



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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Summerfest Kicks Off Picnics in the Park Free Lunch Program for Youth

Summer Food Service Program offers meals, activities for young people at Riverside parks

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The Picnics in the Park series in Riverside, which offers free lunches and activities to young people under age 18, kicked off Wednesday with the celebration of Summerfest at Don Lorenzi Park.

Picnics in the Park features the Riverside and Alvard Unified School Districts' Summer Food Service Program, which provides free lunches for all children age two to 18 at parks and community centers throughout the City of Riverside weekdays through Aug. 22, excluding July 4th.

The Riverside Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department offers physical activity games for kids at some sites and the UC Cooperative Extension provides interactive nutrition education and physical activity for parents.

The program got underway Wednesday at Summerfest, which featured games and activities, such as face painting and an obstacle course, a farmers' market, local vendors, nutrition and wellness booths and cooking demonstrations.

The event, hosted by the City of Riverside and the Riverside and Alvard Unified School Districts, celebrated kids having fit, fresh, and fun places throughout Riverside to eat healthy food and stay active all summer. Nearly 3,000 meals – 2,061 for kids and 764 for adults – were served.

Riverside Mayor Rusty Bailey expressed excitement about the prospect of another partnership that supports Riverside's core values and encourages community spirit.

“Summerfest and the other upcoming picnic lunches represent opportunities for neighbors to eat a healthy meal together and get to know each other,” Mayor Bailey said. “Events like this truly prove that we are better together here in Riverside.”

The Summer Food Service Program is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture and is supported by schools and communities all over the nation.

“School might be out for the summer, but learning never takes a vacation,” says Fay Kazzi, Nutrition Consultant at Alvord Unified School District. “That’s why we believe in summer-meal programs to ensure kids will maximize life learning with the aid of a nourished body and mind.”

To find your child’s local summer lunch site and time within the City of Riverside, just call 311.