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Excerpts and Summary of the 57th Community Hunger and Nutrition Forum
Wednesday, August 10, 2005 12:00PM –1:30PM

Trinity Lutheran Church, Fresno

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MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger

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Community Alliance with Family Farmers

The following is a summary of the reports made at the forum compiled by Edie Jessup and Carey Berend.

Focus: Peddling to Kids: Is Food Marketing going too far?

Wednesday, August 10, 2005

Jeremy Hofer, Fresno Metro Ministry Hunger & Nutrition Project reviewed the packet of materials, agenda, and updates on the Farmers Market EBT Food Stamp Project (Downtown Farmers Market on Fulton beginning to take EBT in September), and Farm to School Project (Farm Fresh Wednesdays).

Edie Jessup, Fresno Metro Ministry Hunger & Nutrition Project: I have a few slides to introduce today's Forum topic "Peddling to kids". This was in **Vida en el Valle** this last week: it is **an article about an after-school program here in Fresno that was packed with parents and educators who wanted to learn about the educational value of Sonic Drive-In's Wacky Pack toys.** Maybe that is one reason why we're doing this forum. School is starting and here we have a Save Mart ad, you can get a **special card and if you spend money at Save Mart they donate a percentage to your child's school.** There is a pilot project with McDonald's in Wisconsin. **McDonald's staff comes into the schools to let kids know and teach them that if they save their receipts from McDonald's they can get things for their schools. For instance, they can get some water color paper, 100 sheets for their school of watercolor paper, and all they need is 1,555 receipts from McDonald's in order to get this 'great donation'.** This Scooby Squad page was in the Fresno Bee and it's a wonderful precis of what we're going to be talking about: **What's Your Favorite Summer Meal? I want to point out up in the corner there, "I like to eat watermelon, strawberries, oranges, bananas, and cucumbers." Is that wonderful? Then somebody else likes a hamburger with fries and a coke. It's a great display of what kids are thinking about in terms of food. Vons will donate to your kid's school if you spend your money with them. Today in the Fresno Bee if you place a classified ad with them you can get a free meal at Kentucky Fried Chicken.**

So I am intrigued by considering the issue of advertising to children particularly by the food industry and the results that we're seeing in chronic disease of children who are consuming soda, fast food, salty and sweet in every kind of food. **I hope that this forum will begin a serious conversation here in Fresno about the environment we are providing our children and our grandchildren and that we consider what the larger impact is on hunger and health policy for this generation.** In 2000 at an early forum that we held on cultural foods a Hmong mother said to me, "The schools are teaching my children to eat poorly." I have remembered that. That has haunted me throughout the years that we have been working on hunger and nutrition issues. Since that time the health outcomes for our children here in Fresno have been well documented in study after study. Our leaders talk about obesity, diabetes, and asthma as being the major public health problems in Fresno County. The mayor has a fitness council and the board of supervisors is beginning to talk about a Fit Fresno. The governor has called an obesity summit on September 15th to which he is inviting industry and business gurus, and has

said that he does not necessarily want advocates and real people there to talk to him because *it would make the business people feel uncomfortable at the table.*

Well-meaning budgets from the California Nutrition Network foundations and local health educators try to counter massive advertising money from corporate advertisers and the public health counter to big business cannot begin to touch the messaging of the pervasive environment on sodas, fast, and fat food. I just returned from a summer visit with my granddaughters. The two-year-old, who does not watch TV except for Elmo, knows and points to McDonald's as we drive by in the car. Her parents didn't teach her. Her childcare didn't teach her. **The society, our culture is dominated by images and infomercials. Meanwhile, I would like to remind us all that Proposition 13 years later has successfully de-funded California schools, and the need to sell diabetes via sodas and fast food to fund our schools is the legacy. Fresno County obesity and unfit kids are documented. Research shows that children under 12 do not understand that TV advertising is a tool to sell products. They do not distinguish between TV programming and advertising.** TV ads create misperceptions about nutritional values of food and leads to obesity and chronic lifelong disease.

In 2002 Sierra High School up in Oakhurst did a writing sample assignment that gave this as a choice for a topic for students to write on; you can read their responses to this on Metro's website. The writing prompt was about vending in high schools and it said, "In recent years public schools in California have had to come up with creative ways to supplement declining budgets in order to provide for so called extras for their students – scoreboards, food for school-sponsored events, and T-shirts among other things. One solution to this problem has been provided by the possibility to create partnerships with sponsoring companies. Several schools in the valley have contracts with companies like Pepsi and Coke, who in exchange for being able to market their products exclusively to students give the schools some of the profits. Sierra High School, for instance, has an agreement with Pepsi Cola. **I have included in your packet the 2002 contracts that Fresno Unified high schools have with the soft drink vendors. It was \$1,700,000 in 2002. I have not been able to get the most recent contracting numbers. That's a lot of money, and that is how we are funding our educational endeavors at the risk of our children.** In 2004 right before the passage of the ban on soda being sold in elementary and middle schools in California, Metro tried to do a phone survey of middle schools on beverage contracts and only two of the middle schools in Fresno would cooperate by giving us information about their contracts. The rest refused to give us information.

