

"FOOD FOR WEEKENDS" PROGRAM

Families of Platte County School District #1 are invited to apply to participate in the Wheatland, Glendo, and Chugwater Food for Weekends Program. It is an effort of the Platte County Ministerial Association and UW Extension Cent\$ible Nutrition, Food Bank of the Rockies, and Platte County #1 to address nutritional needs of families on weekends during the school year.

PCSD#1 students may participate in the program with parental permission. Students pick up the backpacks on Thursdays, or the last day of school before a holiday, and then return the empty backpacks to school on Monday, or the next day of school. Volunteers then fill the backpacks to be distributed again the following week. Backpacks will be distributed as the funding for this program is dependent on grants and donations.

The idea of the program is to have the student pick up a typical school backpack after school on Thursdays (or the last day of school before a vacation), containing non-perishable



food items, which are in an easy to prepare or ready to eat form. The student returns the backpack the next school day, and then the backpacks are ready to pick up again on Thursday, or prior to school breaks. Each family in the program receives one backpack per family each week. Please help your child remember to pick up the backpacks on Thursdays and return by the following Monday.

All families interested in applying, must complete the application and return it to the school office.

Applications for the program may be picked up at all **Platte #1 Schools and the District Office** located at 1350 Oak Street in Wheatland.

If you have any questions, please call

your student's Principal or Superintendent Miller at 307-322-3175.



The Link Between Learning and Child Hunger in America

When children experience food insecurity, they usually do not experience only hunger. When you see a child that is struggling with hunger, it may mean that there are additional problems that present a multi-faceted challenge.

A study from the Tufts University Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy demonstrates that the effects of child hunger in America also reach out to touch other areas of a child's life, and most notably, their cognitive development.

The study shows that there is a link between nutrition and cognitive development, providing evidence that the brain's ability to develop can be negatively impacted when adequate nutrition is not available. The key findings from the study include:

- A child not getting enough to eat on a regular basis can delay brain development and the child's ability to learn. The longer food insecurity continues, the greater chance of cognitive delays.
- Low levels of iron, which is detected in nearly a quarter of low-income children and is a key concern with child hunger in America, is linked with impaired cognitive development.
- Low-income children that come to school hungry have lower scores on standardized tests than low-income children that arrive at school well-fed.
- When nutrition is improved, the effects of food insecurity can be treated.

When a child is food insecure, the body naturally prioritizes the small amounts of food and how it will be used to fuel the functions of the body.

Energy from food is first applied to the maintenance of organs like the heart and lungs, followed by use for growth. Social activity and learning are the last place that energy from food is applied, so children that do not have adequate access to healthy foods may experience social and learning delays.

It is no secret that children that are receiving enough food to fuel not only their organs and their growth, but also fuel their learning, will lead a more productive life. They will be higher-achieving in school and will be able to expend energy toward learning about how to make good choices and have positive social interactions. In short, children that are well-nourished will be healthier, happier and more able to contribute to a healthy society.

Child hunger in America does not happen in isolation. These children may not only have cognitive delays because of food insecurity, but they may also have untreated health problems or parents that are under high levels of stress from job insecurity.

See feedingamerica.org for more information



How Can I Help This Program Continue To Be Successful?

Thanks to the community partnership of the University of Wyoming Extension Cent\$ible Nutrition, the Food Bank of the Rockies, the Platte County Ministerial Association, and Platte County School District #1, we are able to offer this valuable service to our families.

We are accepting donations to expand the types of food we can offer and to make this program sustainable for the future. Donations may be used to provide more fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy products, meat and other food items in the form of vouchers, coupons, or gift cards to local grocery stores.

If you would like to make a donation to the **"FOOD 4 WEEKENDS"** program, see your local church leader, Superintendent Steve Miller, or contact Shelley Marker at 307-331-0947 or shelleymarker@yahoo.com.

Thank you for helping us make a difference!

