

Meade School District 46-1 Launches Annual Matching Program for School Lunch Debt

Starting this year, Meade School District 46-1 will match parents' payments toward school lunch debt, helping families who aren't able to cover the cost of school lunches. An anonymous \$115,000 donation, made through Black Hills Area Community Foundation (BHACF), made this matching program possible.

Meade School District 46-1 invested the anonymous donation into an endowment held at BHACF for the benefit of the School District. The endowment, the Meade School District Meal Support Fund, will provide perpetual, annual matching dollars to help families to pay off school lunch debt.

This year, the School District will receive \$15,000 in an initial grant to help families to pay off the current unpaid meals balance of \$23,000. Each day in the School District, at least 200 students who have not qualified for free-or-reduced meals lack the funds in their school account to cover the cost of their meal. Every student who wants a lunch receives one, regardless of their ability to pay.

Rhonda Ramsdell, District Food Service Director for Meade School District 46-1, is anticipating a robust response from the community. "We are so excited to be able to offer this assistance to our families now and in the years to come! This endowment will enable us to help parents provide for their children in these challenging times and allow students to have the nourishing meals they need to be successful," Ramsdell said.

Kathleen Fitzgerald-Ellis, Associate Director of Philanthropy-Northern Hills at BHACF, partnered with Meade School District 46-1 to open the endowment, enabling BHACF to invest \$20,000 into the Fund as part of its standard endowment matching program. She emphasized that it is rewarding for both donors and nonprofits when a worthy cause receives support that makes our communities stronger.

"Our priority is meeting the needs of individuals and families as well as the nonprofits that support them, and that includes our school districts who do their best to educate and uplift our children. We're grateful for the many generous people who are dedicated to strengthening the place where they live," Fitzgerald-Ellis said.

Families wishing to request assistance can call (605) 347-3601 or email Food Service Director Rhonda Ramsdell at Rhonda.Ramsdell@k12.sd.us to learn more.

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For Interviews:

Please call (605) 347-3601 or email Food Service Director, Rhonda Ramsdell at Rhonda.Ramsdell@k12.sd.us to learn more about the matching program. If Rhonda is out of the office, her assistant will connect you with the appropriate contact for interviews.

About BHACF:

Black Hills Area Community Foundation (BHACF) is a registered public charity, operating as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. BHACF empowers donors to make meaningful gifts, supports regional nonprofits, and manages initiatives around key issues. Nonprofits interested in opening an endowment, and receiving a 25 percent match from BHACF, can connect with BHACF at 605-718-0112.