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First Summer Meals Program to Launch at the Ocean County YMCA To Combat Child Hunger

[Toms River, May 18, 2020]—The Ocean County YMCA will launch the first summer meals program in Toms River on Tuesday, May 26th, at its facility located at 1088 West Whitty Road.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, around 22 million kids receive free or reduced-cost meals thanks to the National School Lunch Program. However, once the school year ends, only 17 percent of those same kids are able to access free meals over the summer break, leaving many children without these meals.

The Y, in partnership with Toms River Regional Schools, is working to fill that gap by keeping children healthy and well-nourished this summer, ensuring that kids reach their full potential. Approximately 5,000 children receive meals from the National School Lunch Program. The YMCA is located centrally between two schools, Walnut Street School and Joseph A. Citta School, which both have over 50% of its students who benefit from the National School Lunch Program.

"Feeding our children gets to the core of what it means to be a student-centered school district," said Toms River Regional Schools Superintendent David Healy, "and during these challenging times it's more important than ever that our kids' academic, social-emotional, and nutritional needs are being met. We're proud to work alongside a valuable partner, the Ocean County YMCA, to ensure that children throughout the greater Toms River area-- especially those who are economically disadvantaged-- remain well fed throughout the summer months."

The Ocean County YMCA will begin serving meals on Tuesday, May 26th, from 11am-2pm, Monday through Friday, until the end of August. Participating youth will receive nutritious lunches and snacks daily. This program will be the first of its kind in Toms River and is being operated in partnership with the Capital

Area YMCA, which is currently providing 2,100 meals daily to residents of the greater Trenton community.

“Hunger has a lasting impact on the development of children,” says Peter T. Rosario, President and CEO of the Ocean County YMCA. “From the first days of this crisis, we have partnered with Fulfill by packing food boxes at the BEAT Center and distributing food boxes at the Y. Giving kids access to nutrition-filled meals allows kids to focus, learn, and become empowered to reach their full potential. The Y’s Summer Meals Program is a monumental next step in our efforts to combat hunger.”

To learn more about the Ocean County YMCA’s Summer Food Program, call or email Kirsten Bowker at 732-341-9622 ext 2215 or kbowker@ocymca.org or visit ocymca.org/summermeals.

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About the Ocean County YMCA

At the Y, we take immense pride in our work to strengthen communities and help all of us be our best selves. We provide a place to play, to learn, to be healthy, and to give back. We believe that everyone, no matter who they are or where they are from, deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential. Everything the Y does is in service of making sure people and communities thrive. The Ocean County YMCA in Toms River features the following onsite amenities: 6,800 sq. ft. functional wellness arena, cardiovascular center, 12 lane competitive size pool with access to adult and family locker rooms, and child watch room.

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