

# Patchwork of Services Leaves Children Hungry

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County has a much lower population of students who meet the standards, which means that fewer services exist even though the number of students in need is much greater.

"The reality is that child hunger isn't just an educational issue or a health issue, it's a moral issue," said Republican Gov. Bob McDonnell. "We must do everything we can to make sure our most vulnerable children are getting regular, nutritious meals, especially during the summer when they are most at risk."

## Students In Poverty

Division	Students eligible	Percent of enrollment
Alexandria City	6,264	54 percent
Arlington County	6,515	32 percent
Fairfax County	45,276	26 percent

SOURCE: Washington Area Boards of Education

of the county's 45,000 children who live in poverty receive nutritional support. Enrollment records show that a small fraction of those students are probably enrolled in summer school. And county officials were unable to identify how many children receive meals from recreation centers or other county programs at press time. Community leaders say they wouldn't be surprised to learn that tens of thousands of children don't get the nutritional support they need during the summer months.

"It's a serious problem," said Judy Harbeck, chairwoman of the education committee of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations. "The need kids have for nutrition doesn't end when the school year ends."

**A NEW STUDY** published last week by the Food Research and Action Center shows that jurisdictions across America have been letting children fall between the cracks for years. The report concludes that only one in seven students who have access to the National School Lunch Program during the

**LAST WEEK**, McDonnell joined forces with Academy Award winner Jeff Bridges and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to announce a new campaign against child hunger in Arlington. Dubbed the Virginia No Kid Hungry campaign, the VIPs assembled at Barcroft Elementary School on South Wakefield Street. The public-private partnership hopes to connect low-income children to nutrition programs, including the Virginia Summer Meals for Kids Program.

The idea is simple — parents can simply call 211 to find summer meals sites near them.

"Our children are hungry because we have lacked a big-picture strategy to connect them to the nutritious food they need to grow and thrive," said Bridges, star of "Tron: Legacy." "The No Kid Hungry Campaign provides that strategy."

In Fairfax County, school officials and county leaders are unable to say how many



COURTESY PHOTO

**Republican Gov. Bob McDonnell, center, speaks with Academy Award winning actor Jeff Bridges, right, at Barcroft Elementary School in Arlington to launch the Virginia No Kid Hungry Campaign.**

school year has access during the summer. And despite record numbers of children being eligible for free and reduced-price lunches during the 2009-2010 school year, participation in summer nutrition programs fell in 2010 nationally.

"If low-income children are going to have access to the healthy food they need during the summer months," the report concluded, "aggressive steps must be taken."

A slumping economy drove increased demand for services across Virginia just as state officials were looking to slash budgets, leaving many children caught in the middle. Nationwide, according to the Food Research and Action Center's analysis, 83,000 fewer students were served by the program in the

summer of 2010 than the previous year. That's why Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States, the Sodexo Foundation, the Walmart Foundation and Dominion Resources have committed to offer more than \$300,000 for the Share Our Strength Program, which operates in 12 other states and will launch in five more next year.

"Our hope is that no Virginian ever has to worry about where they'll get their next meal," said Leslie Van Horn, executive director of the Federation of Virginia Food Banks. "These programs are in place to protect our most vulnerable children, and we're thrilled to be working with our partners to make sure that families know these programs exist year round."

# Pastor Delivers 'Call To Serve'

## West Potomac high seniors attend Baccalaureate.

BY ED SIMMONS, JR.  
FOR THE ALMANAC

"Success is the ability to go from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm," said Rev. Keary Kincannon with a smile to 451 graduating West Potomac High School seniors at the Class of 2011 Baccalaureate on Sunday, June 12.

He was quoting Winston Churchill, and the Wolverines, seated in the sanctuary of Aldersgate United Methodist Church, responded with laughter.

Then Kincannon, who is pastor of Rising Hope Mission Church which serves the homeless and needy of the Route 1 corridor, grew more serious.

"Ultimately, life is not about getting a big house or an expensive car, nor wealth,

power or fame," he said from Aldersgate's pulpit. "Life is about staying true to our highest ideals and principles."

Explaining, he continued, "I believe the purpose of your education is for you to determine how you will serve the greater good of the world with your greatest gifts and talents."

Afterwards, senior Sarah Slichter said, "I felt what Rev. Kincannon's simple, clever speech said to me most

was to put my education to good use. His emphasis on service to the greater good especially had a large impact on me." Sarah, who performed on violin for the service with the West Potomac String Ensemble, will attend Vassar next year.

Her classmate Leah Naidorf, who delivered a Judaic prayer for the service, also was moved. "I took a lot away from Rev. Kincannon's advice. His words were especially meaningful." She heads to The University of Virginia next year.

An Islamic prayer was also offered by her fellow student Remaz Abdelgader.

For Chris Breen, who plays the snare in the Wolverine marching band and is headed

to NOVA next year before going on to George Mason, Kincannon was "the best speaker ever in motivating me."

And Kyle Parker, a student at Virginia Tech next year, took strength from the pastor's remarks which "reaffirmed my beliefs in never giving up. You are never 'out of the game' no matter what others say or think."

Kincannon, who began his ministry 16 years ago offering the homeless food and clothing out of the back of his station wagon, now has a three-story church building on Russell Road, just off Route 1, with a skylight-lit chapel, kitchen and dining hall, food pantry, clothing closet, children's wing and offices for staff.

"My whole career," he had told the Wolverines, "has been feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, and advocating that the marginalized members of our society not be excluded from any of the rights and privileges of the mainstream."

Rev. Keary Kincannon preaches regularly at Rising Hope Mission Church on Sunday mornings at 11 a.m. accompanied by his choir and his Christian rock group, The Rising Hope Jesus Christ Band.



PHOTO BY ED SIMMONS, JR.

**"Ultimately, life is not about getting a big house or an expensive car, nor wealth, power or fame," Rev. Kincannon told the West Potomac High School Class of 2011 at their Baccalaureate on Sunday.**