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Excerpts and Summary of the 37th Hunger and Nutrition Forum

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

Focus: Re-framing the Debate
Diet based chronic disease:
individual choice or an issue of the environment?

Edie Jessup, Coordinator Fresno Metro Ministry Hunger & Nutrition Project: Welcome to the 38th Community Hunger & Nutrition Forum, which means that we've been Meeting for some three years. We are raising the awareness of the issues of hunger and nutrition here in Fresno and beginning to be an informer and a player at the statewide level. Hopefully we here in Fresno will make some huge changes that can really assure the good health of all of our residents.

I'd like to spend just a minute going through the packet* to point out a few things to you, and then I'm going to turn it over to our guests from the Bay Area.

Participant Self-Introductions

Edie Jessup: Thank you. Were glad you're all here. This Forum has taken time to look at the obesity epidemic. We have had a number of forums and we have task groups that are working as do many, many of you in your own arenas. **We've considered some of the issues involved with and the May Summit on Obesity that was held here in Fresno. We've considered local issues and looked at the school environment as the fastest way to change the impact on our Fresno children. We're stunned at daily news items informing us that chronic disease, diabetes, heart disease, cancers, chronic disease by diet will mean that our children will not live as long as we do, and the cost in human well-being and healthcare will be huge. This has led to today's Forum. The issue we consider is: should we take an individual approach or an environmental change approach as a fruitful means to address this crisis is of concern about the consequences of chronic disease by diet? Here in Fresno the poverty is so high, with one in three children in families who are growing up in poverty. We know that obesity**

and poverty are tied. So, we are so happy to have **Leslie Mikklesen and Colleen Floyd Carol from the Prevention Institute and the state Strategic Alliance on Childhood Obesity come here.** They will talk to us and let us know that we are not alone in the state having to face this issue and that we do need to look at the kind of major **changes we need to make in systems that we are involved in** and can look at **how we can tie into state approaches that will be functional and will really make a significant difference very, very quickly.** There are hard questions to consider. So Leslie and Colleen have come to Fresno and then will go back and tell the state group what Fresno is thinking about. Thank you.

Leslie Mikkelsen, Prevention Institute & Strategic Alliance: Thanks, Edie, so much for that introduction, and I can tell already this is going to be a lively day because really what we want to do most is to have a discussion. I'll just start things off by telling you about Prevention Institute where we both work, and the Strategic Alliance. The Institute was founded to focus on primary prevention, and that really means looking at **what it takes in a community to make people healthy and focusing on that.** We were very happy to be part of founding the Strategic Alliance. We know that people need information and skills to make healthy choices, but we also know that a lot is stacked against them, and I think what we've already heard today from all of you about making changes in the schools shows that you're really well aware of it.

I just want to tell a personal story. I'm a nutritionist by training, and I worked for ten years for a food bank before I came to Prevention Institute; first in New York City and then in Alameda County, which Oakland is the biggest city in Alameda County. I will never forget sitting at a meeting we had to talk about advocating for food stamps in the county. One of the ministers there who had a great food program recalled that he had given out food bags on a Saturday as usual, and then was paying ministerial visits to families. He said, "I was really surprised because I went to one of the families and they were eating the pastry I had given them for lunch." He said, "You know, I always knew I was helping them but **I didn't realize that some people had so little that the food I gave them was all they had.**" **That's why I really want to work on making sure people can access all the resources out there and make sure that the Food Stamp Program serves people well.**

Well, that shows right there why it's **not just a matter of individual choice.** There's a lot of talk about the **obesity epidemic, which really is about eating healthy food and being active,** and it's important to remember that the issue is not weight. It's really not about weight. It's about healthy choices. People's bodies will be different body sizes, but what's important is that people are able to eat fresh produce and whole foods and go out and move their bodies, and that's what we're all about as a statewide coalition. **The Strategic Alliance on Childhood Obesity was founded by organizations that had been doing nutrition education that felt like education isn't going to do it. I can give people information, I can hand them a brochure, but if I'm not also helping to make change at the community level and make sure that people can follow through on the advice I'm giving them then we're not going to have a change in this obesity epidemic.**

I've been reading with great interest about the Forums you've been having here in Fresno. I know you had one on health disparities and on soda last month. I think that an important part of the **movement to eliminate health disparities is focused on this very issue of chronic disease prevention. If people eat well and they're active regularly they're far**

less likely to get diabetes, they're far less likely to have stroke or high blood pressure and they're going to be healthier. So this fits right into the efforts that you're already doing right here. You have a handout about the Strategic Alliance, and I don't want you to look at it in great detail. The back side of it, which Colleen is holding up, has our platform, our principles. What Edie said was really important. **We know we need to make a lot of changes. We know we have junk food in the schools. We know that often the cheapest option people have in their neighborhoods, frankly, is to go to a fast food restaurant. If you're trying to feed a family of four why wouldn't you get a 99-cent value meal of a burger and fries and a soda?** In a way there are no options, so **we want to start talking about creating different options.**