In June of 2004 the Fresno Unified School Board appointed a committee to draft a **comprehensive Healthy School Environment Wellness Policy. That committee of 25 stakeholders has completed its work and is ready to proceed to the school board pending the hiring of the new food service director. It is a clear, strong policy we are recommending, and it would make Fresno a leader in the valley if it was adopted. It directly addresses selling to kids.**

I think of all this and I wonder: How can we move from blaming our children, even blaming our schools, for the dependence we have created on selling kids junk food and creating a health crisis?

I think of all this and I'm delighted to introduce our speaker, **Amanda Purcell**, who is policy director of the California Center for Public Health Advocacy. She is the author of the 2000 tome on prevalence and specifics of district wide beverage contracts in California's largest school districts, Fresno included. I asked Amanda to fill us in on the last three years and hope to hear her recommendations and findings and use them as a spur for our discussion here on peddling food advertising to kids and how we might look at **how we as adults can advocate and change the environment through policy.** After Amanda's presentation **Sheli Glasrud** will talk to us about parenting and teaching here in Fresno and the amazing impact she has seen on kids who are learning from advertising.

Amanda Purcell, California Center for Public Health Advocacy: I'm very happy to be here this afternoon to speak with you all a little bit about advertising. To begin with, just a little bit of information about the center that I work with. California Center for Public Health Advocacy. We're headquartered in Davis near Sacramento and we were formed about five years ago out of the Northern California and Southern California Public Health Associations. They wanted to have an advocacy arm and so our center was formed to do advocacy on a wide range of public health issues, but we've really **focused on childhood obesity.** Our goals are about raising awareness and mobilizing folks around public health

issues and in this case around childhood obesity, nutrition, and physical activity. My goal today is to talk with you and give you some examples about **advertising and marketing to children** and then to talk a little bit about what some **potential solutions** are as we start to talk about **what to do about it locally and what to do about it on a statewide basis**.

This cartoon is one that I always like to show because it basically is a caricature of what we see around us: **advertising**. We know that the food industry and alcohol industry spend a tremendous amount of money advertising to us, and here you see this poor guy telling us that we have an obesity problem. And we're always a little bit puzzled, "Well, why do we have an obesity problem?" We sometimes are oblivious to the fact that **food and beverages are really pushed on us**.

Specifically today we're going to talk about children. I think we might be aware of the fact that **children are advertised to a lot**; and then **in other ways I think we're oblivious to the fact that children, even babies, are being advertised to**.

Advertising to babies, toddlers, young children.

This first slide shows **baby bottles with soda logos**. You may have seen this before, and actually in the packet (from the Campaign for an Advertising Free Childhood) there is actually a whole fact sheet on **marketing to babies and toddlers**. We may or may not even think about the fact that that happens. There are some interesting quotes in here. **Clothes, mobiles, crib toys, and even diapers feature branded logos or licensed media characters such Elmo or Spiderman**. How many of us have bought things with Winnie the Pooh or characters on it and **we just think of it as fun. We don't necessarily think of it as advertising. This type of marketing helps ensure that babies will recognize and request similarly adorned products ranging from cereal to stuffed toys to soda as their verbal skills evolve. According to marketing research, babies are requesting brands as soon as they can speak**, so something like this baby bottle does a couple different things. One is it's a **subtle advertisement to the child. It's an advertisement to the parent. It's an advertisement to anybody who sees the child with the baby bottle. It also serves as a subtle or maybe not so subtle cue to put soda in the baby bottle**, so you're more apt to put Dr. Pepper in the Dr. Pepper baby bottle, maybe unconsciously, than you would be with a regular baby bottle, and certainly we know there are lots of problems with putting soda in baby bottles. That's one example.

Another example, and actually Edie sent this one to me this week, this is for **Twinkies with a product tie-in into the Shrek movies. I think of this as almost kid nirvana in some ways. Kids love the fact that they go to the Shrek movie and they see Shrek eating Twinkies and then they go to the grocery store and what do they see but they see the Shrek Twinkies in the grocery store with the green filling and it just boggles their little imaginations that they can eat the Twinkie that Shrek was eating in the movies**. Like I said, it's little kid nirvana, and you see the product tie-in with the movie, you can get the DVD, so **product placement in movies** is something that we're seeing increasingly as a form of advertisement. Pay attention the next time you go to a movie. Do they have a can of Coca Cola? Are they eating a Twinkie? Are they going to McDonald's? **Companies pay big money to have their products placed in movies**, and in fact, one of the fastest evolving forms of advertisement is product placement in TV and movies. **As we watch more cable TV and we have TiVo and all these ways of avoiding commercials it becomes even more and more important for companies to pay for spots on TV and movies to get their products in front of us**.

