



Grant Will Fund Free Breakfasts ; Woodland, Claremont Academies

Worcester Telegram & Gazette

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July 16, 2007

WORCESTER - Eating a portable free breakfast in a classroom has proven more popular with students than eating in a cafeteria before school, and Worcester will receive a grant to help expand its classroom breakfasts, the "got breakfast?" Foundation recently announced.

The New York-based foundation, whose partners include General Mills and the Alliance to End Hunger, is giving Worcester \$8,000 to help spread the **Classroom Breakfast** program to Woodland and Claremont academies (formerly the Accelerated Learning Laboratory).

Worcester has used the program for two years in 11 elementary schools and has seen participation go from approximately 20 percent of students at those schools to 90 percent. Each of those schools has such high percentages of students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals that the school simply gives breakfast to all students for free, said Donna M. Lombardi, Worcester's school nutrition director. Claremont Academy will be the first secondary school in the city to use the program.

Federal money, and a small amount from the state, pay for the meals themselves, which consist of fortified cereal, milk, 100 percent juice and a whole-grain snack. The grant will pay for wheeled crates and possibly ice packs to help get the meals into classrooms, Ms. Lombardi said.

The breakfasts should help decrease the potential for obesity by providing students with nutritious food and making sure they don't skip meals, Ms. Lombardi said.

The schools that already use the classroom breakfasts are Belmont Street Community School, Canterbury Street Magnet Computer-Based School, City View School, Goddard School of Science and Technology, Quinsigamond School, Burncoat Street Preparatory School, Chandler Magnet School, Columbus Park Preparatory Academy, Elm Park Community School, Lincoln Street School and Vernon Hill School.

The "got breakfast?" Foundation works to help millions of students who qualify for a free or reduced-price breakfast get their meal. Nationwide, between 9 million and 10 million students eat lunch for free but don't eat breakfast, according to a foundation spokesman.