



# Creative

## Kids Cruisin' Kitchen — A Creative Partnership: Omaha, NE

Kids Cruisin' Kitchen knocked down a huge barrier this summer in fighting child hunger. Instead of expecting kids to find summer food programs at traditional serving locations, we took the food directly to where they live and play.

We met our pilot goal of serving about 900 meals per week – more than 8,000 meals for the summer – from the counters of two Salvation Army disaster relief trucks. By targeting areas where so many eligible children live, we devised our routes and schedules for breakfast and lunch. We arrived each weekday at apartment complexes where they live and at parks where they play.

Their gratitude was obvious as they greeted us each day. At summer's end, kids presented one of our site monitors, James Farley, with a framed photo of them enjoying breakfast.

"I was happy to see so many kids come back every day with

smiles on their faces and so thankful for the food," Farley said.

The success of Kids Cruisin' Kitchen came not just from willing partners, but from partners willing to share their best available resources. Hunger Free Heartland coordinated the project and provided partial funding. The Salvation Army provided vital trucks, drivers and volunteer coordination. Food Bank for the Heartland provided food, weekend food backpacks and volunteers. Feeding America and ConAgra Foods Foundation provided overall funding. The Mutual of Omaha Foundation funded food for adults who brought their children. The Douglas County Health Department provided communication support.

Our logistics included two routes staffed with four workers per truck. The first route included three apartment com-

plexes; the second included two parks. We filled more than 30 volunteer shifts per week - adding up to more than 1200 volunteer hours! The kids enjoyed either a hot or cold breakfast – often including yogurt, cereal, fruit and milk. Lunch included menus like baked ziti with meat and cheese, green beans, rolls, oranges, and milk.

For 14-year-old Katie Glessman, her Kids Cruisin' Kitchen meal was sometimes her only meal of the day. She and her friends, who usually eat free lunch at school, said getting food in the summer can be a struggle. "I like it because sometimes my mom can't afford to buy food," Glessman said.

Kids Cruisin' Kitchen is a tremendous way to reach kids who need it, but we're sad that there are still so many kids who go without over the summer.



Food that's in when school is out.



**Photo 1:**  
Showing their Gratitude!



**Photo 2:**  
Partners working  
together to feed the  
children.