

Alaska Food Coalition
February 17, 2010
Teleconference Minutes

Participants

Vanessa Salinas, Alaska Food Coalition
Chef Clay, Wasilla Senior Center
Robin Stilwell, Food Bank of Alaska
Linda Bond, St. Francis House, Catholic Social Services
Shodie Akin, Alaska DEED, Child Nutrition
AnnaBell Stevens, Anchorage United Way
Linda Swarner, Kenai Peninsula Food Bank
Gus Marx, Juneau Youth Services
Becky Thompson, The Children's Lunch Box, Bean's Cafe
Abby Huggins, Nome Community Center
Brehan Kohl, Department of Environmental Conservation
Jo Dawson, DEED, Child Nutrition

Welcome

Anna Bell Stevens, Secretary - Alaska Food Coalition

Member Highlight

Becky Thompson, Chief Operating Officer, The Children's Lunchbox, a project of Bean's Cafe

The Children's Lunchbox has a cold kitchen in north Anchorage where fresh meals are made for low income and/or at-risk children. They run two programs: the Prepared Meals Program and the "Just a Little Extra" Weekend Food Program. With funding from Wells Fargo & Providence, the prepared program provides school meals at Crossroads School. They also provide meals for students at AVAIL, an alternative high school in Anchorage for kids in transition. For some students, this is their only daily healthy meal. The Children's Lunchbox also provides an early morning snack two days per week for Boy's and Girl's Club Mountain View. For the Summer Food Program they prepare and distribute 400 – 600 meals per day to many safe community environment sites (most of the sites are sponsored by the Food Bank of Alaska). Bartlett High School and ACE/Acts Life Skills Classes bag food for the weekend food program that serves Mountain View Elementary and Ptarmigan Elementary schools. The weekend food program is privately funded through Wal-Mart, Rotary, Providence Hospital, and many others. Funders have been very faithful to the programs. On March 1 The Children's Lunchbox will be utilizing the hot kitchen at Boy's and Girl's Clubs at the Northeast Community Center. 19,000 Anchorage School District children receive free or reduced meals each year, The Children's Lunchbox served over 96,000 meals in 2010.

Member Update

Abby Huggins, Nome Community Center has accepted a position with Calypso Farm & Ecology Center in Ester, AK. Abby has enjoyed being a part of the coalition; she has been an active participant at the annual AFC meeting in Juneau.

Guest Presentation

Shodie Akin, State of Alaska DEED: USDA At-Risk After-School meals opportunity

The At-Risk After-School Program has recently expanded. CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) sponsors can now claim reimbursement for one snack and one meal per child. Participating programs must be organized, offer structured educational after school and weekend activities during the regular school year. It is not for summer activity programs - but DEED hopes to see programs transition into Summer Food Service Programs in the future. Other requirements include meeting safety codes, and meeting the 50% free and reduced eligibility status. Emergency shelters are also eligible. For eligibility, sponsors may use elementary, middle or high school data, posted on the DEED website. Eligibility status is good for 5 years. Meals served must be nutritionally balanced and meet USDA standards. The program is for kids and teens 18 and younger, there are no application forms for parents to fill out. All snacks and meals are to be served in a group setting. Reimbursement rates are \$1.20 per snack and 4.21 per supper. Supper is eligible for a cash in lieu or commodity credits. After school care centers operating another program, such as breakfast, can turn one of their meals into an after school snack. School based programs can provide meals under CACFP in addition to their school lunch program. The record keeping requirements are more simplified. The DEED Child Nutrition office is excited to expand this program. Their target audience is groups offering the summer food program.

Becky asked if you can make breakfast a snack. Shodie responded the program is for snacks and supper after school, weekends and holidays during the school year. If you have activities on the weekends or holidays, you could possibly serve another meal any time during the day, it would not necessarily have to be an afterschool snack. One snack and one meal – the snack could be considered a breakfast. Snacks must happen anytime after school gets out. Shodie will check on the time for dinners and any specific meal time rules.

