



Press Release

October 10, 2012

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Grant from Walmart Foundation Helped Alleviate Childhood Hunger with \$35,000 Grant to the Summer Food Service Program Sponsored by Houston Parks and Recreation Department

Mrs. Tammy Fields had a vision to bring children to the church during the summer. The hard part was how to feed them. She went online and found the Summer Food Service Program and said "Wow! City of Houston!"

"The Youth Freedom Camp" was created at First Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church in the Fifth Ward, operating in June and July. Mrs. Fields was battling cancer, but she postponed surgery and rescheduled medical tests to take full responsibility for the camp. When asked why she did not take care of herself first, she replied, "I will, but I have to make sure that our children in the Youth Freedom Camp are taken care of first."

The camp provided a wide range of education and recreational activities, including a field trip to San Antonio. Youth Freedom Camp had an average of 40 children every day, and served 912 lunches and 921 snacks. (S.F.S.P. has photos of minors and adults and copyright releases for this story).

The "Playhouse Community Theatre" director Jaime Zelaya was planning to have a summer program for children in Houston's Southwest area, but was worried about how to provide lunch. One day, he was sharing his concerns with Ms. Angeles Romero from Talente Bilingüe who told him "Call Houston Parks and Recreation Department. They have the free Summer Food Service Program."

"What a surprise," said Mr. Zelaya. "I applied to the program, attended the training and received bilingual posters, fliers, a sign, and even a big yellow and black bilingual banner. My program was on its way."

Playhouse Community Theatre had an average of 35 children per day who spent their summer learning acting, making props, dressing up and having a great time. And to Mr. Zelaya's amazement, children from nearby Burnett-Bayland Park came for lunch or snacks after their soccer games because the program is for all children ages 1 to 18, with no registration requirement. (S.F.S.P. has photos of minors and adults and copyright releases for this story).

These and many other stories are the reasons why the Summer Food Service Program, sponsored by the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, had 489 sites which served 1,183,104 lunches and snacks to children in Houston and 12 cities in the periphery this past summer.

"This year, we had applications for 191 new sites," said Sheila Pous, Program Administrator. "Most of the new sites we had were thanks to advertising funded by the Walmart Foundation's grant."

In January 2012, Walmart Foundation's State Giving Program awarded a grant of \$35,000 to alleviate childhood hunger in Houston. For the first time in the 30 years of the Summer Food Service Program, grant funds were allocated for bilingual advertising in local newspapers and spots in English and Spanish

radio stations. Also, a colorful health and fitness educational 8-page booklet, with an attractive design and simple language, was distributed and very well received by many of the 29,455 participants attending the Summer Food Service Program.

The Walmart Foundation State Giving Program strives to award grants that have a long-lasting, positive impact on communities across the U.S. In 2010 in Texas, Walmart, Sam's Club locations and the Walmart Foundation awarded more than \$53.4 million to local organizations. Through additional funds donated by customers and Walmart and Sam's Club associates throughout the state, the retailer's contributions in Texas totaled more than \$61.3 million.

About Philanthropy at Walmart

Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are proud to support initiatives that are helping people live better around the globe. In May 2010, Walmart and its Foundation made a historic pledge of \$2 billion through 2015 to fight hunger in the U.S. The Walmart Foundation also supports education, workforce development, environmental sustainability, and health and wellness initiatives. To learn more, visit www.walmartfoundation.org.

About the Houston Parks and Recreation Department

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages over 38,752 acres of parkland and greenspace for the City of Houston and develops and implements recreational programming for citizens of all abilities. For more information on the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, call (832) 395-7022 or visit www.houstonparks.org.