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Nutritious summer reading

HAPCAP to distribute free children's books during lunch at Mingo Park

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LOGAN — The Southeast Ohio Regional Kitchen recently received a donation of 264 books to be distributed to families at the Mingo Park summer food site this week.

A summer-long program through the Hoeking Athens Perry Community Action Program (HAPCAP), the regional kitchen provides breakfast, lunch and dinner to help local families that may find it difficult to provide nutritious meals on a tight budget all summer long.

The meals are available for anyone 18 or younger, or 19-21 with a disability. There

is no paperwork for income; the only stipulation is that the meals are eaten on-site.

"Summer is a critical time in this area because children may be facing hunger that normally receive meals through the free or reduced lunch program through the school year," stated Asti Payne, Development and Community Relations Coordinator for HAPCAP. "But there also might be an educational gap until school starts again, so we were able to couple the books and summer lunches to provide for families in our area."

The books were donated as part of the Share-a-Story literacy campaign through

the Molina Foundation, a national nonprofit that focuses on reducing inequalities in education and health.

Share-a-Story focuses on the foundation's initiative to highlight the importance of literacy for children and families. The campaign has been designed to coincide with national literacy celebrations like Children's Day and Book Day, which are celebrated earlier in the year.

Since beginning its campaign, the foundation has partnered with more than 2,000 community organizations and donated more than four million new books, while also sponsoring hundreds of reading workshops and lit-

eracy programs for educators and families.

"I think the grant helps provide an educational aspect, because families can take the books home with them," Payne noted. "And it also provides a chance for them to read as a family, which is an engaging opportunity. And the families will be coming to one of our feeding sites, so we can make sure that they get a nutritious meal as well."

Books will be given out at Mingo Park from 3 to 4 p.m. both Thursday and Friday this week. Families with children are encouraged to come and get a free meal and receive a free book to take home.