



# Rural

## West Sioux School: Hawarden, IA

West Sioux School District, located in northwest Iowa, is a consolidated school district that has school buildings in two towns, Hawarden and Ireton, which are about 10 miles apart. West Sioux has experienced a significant demographical change in the past 20 years, which is not uncommon to rural schools throughout the nation. West Sioux has seen an increase in the number of students that qualify for free and reduced lunch, an increase in Hispanic and English Language Learners, an increase in homeless students and a decrease in enrollment. Even with the various challenges, the school district is a successful innovator in the field of education. One of the innovative programs that has seen great success is the Summer Food Program.

During the summer of 2011, approximately 400 meals were served each day at two different sites in two different towns. Children of all ages came to the schools for breakfast and/or lunch. Prior to 2011, there was

only one site that served breakfast and lunch to children. The summer food program has been in operation for the past four summers.

The theme for this year's program was "Trophy". Incentives were offered to encourage attendance. Children received a sticker every time they came for a meal. After receiving 20 stickers, they earned a trophy t-shirt. The students were very motivated by this incentive system. The Ireton site added an extra incentive. After students earned the t-shirt, they could earn stickers and after acquiring 15 stickers they earned a trophy water bottle.

Local ministers, school administrators at both the public and private schools, notified children of the program. Posters and menus were placed in various businesses in both towns. Both towns have a local access television station and information and menus were posted on there as well.

Summer school classes were

held at the Hawarden schools. The summer school program ran from 8:30-12:30 and bussing was provided. Most of the students that attended summer school came to the summer food program for both breakfast and lunch daily. Many students ate lunch at the school before going to a ball game or to the swimming pool. Daycares, parents and elderly people also attended the program.

At the Hawarden site, nutrition classes and dental health screening were provided. Students were informed of ways to maintain good nutrition and make healthy food choices. Nutritious snacks were available for children to sample.



Food that's in when school is out.

**Photo 1:** Area daycares enjoying the Summer Food Program.



**Photo 2:** Working for my "Trophy" t-shirt

**Photo 3:** Food at the summer program is so good

