

what are children munching on?



LUNCH

The Film

birds nest productions





About The Film

As nation-wide funding for school cafeterias rapidly decreases and high-calorie, low-nutrient meals have become order of the day, our nation's children are being afflicted by a slew of diet-based diseases from high-blood pressure and cholesterol to diabetes and obesity. In *Lunch*, a revealing documentary short, director Avis Richards investigates the causes and the consequences of "growing up in a junk-food culture." Through numerous on-site interviews with food workers, doctors, educators, and students, *Lunch* provides a candid, penetrating, and disturbing account of the National School Lunch's Program's failure to promote the proper dietary habits to ensure our youth's physical, social, and psychological well-being. The documentary also explores viable alternatives to the hamburger hegemony, talking with farmers and other community leaders about their efforts to put locally-grown, whole foods back on the menu and make diet and nutrition a core part of every school's educational model. *Lunch* serves up an eye-opening account of a national crisis and its potential solutions, a film that should interest anyone concerned about the future of our students and our society.



Story Line



LUNCH is a short documentary exploring the effects of the National School Lunch Program on America's children today in schools and seeks to shed light on the current situation through candid interviews with doctors, teachers, farmers and various specialists.

The National School Lunch Program feeds some 28 Million children who eat 1 and sometimes 2 meals a day at school. Sadly the food that is served to them too often resembles fast food. The effects are far reaching.

Statistics have shown that kids today will have a lower life expectancy than their parents. Many doctors have had no training in diagnosing adult onset diabetes in younger patients. In 2007 the total cost of diabetes treatment was \$174 Billion and that is only expected to rise as more and more people are diagnosed everyday.

One of the major problems is that parents, students, and even school administrators do not pay attention to poor food quality. Ironically even fast food chains have to supply information on what they are serving. So why isn't that the case with our schools?

With a school system underfunded and a school food surplus sold in bulk and "on the cheap", the results have been the downsizing of proper kitchen in school cafeterias to the point where pre-made fast food style lunches are the only meals available.

This is a recipe for disaster and it is having an adverse effect not only on kid's health, but it is teaching kids to identify food as being fast food and the result goes beyond health and weight issues but to self-esteem and abilities to function properly in classrooms. From healthcare to national test average scores, everything is tied to what we eat.

The most common argument that children will not eat healthy food however many in the field disagree with this statement and say its simply a matter of making nutritional food available to them. The film explores how some schools, dubbing themselves as "Green Schools" such as Hamstead Hill Academy in Baltimore, have made nutrition a core part of their educational model.



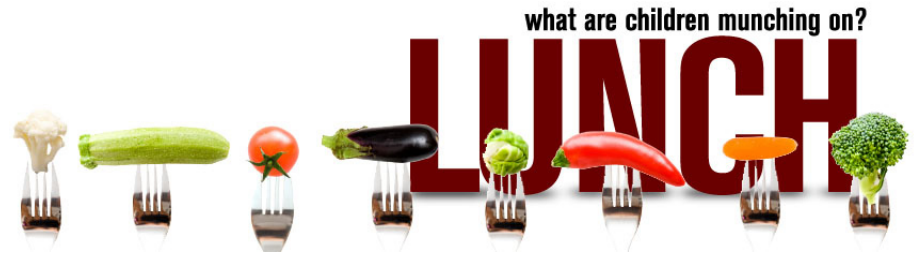
Story Line (contd.)



From school garden to cooking classes these schools have taught children to make healthy choices by including them in the preparation of their own meals.

The film also targets a broader range of social issues beyond school and healthcare touching on economics where the importance of locally grown produce in the Baltimore school system has led to a partnership with Great Kids Farm. Not only does this farm supply produce for the school system but it also educates kids on where their food comes from and offers affordable alternatives to the expensive national distribution plan current in existence. Farms like Great Kids Farm not only create jobs locally but studies have shown that small farms, which use their soil to grow a variety of multiple produce are far more effective than their larger monocropping farm counterparts.

There is a national movement to build a real connection to the food we eat starting with local farmers and schools all the way to Michelle Obama's white House garden all to show that people don't need a big farm to have a positive impact on each other and on America.



The Problem: School Lunches and Childhood Obesity

The Child Nutrition Act, which supplies breakfast and lunch to some 31 million students = \$12 billion annually.

The elementary school lunches average 821 calories per lunch.

80% of schools do not meet the USDA standards for fat composition.

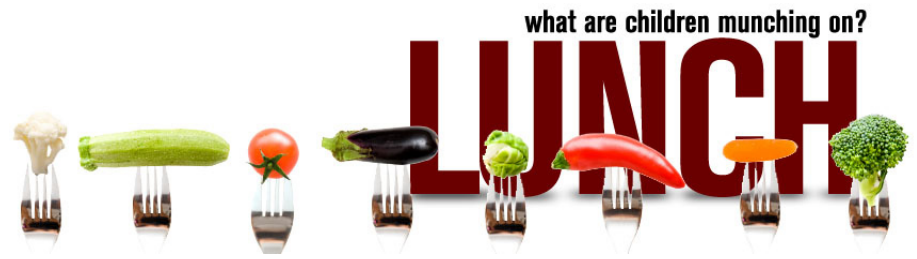
Children who consume school lunches are about 2% more likely to be obese than those who brown bag their lunches.

Soda vending machines are present in 43% of elementary schools, 74% of middle schools and nearly all of high schools."

Nutrition requirements for school lunches: "Current regulations require schools to meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which recommend that no more than 30 percent of an individual's calories come from fat, and less than 10 percent from saturated fat. Regulations also establish a standard for school meals to provide one-third of the Recommended Daily Allowances of protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, calcium, and calories."

"Most public schools offer students a government-subsidized lunch that is supposed to adhere to certain fat, caloric and nutritional standards. 20% of schools also sell branded fast foods such as Pizza Hut and Little Caesars pizza or McDonald's burgers and fries, according to a 2000 study of school health policies and programs by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The CDC reviewed the discharge records of hospitals nationwide from 1979 to 1999, specifically of children ranging in age from 6 to 17 years and analyzed the results for all obesity-related illnesses. The researchers found that the incidence of:



The Problem: School Lunches and Childhood Obesity (contd.)

- Diabetes had nearly doubled
- Obesity and gallbladder disease tripled
- Sleep apnea increased five-fold

More than 70% obese adolescents retain their overweight and obese condition even during their adulthood.

As the percentages of obese children raises, so does the percentage of those affected with juvenile diabetes at nearly the same rate.



Quotations/Testimonials

“Millions of school children are eating two-thirds of their meals at school every day, and often that food resembles that of a fast-food restaurant. We need reform of the school lunch system at the highest levels of government, to ensure that we feed more children and feed them healthier food.”

Kathleen Rogers
President, Earth Day Network.

“Just the right film at just the right time... blends a warning about the food our children are eating in schools with a great, local, solution. It highlights solutions that we all can get behind!”

Jeff Walker
Chairman, Millennium Promise



Call to Action

Support the Healthy Schools Campaign and find out how to take action by contacting your local legislators!

<http://www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/getinvolved/action/childnutrition/action.php>

See what First Lady Michelle Obama is doing to battle childhood obesity. The garden and beyond...

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=70H7m_CkwoU&cc=1#t=1225s

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1vUBYr0-LE&feature=channel>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aVpEr3kfWjc&feature=channel>

Pledge! At Earthday Network:

<http://www.earthday.org/campaigns/save-school-lunch>

I pledge to learn more about the type of food served at my child's school - and about what type of nutritional value it has .

Order DVDs of Lunch to show at your local school or University

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