This is an example of a **website**, and I thought this one was interesting. It's obviously a website for children. It's called **Nutrition Camp**, so **this is an example of what can be under the guise of nutrition education. You can go in and learn about nutrition while playing fun games, but of course, underlying it is that you should be eating Frosted Flakes and reinforcing that Frosted Flakes are a fun and nutritious thing for kids to consume**. Another website example, twinkies.com: "Hey kids, visit our game galaxy." **What's more fun than playing online games? All of these games revolve around Twinkies**.

We certainly know that most of the **ads on Saturday morning TV, which is aimed at children, are food ads, and 44% of those in one study when they looked at them were high-fat, high-sugar foods**, so they're **not** spending a whole lot of time across the board advertising healthy foods to kids. Most of the time it's high-fat, high-sugar things.

Kids clubs. I don't think we often think of kids clubs as a form of advertising, but these are the things where you **sign up for information for Burger King**. Send in your personal information and then

they're going to send you things. This one says the Burger King Kids Club has more than five million members as a part of it, so they're **sending in their addresses and their e-mail and then there's a way to be marketed to. Things can be sold. Things can be e-mailed.**

Then **toys as advertising.** I don't think we think about toys as a form of advertising, but these are just a couple examples that I pulled out. **Playdough has something called the Little Debbie Snack Cake Kitchen, so you mold Playdough into Little Debbie snack cakes. The Jell-O Barbie. Jell-O Barbie comes with a Jell-O T-shirt on. There are lots of forms of Barbie advertising things. She works at McDonald's apparently, because you can get her in her McDonald's outfit and she comes with a McDonald's kitchen. Who knew that Barbie worked on the side? Then another one, the Easy Bake Ovens. This is an Easy Bake Chips Ahoy.** The mix that comes with it allows you to make Chips Ahoy cookies in your Easy Bake Oven. These are just ways that **branding or specific food items are put in front of children all the time under the guise of play and in such a way that I don't think parents necessarily see it as advertising.** They just think, "That's really kind of cute that Barbie works at McDonald's." Well, of course it just promotes that we should go to McDonald's, that we should frequent it, that it's the place to go and have fun.

Advertising in Schools

We're going to talk a little bit about schools. Edie said a number of things to you about schools, and most of the work that I have done over the last ten years has been on the **sale of fast food and sodas and unhealthy foods in California schools, specifically California high schools.** I think it's important to point out as we start that there are **several reasons for why we see such a corporate presence in California schools. Schools across the country have all the same situations we have here in California. We have consistent under-funding of our public school system.** We really have a situation where we don't have enough money to fund books, libraries, music, so **we look to fundraising.** Then to add extra things like field trips, fun things for kids, we certainly don't have money for that and so we look to fundraising to provide that extra money. As I mentioned, the **advertising world for companies is changing. They used to rely on television commercials. Those are probably going away and so they're looking for new ways of getting their products in front of people, particularly in front of children, because we know that brand loyalty is set at a very young age so if they can get into schools and put their brand in front of kids they know that the tendency is for them to then select that brand.** I think that's particularly important with **soda companies.** That's why you see such a push for them to want to be **exclusive in a particular high school or a particular school district** *because they know if they get in there and start serving kids Pepsi products from the time they're eight years old they've got ten years' worth of time when that child for eight hours, five days a week has been exposed to Pepsi products. It helps to cement their taste for those products and it gets them to identify what their favorite product is so when they actually enter the marketplace themselves they have a preference for Pepsi products.*

There's really little public resistance to this. Either people see it as a really fun, good thing that kids have access to fast foods and soda at school, that McDonald's is sponsoring a contest, those are seen as warm, fuzzy things to people. People don't react the same way as if we said, "Well, the tobacco company is going to come and run the spelling bee for us." People might be a little bit on edge about that. They don't have the same reaction when we say the soda company is going to come and do that. They like soda companies. Soda is the all-American beverage. We love soda. We have soda at parties. We have soda at good times. There's just a warm, fuzzy feeling a lot of times about fast food, snack foods, that type of thing, which means that the *public doesn't really stand up and say, "Hey, I'm a little bit uncomfortable with funding public education through the sale of unhealthy food," or "I'm uncomfortable with our schools becoming marketplaces or places where children are advertised to,"* so just keep that in mind as we look at some of these example.

This is a quote from the president of Coca Cola a few years ago: *"The School System is where you build brand loyalty.(John Alm, President Coca Cola Enterprises).* They see the school system as a place where they can begin to build brand loyalty around their products, which makes schools just a very, very, very important place for these companies to be.

When we think about schools there are a lot of different ways that advertising occurs. Some of it is real obvious and you're familiar with and some of it I think is less obvious. **Logos on school property.** These are things like the scoreboard on the football field has a big Coke logo on it, ads in

student newspapers or yearbooks, and textbook covers. I have a slide a little bit later on about textbook covers. When I was in school we covered our books with brown paper bags, but apparently that's no longer in vogue if it ever was in vogue. Now there's a whole giveaway of free book covers that kids can use to cover books. They're just full of advertising and it's usually advertising for soda, candy, those types of things. Screen savers, things on your computer flashing the Coke logo or whatever they're flashing. These are all very subtle forms of advertising.

