came from Sheriff John Merchant in the form of Certificates of Appreciation. The three volunteers recognized were Bill Holland, Corrine Weldon, and Samantha Shamburg. The certificates state, "Your spirit of 'Volunteerism' is inspiring to all residents of Brown County. Because of your dedicated efforts in the "No Hunger Summer Initiative" no children in Brown County had to go hungry this summer. You serve as an example to all of us and should be very proud of your accomplishments."

The Hiawatha ACES, (Allied Community Enrichment Society) hosted the "No Hunger Summer Initiative" lunch Program at the Brown County Sheriff's Office this summer. The program's goal was to help ensure all children in Brown County had the opportunity to receive a nutritional, well balanced meal available for the lunch meal Monday through Friday throughout the summer free of charge. Meals were also available for parents and older siblings for a modest charge.

According to Brown County Sheriff John Merchant, Ian Schuetz, president of the Hiawatha ACE's organization, approached him regarding the use of the basement in the Sheriff's Office for the Summer Lunch Program in the winter of 2015. According to Schuetz, the program has been running since 2013 and was originally held at the Fisher Community Center on east Iowa street in Hiawatha. Schuetz wanted a more centrally located, safe location to conduct the program. He was concerned about children needing to cross First Street/U.S. 73 to get to their location.

Schuetz said the Hiawatha ACES saw the need in Brown County for a program such as the "No Hunger Summer Initiative."

"We could see there were a large number of children in this county who had no reliable meal plan during the summer months," Schuetz said. "We were also very short on storage space at the Fisher Center (and) the Sheriff's Office basement was the perfect place to hold our program."

The current Sheriff's Office was constructed with a large basement designed for use as a community storm shelter. The Brown County Commissioners were approached by Sheriff Merchant concerning the use of the basement for the ACE's Summer Lunch Program. The Commission approved and endorsed the

request.

The ACEs partnered with the Second Harvest Food Bank in St. Joseph, Missouri, as well as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to coordinate the initiative. The USDA provides a per meal, per child, amount of revenue, the Second Harvest Food Bank takes care of purchasing the needed food as well as record keeping, local Hiawatha area volunteers (Hiawatha ACES) provide the manpower to prepare the meals.

According to Schuetz, the change in location has resulted in a doubling of output compared to past years.

“I think the accessibility of the new location, the positive attitude of the volunteers and the comfortable, safe environment of the Sheriff’s Office is responsible for our increased numbers this year,” Schuetz said. “We had an average of 84 meals served per day that the service was offered.”

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