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**Contact:** Natalie Cole  
California Library Association  
650/376-0886 #4  
ncole@cla-net.org

Patrice Chamberlain  
California Summer Meal Coalition  
415/637-6815  
Patrice.chamberlain@phi.org

**California Libraries Provide Over 21,000 Meals to Hungry Kids**

*Partnership Unites Summer Literacy and Summer Meal Programs to Keep Kids Healthy, Engaged*

San Mateo, CA, October 28, 2013 – Public libraries in Fresno, Los Angeles, Oakland, Sacramento, and San Diego provided summer meals and literacy activities for hungry children and teens this summer. The libraries were part of the California Library Association (CLA)’s and California Summer Meal Coalition (CSMC)’s *Summer Lunch at the Library* program, which was developed to keep kids healthy and engaged while school is out.

*Summer Lunch at the Library* is modeled on the successful partnership between Oakland Public Library, the City of Oakland, and Alameda County Food Bank. Similar programs also took place in Chula Vista, San Francisco, Tulare County and other communities in 2013.

In many California communities, school’s closure for the summer break can mean an end to learning or enrichment opportunities and limited access to healthy food, an issue with greatest impact on the state’s low-income children. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers summer nutrition programs to enable school districts, municipalities, tribal governments, and nonprofit organizations to serve free, healthy meals to children and teens in low-income neighborhoods when school is out.

“The economic impact of budget cuts has left many communities struggling to find ways to support their most vulnerable children during the summer break” said Patrice Chamberlain, director of the California Summer Meal Coalition. “This program is a great example of creative, efficient community partnerships that effectively support children’s development and ensure they return to school in the fall healthy and ready to learn.”

“While libraries are well known to feed hungry minds, *Summer Lunch at the Library* provides another unique approach to building healthier communities,” said CLA President, Derek Wolfgram. “The libraries and their partners should savor their success in having provided a much needed service while helping families learn more about the rich resources their local libraries have to offer. The opportunity to help teen volunteers acquire workforce readiness skills makes the program that much sweeter.”

**2013 Lunch at the Library Partners:**

Fresno County Public Library (Central Branch)	Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission
Los Angeles Public Library (Central Library and Pacoima Branch)	Los Angeles Regional Food Bank
Oakland Public Library	Alameda County Food Bank & City of Oakland
Sacramento Public Library (Valley Hi-North Laguna Branch)	Elk Grove Unified School District
San Diego County Public Library (Vista and Lincoln Acres Branches)	Feeding America San Diego

*The California Library Association* provides leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library services and librarianship: [www.cla-net.org](http://www.cla-net.org). *The California Summer Meal Coalition* is a statewide network united to combat hunger and obesity by helping California’s children in need gain access to free and healthy meals through the USDA’s summer nutrition programs: [www.summermealcoalition.org](http://www.summermealcoalition.org). Support for *Summer Lunch at the Library* is provided by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.