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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Classroom Breakfast an Answer to School Breakfast Challenges

Woodbury, NY, August 10, 2010 – Serving breakfast in the classroom instead of in the cafeteria is among the best options to overcome challenges such as time constraints and staffing issues when offering School Breakfast. According to the Food Research and Action Center's (FRAC) *School Breakfast Scorecard* for 2008-2009, districts using breakfast in the classroom have the highest participation rates. Because of this, the *got breakfast?*® Foundation is encouraging schools to consider classroom breakfast as they prepare for the upcoming school year.

Earlier this year *the got breakfast? Foundation* awarded eight Silent Hero grants to school districts to help implement classroom breakfasts. One of the grant recipients, Memphis City Schools in Tennessee, has increased their school breakfast participation this past year in their pilot schools by 82 percent – from 198 students to 361 students and 80 percent of students participating.

Currently, at Hawkins Mill Elementary in Memphis, Tennessee, where the Breakfast in Classroom program was introduced last year, breakfasts are delivered to classrooms, on carts, by cafeteria staff. The serving process takes less than five minutes. Students enjoy their breakfasts as announcements are read as they begin their day.

To launch the Breakfast in Classroom program, letters were sent out to parents and teachers, and the director of Nutrition Services spoke with parents and staff at a PTA meeting to introduce the program. "It's a great way to get students ready to learn," says Carla Franklin,

Principal of Hawkins Mill Elementary. She suggests to nutrition directors, “Get one principal who is willing to try the program -- principals will become your greatest champions for the program.”

The benefits are significant. “We have noticed a decrease in the number of students who are tardy on a daily basis and our children are more attentive while the teachers are instructing because they have had an opportunity to socialize during breakfast,” says Franklin. The FRAC *School Breakfast Scorecard* reports research that shows eating breakfast improves math grades, vocabulary skills and memory. Children who eat breakfast also perform better on standardized tests, have lower rates of absenteeism and decreased behavior problems.

“We plan to promote this Breakfast in Classroom program to other schools in our district, including secondary school administrators,” says Dr. Vista Suarez, Director, Child Nutrition, Memphis City Schools. “It's important to reach secondary students who often do not eat breakfast. We are excited about the potential of classroom breakfast programs.”

“This is just one of many examples across the U.S. where school breakfast participation can increase simply by bringing it into the classroom,” says Bryan Mullen, *got breakfast?* Foundation Advisory Board member. “Classroom breakfast eliminates obstacles such as lack of time in the morning, availability of cafeteria staff, and clean-up.”

The Silent Hero Grant Program was created to encourage schools and non-profit organizations to expand the reach of underutilized child nutrition programs, most notably the School Breakfast Program. While 19 million low income children participate in the National School Lunch Program each day, only 9 million participate in the School Breakfast Program.

For information about the *got breakfast?* Silent Hero Grant Program contact info@gotbreakfast.org or visit the www.gotbreakfast.org website.

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