This is a really important time because all the people in Sacramento, the legislators, are trying to think about what bills they're going to introduce in January, and they actually have a committee. It's called the **Taskforce on Children, Youth, and Worksite Wellness**, and this is exactly what they're talking about is what are we going to do about getting people to eat healthier and be active and **how we can use the public policy process** to support that. They actually have come up with some ideas about what they might want to support. What we're doing now is going around the state **talking to people interested in the issues of healthy food and activity to find out what they think is most important so we can take that information to the legislators and also so that we can make sure that the Strategic Alliance has the information people need to move forward with these policies.** We're setting up a **website.** We're going to have a lot of resources, both the **data you need to support why this change is important but also model policies and programs that people are trying all over the country and in some cases from other parts of the world to really make change.**

So what we're going to spend most of today doing is talking about the policies and we're going to start off with **six policy ideas that are on the table, but we very much want to just hear from everybody other ideas you have. The Strategic Alliance platform,** you'll see, is much broader than these six policies, but what we're looking for is what are those starting points? **Where can we start to make change and start to shift attitudes so that we really do create a healthy eating and activity environment?** I want to just have a chance for Colleen Floyd Carol to say hello to you all. She's just joined our staff very recently, and we're very excited. She has a long history of community organizing and policy, and she's going to bring a lot of strengths to the alliance.

Colleen Floyd Carol, Prevention Institute and Strategic Alliance: Thank you. I just want to say how thrilled I am to be here in Fresno and thinking about how we're going to work more effectively in the Central Valley. We hope that Fresno will help lead the way in the region. I just want you to indulge me for a minute. I'm much more of an experiential learner. I'm just going to ask you to sit back in your chair for a minute and close your eyes. **I want you to think about people you love in your life, your children, parents, friends, and I'd like you also to think about what are the sorts of things that you are able to take for granted as a person who may or may not have access to lots of choices about what you get to eat every day.** I also want you just to take a minute **to think about what it must be like to not have those choices and what it must be like to be told that you should be making better choices and that what you're doing is bad for your system, it's bad for your body, it's bad for the environment, and not really having any options and how you must feel about that.**

I just think that sometimes we have to pull ourselves a little bit closer to the ground in terms of the work we do. I also want us to think today outside the box. I want you to first fill up your box, just give me a mental box and fill it up with all the worst notions that you have about nutrition and fitness promotion and the ways in which you've been working. **What's not working so well? Is it enough just to tell people that they need to do better? Then I also want you to think about what are our successes.** Where are we really being successful? What's working and where are there some **opportunities to take it to the next level?** And then I want you to kind of mentally collapse the side of the box and open it up because we're going to try and take what you've got, what we're starting with, what we're doing well, what we're not doing so well, and then we're going to expand that into something much bigger and something with fewer boundaries. So I'll bring you back here with us, but **try to hold onto those people that you love and know and want for everyone in our community to have those same kinds of privileges of choice and to be able to counteract the millions, billions of dollars of advertising and marketing and resources that fight against exactly what it is that we're trying to promote. Think not just about how we give people information but how we really create environments that allow people to make the kind of choices that lead to good health, community wellness, and other things that we know keep us healthy and help us live hopefully long and fulfilling lives.** I just want to mention one more thing. In the back there are some Strategic Alliance buttons and some forms to join the alliance if you're interested, and I'll leave them in the back so that you can take them before you leave. With that I'm going to turn it back over to Leslie and we'll starting talking about some policy.

Leslie Mikkelsen: Let me just ask how many people have heard about **Senate Bill 677**, which is a bill that gets sodas out of elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools? Have you heard about that passing? I see nods of heads. I have to tell you, when that bill was introduced by Senator Ortiz nobody knew whether that would pass. About a couple years ago there was a bill introduced by Senator Marta Escutia that set standards for the food sold outside the school meal program that actually never went into effect because it required some money to be attached to it. When that first bill came out the soda industry hadn't noticed yet that people were trying to do something about their products in the schools. But by the time SB677 came around they noticed, and they were at the table and they were lobbying the senators and assembly members quite strongly to not support the bill. Despite that, because there was so much public support, and I would guess some of you in the room were part of that public support, they passed that bill, and we now **as of next school year will have a change where only healthy beverages as defined by the bill will be allowed in the schools. That's a change. It's just K-8. I think that it allows the selling of sodas after hours, but it is a step forward.** It's an amazing step forward. It's definitely not the bill people necessary wanted, but that is what happens in the political process is compromise. One very interesting thing that's happened is many, many legislators want to make their mark now on this issue, and they're coming to advocacy groups like ours saying, "What should we do, what should we do?" Plus, they have their own ideas.

