



Interfaith Conference on Childhood Hunger

Hosted by the Virginia Synod, ELCA
Saturday 25 July 2015 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM
Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
Waynesboro, Virginia 22980

Initial Synthesis from Recorded Thoughts...

Introduction -- Who are we? We are a people called to build up future generations in body, mind, and spirit. Through thousands of Virginia congregations and schools and organizations, we have been entrusted with the resources to find and feed **all** hungry children throughout the Commonwealth. The family of faith is ready to reclaim its role as the **preserver and sustainer of life** within each community.

Is there a common advocacy we could be united in?

- Universal Breakfast in Schools legislation for the Commonwealth of Virginia
- Federal Summer Meals Act of 2015 (S.613/H.R.1728)
- Federal Stop Child Summer Hunger Act of 2015 (S.1539/H.R.2715)

What are the root causes of food insecurity and how can we work together to address these?

- **Education** to specifically address lack of awareness and understanding of the most efficient and effective ways for providing nourishing meals for families (lowering cost to feed)
- **Employment** to address lack of means for families by finding meaningful work for all adults in our communities allowing them to gather and share resources for the feeding of children
- **Example** to overcome both apathy and hopelessness through the active demonstration of parental and pastoral responsibility for feeding children, inspiring intergenerational edification in body, mind, and spirit -- parents and pastors working together to feed kids!

What coordinated actions can we take?

- **The Family of Faith** passes on to future generations the knowledge and expectation that if you are ever anxious about where you will get the next meal for your children, come to the church and we will feed you and help lift you up. If one of six children is hungry, it is the moral responsibility of the other five to set the example and share what they have with the one.
- **Conferences, Dioceses, Presbyteries, and Synods** leaders **build the skill and the will** of congregations to find and feed hungry children in their communities. We do so by:
 - Providing resources to share best practices for establishing feeding programs
 - Easing navigation through daunting processes for funding and sustainment
 - Coordinating advocacy at Federal, State, and Local levels
- **Conferences, Dioceses, Presbyteries, and Synods** establish relationships with regional disaster-relief organizations and commercial feeding establishments for integration of disaster-exercises and community feeding events with summer and weekend feeding programs.
- **Congregations** reach out to community schools and clubs to form local alliances and implement custom tailored child-feeding solutions for their communities
- **Congregations** share information through posters and brochures on available resources with families (211, 877-877, WIC, food banks, community meals, summer feeding sites, etc).
- **Virginia Synod** hosts a second Interfaith Conference on Wednesday 18 November 2015 -- again at Grace Lutheran Church in Waynesboro -- with focus on legislative advocacy.



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Number	Ideas to Share
Topic 1 Summer	Table 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide an easy way to connect with sponsors, reassurance that sites and sponsors are different ● Get facts out early about how to be involved in the FALL, going into October, before the holiday season ● Start preparing and get information out early in time for February meetings so that people can meet May deadlines. Need educational component. ● Share information about feed the family model. ● Form a network for best practices between sites ● Get information out about the census-track eligibility to churches ● Advocate together for SFSP and an end to congregate feeding. Need: Provide the words to say... ● Could we draw from the women's groups as hubs of advocacy? ● How can we utilize technology like texting and email? ● Sharing the 877-877 text number (text FOOD) to 877-877 ● Informational need: where are the greatest needs for summer feeding in the state? Where can we concentrate our efforts so this problem doesn't get too large and overwhelming. ● Churches or food banks could give out information about summer feeding sites like the 877-877. ● How can we get at the root issues of childhood hunger, instead of temporary fixes?
Topic 1 Summer	Table 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Faith based toolkit/timeline, ● Info on reauthorization for child nutrition bill, ● Reporting mechanism of what is happening in the churches ● Interfaith organizations to simply feed the hungry ● Faith communities to reach out to other communities to join together to feed the hungry ● Brochures about 211 or other resources available in churches/ faith communities
Topic 1 Summer	Table 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advocacy with school boards ● Council educates churches about summer feeding program in September; instead of spring ● Reach out to disaster relief canteens about potential partnerships - Red Cross, Salvation Army, Baptist Association ● Learn more about Ecumenical Poverty Initiative

