Muskegon Area Intermediate School District Logo

630 Harvey Street  
Muskegon, Michigan 49442-4278  
Phone 231-777-2637 Fax 231-733-1028  
www.muskegonisd.org

# PRESS RELEASE

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Media contacts: Dan Gorman, Food Service Director for Whitehall District Schools and Montague Area Public Schools, 231-855-2134, [dangorman@whitehallschools.net](mailto:dangorman@whitehallschools.net)

Erik Neering, District Manager, Chartwells School Dining, 616-481-1016, [erik.neering@compass-usa.com](mailto:erik.neering@compass-usa.com)

Kristin Tank, PIO, Muskegon Area ISD, 231-894-5419, [ktank@muskegonisd.org](mailto:ktank@muskegonisd.org)

[LINK: Photos of Meal Distributions at School Districts in Muskegon County](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1YWvuj-lLDmU6hqfNBC4DIOimVMwphgGF?usp=sharing)

[School Lunch Day Hero Graphics & Press Release](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1XkIjSVDFOKAZuBZMwID-iG36ELO5ACI1?usp=sharing)

[Meal Distribution Dates and Times](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1j4UbNuCdM-ywYdcPxqKmCnRnSKeiiy5Apo61DriLFYM/edit?usp=sharing)

**School lunch heroes honored; over one million meals given to children**

MUSKEGON, MI– On Friday, May 1 food service staff at the twelve local public school districts in Muskegon County will have collectively distributed over one million meals to students since school buildings closed in March. On that same day, these “school lunch heroes” will join others across America to be recognized for serving up hope to students in the midst of this crisis.

“Our food service staff have huge hearts for kids. They know there are hungry kids out there and this is what we do,” said Erik Neering, District Manager of Chartwells School Dining. “Our staff snapped into action when this crisis hit and they continue to amaze me as the demand for meals increases,” he added. Neering said 176,232 meals were distributed last week alone.

The schools are providing free breakfasts, lunches, and some suppers in a variety of ways. All are providing seven days of meals on a once-a-week basis. Some are delivering at bus stops, many have set times for curbside pickup, and others have designated multiple pickup spots within the community. Many local community groups and churches are providing valuable assistance for distribution and delivery.

Dan Gorman, Food Service Director for Whitehall District Schools and Montague Area Public Schools said, “Our food service staff and volunteers are truly heroes! They are providing a nutritional safety net for kids who may not have healthy meals like this at home. One parent told me she didn’t think their young kids would eat the carrots, but now they eat them like crazy.”

Federal nutrition standards ensure that school cafeterias always offer low-fat or fat-free milk, fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean protein. School meals also meet limits on calories, sodium and unhealthy fats. The importance and nutritional value of school meals are well documented. For many children, school lunch is the most important and nutrient-rich meal of their day.

Over 160 “School Lunch Heroes” from schools located in Muskegon County have participated in providing meals for children since school buildings in Fruitport, Holton, Mona Shores, Montague, Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, North Muskegon, Oakridge, Orchard View, Ravenna, Reeths-Puffer, and Whitehall closed due to the pandemic.

The School Nutrition Association and Jarrett Krosoczka, author of the “Lunch Lady” children’s graphic novel series, created School Lunch Hero Day. It has been celebrated annually since 2013 to provide an opportunity for parents, students, school staff and communities to thank those who provide healthy meals to nearly 30 million of America’s students each school day.  # # #