



school breakfast program

CASE STUDIES

- Adam Road Primary School
- Bidyadanga Police
- Brookman Primary School
- Kondinin Primary School
- Marble Bar School
- Middle Swan Primary School
- Northampton District High School



Preface

Foodbank WA was established in 1994 as a 'bridge of support' between the food industry and community welfare agencies. In the late 1990's and early 2000's, schools began seeking support from Foodbank WA in response to increasing numbers of children who were arriving at school having had little or no breakfast.

The Foodbank WA School Breakfast Program started in 2001, with 17 schools across Western Australia. As of November 2010 there are over 317 registered schools across Western Australia, from Kalumburu in the North to Esperance in the South to several remote schools along the Northern Territory and South Australian borders. The aim of the program is to assist in reducing food insecurity and to provide students with an equal opportunity to excel academically, emotionally and socially. Outcomes associated with the program include improved health status, concentration levels, academic performance, behavioural and social skills, and improved relations with other students, school staff and the wider community.

Registered School Breakfast Program schools are able to access six core, non-perishable products: canned fruit in natural juice, wheat biscuits, vegemite, canned spaghetti, canned baked beans and UHT milk. Fresh bread, fresh fruit and vegetables, fresh milk, yoghurt and oats are also provided as needed and when available. Registered schools are able to access Foodbank WA's Food Sensations nutrition education program and the Choose to Move physical activity program. Regional schools receive dedicated support through the Regional Strategy Project.

The School Breakfast Program and associated food products are provided to registered schools at no cost, due to generous government and corporate support for the food, transport and administration costs. Ongoing funding will ensure the sustainability of this vital resource, which assists many families and communities in need throughout Western Australia. However for it to continue, support from external stakeholders is needed in order to ensure sustainability.

Based on interviews conducted in May 2010, the following case studies provide a glimpse into the unique nature and diverse results of the School Breakfast Program in seven schools across metropolitan and regional Western Australia. These stories demonstrate that the School Breakfast Program is not simply about the food – it has far-reaching impacts on the physical, academic and social health of children and the wider community. Above all, it is about showing these children that someone cares about them.



Introduction

Adam Road Primary School is located approximately 5 kilometres south of the Bunbury city centre. The current enrolment consists of 462 students, with a large proportion of students from Aboriginal, Maori and Asian backgrounds.

Background

Adam Road Primary School started offering an independent breakfast program in 2007 and joined the Foodbank WA School Breakfast Program one year later. Whilst Adam Road Primary School do not experience the 'need' to run the breakfast program on a weekly or fortnightly basis, Deputy Principal Dana Trtica believes in the benefits of the program and continues to run it in conjunction with state and federal government nutrition and physical activity initiatives implemented at the school.

CASE STUDY:

Adam Road Primary School

"We wouldn't be able to do this without Foodbank."

Dana Trtica, Deputy Principal



How does the Adam Road Primary School Breakfast Program run?

Adam Road Primary School's Breakfast Program is run on Green Wednesday (the last Wednesday of each month). On this day students are encouraged to walk to school, with a whole-of-school breakfast made available to each participant. The breakfast is also run in conjunction with other federal and state nutrition and physical activity initiatives, such as 'Walk to School Day'. Between 80 and 100 students attend on each day the breakfast is run, with a basic breakfast menu of cereal, milk, fruit and toast available. Dana is responsible for overall coordination, while school councillors and student volunteers run the breakfast. Dana gets in touch with Foodbank South West in Bunbury a week before each event to organise supplies.

Unique aspects of the Adam Road Primary School Breakfast Program

Running the breakfast program in conjunction with government initiatives is an example of how Adam Road Primary School has implemented the School Breakfast Program to suit the needs of their school community. As the school does not experience the 'need' to run the breakfast program regularly, Dana says that coordinating the breakfast to occur alongside existing events still allows the school and students to experience the benefits of the program. The provision of breakfast also provides an incentive for children to take part in special initiatives and assists in developing health lifestyle behaviours such as physical activity and good nutritional habits.



Results of the program at Adam Road Primary School

Dana has noted that when the breakfast program does occur, the students that participate are calmer, ready to work and more engaged in classroom activities.

