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More Children Get Free Lunch in the Park

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COLUMBIA - Cheese and turkey sandwiches, apples, milk, carrots and ranch dip made a healthy and delicious lunch for the kids in Douglass Park Monday.

As the first day after the holiday weekend, the Lunch in the Park program served 105 lunches at noon.

The program served about six hundred more lunches in June compared with June last year, according to Cindy Mustard, the executive director of Voluntary Action Center. Mustard also said that there are more kids from the neighborhood coming this year.

The program started on June 13 and will be last till August 12, offering free lunches to children under 18. The lunches are available weekdays from 11:30am to 1pm.

About 120 volunteers helped in June.

Drew Floye is a high school student in Columbia. Today was his first day volunteering at the park.

"I feel like volunteering. It makes me feel like I'm helping our community and actually making a difference," he says.

Besides handing out food, he also planned to read books to the kids.

"This week, I'm just getting to know about the kids a little bit better. And starting next monday. I'm reading a lot of books to them that they could read at home", Floye said.

After lunch, the children can join some activities. A volunteer from Columbia Public Works taught kids how to make recycled envelope out of old calendar. Mustard said she hoped more organization will join and bring fun to the children.