Indirect Advertising

Then there are things like indirect advertising that we may or may not always identify as advertising. One example that I found was something called the McSpellit Club, which I think is interesting because McSpellit is not exactly a word. Basically, what the **McSpellit Club does is kids receive free hamburgers, cheeseburgers, and Chicken McNuggets if they receive a perfect score on their spelling test.** Very common. There are a lot of similar things with reading. **If you read so many books you get a coupon to go to Dominos pizza. Very, very common types of promotions.** It's fun, kids love it, but you also know that you don't just go to McDonald's and get the free hamburger. You're going to go to McDonald's with your whole family, which means you're **going to be spending money there, you're going to buy everybody else a hamburger, you're going to buy some french fries, and you're going to buy some soda, so it isn't just a free giveaway for the child.** It's also a way, again, of bringing that family in and having them have a family experience in McDonald's.

"Nutrition Education"?

Then there is this interesting issue of nutrition education, and this is an example that just came from the **National Potato Board, which was a counting lesson on counting potato chips.** There's a **math lessons with Skittles**, so the kids get a big pile of Skittles and they need to divide them up and count them.

How do we make a distinction?

Those things are pretty obvious, but when we start to talk about advertising there then becomes this kind of interesting line. **How do we feel about educational materials from the Dairy Council? How do we feel about advertising materials from a branded water company? As you're thinking about advertising in your community you have to wrestle with this. Are we saying we don't want any advertising to children, we don't want any corporate sponsorship of nutrition education, or are there certain products that we don't want to participate in? Then you have to work to identify what those products are that make you uncomfortable.**

This is just a series of slides that are pictures of things that you're probably all very familiar with. This is a vending machine example, so again, we have a couple things going on. We have, obviously, the **sale of the actual product as a form of advertising, and then the front that goes on the machine also serves as a form of advertising.** I always point this out to people if they're working in their districts on putting in healthier beverages to make sure that you're also working on **getting healthier messages on the vending machine**, because you don't really want that Coke machine to be filled up with Minute Maid juice because you've still got the message of Coca Cola even though the machine is vending juice. The good news is all of these **companies do have either images of people being physically active or they do have images of their healthier products, so there are options for school districts** that are in contracts. They have some wiggle room to make it at least a little bit better.

Student stores are always a big issue when we're talking about the sale of unhealthy foods to kids. I'm sure I don't need to tell you that most of the time student stores aren't selling a whole lot of fresh fruits and vegetables and dried nuts and healthy things. They're selling Cheetos and sodas and candy bars, so again, the message that we're very concerned about is the **legitimization of those unhealthy foods. When schools sell them to children they send a very subtle message that it's okay to eat this stuff.** There is a **problem that we have that the selling of all of this stuff pulls kids away from eating full meals, so instead they're buying a collection of these snacks.** *They're not sitting down and having a sandwich, an apple, and a carton of milk. They're having Cheetos and a soda for lunch.* This is just an example from a cafeteria: when you sell this stuff (chips, candy, junk food), along come big **product displays.** There's a big poster that's showing Lays, and it says something at the top, something suggesting that these are fun, fun stuff. **Everything is colorful and jazzy and it doesn't really look like a tray meal, which doesn't get the same kind of advertising treatment in**

schools. This is an example from Minnesota: this particular school district sold **promotion rights to their school buses**, so their school buses were then painted with 7-Up, which would be Pepsi logos, and so they drive all over town and kids ride around in the 7-Up bus, and isn't that just great.

Fundraising.

It's not always just companies that bring in advertising, but we bring it in as parents or as students. **The Krispy Kreme donut sale seems to be quite popular. It's quite popular in Sacramento. I have a friend who's a high school teacher and they bring a lot of Krispy Kreme donuts into that high school.**

Here is the **textbookcover example.** There's one textbook cover for Gatorade and another for Juicy Fruit gum. This particular company that produces these is called **Cover Concepts**, and the quote here, "**Cover Concepts places your brand directly into the hands of kids and teens in a clutter-free environment.**" **What clutter-free environment means is that, let's say, when you go to the supermarket it has all kinds of different brands.** There are 20 different kinds of gum, there are all kinds of different beverages, and your attention is being pulled in a million different directions. **What this is saying is that at schools, even through there is advertising, it has relatively little advertising, so if you can get your advertisement for Juicy Fruit gum in front of kids, chances are they're not getting very many other advertisements for Juicy Fruit gum. So schools are a particularly important place to capture kids and to talk to them about the fun of Juicy Fruit gum.**

Here are a couple other cartoons. I put this one in because I think it shows a couple of the different situations that we have at schools. *We have vending machines, and there are signs, ice cream party for the student council, so we've got parties that are providing stuff to kids, home and school pretzel sale every Thursday, so we've got stuff being sold at school and at home, candy sale for the orchestra, pizza party today, lollie-pops for honor students, so giving kids food rewards for good performance in schools, cafeteria menus that are hogis, burgers, and fries.* **Kids are just inundated with this stuff at school, and sometimes we have this expectation that we're going to teach them about healthy eating and they need to weave their way through all of this stuff to the one apple that's sold in school and our expectation is that kids will make the right choice and they're going to pick that apple.** But when they've got all of this going on around them, God help them if they can actually find the apple and choose the apple and resist all of this stuff. We think that it's really an **unfair thing to put on kids** that they have to fight through all of this stuff to make a healthy choice.

