

FEEDING THE HUNGRY FEEDING THE SOUL

Tori Childress

Editor in Chief

We have all seen those commercials, the ones pleading aid for hungry children in third world

programs.

June 6 through Aug. 11, Monday through Friday, I was working from 6:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. My alarm clock would go off at the unholy hour of 5 a.m. I dragged myself

breakfast, the line thinned, and I was able to talk to the same kids, learn their names and ask how their vacations went last week. Once breakfast was over, we had to clean everything up and start preparing

fruit. After a week, I saw the little boy take the fruit and put it in his bookbag. I asked him about it the next day, and he said that his parents couldn't always afford to feed him and his siblings because his dad got hurt on the job. Also, they had no car to bring the other siblings to the cafeteria. I didn't know what to say, so I hugged him, and told him that and things would get better for him and his family.

After I hugged him I told cafeteria manager Brandy Childress, my mother, what was going on. My mom told the boy's teachers, and everyone knew it was okay for him to take food out of the cafeteria. The boy would talk to me every day, and he explained how things started to look up for him and his family.

That is just one of the many children I met who didn't have enough to eat. I don't know why most of the kids were in the situations they were in, but, no matter what, them not having food is not their fault. What I do know is that I helped them get the food they needed. I reassured them that they didn't have to worry about when their next meal was coming.

By the end of the summer, the Child Nutrition Program had served over 40 thousand meals.

That's 40 thousand meals served to hungry children in Laurens County. Let that sink in. The number of hungry children in Laurens is so high, but think of the number of hungry parents in Laurens County.

I made a difference and learned a lot this summer about hard work. I was exhausted most days, but I understand I can't improve my community by sitting on the sidelines.

Doing the right thing is not easy, but it is the most rewarding thing you will ever do.



Photo by Brandy Childress

The van (above) and others like it provide summer nutrition and hope to children across Laurens County School District 55.

countries. The commercials tug our heartstrings, but the children leave our minds before the next commercial ends. No one pictures Laurens County is having hungry children like these because no one talks about poverty or believes it exists in our county. I did not believe it either until I worked this summer as a lunch lady at E.B. Morse Cafeteria.

The cafeteria is open in the summer because District 55 offers a free summer meal program funded by the USDA for anyone under 18 years old. E.B. Morse Cafeteria was the central kitchen, meaning we not only had to serve anyone coming through the food line, but we also had to prepare and deliver meals to churches and centers that had hungry children at their summer

from a sound sleep to hustle and rush to get to E.B. Morse Cafeteria on time.

I would speed walk from the parking lot to clock in exactly at 6:30 a.m., wash my hands and jump on my daily tasks. One eye was always on the clock since we had to pack 250 to-go breakfasts by 7:15 a.m. My coworkers and I started getting breakfast set for the 100 hungry students entering E.B. Morse. Only when I saw the children walk down the serving line did I realize all the rushing around, having 10 minutes to eat and cleaning something every five minutes was worth it.

Some students were so hungry that we let them have a second meal because they were still shaky. As we approached the end of serving

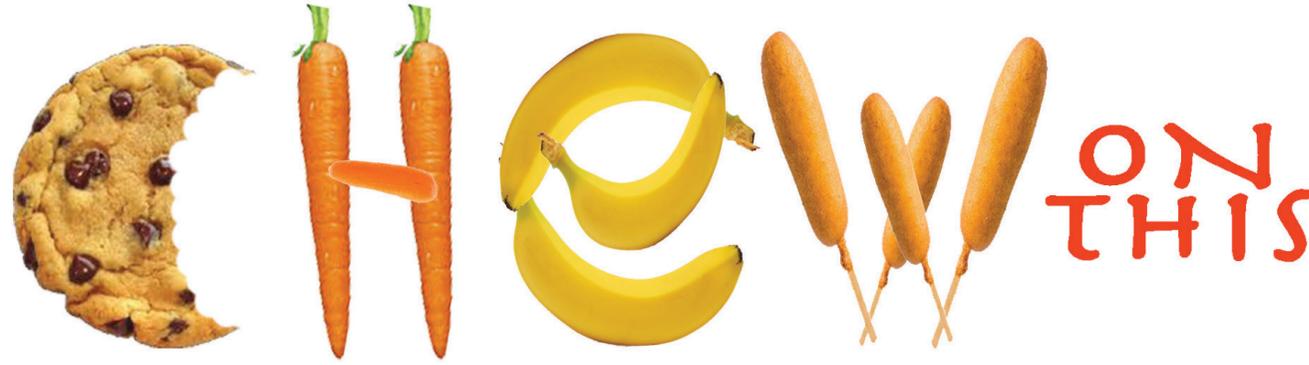
for lunch.

