

Volunteers of America Chesapeake Shepherd's Cove Shelter Uses The Child and Adult Care Food Program To Serve Nutritious Meals and Snacks

Because of the Child and Adult Care Food Program, the children at the Volunteers of America Chesapeake Shepherd's Cove Shelter enjoy not only nutritious meals and snacks, but additional services. These services were made possible because the Child and Adult Care Food Program freed up other funds that previously had to be used for the food and labor necessary for producing meals and snacks for the children.

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federal nutrition program that reimburses homeless and domestic violence shelters for the meals and snacks served to children residing in those shelters. The program is administered on a state level by the State CACFP Agency.

Paperwork is Kept To A Minimum

Volunteers of America Chesapeake Shepherd's Cove Shelter, located in Maryland, feels that the amount of paperwork is small compared to the many benefits. The shelter compiles a menu for the month showing the foods served to children for meals and snacks claimed for reimbursement, and attendance sheets. This information is sent to the state each month. The Shepherd's Cove shelter, as with many shelters, was already collecting most of this information for other grant reporting requirements.

Program Increases Resources Available To Shelters

With the additional resources added to the budget, Shepherd's Cove shelter was able to shift the funding it had previously used for serving meals and snacks to other uses, including starting a new program providing therapeutic after-school care for children with behavioral problems. The available funds also allowed the shelter to match the salary of a VISTA/AmeriCorps volunteer to enhance the job program. The shelter is able to stay open all day because they have the resources to feed three meals a day. The shelter uses the Child and Adult Care Food Program to serve about 60 children each day. The shelter has spaces for 24 families and 24 single women.

Shelters interested in participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program should contact their State CACFP agency. For a list of State CACFP agency contacts or more information visit the Food Research and Action Center's website: www.frac.org.

