



WE GROW GOOD EATERS!

Because when kids eat better, they learn better, act better and feel better

KIDS COOK!

KIDS COOK!: AFTER SCHOOL AND SUMMER MEAL PROGRAMS

THE PROBLEM

Too many of our most vulnerable youth spend their out of school hours in environments where there is not enough to do, not enough to eat, and not enough positive human contact. Common Threads' Kids Cook! programs address these problems.

OUR SOLUTION

Kids Cook! Recipe for Success



- Nutritious, delicious complete meals that kids will eat because they made them!*
- A positive peer environment and a chance to practice teamwork
- Love and support from caring adults
- A chance to learn and practice cooking skills: meals are designed to be easy enough for kids to prepare them at home with minimal to no adult assistance
- Programs take place in low-income apartment complexes and community centers - eliminating transportation barriers



*All Kids Cook! meals are compliant with USDA reimbursable meal requirements

Common Threads is a 501(c)3 nonprofit. EIN 20-5163417

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RATIONALE

When kids are involved in preparing healthy foods, they are far more likely to eat them.

And when kids eat better, they learn better, act better, and feel better. Empowering young people to make healthy food choices is one of the simplest and most effective ways that we can help all youth – particularly those living in high-risk circumstances – to be more successful in their lives physically, emotionally, and academically.



WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

“Children in food insecure households may not eat after their school day has ended.... As many parents work nonstandard hours, particularly in low income families... environments where children receive healthy food are vital to combating food insecurity.”

Enchautegui, M. (2013). "Nonstandard Work Schedules and the Well-Being of Low-Income Families." The Urban Institute.

“Food insecurity can lead to difficulties concentrating, anxiety, and challenges in knowledge retention.”

Children's HealthWatch (2009). "Even Very Low Levels of Food Insecurity Found to Harm Children's Health."

SNAP-ED 2018 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In the fall of 2018, SNAP-Ed commissioned a statewide needs assessment of the SNAP-eligible population and found, among other things, that:

- “Youth physical activity, youth fruit and vegetable consumption and adult food insecurity were among the topics of highest severity”
- “Membership in high structure subgroups is highly predictive of lower rates of food insecurity.... (and) lower rates of being overweight or obese.”

The report recommended “activities and education that focus on skill-based whole family health” (including “training such as cooking classes”) and noted that “healthy eating, including fruit and vegetable consumption for youth is considered a topic of high importance.”