

'got breakfast?' Campaign Gets Congressional Spearheading

Starting the day with a healthy breakfast helps kids concentrate, solve problems, be creative and learn. What most people don't realize is that millions of children in need do not get breakfast at school, even though they are eligible to receive it. They are entitled to breakfast through the School Breakfast Program, yet they start the school day hungry. In fact, a new report from the

ment already has appropriated money for breakfast at school, but not enough schools take advantage of it. Our goal with 'got breakfast?' is to help the neediest children start the day with a good breakfast so they are ready to learn."

McGovern added that "millions of children who qualify for breakfast at school do not receive it. Each morning only 9 million children get breakfast



Senators George McGovern and Bob Dole unveil the new "got breakfast?" poster, which will be distributed to schools nationwide to help foster participation in the School Breakfast Program. The goal of the educational campaign is to raise awareness and increase participation in the program so that all schoolchildren start their day off right.

Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) says that states failed to access \$382 million in federal funding that could have been used to provide breakfast to children who qualified for free or reduced-price breakfasts.

To address this growing problem, two one-time presidential nominees, former Senators Bob Dole (R-Kan.) and George McGovern (D-S.D.) have joined forces with key leaders in the federal government, non-profit and private sectors to launch the "got breakfast?" campaign to promote the adoption of healthy breakfast and milk programs in the nation's school systems.

"Many children who don't get breakfast at school don't get breakfast at home either," Dole said at the Dec. 20 news conference. "The federal govern-

at school out of the 29 million who are eligible. The 'got breakfast?' campaign aims to turn a healthy breakfast for every child from a dream into a reality."

Dole and McGovern unveiled the campaign in Washington, D.C., with representatives of the initiative's partners, including Patricia Nicklin, managing director of Share Our Strength; Max Finberg, director of the Alliance to End Hunger; Camellia Patey, vice president of the National Dairy Council; and Gary Davis, CEO of East Side Entrees, who created "Breakfast Breaks," a grab-and-go boxed breakfast.

East Side Entrees will donate a portion of the proceeds from each meal that goes to children in severe need schools to Share Our Strength, the Alliance to End Hunger and other non-

'GOT BREAKFAST?' CHILD ESSAY CONTEST

Senators Dole and McGovern, who spearheaded the issue of school nutrition in Congress, also announced a "got breakfast?" essay contest. Children across the country will be asked to submit a short essay on why breakfast is the most important meal of the day and why getting breakfast at school is important.

Pictures of the four winners and portions of their essays will be on new "got breakfast?" posters distributed to schools nationwide. In addition, each winner will receive a new laptop, and everyone in their school will get Breakfast Breaks for a week. More information can be found at www.GotBreakfast.org.

profits' efforts to end childhood hunger in the U.S. The donations are expected to reach \$1 million in 2006.

"Every morning school nutrition professionals see firsthand the real need for school breakfast," said Ruth Jonen, SFNS, president of the School Nutrition Association (SNA). "Research conducted by the University of Minnesota and Massachusetts General Hospital concludes that students who eat school breakfast are more alert, have improved memory and problem-solving skills and perform better on standardized tests."

STUDY: SALES OF FULL-CALORIE SOFT DRINKS DECLINE

A new study of school beverage sales based on a comprehensive analysis of industry data showed a sharp decline in school purchases of full-calorie carbonated soft drinks (CSDs) from 2002 to 2004. The study also showed that average purchases of full-calorie CSDs at school by American students during school hours were extremely low in 2004.

The study, conducted by independent economist Dr. Robert Wescott for the American Beverage Association, concluded that purchases of full-calorie CSDs during normal school hours averaged about one 12-oz. can per week for high school students. These estimates were conservatively calculated and likely overstate student purchase levels.

"This study confirms what

previous studies have shown—that consumption of full-calorie CSDs purchased from school vending machines during normal school hours is a very minor source of calories in the diets of American youth and is not contributing measurably to obesity rates in the school-age population," said Susan Neely, ABA president and CEO.

The study also found that full-calorie CSD sales in schools declined sharply from 2002 to 2004, while sales of other types of beverages increased. During these two years, student purchases of full-calorie CSDs in schools dropped by 24 percent, while purchases of waters increased by 23 percent, diet soft drinks by 22 percent, 100 percent juices by 15 percent and sports drinks by 70 percent.

In addition, in a related study published in the journal *Risk Analysis* last month, Dr. Richard Forshee and his colleagues at the University of Maryland found that eliminating full-calorie CSD sales in schools would have little or no impact on adolescent overweight.

Unfortunately, this conclusion is not accepted by a contingent of private attorneys and nonprofit groups who are about to sue Coca-Cola and other soft drink companies for selling full-calorie CSDs to schools. According to the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, reported by Morningnews beat.com, "Attorneys expect to file their first suit as soon as next month (December)."