Challenges and limitations

Dana sometimes has issues finding the time to collect School Breakfast Program products from Foodbank South West; however she feels that this is simply a time management issue, rather than an issue caused by the School Breakfast Program.

Parent and school community support

While no specific comments or feedback have been given, Dana feels there is great acceptance of the program among parents and the wider community. Frequently parents will accompany to children to school on these day to see what the program is all about.

Where to from here?

Dana feels the program is meeting the need at Adam Road Primary and is easy to coordinate as is.

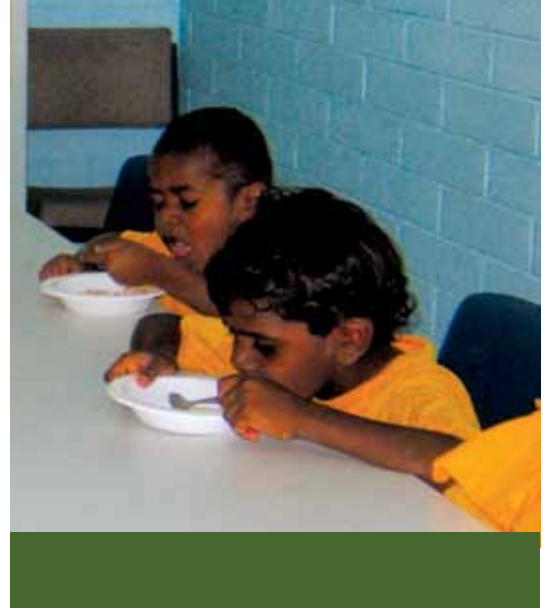
Final Comments:

"It's really great on these days to know the children have received something decent to eat and we are enormously grateful for the support of Foodbank and we're pleased we are able to do that and offer it to our children."

Author's note: In response to increased demand, Adam Road Primary School started running a regular breakfast program three times per week in Term 4, 2010.

CASE STUDY:

Bidyadanga Police



Introduction

Senior Sergeant Robert Clarke and the officers at the Bidyadanga Police Station run a Breakfast Program for the students attending La Grange Remote Community School.

Background

In 2007, the community identified the need for a breakfast program for local students. At the time the school was unable to run the program so the local police and the Department for Child Protection (DCP) took on the role, an arrangement that continues to this day. The Breakfast Program continues to produce positive outcomes for the children, the school, the police and the wider community.



“It’s a good way to create relations between the kids and the community and ensure the kids get some sort of nutrition before they get to school”

Robert Clark, Officer in Charge

How does the Biyadanga Police School Breakfast Program run?

The program was originally run out of the local women's centre, but has now moved to the front verandah of the police station. Attendance usually varies between 25 and 40 children. Foods served include cereal, tinned fruit, juice, toast and toasted sandwiches. The police run the program from Monday to Thursday and DCP run the program on Fridays. Children are encouraged to be involved in serving and cleaning up after themselves each morning.

Unique aspects of the Biyadanga Police School Breakfast Program.

The Biyadanga Police Breakfast Program is a partnership between the local police and Department for Child Protection staff. Whilst they receive support from the school, the police and DCP manage and run the program independently. In addition to breakfasts, police officers supply lunches to children who may approach them because they are hungry. The officers take them back to the station and give them something to eat, such as baked beans on toast.

Results of the Biyadanga Police School Breakfast Program

The Breakfast Program provides opportunities for the children and police to build a positive relationship, which then extends to the wider community. Police have reported very low levels of criminal issues with the children and higher levels of school attendance. In addition, the Breakfast Program assists with the reduction of malnourished children within the community.

Challenges

In the past the Breakfast Program received criticism from the local council. Police motives for running the breakfast were questioned and there were threats to shut the program down. Following a visit to the Breakfast Program, the council now understands and supports the program and the partnership with the school and the Department for Child Protection. Another challenge was with food storage at the women's centre, the original location for the program. Now the breakfast has been moved to the police station, the food is stored in a more suitable manner and therefore lasts longer.

Local Support

The community really supports and values the program. According to Senior Sergeant Clarke, there are not enough employment opportunities for the community members. Many families rely on the pension or benefits, but the money can only go so far, resulting in many families utilising the Breakfast Program service to provide good nutrition to the younger generation. The community shows its support in any way they can, such as the local store donating bread every week.

