



News Release

Cahokia School District Launches New “Breakfast Beyond the Bell” Program to Provide Additional Nutritional Support for Students

CAHOKIA, Ill., January 15, 2019 - Breakfast Beyond the Bell, a new food initiative aimed at supplementing its current federally funded free and reduced breakfast program, is being piloted in the [Cahokia School District](#).

Breakfast Beyond the Bell is funded through a \$30,000 grant from the [Monsanto Fund](#), a philanthropic arm of [Bayer](#). The program will be supported by the St. Louis Area Food Bank. One thousand students, 200 from the Estelle Sauget Elementary School of Choice and 800 Cahokia High School students, will participate in the new pilot initiative. The [St. Louis Area Foodbank](#) is a hunger relief organization that serves 26 area counties throughout the St. Louis region – 12 in Illinois and 14 in Missouri. Through its various relationships within the food industry, the Foodbank will secure a variety of breakfast items such as bananas, apples and fig bars that will be delivered and served twice weekly to Cahokia students until the end of 2019.

According to a 2015 report commissioned by the U.S. Department of Agriculture entitled [Hunger in Our Schools](#), educators throughout the nation indicated they regularly see students come to school hungry and that eating breakfast improves academic achievement, attendance and lessens behavioral problems.

“Before entering school in the morning, waking up hungry is just one of numerous challenges some students face before arriving at school. The thought of telling their friends and teachers that they are hungry, can be embarrassing,” said Al Mitchell, Vice President of Corporate Engagement for Bayer. “Eating a healthy breakfast is the foundation for successful learning. The Monsanto Fund’s support of Breakfast Beyond the Bell re-enforces our commitment of addressing childhood hunger while ensuring the nutritional needs of Cahokia’s students are met.”

“As educators, we are responsible for assisting our learners and their families, however consistently meeting the most basic of needs can at times be difficult, especially if hunger is present,” said Tanya Mitchell, Cahokia School District’s Interim Superintendent. “We are very grateful for the Monsanto Fund and the St. Louis Area Foodbank’s support of Breakfast Beyond the Bell and look forward to expanding this pilot program so that all 3,400 district students will benefit from this nutritional initiative.”

More than one third of individuals receiving food assistance from the St. Louis Area Foodbank are children and according to Feeding America's "Map the Meal Gap" study, nearly 20 percent of those living in St. Clair County, Ill., where Cahokia is located, are food insecure.

"At the Foodbank, we know that if we're going to realize our vision of a stronger healthier bi-state region where no one goes to bed hungry, it starts with making sure that kids are being fed," said St. Louis Area Foodbank President and CEO Meredith Knopp. "We are honored that the Monsanto Fund entrusted us to provide nutritious breakfast items for students in the Cahokia School District. This partnership is going to help fight hunger for 1,000 students and feed hope for the future."

The Cahokia School District will implement the Breakfast Beyond the Bell program using two different models known as "Breakfast in the Classroom" for elementary students and "Second Chance" for high schoolers.

Breakfast in the Classroom allows young students to get breakfast from a designated area and bring it back to eat at their classroom desks during first period. At Cahokia High School, the Second Chance model will place mobile service carts in high traffic areas. This will allow older students, who may not be hungry first thing in the morning, to grab breakfast items to eat after their first or second period breaks.

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St. Louis Area Foodbank

The St. Louis Area Foodbank began its service to the community in 1975. Since that time, the organization has grown to become the bi-state region's largest nonprofit 501c3 food distribution center dedicated to feeding individuals in need. Through a robust network of community partners and programs throughout 26 counties in Missouri and Illinois, the Foodbank helps provide 37 million meals annually. More than 392,000 people in the bi-state region rely on the Foodbank for assistance each year. For more information on the organization and the issue of hunger, please visit www.STLFoodbank.org.

The Monsanto Fund

The Monsanto Fund, a philanthropic arm of Bayer, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening the communities where farmers and Bayer employees live and work. Visit the Monsanto Fund at www.monsantofund.org.

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