

FOODSERVICE DIRECTOR

SENATORS ASK: GOT BREAKFAST?

DECEMBER 21, 2005 – A new “Got Breakfast?” initiative aims to significantly increase participation in the National School Breakfast Program (NSBP).

Former senators and presidential candidates Bob Dole and George McGovern participated in the “Got Breakfast?” launch last month at a press conference in Washington along with a coalition of organizations dedicated to ending hunger and a private-sector company offering a bundled breakfast meal designed to increase student breakfast participation.

Organizations on hand for the launch included the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), the Alliance to End Hunger, the National Dairy Council, and the School Nutrition Association (SNA). The private-sector participant was East Side Entrees, which is contributing \$500,000 to raising awareness of the importance of school breakfast and donating part of its proceeds to Share Our Strength.

Found – \$400 million: Sens. Dole and McGovern pointed out that nearly \$400 million in federal funding has been “left on the table” that could have been spent on breakfast. Kate Coler, deputy under secretary, USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), noted that more than 80,000 institutions currently serve breakfast to children daily and that starting children off with a healthful meal helps combat rising rates of obesity.

FRAC president Jim Weill reported that his organization’s latest School Breakfast Report Card indicates that the number of low-income children receiving school breakfast has doubled over the last 14 years but that for every 100 children who receive a school lunch, only 44 receive breakfast. “If lagging states could reach levels of participation of model states, then 1.2 million more low-income children would be fed.”

SNA president Ruth Jonen added that students who consume school breakfast perform better in the classroom and on standardized tests, and their attendance and behavior are better than those who do not.