**THE IMPORTANCE OF *FAMILY DAY***

**WHAT IS *FAMILY DAY*?**

*Family Day* is an annual national campaign geared towards encouraging families to sit down to have meals together. This year, *Family Day* is celebrated on Monday, September 25, 2017.

**ORIGIN:**

*Family Day* was created in 2001 by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University to advocate for increased family meal times as a key way to prevent alcohol and drug use in youth. The impact of family meals has been heavily researched and the consensus has been that families sharing meals together has a huge preventative impact on youth.

***FAMILY DAY* IN MARTIN COUNTY:**

Tykes & Teens launched the first *Family Day* Campaign in Martin County during the summer of 2013. Two years later they joined forces with United Way of Martin County’s Strengthening Families Task Force – United Way of Martin County, Tykes and Teens, SafeSpace, Martin Library System, Lesser, Lesser Landy & Smith, CASTLE, CHARACTER COUNTS!, Martin County School District, Children’s Services Council of Martin County, and Martin Volunteers – and many local businesses and organizations to further strengthen the impact and importance of the message.

**STATISTICS:**

Children who sit down to eat with their families five or more times a week…

* Are 60% more likely to engage well in school;
* Are 52% more likely to say no to drugs, alcohol, tobacco;
* Are 27% more likely to report a good relationship with parents;
* Are 35% less likely to engage in disordered eating;
* Are 24% more likely to eat healthier foods;
* Are 12% less likely to be overweight;
* Report having a good relationship with their parents;
* Have better vocabulary and reading skills;
* Have stronger family ties;
* Are more likely to be emotionally content; and
* Are less likely to experience behavioral issues, depression and other mental health concerns

**WHY DO FAMILY MEALS MAKE A DIFFERENCE?**

* The dinner table can be both a time and place to disconnect from life’s stressors and a natural, regular opportunity for parents to connect with their children.
* Kids and adolescents who take part in routine family meals can be more comfortable talking about their friends, their academics and even sensitive subjects.
* Give parents a vital chance to show concern, give advice, and establish important expectations about what they feel their children should and shouldn’t be doing – all things that can have an extraordinarily positive impact on a child’s self-esteem, interpersonal skills, and sense of control.

**HERE’S WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SPREAD THE *FAMILY DAY* MESSAGE AND BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE CAMPAIGN**

* Learn more about *Family Day* at <http://casafamilyday.org/familyday/>
* Make a commitment to have more family meals
* Like and check out our postings on Facebook at Tykes and Teens Family Day
* Host a *Family Day* dinner at your business, organization, or in your neighborhood
* Promote *Family Day* within your business or organization
* Put the *Family Day* logo on your website, email signature and lobbying materials
* Spread the word about the importance of family meals

**FINAL THOUGHTS**

Parents are critical in the prevention of public health issues effecting youth. Family meals are a simple concept that can make a BIG difference in our children’s lives with very little effort. Food brings people together and has since the beginning of time – everyone has to eat! When families are encouraged to take time to have one extra meal a week together, at home, then we will begin to change the culture of families.