

Livingston Daily

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How many students in your Livingston County public school district need lunch for free or at a reduced cost?

[Sean Bradley](#), Livingston Daily Published 6:00 a.m. ET July 1, 2019

In Livingston County, 21% of public school children qualify for free or reduced-price lunch programs.

This means that when the county's [26,597 public school-enrolled children](#) leave school for the summer, [5,672 of them](#) could go without breakfast and lunch in the summer months.

To help rectify this, Gleaners Community Food Bank has launched its ninth annual "Hunger Free Summer" program, which provides children with a safe environment to eat meals and participate in activities throughout the summer, according to a news release.

"Every child deserves a hunger free summer," said Gerry Brisson, president and CEO of Gleaners Community Food Bank. "Yet, we know that without access to breakfast and lunch at school, many kids in our community will spend the summer wondering where their next meal will come from. We cannot let that happen. That's why our summer programs and 'Hunger Free Summer' campaign are so critical."

The 12-week campaign, which lasts through Sept. 2, raises money for food purchases and programs for use by children in the summer.

Gleaners' "Hunger Free Summer" program partners with the Salvation Army's "Summer Lunch Bunch" program, said Bridget Brown, director of Food Secure Livingston at Gleaners Community Food Bank's location in Howell.

There are more than 90 summer meal sites throughout the five-county region Gleaners covers, which includes Livingston, Monroe, Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties. Nearly 70% of the meal sites serve breakfast and lunch.

The sites also provide educational, physical and recreational activities in supervised environments, according to the news release.

There are more than 300,000 children in southeast Michigan who qualify for free or reduced price lunch programs, according to data from child well being tracker Kids Count.

The numbers breakdown as follows:

- Wayne: 174,793 children;
- Oakland: 62,572 children;
- Macomb: 59,400 children;
- Monroe: 8,787 children; and
- Livingston: 5,672 children.

Although Livingston County's number is the lowest of the five counties, the numbers from the five public school who receive free or reduced-price lunches break down even further.

"Likely, there are more than that," Brown said. "We may just not serve them on a day-to-day basis."

Fowlerville Community Schools has the highest percentage of students who qualified for free or reduced-cost lunch in the 2017-18 school year at 35%, while 29% of Howell Public Schools' students qualified, according to data from the Michigan Department of Education.

At Pinckney Community Schools, 21% qualified that year. In the Brighton and Hartland public school districts, it was 14%.

To participate in the "Hunger Free Summer" match campaign, donors can visit www.hungerfreesummer.org, call 855-315-3663 or mail checks to Gleaners Community Food Bank at P.O. Box 44050, Detroit, MI 48244. Checks should include "Hunger Free Summer" on the memo line to ensure the donation is matched.

In addition, the Salvation Army's "Summer Lunch Bunch" program meets at locations throughout the summer for free. Visit salvationarmylivingston.org for more information.

Contact Livingston Daily reporter Sean Bradley at 517-552-2860 or at sbradley@livingstondaily.com. Follow him on Twitter @SbradleyLD.

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