

Congresswoman Matsui Encouraged Sacramento Families to Take Advantage of Free Summer Lunch Program

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Washington, DC — Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-5) urged Sacramento families to use the free summer lunch program and highlighted the importance of child nutrition during a tour of the Teichert Boys and Girls Club with the club's benefactor and namesake, Fred Teichert. It is estimated that about one-third of eligible children use the free lunch program in the summer. Additionally, the tour will highlight the many programs offered at the Teichert Club that help children and teens learn life and safety skills

"What is really important about this Boys and Girls Club, is the hot, healthy and nutritious meal you can get here for free under the federal lunch program," stated Congresswoman Matsui. "When you eat a nutritious lunch, you have the fuel to do better in school. Eating right can actually improve your memory. And good food means you have the energy to play all those games and sports."

Congresswoman Matsui has been a strong advocate of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), an extension of the federal National School Lunch Program, which provides free or reduced-priced lunches to children. She has joined with her colleagues to urge an increase in federal funding to \$306 million — 5% more than last year. In light of the recent report by the California Food Policy Advocates indicating an underutilization of the program in Sacramento County, Congresswoman Matsui is working to highlight the free, nutritious meals available during the summer break that many children are missing out on receiving. The full report can be viewed on their website at www.cfpa.net. At the Boys and Girls Club, they provide a free meal to all members, regardless of their income status. In fact, the Boys and Girls Club will serve meals to anybody under the age of eighteen who is hungry.

As an example of why she supports the program, Congresswoman Matsui emphasized the importance of eating nutritious meals, "That's why I am a strong advocate of the free lunch program — for the school year and the summer. I know that sitting in this room are future doctors, scientists, astronauts, athletes, and teachers. Healthy meals are one of the keys to achieving those goals. I want all of you to meet your potential."

The Boys and Girls Club of Greater Sacramento serves over 4,000 members from ages 6 to 18 each year, approximately 300 of whom use the club during the summer months. The Club's mission is to never turn away a child who wants to join the club regardless of economic circumstances. The Teichert Club reflects the surrounding neighborhoods of South Sacramento and Oak Park. 45% of the children are African American and 31% are Hispanic. The Boys and Girls Club of Greater Sacramento was founded in 1993, in large part because of the vision and generosity of Fred Teichert. Until then, Sacramento was the only large city in the country without a Boys and Girls Club

Concluded Congresswoman Matsui, "I encourage all the families in Sacramento to take advantage of the free meals, whether it is at the Teichert Club or another location."

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