

# Case Study: Fighting Child Hunger

How a local summer meal program grew to feed children statewide and influence a national discussion.



## Phase 1: Local

During the Great Recession pediatricians were seeing unprecedented levels of food insecurity. The Office of Child Health Equity (OCHE) at Stanford Medicine partnered with a local school district in 2012 to launch the district's first summer meal program. Through the course of the program, they leveraged public and private funding to feed both children and adults--the first program in the region to prioritize feeding adult caregivers. Many partners including the YMCA of Silicon Valley and Second Harvest Food Bank were instrumental in growing, funding, and sustaining this summer meal program which continues today.



## Phase 2: State

The library meal program success led to "Lunch at the Library" being endorsed by the California Library Association (CLA) in 2013. Local and state policy makers encouraged programs to evaluate and disseminate evidence to ensure long-term sustainability. The OCHE team answered this call, conducting two key studies\* of the impact of this model. Findings were shared with community partners, and local and state policy makers. The cumulative result is that the 2018-19 State Budget included \$1 million dollars in funding to support Lunch at the Library statewide and the 2021-22 budget has appropriated \$800K to continue the program.



Our early evaluation of the summer meal program revealed that families were worried about food during winter break. The local library stepped up to fill the gap providing meals to children and caregivers for the two weeks of winter vacation/break. This was the first library-based meal program in

the Peninsula. The OCHE provided seed funding to the library meal program, which has proven to be wildly successful. The spark that started in 2012 has led to ongoing, community-meal models that have expanded statewide, all unified in their commitment that no child in California should go hungry.

**Partners in this work:** Ravenswood City School District, YMCA of Silicon Valley, Second Harvest Food Bank, Revolution Foods, San Mateo Libraries, Lucile Packard Children's Hospital

## Phase 3: National

Word of this innovative work addressing food insecurity through multidisciplinary partnerships spread. In 2021 the OCHE was contacted by Congressman Jim McGovern's office (D, Massachusetts), Chairman of the House Rules Committee, who has a long record of fighting for programs addressing hunger and food insecurity. In order to build support for a White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, Hunger, and Health, the Congressman led a national listening tour on hunger and on August 20, 2021 he came to East Palo Alto. The roundtable event highlighted our community's experiences, our collaborative approach and allowed us to share innovative solutions.



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Lunch at the library: examination of a community-based approach to addressing summer food insecurity

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**Combating Child Summer Food Insecurity: Examination of a Community-Based Mobile Meal Program**

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