

LA Dream Center's Drive-Thru Food Service Is Back, Along With Mobile Learning Hubs

With the school year underway in Los Angeles, the L.A. Dream Center has announced that on Tuesday, Aug. 18, they will resume their drive-thru food service to assist families who normally had school lunches to count on for their families. They first introduced this unique gift to the community back in March when the pandemic began.

In addition to the meals provided on the Dream Center campus, the Dream Center is now pleased to announce the first-ever "Restart Learning Center," mobile learning hubs strategically placed throughout Los Angeles to provide a place of safety, accountability and motivation with tutors on board. This is an entirely new form of assistance the Dream Center has embarked on, knowing that education will be particularly challenging for many families without resources and good structure to help their children as they attend school remotely.

"It's no secret that the pandemic and the lock down in Los Angeles are crippling the poorest and most vulnerable among us," L.A. Dream Center co-founder Matthew Barnett has repeatedly reminded his staff and volunteers. "When this crisis began, I saw families in tears from overwhelming uncertainty and kids robbed of a normal childhood or adolescence. I saw the rug pulled from under so many in our community. But when life lands a punch, we counterpunch with a force of good. Families throughout Los Angeles need us right now, and providing meals and resources to ensure kids don't fall behind scholastically are just two of the ways we're responding to this crisis with every ounce of energy that we have. Right now, all of us at the Dream Center are united in enthusiasm for our latest mantra: 'Meet the need. Support the

comeback.'"

The Dream Center is reopening its drive-thru and food line on Aug. 18, operating throughout the fall semester and possibly into the new year. It will be open from Monday to Friday, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Barnett and a number of staff at the Dream Center personally know numerous families who rely on school lunches every day. In fact, 85% of children in California benefit from school lunch programs so much so that during the summer, 17 out of 20 low-income students fall into the nutrition gap when it becomes unavailable, according to the L.A. County Department of Public Health.

Back in the spring, the Dream Center was distributing upwards of 11,000 meals a day, and they even offered deliveries to vulnerable seniors, totaling nearly 900,000 free meals by the beginning of June.

The Restart Learning Centers made available for students will also kick off on Tuesday, Aug. 18. There will be workstations on-site at the Dream Center's Echo Park campus open during the week. In addition, outreach workstations will be available in the afternoon in some of the nearby neighborhoods during the week. At each location, inner-city kids in the under-served communities surrounding the Dream Center will have access to tutors and resources like computers in order to study and complete assignments. This will all be executed in an effort to relieve parents of work schedules and schooling, to encourage students in their assignments, and to provide them a safe place to get mentored and stay motivated.

For more information about these exciting new opportunities offered by the Dream Center, check out *dreamcenter.org/relief/*. {eo}