

Gladstone District provides free meals for kids

At 9 a.m. weekdays, cars and minivans line up in the parking lot of the Gladstone Center for Children and Families [GCCF]. Some children arrive on foot, by bicycle, or by skateboard, carefully spaced apart. They are here to pick up free breakfast and lunch, distributed by the Gladstone School District during the statewide school closure.

“We started with one site but quickly added two more. At this point we are providing meals to as many as 452 children each day,” said head cook Lynn Aleksich. “Families have been very appreciative of the food, especially now that they are trying to visit grocery stores less often.”

Each child receives two meals, for example include cereal, two pieces of fruit, a sandwich, a bag of baby carrots, graham crackers, and two cartons of milk. On a typical day, 325 Gladstone children and teens pick up meals from the GCCF, Kraxberger Middle School, or Meldrum Bar Park.

“The kids were so happy and excited to go through their sacks and see what they had,” said parent Breanna Kunz. “They decorated their bags, then put the lunch food back in for later.”

Besides school cooks, other district employees have stepped up to help, including secretary Heidi Smith and custodian Melissa Clark.

“Thankfully, The Clackamas Bookshelf and SMART have stepped up to provide free books at our food sites on occasion,” said district spokeswoman Leslie Robinette. “It’s a great way to keep kids reading until schools can reopen.”

Meals are provided weekdays:

9-10 a.m.

- Gladstone Center for Children & Families: 18905 Portland Ave.
- Kraxberger Middle School: 17777 Webster Road

10:30-11:30 a.m.

- Meldrum Bar Park [near the playground]: 19 Meldrum Bar Park Road

PHOTO: GCCF secretary Heidi Smith helps pack free meals for Gladstone students.

PHOTO: Custodian Melissa Clark distributes grab & go meals to families in the drive-through lane at the GCCF.

PHOTO: Gladstone High School cook Amy Voelker wheels a cart of meals to the parking lot at Kraxberger Middle School.