

Contact:
Lisa Coe
Vista Communications
847-526-2045

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEETINGS ENCOURAGE SCHOOLS TO ADOPT CLASSROOM BREAKFAST PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT DALLAS

Dallas, TX, December 12, 2011 – Approximately 50 school principals and administrators from Dallas Independent School District came together over breakfast on the mornings of December 7, 8, and 9 to talk about school breakfast – in particular, classroom breakfast. Hosted by Dallas ISD and the *got breakfast? Foundation*, the meetings were a call to action to implement Breakfast In the Classroom (BIC) programs at every Dallas school, district-wide, in order to help reduce hunger in the community and improve overall student performance.



Speakers included Dora Rivas, Executive Foodservice Director from Dallas, TX, who also spearheaded this event, to share her district’s school breakfast success story, along with, Catalina Presas-Garcia of the Brownsville, Texas ISD School Board. Other speakers included Carlos Quintanilla, President of Accion America, Margaret Lopez, Director for Nutrition, Dallas ISD; and Gary Davis, founder of the *got breakfast? Foundation*.

Dallas ISD’s Lopez explained to her colleagues, “We have a lot of food insecurity in our community, but only one-third of the students take advantage of the breakfast program in the

cafeteria. When we offer a free, convenient, tasty, healthy meal to students, everyone wins; students, teachers, administrators, parents and the community.” With Dora Rivas, she and her team are working closely with principals to implement BIC programs smoothly so everyone benefits.

Nationwide, childhood hunger is an epidemic, with one in five children going to school hungry each day. And in large metropolitan cities like Dallas, the percentage of hungry school children is even greater. “Working together and feeding our children we can help with their success in education,” said Brownsville’s School Board member Catalina Presas-Garcia. “Our children should not have to suffer from hunger.”

The mission of the *got breakfast? Foundation*, which co-hosted the event, is to ensure that every child, regardless of background, starts the school day with a nutritious breakfast in order to learn, grow and develop to their fullest potential.

Speaking on behalf of *got breakfast?*, founder Gary Davis noted that our children’s hunger is unfortunately being overlooked. Davis stated that schools not fully accessing existing federal nutrition entitlements are short-changing our in-need children. But by completely switching from the traditional cafeteria breakfast to serving “grab ‘n’ go” classroom breakfasts, schools can feed so many more children, up to 4-5 times as many ,and make a real difference in our children’s lives.

Carlos Quintanilla, President of Accion America, whose organization served over 100,000 meals to children this summer, emphasized the important role the community has in supporting school districts to participate in Breakfast in Classroom programs. His goal is to promote healthy eating habits among the fast-growing Hispanic population of Texas.

“This is an outreach effort that includes the Dallas Independent School District, its principals, its teachers, our community and the *got breakfast? Foundation*, with all of us working towards the goal of achieving 100% enrollment in Breakfast in the Classroom, so that we will make a difference in the educational success of our children,” said Quintanilla. “Eating breakfast in the classroom is a step in the right direction – it is not out of reach, it is not a burden – but it is a benefit for all of us.”

According to the Food Research and Action Center’s *School Breakfast Scorecard for 2009-2010*, serving Breakfast in the Classroom is a key strategy for increasing participation rates. Research has documented the following benefits:

- Improvements in attendance
- Reduction in tardiness
- Fewer stomachaches and visits to the nurse
- Higher test scores
- Fewer disciplinary problems
- Improved diets
- Reduction in obesity rates

“We need to give students every opportunity to be successful in school. Breakfast In the Classroom improves learning readiness so children can focus on the job at hand, learning,” said Lopez.

For more information about Accion America, call 214-524-1011 or visit the company website at www.accionamerica.com. For more information about the *got breakfast? Foundation*, visit www.gotbreakfast.org.

###