Robin asked if the expansion starts next September, or will programs be able to start this year? Can current afterschool programs add supper before the end of this school year? The rule is you could get reimbursement that is retroactive and you can add supper to an existing site. USDA will be getting questions and answers out soon to help programs understand this expansion. Shodie can be reached at: shodie.akin@alaska.gov

Legislative Update

School Meals

In the Senate, SB03 has passed through the education committee and had one hearing in the finance committee. Finance committee members had several questions about the number of students who might be added, cost factors, local foods, effective dates and waste. We are working with the School Nutrition Association to provide Sen. Wielechowski's office with correct responses. We anticipate a hearing in Senate finance soon. In the House, Representative Munoz from Juneau has introduced HB132 – the counterpart of SB03. This bill has passed through House education and is waiting for a hearing to be scheduled in House finance. Look for an advocacy alert from Food Bank of Alaska soon with updates on contacting key legislators.

Senior Benefits

HB 16 sponsored by Representative Hawker was the first bill to pass the House, unanimously. This bill was then introduced in the Senate, and has had one hearing in Senate finance. It is expected to pass through finance and go to session for a vote quickly.

We encourage everyone to thank their legislators for supporting Senior Benefits, and also the sponsors of SB03 and HB132, Funding for School Meals.

AFC Annual Meeting

Representatives from 14 Coalition member organizations from Nome to Juneau met in Juneau February 6, 7 and 8. AFC officers Heather Harris, President, Gloria Benson, Vice President, AnnaBell Stevens, Secretary, and Susannah Morgan, Treasurer, were re-elected for a second term. Members met with state legislators and administrators to express support for funding for school meals, extending funding for the senior benefits program and expanding Denali Kid Care. 50 guests and a dozen legislators attended the 4th annual AFC legislative breakfast "From Seven to Seventy: Ending Hunger Among Alaska's Most Vulnerable Populations" sponsored by Senator Bill Wielechowski and Representative Mike Hawker. AFC members met with AGENET and National Association of Social Workers Alaska Chapter members to share information and legislative strategies.

AFC members agreed one of the highlights of the meeting was a tour of The Glory Hole Shelter, Soup Kitchen and Care Center. Ray Cole, Special Projects Manager, and Mariya Hovishchyk, Executive Director, gave coalition members a tour of the new walk-in freezer (Glory Hole was a FY10 Alaska Food Coalition Mini-Grant recipient) and their roof-top and terraced garden project. This summer, clients and volunteers stacked 11.6 tons of cinder block in one day for the garden retaining wall. For pictures and more information on the garden project go to:

<http://www.feedjuneau.org/storage/newsletters/GH%20Summer%202010.pdf>

AFC Luncheon Keynote Speaker, Erin Walker Tolles, Chief of Policy for the Department of Public Assistance (DPA), gave a terrific overview of the programs DPA oversees, including Food Stamps, Senior Benefits, Medicaid, Child Care, Heating Assistance, Temporary Assistance, WIC and Adult Public Assistance. Over 100,000 Alaskans receive assistance through DPA each month. DPA recently received awards for cutting Food Stamp client backlogs and wait times. Department caseloads are up 16%, a 60% increase in 5 years.

Member Comments from the Annual Meeting

- Annabell noted the increased number of legislators we were able to meet with this year, not just staff.
- It was Linda Bond's first year; she enjoyed meeting legislators and is looking forward to next year.
- Abby has enjoyed her role reaching out to rural legislators; it has been a good experience. This was her second year, she understood the process more. She noted it really makes a difference to the rural legislators when they have someone from rural Alaska visiting them.
- Chef Clay participated last year, and is looking forward to participating next year.

Pending

Annabell reminded us the Anchorage United Way Walk for Warmth will take place on Saturday, February 19. It is a one mile walk. March 12 is the Empty Bowl fundraiser for Bean's Café and The Children's Lunchbox.

Vanessa will send out a draft FY12 AFC budget for approval during the March AFC teleconference. FY12 goals approved at the annual meeting will also be distributed.

Members have requested we change the dates of the annual conference from a Sunday – Tuesday schedule to a Monday – Wednesday schedule. We will vote on this during the March teleconference.