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Local Schools Team Up with FOODPLAY to “Make Good Eating Great Fun!”

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DATE: _____ TIME: _____ CONTACT: _____

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This year is going to be the healthiest school year yet! Schools across the country are serving up healthier school lunches with more fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains... and FOODPLAY is coming to town! Complete with a cast of colorful characters, fantastic feats of juggling, music, magic, and audience participation, FOODPLAY, a national award-winning theater show, will be bringing its magic to turn kids on to healthy eating and active living at the:

Thanks to: _____

While FOODPLAY makes good eating great fun, its messages are quite serious. In the last 30 years, childhood obesity rates have doubled among elementary school children and tripled among teenagers. One in three children are overweight, and less than two percent of the nation’s youth are meeting their daily nutritional requirements. Kids, on average, are drinking over 600 cans of soda and consuming more than 150 pounds of sugar a year, missing out on recommended levels of fruits, vegetables and whole grains needed for optimal health. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, over one-third of the nation’s youth will develop diabetes if current eating and exercise habits don’t improve.

FOODPLAY’s fun-filled performance puts healthy eating and active lifestyles center stage. Along with a school-wide assembly performance, schools receive extensive follow-up resources to keep the messages alive in the classroom, cafeteria, and at home, all year long. The highly spirited program helps get everyone at school excited and on board to work together to create healthier schools and improve children’s eating and physical activity habits.

During the school-wide assembly program, children meet “Janey (or Johnny) Junkfood,” whose dream is to become a juggling super star. The problem – s/he keeps dropping the balls because of her/his poor eating habits. Like many of today’s children, JJ skips breakfast, fills up on soda and candy, zones out in front of the TV and computer, and then wonders why s/he’s sick, tired, and out of practice.

With the help of the “Coach” of the National Junior Juggling Team, and the audience, JJ discovers how to juggle the foods s/he eats to wind up with a balanced diet. Kids learn the importance of fueling up with breakfast, and if they don’t get breakfast at home, they can get breakfast at school. They learn how to eat to win using USDA’s MyPlate food guide, filling half their plates with fresh fruits and vegetables, and choosing whole grains, low-fat calcium-rich sources, and lean protein foods. Students take back a host of fun ways to be physically active every day including participating in sports, de-stressing with yoga, dancing indoors on a rainy day, and taking walks with their families.

The program empowers kids with the skills needed to make sense of a confusing food marketplace by seeing through TV commercials and deciphering food labels. While health experts recommend that people consume less than six teaspoons of added sugar a day, kids are amazed to discover that there are ten teaspoons of sugar in one can of cola, and that for many sports drinks, sugar is the main ingredient! Coach teaches kids how to “Read It Before You Eat It!” and explains that the main ingredient is listed first on ingredient labels. And while a food or beverage may be advertised as “natural” or “nutritious” – there are tricks along the way. There are, for example, many names for sugar, including “high fructose corn syrup,” and several can be found in one food product.

To test their nutrition smarts, kids participate in the "Super Star Snack Attack!" The challenge for the three game-show contestants is to choose the healthiest snacks from a variety of fresh and processed packaged items. The winning snacks turn out to be the ones that they can prepare themselves such as popcorn, veggie grab bags, yogurt parfait, rainbow fruit sticks, and natural soda made by mixing half fruit juice, half seltzer. Kids discover that choosing fresh foods is not only good for their health, but it's good for the health of the planet. The contestants receive "FoodPlay Fruit + Veggie Tracker Bands" – a fun tool that encourages kids to eat more fruits and veggies throughout their day, and the audience receives snack cards to bring home and post on their fridge.

As students return to their classrooms to the beat of "Treat Your Body Right!" - FOODPLAY's message comes in loud and clear: feed healthy foods to your body, positive messages to your mind, and have fun being active every day.

"Studies show that healthy eaters make the best learners, and we're so pleased to be able to help kids develop healthy habits to last a healthy lifetime - all in a spirit of fun and celebration! Schools are the perfect setting to model positive behaviors, and we love bringing FOODPLAY to help get everyone on board, excited to work together to create healthy schools, healthy families, and healthy communities," says Barbara Storper, MS, RDN, FOODPLAY creator and Executive Director of FoodPlay Productions.

For more information, free nutrition resources, recipes, and tips, visit: www.foodplay.com

Take the FOODPLAY 5! Challenge:

- 5 - Eat at least **5** fruits and vegetables a day!
- 4 - Read It **Be4** You Eat It!
- 3 - Fuel up with **3** square meals a day – starting with **BREAKFAST!**
- 2 - Remember – I can do this, and you can **2!**
- 1 - Get up and **PLAY** for at least **1** hour a day!

www.foodplay.com

About FoodPlay Productions

FoodPlay Productions was founded in 1982 by nutritionist, Barbara Storper, MS, RDN, to use the power of live theater to turn kids on to healthy eating and active living. Since then, the FOODPLAY program has reached over five million children across the country, and received a host of awards including an Emmy Award when made for TV. Evidence-based with proven results, FOODPLAY has been shown to dramatically improve children's eating and physical activity habits, according to USDA-sponsored evaluations. FoodPlay Productions creates national touring theater shows, media campaigns, curricula, video kits, children's books, and fun tools to make nutrition come alive. www.foodplay.com

Note: High-resolution images and digital press releases are available online at: <http://foodplay.com/press/press-releases-image-downloads/>