This is another picture that someone just sent me. It's the **Coca Cola Elementary School.** **That's what it's called. Coca Cola Elementary.** The kids are wearing Coca Cola backpacks, there's a Coca Cola flag flying beneath the American flag, and the Coca Cola delivery person is saying, "Perhaps it's time for us to back off."

The reason that we're so concerned about marketing to kids at school is that dietary habits are influenced. We feel really strongly that schools send very subtle and not so subtle messages to kids about what is good to eat and what is appropriate for them to eat, and the degree to which everywhere they turn on school campuses is about unhealthy eating, it really sends the message to them that that's the thing to do. A number of years ago before I took the job that I have now I worked for California Project Lean, which is a statewide nutrition and physical activity program. We had a bone health program that actually operated here in Fresno and they had a very similar experience. They were talking to Spanish-speaking women about making a switch from full fat milk to lower fat milk. They had community educators that were providing these messages, and one of the comments that came back from the community was, "**We're kind of confused about this switch from whole fat milk to lower fat milk because when we send our kids to school they're given full fat milk, and surely our schools know what's best for our children.**" It really made the people that were running that program take a step back and realize that probably before they even did the education messages they needed to start thinking about the type of milk that was served in schools because it was really reinforcing a message to parents about what was appropriate to serve to their kids. I think all the soda and fast food advertising does the same thing.

We've already talked about the fact that brand loyalty is built and then unhealthy food is normalized. We live in a culture that tells children and tells parents that kids need to eat certain types of foods, too. So what do children eat? They eat chicken nuggets, macaroni and cheese, pudding, whatever it is. Those are the kid foods and that's all that kids eat and that's what is marketed to kids.

Here's the macaroni and cheese for your kids. In fact, there was a quote also in here I thought was interesting about macaroni and cheese. It says, "Many popular children's media characters appear on the packaging for high-sugar, high-calorie foods. **Sponge Bob Square Pants was Kraft's top-selling macaroni and cheese.** It's reinforcing the fact that kids aren't just going to eat pasta with tomato sauce. They have to eat macaroni and cheese, and it's even better if you're eating Sponge Bob.

Solutions Advertising is an interesting thing to try to fix.

It's especially interesting to try to fix it in the United States **because in the United States we have given corporations first amendment rights, the same type of free speech rights we have as individuals, which is different from Europe.** A lot of times you'll hear of really great examples in **European countries where they've limited marketing to children at a national level.** We have a little bit of a problem with that because our corporations are allowed free speech rights which means they're allowed to advertise, so it makes it a little bit tricky. But that having been said, we're really starting to see that people are starting to try to take some action on this and we think one of the **best places to start is to start locally in communities, particularly in public environments where kids are like schools, publicly financed daycare programs, and after-school programs where we can start to reign in the influences that are put upon kids.** One of the recommendations that I'd like to make is that you think about **first dealing with the presence of unhealthy food before you deal with the advertising of food.** In talking with folks that have dealt with advertising issues and other **public health arenas like in tobacco they're really clear that before they could deal with the advertising they had to deal with the availability of the product. It's particularly the case with food because food is legal.** It's illegal for kids to have tobacco and so to advertise an illegal product to kids is obviously not allowed. Food is a little bit trickier, but it seems like if we set up a situation, for instance, where soda is not allowed in public schools it then becomes logical that that also means that soda cannot be advertised and promoted to kids at school because it's not allowed in schools. So when you're thinking about advertising and you're thinking about the provision of unhealthy foods they go hand in hand. There is a lot of work that needs to be done **locally**, that we're thinking about working on it at the **statewide** level, and then there are a number of groups that are starting to work on it at the **federal** level in trying to get changes made in the FCC and these groups that deal with advertising to kids.

The types of environments to think about, again, **schools and also parks and recreation.** We're seeing a lot of soda industry sponsorship of parks and recreation programs. They have the same types of funding problems that school systems have so they're looking more and more to beverage companies to support them. **After-school programs, daycare settings, government buildings,** and then if you're doing community education or family education also **talking to parents** about the degree to which some of this stuff is happening in their homes as well.

This is my contact information: www.ccpa.org. We do have an advocacy network. If you're interested in finding out about what's happening **statewide and what's happening with legislation** you can visit our website and sign up for our advocacy network and you'll get e-mails from us particularly when legislation is at a critical place or legislation sponsored by my organization. If you have any questions about those pieces (SB12 and SB 965) of legislation I'm happy to answer questions at the end when we're done about those two bills, which are to set nutrition standards for schools in California. Thank you all for listening to me and I'll be interested to hear your comments.

