

# Play-In-The-Park Summer Food Program Kicks Off July 7



*Call 508-961-3015 to find out more information about Play in the Park Summer Food Program.*

The City of New Bedford will continue the summer tradition of offering a Play-in-the-Park Summer Food Program where children will enjoy a free, healthy lunch and supervised recreational activities at one of more than twenty sites across the city.

Kick Off events are planned for on July 7, 2015 at Harrington Park on Court Street, July 8, 2015 at Clasky Park on Purchase Street, and July 9, 2015 at Montes Park on Acushnet Avenue for special activities brought to you by a grant from Project Bread. Residents may call 508-961-3015 to find out more about the Play in the Park Summer Food Program.

The popular free summer program is available to children eighteen and under at parks, playgrounds, and Housing Authority locations throughout the city. The effort is part of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), a federally funded nutrition program that provides free meals to children ages

eighteen and under when school is not in session.

In New Bedford the SFSP is administered by the Department of Parks Recreation & Beaches. Last year the Department was recognized with a "Stand Out Award" by the Office of Nutrition, Health and Safety Programs at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The state agency recognized the Department for "valuable contributions to the Summer Food Service Program" through an increase in participation and development of new programming to engage participants.

This year all children eighteen and under are invited to drop by any of the following sites for a free, delicious, and nutritionally balanced meal from 11am-2pm, Monday through Friday. There are also five rainy day sites throughout the city to ensure reliable access to free lunches. Fun activities are planned at all the sites so children can drop by for a meal, activities, or both. Activities are led by local youth through summer youth employment programs including "CDBG" and SFSP funding. Additional partnerships with community organizations also bring a variety of activities to each site.

- Andrea McCoy Recreation Center (also a rainy day site)
- Ashley Park
- Blue Meadows Housing
- Brickenwood Housing
- Brooklawn Park (also a rainy day site)
- Buttonwood Park
- Clasky Park
- Harmony Community Garden
- Dottin Place Housing
- Gomes School Playground
- Harrington Park
- Hazelwood Park
- Magnett Park
- Montes Park (also a rainy day site)
- Eddie James Park at Nashmount

- Parkdale Housing
- Riverside Park (also a rainy day site)
- Roberto Clement Park
- Ruth Street Park
- Satellite Village
- Shawmut Village
- Westlawn Housing
- West Beach under the Pavilion (a rainy day site only)
- Presidential Village

## Background Information on the Summer Food Service Program and Project Bread

More than 387,000 children across Massachusetts qualify for free or low-cost school meals during the school year. When school ends for the summer, these children lose access to school meals, often leading to unhealthy meals, fatigue, weight gain and learning loss. This leaves many children unprepared to return to school in the fall.

The Summer Food Service Program, administered by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education with support from the Child Nutrition Outreach Program at Project Bread, works to ensure that children have continued access to nutritious meals. The program provides free meals that meet federal nutrition guidelines to all children 18 years old and under, specifically at approved Summer Food Service Program sites in areas with significant concentrations of low-income children.

Project Bread is the only statewide anti-hunger organization committed to providing people of all ages, cultures, and walks of life with sustainable, reliable access to nutritious food. From community-based meal programs, to early childhood and school nutrition initiatives, to improved access to farm-to-table resources, Project Bread approaches hunger as a complex problem with multiple solutions. With funds raised through The Walk for Hunger and other sources, Project Bread pioneers

innovative initiatives and supports effective programs to eradicate hunger in our state. For more information, visit [www.projectbread.org](http://www.projectbread.org), [www.facebook.com/projectbread](http://www.facebook.com/projectbread), or [www.twitter.com/walkforhunger](http://www.twitter.com/walkforhunger).

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, sometimes referred to as the Massachusetts Department of Education, is the state education agency for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It is responsible for public education at the elementary and secondary levels, and is governed by the Massachusetts Board of Education. For more information, visit [www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu).

---