



Creative

The Greater Chicago Food Depository's Lunch Bus Keeps Meals Moving During the Summer:

Chicago, IL

On a warm August afternoon, Miami Park on Chicago's southwest side is at its busiest with children running and playing on swings while mothers, fathers and grandparents sit on benches watching, chatting and waiting. They are keeping their eyes and ears open – not for the ice cream truck, but for the Greater Chicago Food Depository's **Lunch Bus**.

As soon as the white van – decorated with vivid pictures of apples on the side – pulls up, a line quickly forms as the Food Depository's volunteers set up.

"Watermelon!"

Alyssa smiles, takes a huge bite and smiles again. "She loves fruit," her mother says as Alyssa swallows and smiles again, the watermelon juice dripping down her chin.

Miami Park is one of 15 sites the **Lunch Bus** visits in Chicago and its south suburbs each day. Now in its second year, the program will bring more than 20,000 nutritious meals – including grains, protein, fruit, vegetables and milk – directly to children in Cook County this summer.

Working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the State of Illinois and its network of community partners, the Food Depository launched the Lunch Bus to reduce child hunger in Cook County, focusing on priority communities identified in its landmark study of child hunger, *Running on Empty*. Once the priority areas were identified, the Food Depository reached out to parks, churches and synagogues, schools, community organizations and other neighborhood centers to de-

velop the best distribution plan for each community. The Food Depository was then able to link corporate sponsors, individual donors and volunteers to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Summer Food Service Program, resulting in a powerful public-private response to hunger.

As the volunteer packs up, preparing to head to the next stop, Alyssa asks "will there be more food like this next week?" Thanks to the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Summer Food Service Program and the Greater Chicago Food Depository's **Lunch Bus**, the answer is "Yes!"



Food that's in when school is out.



Photo 1 caption: Now in its second year, the Greater Chicago Food Depository's Lunch Bus will bring more than 20,000 nutritious meals – including grains, protein, fruit, vegetables and milk – directly to children in Cook County this summer.



Photo 2 caption: The Lunch Bus makes 15 stops each weekday in priority communities throughout Cook County.