



## Media Release

---

Contact:

**Amy Webb, Director of Communications  
(501) 682-8650**

**For Immediate Release**

July 25, 2012

### **Governor Visits NLR Summer Food Service Program Site**

Governor Mike Beebe set an ambitious goal for the Arkansas Department of Human Services to sign up 600 sites statewide offering free summer meals for children – 100 more sites than last year. Staff of the department’s Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE), which oversees the Summer Food Service Program in Arkansas, proved up to the challenge. With the help of the No Kid Hungry campaign and the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, they exceeded Beebe’s goal by securing 606 locations.

Beebe visited one of those sites, the McAlmont Church of Christ on East 46<sup>th</sup> Street in North Little Rock, on Wednesday. It has been a summer feeding site since 2008, and is projected to serve about 11,000 meals this summer.

“Good nutrition is essential to the healthy growth and development of our children,” Beebe said. “It is programs like these that will close the gap on hunger, and we can already see the progress that’s been made.”

Arkansas has made great strides in terms of feeding its children, but more needs to be done, he said. In two years, the state has gone from being ranked sixth worst in the nation for food insecurity for children to ninth worst. And although the Summer Food Service Program is available at more locations this year, 11 counties still have no summer feeding sites and only 25,000 of the 244,000 children who are eligible for free or reduced lunches during the school year are accessing free summer meals.

So Beebe is setting a new goal for DCCECE staff: triple the number of children receiving summer meals (about 93,000 children) before Beebe leaves office.

“We have a hard-working staff that is dedicated to meeting the Governor’s new goal,” said Dr. Buster Lackey, administrator of the DCCECE Health and Nutrition Unit.