



DREXEL UNIVERSITY

Center for

# Hunger-Free Communities

## *Summer Meals Act – S. 2527* Insights from Witnesses to Hunger

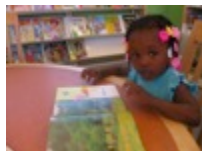
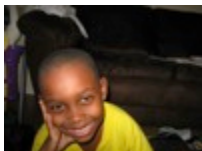
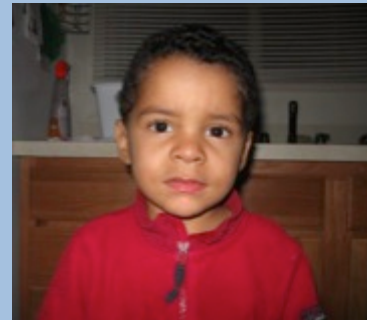
Senators Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Representatives Don Young (R-AK) and Rick Larsen (D-WA) recently proposed the Summer Meals Act of 2014. This bill would enhance efforts to expand the reach of the Summer Food Program to low-income children and simplify the administration of the program for sponsors. To capture the impact of this bipartisan proposal, members of Witnesses to Hunger made statements on the struggles they face when feeding their families in the summer.

“I am volunteering as a Site Coordinator at a Summer Lunch Program in Oakland. Yesterday, a mother and her two kids told me that their local library closed (Oakland Libraries often host Summer Lunch Programs) so they had to walk to another site: to an unfamiliar neighborhood, over a mile, hilly, and with two hungry, restless children. Of course there is nothing wrong with a nice walk, but the circumstance is all wrong.”

- Sarah P., Witnesses to Hunger, Oakland, CA

“It’s hard enough during the school year, and in the summertime I really have to be extra careful. I usually do, in the summertime, go without eating. My kids, no matter what, they eat. They’ll ask me, ‘mommy why aren’t you eating?’ and I’ll say, ‘oh I’ll eat after you guys eat.’ My son would get so upset and say, ‘Well if you’re not eating, I’m not gonna eat because that’s not fair if you don’t eat.’”

– Jean C., Witnesses to Hunger, Scranton, PA





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"During the summer, the kids always need more to drink. Now that they're not in school, we have to provide an extra meal. The kids are doing more things so they'll have a bigger appetite during the summer. When they go to the babysitter, we have to provide food for them. I would love to satisfy my kids with whatever they would *like* to eat sometimes."

- Kathy, Witnesses to Hunger, Camden, NJ



"I am a single proud mother of two girls ages 9 and 5. I have been going through some rough times that make it difficult to provide for my family. My 5 year old suffers from asthma and food allergies and I have to buy separate food for her to eat. This food is expensive and it poses a significant amount of stress on my family. One out of three of us will not eat properly. It's not enough to provide for the summer. My daughter is suffering most because school's out and now summer camp does not provide the food she eats so I have to provide her meals and it limits the amount of food she has at home. I need assistance to feed my children, especially for the summer. It has become extremely difficult to manage both eating routines. To provide for home and now for summer camp... impossible."

- Juell F., Witnesses to Hunger, Boston, MA

"With summer approaching I know that feeding my children will be even more difficult. Kids play more, and without school meals I need to keep them hydrated and fed throughout the day. This means I will have to take money from paying my bills to use at the grocery store since I don't have any buffer to help make up for this loss. My best friend works at a school and she says some of the kids actually look forward to going to school just because they can eat breakfast and lunch there."

- Anisa D., Witnesses to Hunger, Camden, NJ

