



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CEDA Celebrates Return of Nutritious Summertime Meals for Needy Cicero Youngsters

Program feeds 200 low-income children daily at park district site

CICERO, Ill. (Aug. 2, 2007) – Cicero Town Manager Larry Dominick and State Rep. Elizabeth Hernandez joined Robert L. Wharton, President and CEO of the Community and Economic Development Association of Cook County (CEDA) in feeding hundreds of low-income children at Clyde Park.

At the request of community leaders, CEDA's Summer Feeding program returned to Cicero this year after a five-year hiatus. Today, in celebration of the return of the program, Wharton, Town President Dominick and Rep. Hernandez served food to children lined up at the Clyde Park site.

The program, which fed nearly 200 low-income children hot, nutritious lunches each weekday this summer, ends on Aug. 3.

"This is one of the many things that CEDA does in partnership with the community," said Wharton. "Through this program, we know that children with tremendous needs are being nourished and will return to school this fall fully capable of learning."

Cicero officials asked CEDA to bring back the program due to of a growing need for local children to eat nutritious meals during the summer months. Many children in the area receive free or reduced-price lunch during the school year, but some families are unable to provide nutritious meals to their families over summer break.

"I can't ever say enough good things about CEDA. This is a really a blessing because a lot of these kids might not otherwise get lunch," said Mayor Dominick.

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CEDA Summer Feeding Add one

The Cicero Summer Feeding site is one of 23 locations in Cook County where low-income children have access to free, hot nutritious meals. In Cicero, the need is especially great because many parents are undocumented immigrants who may be unable to provide healthy meals for their children, said Suman Sood, CEDA's Nutrition and Health Manager for Children's Services.

At the request of the school district, CEDA also provides boxed lunches for students attending summer classes and for field trips.

Children up to age 18 are welcome to visit the facility on a walk-in basis for a warm meal, Sood said. The community also serves a number of pregnant teens who likewise are in need of healthy meals.

"We try to encourage them to come, not only for themselves, but also for the baby growing inside their body," Sood said.

Rep. Hernandez said the Summer Feeding program provides a much-needed service to children who would otherwise go without during their summer break.

"Five years is too long for Cicero children to go without assistance," she said. "During the summer months, many of our families are presented with significant challenges."

As one of the largest private non-profit organizations in the country, CEDA serves more than 200,000 Cook County residents annually through more than 30 programs and services in the areas of child and family development, health and nutrition services, senior citizen programs, economic development, employment and job training, housing services, education services and community development.

CEDA constantly improves and expands services to further its mission of assisting individuals, families and communities. CEDA has more than 625 full- and part-time employees and nearly 4,500 volunteers dedicated to helping Chicago-area residents attain economic self-sufficiency and improve their quality of life.

To schedule an interview with Suman Sood or CEDA President and CEO Robert L. Wharton, please contact the numbers listed above.

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