Edie Jessup: Thank you so much, Amanda, **Sheli Glasrud** will talk with us. She's a parent and a former teacher. Hers is firsthand experience in Fresno and the very thing that Amanda has recommended that we talk about and look at is our local issues. Sheli, thank you.

Sheli Glasrud, parent and former teacher: I'm going to start by telling you a little bit about myself. **I have a ten-year-old son** who goes to school here in **Fresno Unified.** I have taught both fourth and third grade in socioeconomically diverse schools and **cooking class in an after-school program at Cooper Middle School for two years, and for the past three years I have job shared in a third grade classroom at Powers/Ginsberg Elementary School.** I'm pretty active in my son's school as well. He's going into the fifth grade. I'm not going to talk about direct advertising to children in schools but rather the **insidious influences that permeate our school system that in my opinion are just as harmful**

to children's nutrition as direct advertising, I see a lot of the same things that Amanda is talking about.

As a parent I teach my son about healthy food. He has a wide range of tastes as well as knowledge. I give him the tools to be able to know how to make the healthy choices with food. He eats breakfast every day, he takes a healthy snack to school every day, I pack him a healthy lunch every day, we eat a balanced dinner every evening, and still I **am fighting the intrusion of very unhealthy foods at school every day. Foods that used to be sometimes foods or once-in-a-while foods are available at schools in snack bars stocked with sugary, salty snacks and unnaturally colored sugary liquids, no fresh fruit, no bottled water. Pizza, ice cream, and candy are offered as rewards or incentives at school.** That's real common. *You get a pizza party if you do this. You get an ice cream party if everyone does this. Candy is real frequently given as a reward. Pudding cups and other sweets are offered to children who work in the cafeteria as helpers as rewards for their work, and most kids simply don't have the resolve to turn down these constant rewards time after time.* It wears them down even if they're trying not to eat things that aren't healthy.

In my experience as a teacher, many of the same scenarios are true but with one exception. **Many of the children have not been exposed to a variety of different fruits and vegetables and healthier prepared foods on a regular basis.** In my middle school cooking class many **teens did not eat breakfast.** In discussions they admitted to leaving for school without having eaten breakfast and *they would just pick up a candy bar or a coke at school in the vending machine once they got to school.* By 3 p.m. they were famished and ready to eat whatever I had planned. One-pot meals, omelets, we made all kinds of things. Breakfast burritos, turkey meatballs, fresh squeezed juices. **No student in my after-school cooking class had ever had fresh-squeezed orange juice.** We made things with lemon, grapefruit. None of them had ever had fresh juices. I was shocked. These students were open to anything including junk food if I had offered it, but in class **they tried many new and different foods because they were hungry, so they're wide open to whatever is there, and if all that is there is junk, that's what they'll eat.**

Similarly, my **third graders often came to school hungry.** Many students each week would not feel well or have stomachaches about an hour into school starting. My teaching partner and I kept certain snacks in the cupboard. **We kept Akmak crackers, they're whole-wheat crackers, we kept a variety of dried fruit, and we kept unsalted roasted almonds. That's it.** That's all they got, and so after a while they'd say, "Mrs. Glasrud, I love the flavor of those Akmak crackers." They really, really loved getting those, but they weren't the salty things that everyone says that that's all the kids would eat. That's all they had, they were hungry, and they learned to love them. **In our class we started the year with a health and nutrition unit to start the tone for the year.** The children have informal lessons about fruits and veggies and ag products from the San Joaquin Valley, and that's really a part of Fresno County which is part of the third grade curriculum that we taught. They tasted foods as we discussed them, and many were familiar, of course, with apples and oranges and grapes but they rarely ate or included them in their lunches. When melons, berries, or more unusual foods were introduced most students were willing to try them and they were always surprised at how much they liked them. Many students hadn't tried those, and in our San Joaquin Valley where things are so abundant and we grow all of those things it was, again, shocking to me that **many students had not tried those foods.** Occasionally we would cook in our classroom and they made and ate foods like butter pumpkin bread, cranberry relish, fresh applesauce. They always loved the wholesome foods that we made and most of them had never eaten.

At Powers candy is sold on certain days after school. Pizza, candy, and ice cream are often used as incentives or rewards. In fact, Healthy Families sent home surveys with our students. They offered the class that returned the most surveys by the end of the week a pizza party, and my hungry class won the pizza party. Vending machines are in the cafeteria. They sell Hawaiian punch, some juice drinks, and this year water was added so we were happy about that, and those are for kids after school. **Snacks are offered in the after-school program. I always thought they had a healthy snack, but just the other day a friend of mine said, "I had to start sending a snack with my son for the after-school program." I said, "I thought they had snacks." She said,**

“Well, I found out they were serving pop tarts and potato chips in the after school program.” So she started sending a snack with her son instead.

