



FRAC: Model Afterschool and Summer Advocacy Efforts

Model Program

Food Banks Asks UPS and HTA to Help Transport Summer Meals to Rural Areas **Food for People, Humboldt County Transit Authority and UPS, CA**

Finding innovative solutions is the key to success in Eureka, CA where Food for People, the food bank serving Humboldt County, sponsors the Summer Food Service Program and partners with the Humboldt County Transit Authority (HTA) and UPS to serve 200 children in rural areas.

This successful relationship started six years ago when Food for People approached HTA and explained that high transportation costs were making it too expensive for summer meals to be delivered to children in rural areas. HTA agreed to get involved.

To reach even more rural children, Food for People asked UPS to deliver meals to other rural sites. "UPS was already picking up gleaned produce from farmers along some of their delivery routes so the basis for the partnership was already there", Rishel explained.

Food for People prepares the lunches, places them in coolers, and then puts them on the public bus or a UPS truck for distribution.

The HTA Partnership

During the summer months, HTA's southbound bus drops off around 80 meals each day to children at three program sites. This saves summer food staff members about 60 miles of driving every day. The meal sites all offer programs or informal activities such as arts and crafts. Paperwork is returned weekly inside one of the empty coolers. Community volunteers or site staff usually return the coolers when they come into the city, but occasionally food bank staff members drive out to the sites and collect them. "The entire community seems to be behind this initiative", said Jennifer Rishel, Fund Development Director at Food for People. The regular passengers on the bus like the idea so much that they make a point of explaining the meal delivery system to new riders.

The UPS Partnership

Food for People now loads meals on to UPS delivery trucks, which then deliver the meals to two rural locations an hour outside the city. Thanks to this creative partnership, an additional 120 children receive nutritious lunches each day throughout the summer. UPS exchanges the coolers with lunches for the empties and completed paperwork from the day before. Food bank staff then pick up the empty coolers from the UPS hub the next day when they drop off meals for that day's delivery.

"Since no one is willing to sponsor summer food sites in these rural communities, it would have been impossible to get meals to children in these areas without the assistance of UPS", Rishel remarked. "We really appreciate our local UPS office and all the drivers who have been so supportive of the program over the past two years. The whole concept has promoted great relationships around the county."

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