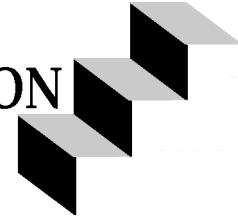


**EDUCATION
FOUNDATION
OF BLOOMINGTON**



**2575 West 88th Street
Bloomington, MN 55431**

For immediate use
April 13, 2009

For more information, contact
Ann Tillotson, 952-994-6537

Children’s Food for Thought serves Bloomington students

Bloomington students with families who are struggling financially and find it difficult to meet lunch money demands can eat free nourishing meals, thanks to Children’s Food for Thought, a program of the Education Foundation of Bloomington.

“Children’s Food for Thought provides free school meals for K-12 students whose household income is not low enough to qualify for federally funded free and reduced-priced meals at schools,” said Ann Tillotson.

Tillotson founded and manages the Education Foundation of Bloomington program, which operates with donations from businesses, the faith community and individuals. EFB is a 501.c.3. nonprofit organization.

“A single incident, such as job loss, low or irregular income or an uninsured medical situation can disrupt family income to the point that there is no money for school lunches,” she said. In the current economic climate, Children’s Food for Thought is helping growing numbers of Bloomington students.

In 2005, a pilot program at Normandale Hills Elementary tested the idea and the program expanded in 2006 to serve all nine elementary schools with free meals.

— more —

“We’re now serving students in all of Bloomington’s 14 public schools and have seen a significant increase in demand to use the fund,” noted Tillotson. “More students will need help with meals as families face these difficult financial times.” In the 2008-09 school year, the program will have provided approximately 2,500 lunches with lunch prices now ranging from \$2.20 to \$2.50.

School faculty and staff understand the importance of confidentiality in connecting students to the program. “Older students often will go hungry rather than have their peers know they’re getting free meals,” according to Tillotson. Meal payments are handled so that no one in the lunch line can tell the difference. In fact, even parents don’t always know.

CFT sometimes works as a bridge for kids to have lunch while the family’s application for free or reduced-price school meals is pending. CFT can act immediately because no application is involved. Tillotson explained that caring school staff can spot the need and handle the situation discretely with a student.

School food service staff handles CFT funds by making a request for the number of students who will receive the meals. The program’s donated funds are accounted for separately from the federal school lunch program.

A donation of \$15 provides more than a week’s meals for any student in the Bloomington school system.

Donations to Children’s Food for Thought can be made through PayPams, which handles school lunch payments by credit card, or by check to the Education Foundation of Bloomington, 2575 W. 88th St., Bloomington, 55431.