



Universal Elementary School Breakfast Program October 5, 2018

This school year, the Juneau School District is continuing to offer free breakfast for all students at elementary and middle schools, some sit down and others grab and go foods. Also, all high school reduced-price breakfast and lunch recipients are welcome to a free breakfast and lunch for the second year.

The Juneau Community Foundation and United Way of Southeast Alaska teamed up with the Juneau School District and other donors to provide the funding needed for these vital food programs for students. Over \$35,000 is needed annually to bridge the funding gap between federally provided funds for free and reduced breakfast participants and making the breakfast open to all students. Additional donations to keep this program going are being accepted.

“Our partnership among donors and the school district ensures that all of Juneau’s elementary school students get breakfast, while also providing breakfast to middle school students and free breakfast and lunch to high school students who used to have to pay a reduced fee for these meals. This is the third year of the program and with an increasing number of students participating, we are seeking additional donations to keep this food-in-the-morning program going,” said Amy Skilbred, Executive Director, Juneau Community Foundation.

Studies have shown that when students can eat a healthy breakfast at school, a greater number of kids who otherwise would not have a breakfast attend because there is no stigma to having your breakfast at school. This breakfast program relies on parents who meet the guidelines signing their students up for the free and reduced breakfast program because that provides the majority of the funding needed with federal funds.

“It’s great to see students start their day off right by eating a healthy meal. The school district encourages all eligible households to sign up for free and reduced price meals as this is an essential component to making sure this program continues,” said Adrienne Schwartz, Food Services Supervisor for the Juneau School District.

The school district will be monitoring the universal free breakfast program for elementary and middle school students for the 2018-19 school year to determine whether having all students take part de-stigmatizes the free and reduced cost school meals and ensures all students get a healthy start to their day.

“United Way of Southeast Alaska has been a long time partner in providing food resources in our communities. Reducing the number of children that start the day hungry is a positive for everyone. Studies show that when students are not dealing with hunger and uncertainty about their next meal, they are better able to focus on learning. Also, by funding the breakfast program we hope the community increases support for the weekend backpack and vacation food box programs,” reported Wayne Stevens, President and CEO, United Way of Southeast Alaska.

The Juneau Community Foundation (juneaucf.org) and United Way of Southeast Alaska (unitedwaysseak.org) encourage community members and families to donate to support these in-school food programs and the continuation for all students to receive free breakfast in the mornings.

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