Once again, **do we really expect young children to just say no to junk food day in and day out when they're surrounded by it at school?**

In this era of budget crises and insufficient financial support of the schools parents are forced to fund raise. That's something that Amanda talked about and I've been right in the middle of that. Sometimes we sell what is not so healthy. **We have a fundraising arm called the Powers/Ginsberg Foundation. I was involved in many such fundraising campaigns. You need to have three or four fundraising events per year to make enough money to fund the many needs of the school which aren't covered by other kinds of funding.** For example, we pay for buses for field trips, \$500 each. That's a lot of fundraising if you want to send kids on field trips, which are important. We sent kids who couldn't afford it to sixth grade camp. We sponsored campus beautification. We put a patio on the site of the school so children could wait inside the gates for their parent. These are things that are important. We had to raise money to do them. **We had healthy events like jogathons. We had community events like our fall festival in which we featured homemade tamales and egg rolls made by parents and other food games, entertainment, an auction. These events took weeks and months to plan and there was a lot of work, but these events combined did not match the money we found that we could make by selling cookie dough.** Cookie dough was a huge money maker. For the record, I was against it. Everyone on the board said, “We buy that stuff anyway. Now the school can profit.” It's hard to argue with the fact that in two weeks you can make \$10,000 to \$25,000 with very little effort by any one person and make that much money in two weeks, and we did. **We made \$16,000. Is this what we want to sponsor? A campaign selling sugary cookie dough to our family and friends?** Every one of my friends on the board said they buy that regularly so why not, and now the school would profit, so we did it, we made \$16,000, and that was **only 35 percent of the profit. The company made 65 percent.** That's amazing to me that we still made that much money and it was 35 percent. This year we switched to another company and we made 45 percent. It was a local company. It was still an amazing thing to me that really there was some organization and work involved but it was really the *easiest money we ever raised and it made twice as much as the other events combined.*

Not-so-healthy food is all around us. It seems to be even more present in our schools, being **eaten by the very children that we're trying to educate and help to develop healthy lifelong habits. What are we telling them by continually offering them not-so-healthy food?** I want my son and my students to eat nourishing food that actually might help improve brain and body function and help them concentrate on their studies, not work against it. **They can't make healthy choices if they don't know about nutritious foods, and they certainly can't make healthy choices if there are truly no healthy foods to choose from in the place where they spend six to ten hours a day.** I will continue to fight the intrusion of junk food in my son's life. It would be wonderful if our schools developed a similar policy. Thank you very much.

Edie Jessup: I want to I call your attention again to the *Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood*. We'd like to track some of the promotion of both healthy and unhealthy food here in Fresno, whether from newspaper or TV or radio on the '**Metro Ad Watch**'. I want to pay attention to the faith community and our business community also as a place where we can look at how we're promoting food.

Rachel Carpenter, Heartfelt Holistic Massage and Therapy: I'm a local massage therapist. I do a lot of work with local **Child Care Planning Council**. . I noticed in the Bay Area **when the Family Childcare Food Program started losing some of their (federal) subsidy that they opened up the food program to a large amounts of donated food because they could no longer afford to offer the foods that were required on the food program, and they started to accept donuts for breakfast and they actually accepted catsup as a vegetable.** I was really horrified to think that they could open the food program, which was a wonderful program, to such horrible foods. I volunteer with American Red Cross and I regularly give earthquake preparedness programs and I go to the Police Activities Leagues here in Fresno where they have the kids in the park. Well, in order to get these kids to the park with these activities the **Police Activity Leagues also feed them, but they're feeding them donuts and cookies.**

Eddie Jessup: I wish PAL had been here today. We are working more and more with the Parks and Recreation Department. This year they finally are back serving Summer Lunch and we would very much like to work with the after-school programs. Amanda, do you have a response?

Amanda Purcell: Yes, just a comment that I think your **point about daycare and environments for preschool children is really important** and it's something that we haven't as an **advocacy community or at least at the state level spent a lot of time on, but we certainly know there's a growing emphasis on 0 to 5 and after-school funding.** I think figuring out how to integrate nutrition and physical activity into that is important. Just one other thing. It's interesting, the **Police Activities League is actually on record in support of both of the bills that we have, so I'm not sure where the disconnect is, but someone in that organization is in favor of healthier foods and beverages so somehow maybe they need just a little help getting it into reality.**

LeeAnn Parry, Kaiser Permanente, and First Five Commissioner: I had a conversation this morning about moving into opportunities to focus more on obesity prevention for 0 to 5. One of the things that I would really like to see is a much greater community effort. **This is not about good sense. It's not about education and knowing what we should eat.** *We have a tremendous need for our comfort foods, and our comfort foods are not necessarily raw carrots, as much as I like carrots.* **We have as a whole culture allowed ourselves to deal with our stresses and our demands through our eating patterns and we're very protective of that, too, so it's not just in First Five. It's got to be a whole community way of being able to address the fact that over-processed foods are what we usually call our comfort foods, and actually what they do is not comfort us but put us in a worse situation.**

We need to learn to enjoy the richness of full flavors. I call them clean foods. It's really hard to do because **it's not just about what our kids are eating. It's our whole culture.**

Eddie Jessup: Yes, and I, too, am concerned about focusing on kids as if they were the problem; whereas it is an adult problem. Do we have someone here from Head Start?

