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ALSDE CHILD NUTRITION UNIT READIES FOR THIRD ANNUAL SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM KICKOFF RALLY

“Break for a Plate” event aims to raise awareness of program, boost participation

Montgomery, Ala. – To mark the 40th anniversary of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS) this year has set a goal of serving 200 million meals nationwide to children and teens who are at risk of experiencing hunger when school is out – 14 million more meals than were provided in 2014.

Alabama, which is among the Top 10 states in the nation that are continuing to experience gains in the number of SFSP sponsors as well as meals served, has once again been tasked by the USDA to boost SFSP participation in order to help increase the number of children who receive proper nutrition during the summer and are thus ready to learn when they return to school in the fall.

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), Child Nutrition Program (CNP) Section, will host a rally to kick off the state’s efforts to aid the USDA FNS in achieving its goal at 10 a.m. on Friday, May 8, 2015, on the steps of the Alabama State Capitol Building, 600 Dexter Avenue, Montgomery.

The third annual kickoff rally, “Break for A Plate,” will feature remarks by State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tommy Bice and Robin Bailey, USDA FNS Southeast Regional Administrator.

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Other highlights of the celebration will include performances by the Greenville High School Band and Luverne High School Cheerleading Team; an appearance by the Montgomery Biscuits Baseball mascot, Big Mo; and tours of the Mobile County School System’s Super Food Express, which administers summer meals via school bus.

Alabama SFSP sponsors served a total of 1,995,852 meals in 2014, up from 1,650,896 in 2013. In addition, 172,173 children were served last year, compared with 137,537 in 2013.

Aside from the annual rally, the continued growth of the state’s summer feeding program can also be attributed to awareness raised through www.BreakforaPlate.com, a website developed to promote the need for more sponsors in USDA targeted areas where SFSP participation is low.

Despite these gains, there still are not enough organizations administering the program in many communities with the highest need, and the ALSDE continues to work diligently to reach new sponsors through partnerships with national, state, and local organizations.

Here are some facts about the Summer Food Service Program:

- Participating organizations may be reimbursed for meals and snacks that meet USDA guidelines.

- The ALSDE encourages schools, parks and recreation programs, faith-based organizations, and other nonprofit organizations to offer meals through the Summer Food Service Program.

- All children 18 years of age and under who come to an approved open site or to an eligible enrolled site may receive meals provided by SFSP sponsors.

More information can be obtained by contacting the Alabama State Department of Education, Child Nutrition Programs, at 334-242-8249 or visiting www.BreakforaPlate.com.

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