

THE BACKSTORY

A few years ago, the football coaches at Thomas Jefferson High School, realizing their players were *losing* weight (NOT what you want as a football coach) throughout the season, asked the community to help provide some “quality calories” so players would have the energy required to perform well and maintain weight. So, several churches and non-profits responded by providing a snack/light meal for the TJ football team Mondays–Thursdays prior to practice during the first sports season.

THE WHY

- The vast majority of students who attend TJHS are bussed-in from all parts of the City of Richmond (95% do not live in the district but attend via variance).
- Most students at TJHS come from low-income homes.
- TJ is 88% African American, 12% Hispanic, Asian and Caucasian.
- Students are served lunch at 10:30 a.m. But most do not get home from activities until 7 or 8pm, where their prospects for a nutritious dinner are often questionable.
- While we fully support the football team, we are also aware that many *other students* stay after school for activities (band, volleyball, cross country, cheering, tutoring, etc.).
- This season, as program coordinators, Hope Church is striving to organize a bold effort to feed *all* the students.

THE MISSION

- To serve a heavy snack/light meal to the 150-175 students who stay after school to participate in sanctioned afterschool activities at TJHS. Mondays –Thursdays from September 6- November 3. (*For perspective, that’s between 6,000 and 7,000 snacks/meals over the 10-week period.*) The entire student population of TJHS is between 600-700, so this program has the potential to impact up to 25% of the student body.

THE VISION

- Work with the TJHS administration, community businesses and churches to meet this need. Bringing the community together to serve TJ is pivotal to this effort.
- Be a dependable presence in the lives of students.
- Develop relationships with students, helping to identify and invest in leaders in the TJHS community.
- Show up at games and events to support student athletes

THE NEEDS

We are going to need a lot of help. It will take many businesses and volunteers in the community working together to accomplish this mission.

- + Food and beverage donations
- + Donation of “to go” bags
- + Water and Powerade
- + Volunteers from the community to be present on the ground to prepare food, set up, serve and cleanup each day. (2:00pm-3:30pm)
- + Financial support: Tax-deductible financial support can be made through the Tee Jay Vikings Fund. Checks should be made out to “Tee Jay Vikings Fund” or “TJVF” with “Feeding Future Leaders” or “FFL” in the memo line. Corporate donors will receive recognition by way of mention/ad space in programs and banners at TJHS.

We are grateful to Whole Foods and Coca-Cola who are already helping support this effort.