<p>Topic 1 Summer</p>	<p>Table 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use the reauthorization timeline to create advocacy groups ● Find those people/groups that have passion for this and empower them to become sponsors/sites. ● Use human rights/civil rights groups to build coalition to engage elected leaders in conversation. ● Churches come together and start a site ● Join Bread for the World <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Deadline for letters is September http://www.bread.org/write-congress ● Link organizations ● How do we disseminate information about SFP to organizations that are already doing similar programs out-of-pocket? ● Educate faith-based entities that child hunger is an issue.
<p>Topic 1 Summer</p>	<p>Table 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Checking into other summer feeding programs that are not connected with this program. Make sure there is no duplication of effort. Local people also know the needs within each county. To find these places, contact the Council of Community Services website. That gives a listing of all community services. ● Have parishes/contact local school boards. ● How do the parents/children find out about the availability of these programs? Where and how is this information disseminated? ● At congregational/diocesan/synod meetings have representatives come talk to the members how to get involved or give updates on these programs. ● Use radio stations public service announcements to get the news out.
<p>Topic 2 Breakfast</p>	<p>Table 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make teams in your community to talk about breakfast in the classroom ● Letters to newspapers in your area to raise awareness. ● Need: List of Schools that are already participating ● Simplify the information so people don't get discouraged ● Strategize together to advocate, connect the dots from different groups. ● How do we empower and unify families, instead of just doing meals for children (could be more in dinner)?
<p>Topic 2 Breakfast</p>	<p>Table 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School-level decision ● Communication at the school-level between administrators is key to program's success. ● School staff setting an example by eating school breakfast along with students. ● Approved school volunteers/organizations staff breakfast in classroom. ● What about delays/late openings? Breakfast isn't typically provided. Are there provisions in place for this? ● Engage local organizations.
<p>Topic 2 Breakfast</p>	<p>Table 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The need to advocate because of the positive benefits from this program ● Are there programs that work with the entire family?
<p>Topic 2 Breakfast</p>	<p>Table 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Further examine potential to advocate to private schools

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every student is different and has different needs relative to food - how to best accommodate that within alternative school breakfast models • Eating in classroom has positive impact on classroom social environment
Topic 2 Breakfast	<p>Table 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contingency plans for days out of school (snow days) • How to facilitate teachers with multiple responsibilities • Building trust with faith communities and schools • Give scripts with bullet points to talk with administrators for consistent message • Share specific models of success-ex. Newport News, Norfolk • Supply local community locations with brochures of info on the programs
Topic 3 Weekend	<p>Table 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Williamsburg / James County schools have backpack program • Faith Lutheran in Suffolk backpack program • Southeastern VA food bank participating • Micah's backpack limited in Richmond-Epiphany Lutheran
Topic 3 Weekend	<p>Table 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culpeper UMC - services 1 school/year • St. Luke's Lutheran - Services 4 schools in Culpeper County • A.G. Richardson Elementary - planning for Backpack Program currently in progress. • Peace Lutheran - Charlottesville - planning for Backpack Program in early stages to serve Hollymead Elementary in Albemarle County • Warren County - serving elementary schools
13 Weekend	<p>Table 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No weekend feeding programs identified
14 Weekend	<p>Table 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No weekend feeding programs identified
15 Weekend	<p>Table 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Lynchburg Baptist Church (Dr. Robert Putt) operates program - unknown which schools are served.
16 What can we do together?	<p>Table 1: Who, What</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Virginia Synod will get out information that has been shared on July 25 • Convene a larger, statewide group that includes faith groups, government, and feeding organizations, and nonprofit groups (bread for the world, Feed More). • Extend invitations to other faiths into this group. • Send out Reauthorization Information • How to apply for summer feeding program
17 What can we do together?	<p>Table 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who -- Regional-congregations, municipal, ecumenical, food bank, chamber of commerce, education, nutritionist • What -- discovering best practices for those in need, discovering resources available-ex. organizations, effectively make ourselves visible and vocal

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who -- Commonwealth of VA ● What -- Provide a central reporting system of who is doing what with contact info, address the root causes of hunger
<p>18 What can we do together?</p>	<p>Table 5: Who? What?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is happening in the life of the state in the faith community? What can we do to work together as a grassroots group to advocate? How can we work together? ● We have legislative commonalities ● Who can lead this effort? VA State conferences? VA Interfaith Policy Center? ● Organize local groups? ● How can we connect with Bread for the World? Would they organize the advocacy piece? Attend conference?
<p>19 What can we do together?</p>	<p>Table 2: Who? What?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child nutrition programs need to be reauthorized <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grassroots effort to make legislators aware of issues. ○ Remove congregate eating ○ Create form letter to distribute/submit by target date. ● Look at Alliance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Band together on local levels to county level. ○ Use social media ● Use conference/region gatherings of churches to disseminate information. ● Contacting legislators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Be specific in what is wanted/needed ● Schools have to be the hub ● Educating communities on poverty.
<p>20 What can we do together?</p>	<p>Table 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● VPLC/VA Hunger Solutions and Virginia Feeds Kids - Promote VA Anti-Hunger Policy Conference to encourage further participation and discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support for attendance fee ● Office of the Governor - provide data, best practices, CNR policy priorities, and grant information to larger network for local advocacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Research documentation on root causes of food insecurity ● Virginia Feeds Kids - organize regional meetings and encourage community networking and relationship building to address larger issues of poverty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop outline with concrete steps on local organizing ● Virginia Feeds Kids - tell story of and promote general awareness of “working poor” in Virginia ● Baptist General Convention - draw others to the table for future networking opportunities (VA Policy Conference and regional meetings)