



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wilkes-Barre Family YMCA's Food and Fun at the Park Promises to Feed Wilkes-Barre City Kids' Potential All Summer

WILKES-BARRE, PA, 06/15/2018 - In an effort to combat child hunger and keep kids active and engaged this summer, the Wilkes-Barre Family YMCA will again offer its free Food and Fun at the Park program at six Wilkes-Barre City parks and at the Wilkes-Barre Family YMCA beginning Monday, June 25th. The free program provides nutritious meals and snacks and fun learning activities to keep youth healthy, active and well-nourished all summer. The Wilkes-Barre Family joins the Y's national effort to serve more than five million meals to 150,000 kids and teens this summer thanks to funding from the Walmart Foundation and YMCA of the USA.

When kids are out of school, it is estimated that 1 in 6 may not know when their next meal will be. Across the country, more than 22 million kids rely on free or reduced lunches during the school year, yet only about 3 million children take advantage of the free meals provided by the USDA's Summer Food Service Program, meaning that 6 out of 7 eligible kids do not get these healthy meals over the summer.

What does hunger do to kids? In school and at home, food insecure children may show an array of behavioral problems, including fighting, hypersensitivity, aggression, anxiety, depression and bullying. Economically challenged families who depend on the free/reduced school foods must devote an additional \$300 from their already stretched budgets to feed each of their school aged children over the summer.

Food and Fun at the Park will run weekdays, Monday through Friday, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and is open to kids in grades K through 12. Pre-school children are welcome, but must be accompanied by a caregiver over the age of 16. Lunch will be available from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and snack will be served at 1:30 p.m. The program will end on Friday, August 17th. There will be no program on Wednesday, July 4th.

In addition to healthy foods, kids will enjoy activities including the Imagination Station Café, funded by the United Way of Wyoming Valley, which engages kids in fun reading and provides free books for their home libraries. Anti-bullying games, a bicycle safety course and Tasty Thursdays nutrition education are also on the agenda, funded by the Wilkes-Barre City Health Department through a PA DOH Preventive Health and Services grant. The program will be staffed by trained college interns funded by a State/Local Internship Program grant from the Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board in partnership with PA CareerLink.



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The Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO) will be providing the nutritious foods and Wilkes-Barre City provides the well maintained parks and play equipment. The program is also funded by the Fund for Luzerne County of The Luzerne Foundation, the Constellation Fund of The Luzerne Foundation, and other friends and donors to the foundation such as Linda Casey and Richard Williams.

The Food and Fun at the Park sites include:

1. Coal Street Park: Coal and North Sherman Streets.
2. Iron Triangle Playground: Corner of Hickory and Metcalf Streets.
3. Spruce Street Playground: On Spruce Street just after Blackman Street.
4. Huber Park: Stanton and Huber Streets.
5. Parsons Park: On Scott Street just after Matson Avenue.
6. Miner Park: Old River Road near Kistler Elementary School.
7. YMCA: 40 W. Northampton Street. (space is limited to the first 40 kids daily).

To learn more about Food and Fun at the Park visit the YMCA's website: www.wbymca.org or call 570-823-2191.

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About the Y

The Y is one of the nation's leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Across the U.S., 2,700 Ys engage 22 million men, women and children – regardless of age, income or background – to nurture the potential of children and teens, improve the nation's health and well-being, and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. Anchored in more than 10,000 communities, the Y has the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change. www.wbymca.org