

Childcare Center Focuses on Nutrition with CACFP

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Member Mercer County YMCA of Aledo, IL featured by the National CACFP Sponsors Association

ROUND ROCK, TX, USA, October 22, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In 1997, the Mercer County YMCA transitioned from a half-day preschool to a full-time childcare center. They now have 1 full day center, 3 afterschool sites, and 1 summer day camp working together to serve about 200 children. Lisa Clawson, Mercer County YMCA Children's Director, values the importance the YMCA has in relationship to the health of the children, realizing that for many of them, the team is serving much more than just a lunch. They are also responsible for serving knowledge as nutrition educators and mentors.



Mercer County YMCA is a full-time childcare center. Lisa Clawson and the staff focus on nutrition and healthy lifestyles.

Megan and Brenda, the YMCA chefs, serve as the champions, or YMCA leaders, for child nutrition. The Y values the importance of education and has sent the chefs to conferences such as the National Child Nutrition Conference and schedules them for consistent nutrition education training. The chefs then act as nutrition ambassadors for the children, while also ensuring the teachers and program leaders are also educated. Through the CATCH curriculum, games, and cooking classes, the children are learning about a variety of nutritional topics.

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Nutrition is where it all starts for the day. You have to feel well to learn, work and play.”

Lisa Clawson

Parents are sent information about each lesson and the Y also hosts family nights where a nutritious meal is prepared by all. The health department has joined with the Y to teach nutrition and cooking classes. Together they hope to make nutritious choices a family lifestyle where

children develop lifetime healthy habits. If kids understand what it means to be healthy when they are young, it will hopefully combat problems later in life.

Lisa realizes that their work at the Y is not yet complete. They would like to join the Summer Food Service program and are applying for food grants to be able to develop a senior food program which is an area where they see a definite need. They are heavily involved in the community with canned and soup food drives, donations to the food pantry, activities at the nursing home and healthy taco fundraisers. Through education and active involvement, they are working diligently to combat food insecurity in their area.

CACFP is an indicator of quality child care. When children are cared for by providers who are part of the CACFP they are receiving the best nutrition available. Learn more about other CACFP providers featured in the [Member Showcase](#) through the National CACFP Sponsors Association.

Since 1986, the [National CACFP Sponsors Association](#) (NCA) is the leading national organization for sponsors who administer the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). It provides education and support to thousands of members in the CACFP community and in particular to sponsors of all sizes from across the country. CACFP strives to improve communication between families, caregivers, sponsors and their supervising government agencies.

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