



DOUGLAS COUNTY

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

DOUGLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS AWARDED SUMMER MEALS INITIATIVE GRANT

WRITTEN BY: K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION- DOUGLAS COUNTY SNAP-ED

The Baldwin City, Eudora, and Lawrence school districts were awarded the Kansas Health Foundation (KHF) and Sunflower Foundation (SFF) grant for the summer meals initiative. This grant funded the betterment of summer meal programs in addition to the existing USDA funded Summer Food Service Program.

Grantees in medium-size districts between 1,000 and 10,000 students, including Baldwin City and Eudora, received a base of \$6,000 each plus a per pupil rate of \$2.17. As Lawrence School District is a large district with more than 10,000 students, they received a base of \$10,000 plus a per pupil rate of \$2.17. Across the state of Kansas, the KHF and SFF awarded \$1.2 million in grant funding to 118 school districts/community partners to help feed Kansas kids and families this summer.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an urgent need for food assistance in our local communities.

“Feeding nutritious meals to children this summer posed a unique challenge to schools. Local school districts successfully implemented meal programs during the pandemic and their creativity, persistence, and resilience did not go unnoticed” says Cheryl Barnes, SNAP-ED Nutrition Educator with K-State Research and Extension – Douglas County.

According to Nichole Burnett, RD, LD, Director of Food Services in Baldwin City, their grant money funded hot and cold boxes and ice packs to replace worn out equipment. The goal with this equipment was to help reduce the number of trips between the school, where food preparation was, and where food was distributed. The equipment allowed the school to keep food in the appropriate temperature zone for safety, which aided in eliminating food waste if there were leftovers after distributions.



Photo by: Wendy Conover, Baldwin City Library Director, at the Baldwin Grab & Go site at the Baldwin City Library

Emma (21) and Jacob (19) had full summer plans before Covid-19 interrupted jobs and internships. An opportunity to work with the USD348 Summer Food Service Program allowed the siblings to join community efforts and serve. Emma shared, "In the midst of a pandemic that has led to so much pain and unexpected change, the opportunity to reconnect with my community has been a light in the darkness. While this is not the summer I had planned, I am grateful for the opportunity to work alongside other community members in the kitchen and help to support this great program."



Photo by: Cassy Bailey, Dean of Students at Baker University, of Emma and Jacob volunteering at the Baldwin City Summer Food Service Program

Shanda Hurla, Executive Director of the Eudora Schools Foundation shared, "We are beyond grateful for the support from the Kansas Health Foundation, the Sunflower Foundation, and the Douglas County Community Foundation to help us feed our Eudora kids all summer. The assurance of knowing that our students are getting at least two meals a day, in addition to, once a week, having the opportunity to take home fresh produce from area farms is a huge positive for our families that are managing and navigating all the stresses during this unprecedented time. Feeding Eudora's success this summer wouldn't be possible without all the local collaboration and the bigger support from several local and state Foundations. We are so appreciative."



Photo by: Shanda Hurla, Executive Director Eudora Schools Foundation, taken at the Feeding Eudora site