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## **EASTERN SHORE PUBLIC LIBRARY RECOGNIZED FOR PARTICIPATION IN SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM**



*Photo above: Eastern Shore children enjoy a healthy meal after a fun Summer Reading Program. The library was recently recognized for its participation in the 2018 USDA Summer Food Program.*

ACCOMAC, VIRGINIA (January 3, 2019) – Virginia USDA Rural Development recently recognized the Eastern Shore Public Library for participating in the Summer Food Program (SFSP) during the summer of 2018 with a Certificate of Appreciation. The library received a letter signed by Elizabeth W. Green, State Director, Rural Development, United States Department of Agriculture and Dr. Sandy Curwood, PhD, RDN, Director, Office of School Nutrition Programs, Virginia Department of Education, which acknowledged the library’s generosity and initiative in helping Virginia move “one step closer to ending childhood hunger throughout the Commonwealth.”

The letter further stated that summer is a vital time for children’s growth and well-being. On average, only 15% of Virginia children who rely on free or reduced-price school lunches are also getting free meals in the summer through the Summer Meals Program. With the continued support and dedication of community organizations like the public library, the shared goal is to increase that number to 100%.

By hosting a free summer meal site and providing a local and convenient location for children to easily access food resources without the need for major transportation, Eastern Shore Public Library decreased the burden of hunger and helped the kids in the community reach their full potential. Virginia USDA Rural Development is astoundingly grateful for the Library’s leap of faith and unwavering dedication to the youth that reside in their Eastern Shore community.

During the summer of 2018, Eastern Shore Public Library served a total of 434 meals over an eight-week period. Meals were provided two days per week at the library in Accomac and another two days a week at the Nassawadox library location. According to Youth Services Librarian, Janice Felker, lunches were served on twice as many days in 2018 as in 2017 when the library first began the program, and the total number of meals served was over 250% of the total count in 2017. “We hope this program continues to increase its outreach and provide even more of our Eastern Shore youth with access to healthy meals in a safe and friendly environment. By partnering with the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore and Accomack County Parks and Recreation department to participate in the SFSP, Eastern Shore Public Library helped children on the Shore to have all the brain power they needed to learn and read over the summer and then succeed during the school year.”

Eastern Shore Public Library plans to host the meal program again in the summer of 2019. For more information about the library’s Youth Services programs and a calendar of upcoming events, visit [www.espl.org](http://www.espl.org).

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