

Feeding During a Pandemic and Construction

By Janet Reynolds, Library District #2 of Linn County, La Cygne, KS

Our library in La Cygne, Kansas, has been doing [summer lunches for kids for five years](#) and lunches for seniors for two years. We operate as a self-funded program, with funding coming from concerned community members and a few small grants.

Then along came 2020. We closed for a week, but there was a need for food. Schools had closed and we are a food desert with no grocery store closer than 20 miles. Our volunteer leader and her volunteers, along with the library director, geared up to serve lunches out the front door. No one understood what COVID-19 was and there was a great amount of fear. Complicating things further, we were also constructing an addition to double the size of our facility.



By Memorial Day, we offered lunch pick-up and delivery. For summer reading, we loaded up food in the van weekly and went to the local park for a picnic and a guest entertainer. Some great entertainers came from miles away, just to be able to perform. We had the boxed lunches, brought hand sanitizer, and social distanced the performer, but we were outside and in the fresh air and sunshine for 11 weeks. The parents and community were thankful for something “normal” for their children.

By mid-August, the library had served over 11,000 meals. In October, we moved into our new addition, with a meeting room to seat 120 and a kitchen and kitchen storage four times bigger than our little prep kitchen that served us so well during the early years of summer lunches. As winter rolled around, we started serving senior meals once a week inside, along with the choice of a back-door pickup.

This summer we will provide meals to children in our community five days a week, our two lake communities two days a week, and to another small rural community two days a week, along with programs daily, including a cross-generational meal on Thursdays with our seniors joining our kids for lunch, mentoring and BINGO.



Food, friends and fun will be the goal. It will be interesting to see how we coordinate all the meals served inside and outside from our new facility. For more information, contact Janet Reynolds at lacygnelibrary@gmail.com or visit our website at www.lacygnelibrary.org or our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Library-District-2-of-Linn-County-La-Cygne-KS-53865434076>