Where to from here?

The police will continue to run the Breakfast Program in the current format. In the words of the police officers, “the program is doing wonders!”

CASE STUDY:

Brookman Primary School



Introduction

Brookman Primary School is located in Langford, in Perth's southern suburbs. The school community consists of a vast cultural mix resulting in one third of the 345 students having English as their second language. Initially only responsible for collecting the breakfast products from Foodbank, Zora Elliss became the Coordinator and has been one of the main drivers in creating the dynamic program that runs today.

Background

The program commenced in 2002. Several students came from families that, for a variety of reasons, did not always provide breakfast at home. The staff thought a Breakfast Program would be beneficial for these students and asked the P&C to implement the program at the school.

"We appreciate the support from Foodbank, couldn't do it without them. People in the community appreciate what the Foodbank do; they do a fantastic job."

Zora Elliss, SBP Coordinator





How the Brookman Primary School Breakfast Program is run

In the beginning the program was run once a week and was reliant on teacher volunteers. Currently the program operates three times per week, staffed by student helpers and a few parent volunteers. Food served differs depending on the day it is run. Monday's menu includes cereals or porridge, fruit (stewed, tinned and fresh), toast, milk, Milo and juice. Wednesday's menu consists of spaghetti and baked bean toasted sandwiches, toast with a variety of spreads, yoghurt, tinned and fresh fruit. Friday's menu includes a hot breakfast and rolls with a variety of fillings. Almost 100 students attend each day.



Unique aspects of the Brookman Primary School Breakfast Program

Zora employs many tactics to reduce food wastage - for instance, the fresh fruit left over at breakfast time is sent to the classrooms and consumption is encouraged at appropriate times during the day, such as during "Crunch&Sip®". Special guests such as local members of parliament are often invited to attend breakfast club to see how it is run and to encourage ongoing support.

Themed breakfasts are regularly organised to promote breakfast club attendance. A recent NAIDOC week breakfast included the provision of kangaroo sausages.



Zora also incorporates life skills education during each breakfast. Examples of this include involving children in the food preparation process, teaching students about the importance of washing their hands, cleaning their dishes and encouraging students to clean the area after breakfast is finished.

Results of the program

The positive outcomes that result from the Brookman Primary School Breakfast Program extend throughout the school environment. The benefits for the students include learning basic cooking, food and personal hygiene skills. The breakfast club provides social networking opportunities, creates a sense of belonging among the students and brings structure and normality to at-risk students. The program also provides international students with opportunities to practise speaking English. One particular student who was unable to speak English fluently started attending the breakfast. A few months later, the student won the "Aussie of the Month" award for helping at the Breakfast Club.



Challenges

The one major challenge for Zora is that of recruiting and retaining reliable volunteers. While she has her regular student volunteers, she needs more reliable adult volunteers to ensure the breakfasts run smoothly.

Where to from here?

Zora finds the School Breakfast Program Coordinator role rewarding and fulfilling. The Breakfast Club will continue running at Brookman Primary School with a few modifications. For example, structured procedures will be introduced to ensure that certain tasks are performed at specific times.



CASE STUDY:

Kondinin Primary School

Introduction

Kondinin Primary School is attended by 59 children from within the township and surrounding farms. The school places particular emphasis on attendance and the academic and behavioural values of all students, irrespective of cultural background. The principal, Valerie Applegate, happily reports that Kondinin Primary School's Breakfast Program produces positive outcomes for her students, whilst being simple to run and maintain.

Background

Kondinin Primary School joined the Foodbank WA School Breakfast Program during Term 4, 2008. Val had observed the impact of the program during her time at another school and felt that it would positively impact the students at Kondinin Primary School. It was implemented following liaison with the school's Noongar parent group, who pledged their support for the Breakfast.

How the Kondinin Primary School Breakfast Program is run

The Kondinin Primary School Breakfast Program takes place every Thursday morning. Val coordinates the ordering of product from Foodbank WA and has hired an AIEO (Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer) to oversee the day-to-day aspects of the program. The AIEO organises a roster of parent volunteers to help out, is responsible for keeping track of food stocks and reports to Val if any product is running low, such as bread or milk. Students are offered toast with vegemite, toasted sandwiches with baked beans or spaghetti, fruit, wheat biscuits and Milo. Between 20 and 29 students attend the breakfast program weekly.

