

# Summertime shouldn't be hungry time

By Kevin Concannon

USDA Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services

In the midst of winter/spring, it can be easy to forget those long, hot days of June, July, and August.

Even so, now is the time to start applying and planning to feed hungry children when the school year ends.

More than 21 million children in the country receive free and reduced price meals during the school year, but when summer rolls around, only about 1 in 10 of those kids (3 million) get free meals through federal summer feeding programs. Clearly, there is a gap that needs filling.

Enter USDA's Summer Food Service Program. Kids are at higher risk of going hungry during the summer months, and we are working to fill that void. USDA alone, however, cannot accomplish the important work of feeding our low-income kids.

You and your organizations have an important role to play.

Faith-based, community and private non-profit organizations are pivotal in the lives of needy children. And schools, churches, recreation centers, playgrounds, parks, and camps are all eligible and encouraged to serve summer meals in neighborhoods with a high percentage of low-income families.

These locations, by their very nature, offer safe and familiar environments and are places children gather when school is out.

But feeding hungry young people requires commitment. Sponsors must provide a capable staff, managerial skills and food service capabilities. Sponsors may provide their own meals, purchase meals

through an agreement with an area school, or contract for meals with a food vendor.

If you don't want to be a sponsor but still want to be involved, your organization can be a summer feeding site. There are sponsors in your area who can work with you to feed the children in your community.

And don't forget to register your summer feeding sites for the National Hunger Hotline at 1-866-3-Hungry or 1-877-8-HAMBRE.

The most successful summer programs offer activities for kids. Children are much more likely to come out for a meal when there is an activity to keep them there. It can include anything from sports, tutoring and arts and crafts, to other creative activities with community partners.

Developing partnerships with other community organizations is often the key to being able to offer great activities.

To learn more about the Summer Food Service Program or to participate in one of USDA's free webinar sessions on opportunities to provide summer meals, please visit [www.summerfood.usda.gov](http://www.summerfood.usda.gov).

These helpful webinars will highlight the program, offer an understanding of how SFSP works, detail sponsor and site roles and responsibilities, and provide outreach tips and other resources to get started.

Together we can continue to tackle childhood hunger and ensure kids receive the nutritious meals they need in summer, and throughout the year.

We look forward to working with you to meet that goal.

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CARTOONISTS  
SUNDAY  
CARTOONISTS DAY



## Damon's six degrees of separation

**Annette Funicello** – When news reports circulated that one of the original Mouseketeers of The Mickey Mouse Club, Annette Funicello, had passed away, my thoughts quickly traced back to my father's casual acquaintance with Annette and her family.

Considered the sweetheart of my generation, Annette was a novelty for all who followed her success back in the 1950s and '60s. And those who regularly attended mass at St. Cyril of Jerusalem Catholic Church on Ventura Boulevard in Encino of Los Angeles most likely were aware they went to Annette's church.

My father was a deacon at St. Cyril for nearly 30 years, performing many odd jobs from ordering altar candles to hiring contractors and just about everything in between, including training altar boys.

In one of Dad's classes were Annette's boys, Jack and Jason, now adults. Dad always said of her sons, "They were fine young men." And of Annette he'd remark, "One of the kindest people you'll ever meet."

**Lucille Ball** – Watch any number of old episodes of "I Love Lucy" and listen when actress Lucille Ball mentions where she was born – Jamestown, NY. In 1961, my family moved from Pennsylvania to Jamestown. I was nine, and back then, there was little telling that Lucy had roots in Celeron, a tiny suburb outside of Jamestown in Chautauqua County.

Today, the street where her childhood home still stands is named "Lucy Lane." Signs posted on the front door and mailbox read "59LucyLane.com."

My husband, Brian, whose childhood home is right down the street from 59 Lucy Lane, attended the same elementary

MY STORY YOUR STORY



**PAULA DAMON**  
[paula.damon@iw.net](mailto:paula.damon@iw.net)

school in Celeron as Lucy attended, only 45 years later.

In Jamestown, there's a museum dedicated to her life and career, a theatre aptly named "Lucy Playhouse" and murals around town depicting scenes from her famed sit-com. The comedic TV star's dying wish was to be buried in Jamestown, where her grave is well-marked in Lake View Cemetery at the edge of town.

**Natalie Merchant** – Also a native of Jamestown, NY, contemporary singer/songwriter Natalie Merchant went to Jamestown High School, where my mother was a substitute teacher at the time. Natalie attended Jamestown Community College, where her mother was employed and my husband earned his associate's degree.

My parents and Natalie's grandparents were business owners on a first-name basis in Jamestown, where they traded products and services with one another. After dropping out of high school, Natalie joined a band called 10,000 Maniacs.

**10,000 Maniacs** – The alternative rock band of the 1980s and '90s was co-founded by John Lombardo, a classmate of mine in elementary and high school. My first heartthrob in fourth grade, John showed signs of being a brilliant artist and musician even then. We graduated in the Class of 1970 from Southwestern

Central High School, West Ellicott, a suburb of Jamestown.

