



## Connecting Kids to Meals Receives USDA's *Turnip the Beet* Bronze Award

**TOLEDO, OH, April 21, 2022** – Connecting Kids to Meals (CKM) is excited to announce the distinct honor of being awarded the *Turnip the Beet* Bronze Award for the work done during last year's Summer Meal Program to feed thousands of kids. Every year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) presents Summer Meal Program sponsors who provide high-quality meals that are appetizing and nutritious a prestigious award for their efforts. This year, FNS awarded 84 summer meal sponsors nationwide with *Turnip the Beet* awards for their programs in 2021. There were only 4 organizations highlighted in all of Ohio, and CKM was one of them.

The *Turnip the Beet* Award was created to place a spotlight on sponsors who go above and beyond to present children in low-income households with free, healthy meals when school's out for the summer. "Nutritional meals are extremely important for kids' developing minds and bodies," said Wendi Huntley, President of CKM. "Providing these meals ensures that these kids are receiving the nutrition they need for growth and development, and that they are ready to return to school and learn in the fall."

CKM makes it their mission to provide free, well-balanced meals to kids in need all year long, but especially during the summer months when kids who rely on school meals are vulnerable. As part of their Summer Meal Program, CKM partners with popular locations where kids gather in the summer – schools, libraries, parks, pools, churches and community centers. During the summer of 2021, more than 6,000 nutritionally balanced meals were served each day at more than 100 locations. This summer, CKM strives to create more than 185 site locations, allowing them to serve more than 350,000 meals to kids in need. "We are beyond grateful for the opportunities our partnerships have brought to these kids. Without them, our program wouldn't be as successful as it is today," said Huntley. "Collaboration with the community is essential for reaching kids and their families."

In addition to providing summer meals, afterschool meals packed full of nutrition are also available on weekdays, and weekend meals are handed out with Friday meals. In 2021, more than 776,000 nutritious, hot meals were served by CKM and more than 7,000,000 meals have been served since the organization started in 2002. You can help feed children in low-income families by donating at [www.ConnectingKidsToMeals.org](http://www.ConnectingKidsToMeals.org). A site list is also available on their website.

### About Connecting Kids to Meals

Connecting Kids to Meals has been feeding hungry at-risk kids for over 19 years. Some of the trusted partners where meals are served include schools, libraries, churches, community centers, parks and other locations where kids gather. Last year, about 776,000 nutritious meals were provided to kids during out-of-school time. To learn more about CKM, visit [www.ConnectingKidsToMeals.org](http://www.ConnectingKidsToMeals.org)

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