

Free Meals for Hungry Children

Children are fed nutritious meals at several schools through contributions to Paper Houses Across the Border.

We work in cooperation with trained volunteer cooks, the state of Coahuila and the school directors and teachers in a wonderful program that enables us to feed the school-children at a cost of 12-cents per meal!

Schools in the program provide a cafeteria, volunteer cooks, and other material needed for the preparation of the meals. The school enters into a contract for a certain number of meals and promise to pay the equivalent of 10- cents per meal to the state.

The state of Coahuila trains and certifies the volunteer cooks so that health laws are followed to the letter. Parents volunteer as cooks and arrive hours before the start of each school-day to prepare the meals. These parents remain afterschool to clean the dishes, pots, pans and the entire cafeteria. The teachers walk the children to and from the cafeterias and supervise the children during the meals.

The state subsidizes the cost of ingredients so the cost to us is only 10-cents per meal (the other 2-cents per meal are used for cleaning supplies and repairs/replacement of equipment, dishes, etc.).

At the end of the school year, the state refunds 20 percent of the money spent on the subsidized meals directly to each school. Each school provides us with documentation and receipts to show that this money was spent to benefit the school.

The state provides training and certification of the volunteer cooks, menus approved by a nutritionist, and food.

We visit the schools and the cafeterias unannounced and we also ask parents and children about the means as we walk the colonias. We are very pleased with this program.

Summary

Because we are now working with the state of Coahuila, the cost of feeding a child for an entire school year is 12- cents per meal.

We also provide items like electric juicers (schools make orange juice and lemon-aid for 2,000 children using small plastic juice squeezers) ceiling fans, and other items to each school.

We need new contributors to expand this program. Families have told us that because of the economy adults skip meals at homes to make certain that the children have enough to eat. Many parents have thanked us for providing meals to their children at school.