Unique aspects of the Kondinin School Breakfast Program

The students finish their breakfast at around 8.00am, which is followed by all children brushing their teeth. Val organises activities to occupy the children until school starts, such as reading activities using magazines, comic books or library books.

Val has noticed increased parent engagement in information and education programs timed to start immediately following the Breakfast. Several programs, such as first aid courses and diabetes clinics, have been enthusiastically attended by a number of parents.



“It’s a terrific program, I like the way the program brings the community together”.

Val Applegate, Principal

Challenges

Val admits that their School Breakfast Program ‘journey’ has not always been ‘smooth sailing’. It was originally held in the art room. Whilst the room provided access to tables, chairs, a sink and an oven, the space was not really appropriate. The desire for a more appropriate breakfast club setting led the school community to install a brand new kitchen, which now provides an inviting and aesthetically pleasing area to hold the Breakfast.

Results and outcomes of the Kondinin School Breakfast Program

The children have truly embraced the Breakfast Program, and look forward to every Thursday morning. Whilst attendance at Kondinin Primary School has always been good, the breakfast provides an extra incentive to attend school on Thursdays. Val has observed a number of positive outcomes associated with the program. Younger siblings of students are invited to attend, which provides both Val with the opportunity to meet her future students and the younger children the opportunity to start getting used to the school rules. Additionally, renovating the art room has provided a place to hold different school functions, including the “Healthy Tucker Lunch” organised by the local Aboriginal Health Service.

As a result of being a parent volunteer at the Breakfast, one of the aboriginal parents is now employed by the school as an AIEO and is in charge of Breakfast Club. Her involvement has built her confidence to the extent that she has also applied for the cleaning job and now job shares with another lady to clean the school. She is more confident and a great asset to Kondinin Primary School. Val says “we would never have employed her if she didn’t volunteer for Breakfast Club because we wouldn’t have known what a great asset she is.”

Where to from here?

Valerie is happy with the Kondinin Primary School Breakfast Program, as it is manageable and is producing good results. She would like to build on the effectiveness of the program by supplying lunches for those children that do not have lunch, and to start running a computer course for parents after breakfast.



Introduction

Marble Bar School caters for 59 students from Kindergarten to Year 12. Eighty-five percent of the students attending Marble Bar School identify as being of Aboriginal descent.

Background

David Melling (Principal, April 2009 to June 2010) and Betty Marshall (Attendance Officer) were responsible for the introduction of the School Breakfast Program in Term 2, 2009. David had observed the program during his time at previous schools – Ngurrawaana Remote Community School and Gwynne Park Primary School – and could see the potential for positive outcomes at Marble Bar School. The Breakfast allows the school to fill hungry bellies and meet the social needs of the community in a mutually acceptable, ‘no-shame’ manner.



CASE STUDY:

Marble Bar School



“The need is real – and if we can meet that need, then how can you say no to that?”

Betty Marshall, Attendance Officer

How is the Marble Bar School Breakfast Program run?

The School Breakfast Program operates Monday to Friday. Betty is the School Breakfast Program Coordinator at Marble Bar School. In her capacity as school attendance officer, she often collects the students for school, and therefore has a good idea of which students have not had breakfast. The menu varies throughout the week, including fruit, spaghetti and baked beans on toast, eggs on toast, French toast, toasted sandwiches, cereal and milk or juice. The number of students attending fluctuates, but a core group of 7 to 10 students access the program on a daily basis.

Unique aspects of the Marble Bar School Breakfast Program

In the beginning, many students were not coming forward at breakfast time due to shame associated with admitting they have no food. To combat this, Betty makes the breakfast program foods available to students throughout the day, so students now discreetly come forward and are given something to eat. Betty has gone to great lengths to reduce any sense of shame, increasing the likelihood of children participating. For instance, when students ask for lunch, Betty puts their sandwich in a paper bag, to give the appearance that the lunch was brought from home. A unique event that has grown from the breakfast program is the “Friday Feast.” For lunch on Friday, the school does a ‘big cook up’ for the whole school, incorporating healthy items such as vegetables and rice. This ‘whole of school’ approach has also helped to reduce any stigma associated with accessing the breakfast program.

