



# HAWAI' APPLESEED

## CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

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### DONATIONS AT SAFEWAY KEEP CRITICAL GRAB-AND-GO MEAL PROGRAM GOING STRONG

During the month of September, donations at Hawai'i Safeway will help families struggling more than ever with hunger during the pandemic.

HONOLULU, Hawai'i — With the COVID-19 pandemic threatening livelihoods and closing schools, preventing childhood hunger is more important than ever. Thousands of hard-working families have been thrust into a position where they no longer have access to the free school meals they rely on to supplement their household budgets.

The good news is that Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law & Economic Justice is working closely with the Hawai'i Department of Education and a number of community organizations throughout the state to ensure that free grab-and-go meals can be made available even while school is out.

That's where the public can help. All through September, 2020, when customers visit local Safeway stores in Hawai'i, they will see signs advertising the annual *Nourishing Neighbors* fundraiser sponsored by the Safeway Foundation and with the support of the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC).

Making a donation at the register when you check out of any Safeway store on Kaua'i, O'ahu or Hawai'i Island will support our work to help students continue to receive free, healthy meals at a time when many families are struggling more than ever before.

"With the status of the 2020-21 academic year uncertain, and as the pandemic continues to place severe hardship on Hawai'i families, it is critical that we continue to support free, nutritious grab-and-go meals for keiki who need them," said Daniela Spoto, Hawai'i Appleseed Director of Anti-Hunger Initiatives.

On a typical school day, nearly 65,000 economically disadvantaged Hawai'i students benefit from free or reduced-price school breakfast and lunch. For many, these are the only nutritious meals that they eat regularly. For their families, these meals help relieve financial stress by reducing their food budgets.

During a typical summer, when students are not able to eat free or reduced-price meals at school,

community partners work together to provide food to children and youth in low-income areas via the federal Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The free, healthy grab-and-go meals are prepared according to United States Department of Agriculture standards.

However, with schools closed for most of the second half of the previous academic year, these partners banded together to expand the program beginning in March. As of July 16, this partnership of rotating nonprofit and government organizations had established 30 grab-and-go meal sites serving some 5,500 children per day.

“It’s clear that the need for this program is there,” said Nicole Woo, Hawai'i Appleseed Senior Policy Analyst. “With Safeway Foundation’s *Nourishing Neighbors* fundraiser, we’ll be able to continue meeting that need with a program that is on track to serve more than 1.5 million meals in 2020.”

The *Nourishing Neighbors* campaign, formerly *Hunger Is*, will run the entire month of September at more than 20 Safeway stores in Hawai'i. Donations at the Maui Safeway locations will go to the Maui Food Bank, another worthy cause to support.

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Hawai'i Appleseed is working to build a more socially just Hawai'i, where everyone has genuine opportunities to achieve economic security and fulfill their potential. We change systems that perpetuate inequality and injustice through policy development, coalition building and advocacy.