Rumor has it John is still performing and working with bands in the Buffalo, NY area. He didn't bother to show at our 40th class reunion, but I'm holding out hope he'll be at our 50th in seven short years.

**Matt Damon** – According to the Damon Family Tree, my husband is related to actor/screenwriter Matt Damon. Brian and Cousin Matt share the same original great grandfathers in America, dating back to 1650, when the first is Thomas Damon sailed from England to the Reading settlement in the Massachusetts Colony.

Thomas Damon had a son also named Thomas, born in 1658. Thomas Damon II had 14 children, one of whom was John Damon, born in 1709.

Interestingly, our son Nicholas bears a remarkable resemblance to Cousin Matt. We are often asked if Matt Damon is any relation. People are astonished when we reply, "Yes!"

Six degrees of separation is a theory that everyone is six or fewer steps away, by way of introduction, from any other person in the world.

This means that a chain of a friend of a friend can be made to connect any two people in a maximum of six links in the chain.

So, next time you come across Annette Funicello, Lucille Ball, Natalie Merchant, 10,000 Maniacs or Matt Damon, you will be connected in less than six degrees or links through me.

## PLAIN TALK POLL RESULTS

Gun control laws should be...

More strict	19
Better enforced	11
Less strict	8
Kept at they are	8
Total Votes	43

To participate in the Plain Talk's weekly poll, log on to [plaintalk.net](http://plaintalk.net).

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Plain Talk encourages its readers to write letters to the editor, and it asks that a few simple guidelines be followed.

Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the Plain Talk will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.

Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters

may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.

Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters to the Editor, 201 W. Cherry St., Vermillion, SD 57069, drop off at 201 W. Cherry in Vermillion, fax to 624-4696 or e-mail to [david.lias@plaintalk.net](mailto:david.lias@plaintalk.net).

## SOUTH DAKOTA EDITORIAL ROUNDUP

The Associated Press

Argus Leader, Sioux Falls, April 2, 2013

### Native American foster care needs work

Federal law says Native American children belong in Native American foster homes, except in the most extreme circumstances. Despite that law, the number of children in South Dakota who are pulled out of their culture and kept in white homes hasn't changed much since the law was passed almost 35 years ago.

There are lots of reasons given for why Native children — at a high rate — are sent to white foster homes. There are not enough approved and available Native American foster homes on the list, for starters.

It's often difficult to find family members to care for children placed into foster care.

It's hard to solve the complex problem of finding suitable foster care homes, no matter what race the child is, particularly for Native children. But we have to, and

we have to look at all possible options.

No one's hands are clean. The state needs to work even harder to place children in safe Native American foster homes. That responsibility can't be taken lightly. Tribes need to help to encourage Native families to provide safe, suitable foster care. Relatives and other families need to come forward to care of the children.

Numbers don't lie. If 80 percent to 90 percent of Native children are being placed in white homes, clearly the spirit of the law isn't being followed. And we're falling short of our duty as a state to children who deserve safe care and should remain in a home where they can share their culture.

It's good to talk about the issue with all involved at the table and to find ways to improve foster care. Progress is important.

Everyone who works with Native foster children has work to do to make that number move.

Rapid City Journal, Rapid City, April 3, 2013

### Vote keeps Evans Plunge open

It was a close vote, but Hot Springs voters agreed to allow the city to purchase Evans Plunge. After two winters of seeing the popular swimming pool closed during the off-season, Evans Plunge may have an owner with the funds to keep it open year-round: taxpayers.

The ideal solution would have been to keep Evans Plunge in private hands that would have guaranteed public access and kept it open all year.

Before last week's vote, a group of businessmen came forward with an interest to buying the Plunge, but the vote to allow the city to borrow up to \$1.9 million to buy and restore Evans Plunge may price them out of the running to buy the swimming pool.

Evans Plunge is the oldest tourist attraction in the Black Hills. Its naturally heated mineral waters have been drawing visitors to the area well before there was a carving at Mount Rushmore and is the reason that there is a VA

medical center in Hot Springs to begin with.

Voters recognized that Evans Plunge is important enough to the identity of Hot Springs and its future to authorize the city to buy it. Modernizing the Plunge building and keeping it open year-round will cost Hot Springs taxpayers more money, as the current owners will attest.

If the city modernizes its facilities and successfully markets Evans Plunge to the many thousands of visitors to the Black Hills every year, the purchase could turn out reasonably well.

The important thing is that the public will continue to have access to the warm mineral waters of Evans Plunge.

We don't expect Hot Springs to operate Evans Plunge as well as a business might, but a lot of towns have city-owned swimming pools and recreation facilities, and it won't be unheard of for Hot Springs have its own municipal swimming pool with Evans Plunge.

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