The school may have some left-over product at the end of school term, which is distributed to families. Any left-over food products are packed into hampers and made available to any families for whom food insecurity may be an issue.

Outcomes of the Marble Bar School Breakfast Program

Betty and David have noticed excellent results since the introduction of the School Breakfast Program. The children appear more settled and able to study during class. Betty says that the children’s academic performance and learning abilities have “been coming along in leaps and bounds”, with many students coming to the breakfast program “just for the chance to socialise with other children”. Finally, Marble Bar School’s version of the program has reduced any stigmatisation associated with the need to rely on the program for food.

Support for the program?

At first some teachers did not support the program, feeling it would create a dependence on the school to provide breakfast for the children. By working through these issues, the school community now realises it is about meeting the needs of the community and the school caring enough to make sure the opportunity is there to strive academically. This has resulted in staff acceptance of and support for the program.

What is the future for the Marble Bar School Breakfast Program?

Everyone involved in the Marble Bar School Breakfast are happy with the program. The current format meets the need of the community and encourages children and families in need to come forward without feeling ashamed.



CASE STUDY:

Middle Swan Primary School

Introduction and background

Middle Swan Primary School is located in Stratton, in Perth's north-eastern suburbs. The school had a Breakfast Program during the late 1990's, which closed down in 2000 due to a perceived lack of need. In an effort to re-establish the program, the school joined the Foodbank WA School Breakfast Program in 2007. As with the first attempt, the popularity of the latest program limited, but has greatly improved due to the efforts of Matt Jarman, the Principal, and Leigh Adams, Coordinator and parent volunteer.



"It's not about poverty, its about creating a good environment, a network, something different to do and an opportunity to get together."

Leigh Adams, SBP Coordinator

How does the Middle Swan Primary School Breakfast Program run?

Middle Swan Primary School's Breakfast Program is held every Tuesday and Thursday. The program is run by staff volunteers on Tuesdays and by parents and other volunteers on Thursdays. Andrew, a volunteer through Landgate, travels to Middle Swan from Rockingham every Thursday to help out! The breakfast menu includes cereals, spaghetti, baked beans, tinned or fresh fruit, yoghurt and toast. Approximately 20 to 35 children attend on a regular basis.

Unique aspects of the Middle Swan Primary School Breakfast Program.

Leigh utilises numeracy and literacy activities to keep the children occupied during busy periods. If the line for breakfast becomes too long or if students become unsettled, Leigh initiates activities such as star jumps or playing the Fantastic Fruit & Veg Adventure game. One of Leigh's favourite numeracy activities involves asking children to perform a head count and to set out enough tables and chairs for the number of students taking part in the breakfast.

To promote a sense of ownership and belonging amongst the students, Leigh included the older students in creating the 'rules for Breakfast Club'. These rules are based upon common courtesy, table manners and awareness of the needs of others. The students who attend the breakfast are actively encouraged to mix with students outside their usual peer groups. Students who have already had breakfast at home, but have been dropped at school early, are invited to come inside and be involved in the activities and socialising.

Results

Since Leigh took over as Coordinator, School Breakfast Program attendance has increased from an average of 10 up to 35 students. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, the Breakfast provides extra incentive for students to attend school. It puts the children in a positive frame of mind to concentrate and behave in class. As they leave students are told to have a good day and to respect others and themselves. It provides social networking opportunities and promotes friendship, safety and a good environment. The healthy eating and nutrition message is promoted actively, in that students have access to nutritious foods which they may not have access to at home.

Challenges

The recruitment and retention of dependable volunteers to assist with the Breakfast Club is a challenge at Middle Swan Primary School. The current building scheme has meant that it has been moved to a shared wet area. However, this change in location has not impacted on attendance. Leigh has worked hard to change the belief that the Breakfast Club was associated with poverty and therefore only for children have not eaten breakfast, or families that could not afford to feed their children. Constantly promoting the benefits of the program through the school and parent newsletters has assisted in changing this belief, which has resulted in many more students utilising this service.