Lunch was the hectic part of the day because kids in summer school, art programs, music programs and at the YMCA would come to E.B. all at the same time. Some-where in the middle of all the chaos, I began to notice that some of the kids who would eat breakfast twice would be the first ones in line at lunch. The kids would grab one of everything we served, grateful and happy to get whatever we had.

One little boy in the program asked me one day if he could take another fruit. I told him something along the lines of, "Eat the fruit you have on your plate first; then, if you are still hungry, you may come back." Well every day after that, the same boy would repeatedly get an extra



Photo by Brandy Childress



Whether it's nutrition, free time with friends, club meetings or tutoring, school lunch means something to everyone.

iLunch is myLunch Where can iSit?

Nathan Kellett

Photo Editor

A new year brought a new principal and a load of other changes to how the average school day goes. The main changes were to the way lunch works. Last year, LDHS had four lunches at different times within third period. Now we have iLunch, during which students all eat at once for 50 minutes. So far iLunch is working very well, and we have not run into a lot of problems, with the exception of several fights which probably would have occurred regardless of the length of the lunch period. The new lunch period has many positive aspects, but there are some improvements that could be made to make iLunch the best it could be.

The first problem with iLunch is with the outside areas' seating. Outside Commons, for example, people usually stand in groups with nowhere to sit other than the ground because the tables and benches that are outside get taken. If they do get there before everyone else, students take one of the five benches outside or snag one of the tables for their group.

"There isn't enough space in Commons, outside and everywhere else. There are just too many students," sophomore Hailey Grady said.

The best way to fix the problem of not enough seating is to add more seating to accommodate the number of students outside of Commons. Although the school has blankets stored for students to grab and use to sit on the grass, LDHS still needs to add more tables outside of Commons.

More seating will cost money, but one way to offset the cost of tables would be to have Building Construction classes build more picnic tables. Building Construction students estimated the materials cost for wooden picnic tables like the ones outside the Tech Building to be \$112 per table plus tax. (Two 16-foot pressure treated 2x4s cost \$18; five 12-foot 2x6s are \$45; eight 6-inch carriage bolts cost \$24; one box of decking screws is \$25.)

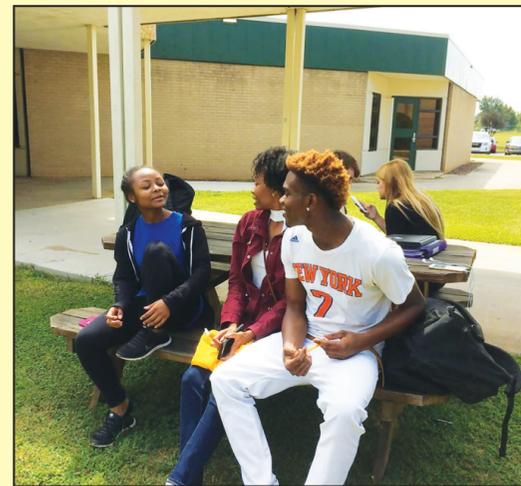


Photo by Amy George

Picnic tables in the courtyard outside the Tech Building and in other locations on campus provide places for students like seniors Brianna Clark, Adrianna Franklin and Tyqwan Johnson to socialize and enjoy the sunshine.

The \$112 cost per table is considerably less expensive than buying metal tables like the ones outside Commons, which cost between \$743 and \$756 each, or the high-top tables located in the L-Building, which cost \$400 each, according to District 55 Director of Operations Rhett Harris and Director of Student Nutrition Services Wanda Knight.

For \$436, LDHS could get three picnic tables made at the school, which would seat 18 students, or the District could purchase one high-top table, which would seat four people. Six picnic tables could be built here for the cost of one green table, seating 36 students instead of six.

Logically, LDHS should buy the tables that cost less, and if Building Construction students made the tables as part of their curriculum, they would gain practical, hands-on experience and have be able to take pride in something they had created for LDHS.

Adding outdoor tables does not solve the problem of limited indoor seating during inclement weather, but the days on which students have been unable to eat outdoors because of rain or cold have been limited. LDHS has done a good job of managing inclement weather seating by opening the Lecture Theatre at lunch and by teachers' allowing students to eat in their classrooms.

Clearly, getting more for your money is important with limited funding. If the school were to take advantage of the Building Construction classes' skills, the money saved by constructing picnic tables could be spent on more indoor seating, and more students would have comfortable places to eat.

How do you feel about iLunch?

Jamesia Harrison

Staff Reporter

"I like iLunch because we get a free 50 minutes to eat, talk, and study." sophomore Priscilla Jauregi-Cortez

"I appreciate lunch ladies trying to go their fastest to get the long lines down so that the wait is not long." senior Aysha Dorrah

"I usually eat at the same table every day inside instead of going outside." senior Chris Harvey

"I'm starting to enjoy iLunch a lot. We get more time to hang out and just chill." senior Destiny Williams

"The lines are much longer, but instead of it being just two lines, there are different options you can choose from." senior Dasion Mosley