

# Hunger in Texas Stats

infographic by Rebecca Macias

**13%**

of children eating free or reduced-price school lunches get summer meals.



**61%**

of children eating free or reduced-price school lunches also get in-school breakfast.

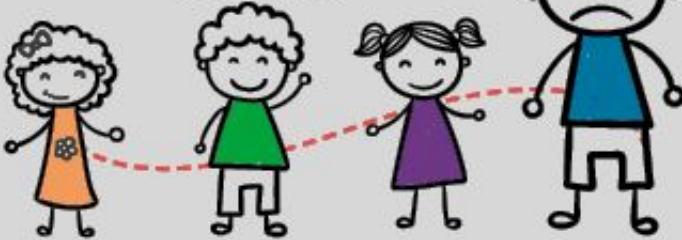
- More than one in six Texans,

**4.8 million**

- people live in poverty.

**1 in 4**

children in Texas struggle with hunger and finding food sources.



## The Problem:

Source <http://www.nokidhungry.org>

All of these kids in Texas are eligible to receive more help, but too many of them miss out.

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## To Enjoy A Full Meal

Junior finds voice after years of hunger, poverty, abuse

Rebeccah Macias, editor-in-chief

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Filed under [Student Life](#)

“I’m starving”, a kid shouts out to the class. The lunch bell rings and junior \*Bethany Sanchez groans at the kid’s comment. As she walks in the hallway to head to the cafeteria, she thinks of home and her own hunger. She wishes she could tell the world how lucky they are to enjoy a full meal.

“When I hear people joking about how they haven’t eaten in so long, it bothers me,” Sanchez said. “Or they just go on saying how starving they are, but yet the last meal they ate was last night, and I just think to myself, ‘You have no idea.’ I mean, sure, you’re hungry. Your stomach is growling, but you’re not starving.”



Sanchez grew up in a household where food and supplies were always scarce. Sanchez says by having a father who didn’t care for the children in her family, she had to raise herself and her siblings.

“My dad was incredibly abusive. When I was about seven or eight, we had a really horrible house fire,” Sanchez said. “As we were trying to pay for everything that got damaged, whatever he could take away from us, he did.”

Sanchez’s father had different methods of abuse. One of them was testing the children to see how long they could go without food.

“The most common food that would be lying around in the kitchen would be a can of peas,” Sanchez said. “The kitchen was always dirty, and there was a pantry that was filled with other canned food, but my dad installed a lock so none of us could have access to get it.”

Sanchez says she stayed strong, but watching her siblings, who she could not help, was unbearable.

“I am the youngest of seven,” Sanchez said. “And the constant ache in my heart watching my siblings suffer was hard. It was always just a constant thought process of ‘how can I stop this?’”

After Sanchez’s mother hit her breaking point, she could no longer help out her family’s children when they needed her.

“My mom was physically there, but she was always physically hurt too much to really do anything,” Sanchez said. “I remember once she had several broken ribs, cuts down one arm, and small chunks of hair missing.”

For days, Sanchez would go without a full stomach. This lasted, for her and her siblings, for three years.

“It’s one of those things that feels so surreal,” Sanchez said. “And it’s just one of those things that really is heartbreaking when I do come to think about it.”

As things progressively got worse, from lack of food to her other problems at home, at the age of 12, Sanchez ran

away.

“I felt incredibly guilty,” Sanchez said. “I didn’t know what I was going to do. I didn’t know what was going to happen, but I knew I didn’t want to be there. I was thinking, at the time, that anywhere was better than being there.”

After being away from home for a month, Sanchez was found by the San Antonio Police Department and was brought back.

“As a closed-in kid, the idea of being picked up by the police was terrifying,” Sanchez said. “I tried pleading my case on why I didn’t want to return home, but they didn’t really seem to care.”

On August 14, 2012, Sanchez and her family moved to Pflugerville, leaving her father out of the picture.

“When I left the city, I got an outraged phone call from him,” Sanchez said. “He kept going on saying I was dead to him and that he never wanted me in the first place. That was the last time that I officially heard from him.”

Almost three years later, Sanchez and her family packed their bags and moved to Round Rock.

“I was skeptical at first,” Sanchez said. “I didn’t know whether to be excited or nervous because there was so much change going on.”

Sanchez says she can only speak for her mom, her brother and her self in regards to the aftermath of her father’s abuse.

“Through the years of therapy, we’ve taken great strides towards getting better,” Sanchez said. “I’ve experienced a lot of personal growth in the last few years. I’ve learned what it’s like to get a formal education and learned that the situation I was living in wasn’t okay. In the end, I found my voice.

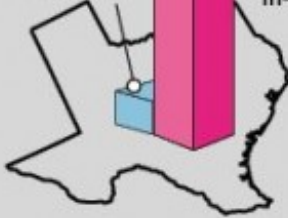
\*Name changed to respect student’s privacy

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