Support from the community

Breakfast Club is accepted as a core program in the school and is greatly appreciated the school community, especially working parents who may need to drop children off to school early.

Where to from here?

Once the building scheme is completed in late 2010, the School Breakfast Program will move back into a self contained area. Leigh is also working toward increasing the days it is run and recruiting volunteers to staff the additional days.





CASE STUDY:

Northampton District High School

Introduction and Background

Northampton District High School is located in Northampton, a small town approximately 50 km north of Geraldton. The school caters for 117 students from a diverse range of backgrounds, from Kindergarten to Year 10. Northampton DHS became involved with the School Breakfast Program in 2004, in response to many students arriving at school without having eaten breakfast. Initially occurring one day per week, Deputy Principal Petrina Bean said that the program was progressively increased to five days per week in line with the demonstrated need in the school community.

It's great we can be a part of the program and thank you all for your support. It's a good thing - the kids love it and the staff really value it"

Petrina Bean, Deputy Principal

How the Northampton District High School Breakfast Program is run

Between 40 and 60 students access the Northampton DHS Breakfast Program at some point during the week, which represents approximately half of the student population. It is staffed by a roster of volunteers and parents. Foods served include baked beans or spaghetti on toast, fruit, cereal and milk. On occasion, bulk donations of other foods by generous community groups allow for special meals, such as scrambled eggs. The children are responsible for washing their own dishes once they have finished eating breakfast which, Petrina believes, acts to reinforce important life skills.

Unique aspects of the Northampton District High School Breakfast Program

Many different characteristics of Northampton's Breakfast Program make it distinctive and effective. They sometimes have themed breakfasts such as 'Pancake Day' and hold an end of term 'Breakfast Club Party' consisting of a cooked breakfast. In the past, other programs such as Foodbank WA's Skip Rope, not Breakfast Program has been run in conjunction with the Breakfast Program. Finally, the local police assist with running the Breakfast on Mondays.

Children's responses to the Program

The School Breakfast Program seems to be very popular among the children. Besides the cereals, the children are very keen on the food choices. Spaghetti and baked beans on toast are the clear favourites.



Results of the Program

After the introduction of the Breakfast Program, Petrina noted positive changes in the student's behaviour. They are more settled and able to concentrate on their work. It also encourages students to socialise with those outside their regular group of friends. Furthermore, some secondary students help to run the Breakfast which gives social networking opportunities and helps the younger children feel more comfortable with the older children.

Challenges

One existing challenge for Northampton DHS is that Foodbank Geraldton closes early, which makes it difficult to get supplies outside of school hours. However Petrina feels it isn't a major issue. Secondly, the Breakfast was moved to the home economics room due to power blowouts in the old room. However, the younger children initially did not feel comfortable going to the home economics room as it is located in the secondary part of the school. This was addressed by walking children from the bus to the home economics room until they feel comfortable to walk on their own.

Where to from here?

Petrina is content with how the School Breakfast Program is run in her school. She has received lots of positive feedback from the community, therefore doesn't see the need to alter the program at this stage.

Acknowledgements

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Compilation

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Schools

Robert Clark – SBP Coordinator, Bidyadanga Police

David Melling – Principal, Marble Bar School (to June 2010)

Betty Marshall – SBP Coordinator, Marble Bar School

Dana Trtica – Deputy Principal, Adam Road Primary School

Zora Elliss – SBP Coordinator, Brookman Primary School

Valerie Applegate – Principal, Kondinin Primary School

Matt Jarman – Principal, Middle Swan Primary School

Leigh Adams – SBP Coordinator, Middle Swan Primary School

Petrina Bean – Deputy Principal, Northampton District High School

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Department of
Health



“ Each morning we arrive at school to teach our students the lessons we have carefully prepared, hoping our students come to school bright-eyed and ready to learn, but for most students out here that just isn't the case.

Although some of the reasons students might be unprepared are beyond our control, there is something we can do: **encourage students to eat breakfast at school, and help to make sure that no student walks through your door with an empty stomach.**”

Principal, Remote Community School



**school
breakfast
program**

An initiative of:



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