Participant comment: I work with a lot of farm workers and I really feel that everybody in our society needs to be taught to read labels and all the hidden sugars in our labels and what a hydrogenated oil is. People don't know that and they eat this junk in good faith because they figure if somebody is selling it, it must be safe. What I always say is, **if it didn't come out of the ground or off the tree don't eat it, period.**

Dr. Alex Paros: I'm a retired certified metabolic nutritionist. I do want to thank you very much for bringing up the information about marketing. This has been one of my pet peeves. I fought it and it's like going up against the wall. My late father left an olive orchard for me on the island of Crete, Greece. We have seven gold medals for our oil. Something that you people are not aware of is that oil that you buy here in the states is mixed with other oils and it's put out as pure, organic olive oil. I have a question for you. **Why are we not hitting the churches and asking the churches when they're going to stop giving donuts and coffee for the first thing as soon as you walk in?** I've been to so many churches here in Fresno, and as soon as I walked in, "Oh, you're new here. Next Saturday night we're having a spaghetti feed. Or, "Saturday night we're having an apple pie and ice cream night and the kids are going to put on a special show." I had a saying. I said, "If God made it, eat it. If man made it, don't eat it."

Amanda Purcell: When Eddie just mentioned faith communities I was thinking of a church that I used to go to in Sacramento. **One of the fundraisers they had was you can rent an In-N-Out Burger booth and they'll wheel it to your property and then you can sell In-N-Out burgers. They would do this after Sunday services.** My friend and I would always joke that it was Sunrise Community Church helping you get to heaven just a little bit faster. I think your point is well taken and that **all of the environments that we're in, whether it's our work places or our place of worship or our schools or our, you know, I belong to the YMCA. YMCA has a huge partnership with Pepsi and you walk**

in and there's a big Pepsi machine. Once you work in this field it's everywhere you go. It's like kind of beating on you that there are these influences, so your point is well taken to really think about wherever it is that we spend time.

I think **we obviously can't ignore the mental health facet of obesity and health.** I saw you're focusing on mental health as well. Your point is well taken that so much of what we deal with is mental health, and we can't ever really forget that part of it.

Participant Comment: I just wanted to say when you see people having health fairs and they're serving cotton candy and corn dogs and all of that, please ask them where the fruits and vegetables are. Even the community clinics – I hope there's nobody here from the clinics – and in another two huge agencies they serve this stuff. Juice and sodas in these communities is like taking alcohol to an AA meeting. They're terrible. They're really terrible, and that's the **teachable moment for us to say, "Don't you have any fresh fruit here?"** Don't tolerate that kind of stuff as an outside observer. You can go in and say, "I'm not going to eat here."

Last but not least, **I did a little presentation on gestational diabetes because I'm the regional social worker for the California Diabetes and Pregnancy Program. I used to see one or two diabetics a month. Now I see eight to ten diabetics a day. The economy of California is going to collapse unless we do something really, really fast, and it can be done if we all take our part.** Any time you go to a party and they don't have any water say, "I'm not having anything," so that people start to get the message that if they don't have fresh stuff nobody is going to eat it.

Edie Jessup: I think that we're going to have to think larger than that. What Amanda has talked about in terms of **policy**, eliminating it from the environment and our communities. Fresno County, I believe, is our largest employer in Fresno and we really have to **seriously talk to Fresno County and get our Public Health Officer and Board of Supervisors to see that poor food is removed in county offices because parents (employees and those who do business with the county) need to have modeled guidance, too, where they live and where they work. It's very important that we start changing the business environment.**

Metro hopes this has been the beginning of a conversation, I would be happy to discuss advertising food to children with other groups that are interested and to support policy level changes for our whole environment so that we are not individually having to fight the fight.

I will end with a quote from Dr. Francine Kaufmann, who has coined the word "**diabesity**" to warn us that obesity-linked diabetes is a public health crisis *already*. She works for Children's Hospital in Los Angeles and she has written a book called *Diabesity: The Obesity-Diabetes Epidemic That Threatens America – and What We Must Do to Stop It.*

"When I first started at Children's Hospital in 1975 we sold cigarettes. It became socially unacceptable for a healthcare institution to sell cigarettes. We have to get to that same attitude around health and healthy lifestyle. It is not okay to sell sodas here. It is not okay to have a gift shop that sells candy. We just celebrated an anniversary of a new project and the administration sent around chocolate cupcakes at the hospital. I sent off an e-mail to everyone. I am appalled. My e-mails always start with, 'I am appalled.'"

Go forward and do good. Thank you.