We want to make sure that we really give them an earful, and as Edie said, **Fresno has become an incredibly important part of the state. Everybody recognizes there are a huge number of people that live here, so what you all have to say is extremely important.**

What I want to do is share these six policy ideas with you and there is a handout. It's a little bit lengthy. It's a two-pager that's got a pretty lengthy description of these six ideas, but I can actually summarize them for you and then give you a chance to read it over and see if you have any questions. Then what we want to do is have some discussion in small groups about which of these ideas you think is the priority now. So I'm just going to run through them.

1. **Legislation that would actually put some standards** in place. They're already there, but to really **strengthen the quality of school meals**, and that might focus on limiting fat, it might focus on getting fruits and vegetables in there. It's limited, but the problem is that when you look around the state, what's on the books and what's happening at the school level are not the same, so the idea is to have some legislation that would actually get some **renewed enforcement and intention to improving school meals. There are the standards at the federal level but they're not necessarily being implemented everywhere**, so we want to put some teeth into it. Yes?

Terry Soares, R.D., Fresno County Office of Education: There was some research done at Fresno State University recently that examined the school lunch program and it was a statewide effort. The data came out of the Department of Education, and primarily what they found is that schools that are using nutrient standard menu planning because people are familiar with computers at that level are able to meet the standards, but those schools that are continuing to use traditional food-based menu planning, or they call it revised food-based menu planning, don't meet those standards, and I'm talking school lunch and not ala carte meals. It hasn't been published yet.

Leslie Mikkelsen: I think that shows that with all of these there is a **certain level of detail in understanding what's really going on at the school site level and that our role, I think, is to say the kind of changes we need to make.** Then there is clearly a point at which the people that are involved at the school level, at **the administrative level, are going to have to come together and talk about what exactly that legislation should look like.** What we really want to talk about today is the *general idea and what we think is a high priority.* I'm going to be asking you later to pick what you might have as your first, second, and third priority and also if there is anything you think is a bad idea.

Dr. Ed Moreno, County Public Health Officer: When I see the word "standards" for me with my background I automatically think of skill-building, making sure if you have **system standards that you teach people how to perform the task you're asking them to so that when you do evaluate them they are able to perform at the level that you're asking them to.** The schools probably already do this, but we need to make sure that they are **taught and understand the standards for delivering the meals that you're asking them to. The other end of standards would be the evaluation or the outcomes.** Besides recording whether or not they're meeting those standards maybe there are some other outcomes such as demographics or characteristics of the students who are going to school who follow these standards and making sure that you do see some **health-based outcomes** as a result of this.

Leslie Mikkelsen: I just realized I had asked Colleen to take notes but I forgot you have these fabulous transcripts so actually we'll be using all these comments and feeding them back, so they're really good to get them. Are there any other questions on this particular issue?

Diane Scott, UU Social Justice Committee: The only way to get people to change is when they understand why, and that goes the same for kids. Nutrition should be a major part of a child's education. You can talk about a lot of different things. Let them add up the calories in everything and see what they get and different things like that, because that's how they're going to change. **You can put all the rules you want on a kid and they're going to go to a friend's house and have a donut**, so they have to be aware of what they're doing also.

Leslie Mikkelsen: It's definitely that. I'm wondering if you're putting another idea on the table too, which is some **requirement for nutrition education**. That's what it sounds like to me. **We don't currently require it. There is an option and there is curriculum available, but it's not something required.**

Diane Scott: I don't think you even have to take home economics in junior high or middle school anymore, so they never are taught these things.

Participant comment: The other thing I didn't see on here was **school gardens**, and I think this kind of falls in line with what Diane was saying that **kids don't understand where food comes from**, and I think that's really important not only to say that **children should be educated about nutrition but also the whole process whereby food ends up on the table and in their mouths.**

Leslie Mikkelsen: So that's another issue that could be incorporated into state policy.

Participant comment: As a school nurse I think one of the issues, too, is **not only educating the students about their nutritional choices as well as increase physical activity, but we really need to reach the parents.** Unfortunately, these students leave campus and they go home to a family and a lot of times these families don't understand what good nutrition is all about, so it means that we have to reach a little further than just what we can do in the school system. We have to figure out how we can reach the parents, and again, it's not just about nutrition. It's about increased physical activity. **It's not just students. It's actually starting with faculty sometimes, too, in teaching them and having them become better examples, healthier examples.** So we have a lot ahead of us.

Leslie Mikkelsen: And I think that's a good segue to the second issue that's being talked about a lot.

2. **What can we do to improve physical education in schools?** Kids go to school every day. That's one place they can be active. I don't know what that's like around here. **Do people know what's going on in terms of physical education in the schools?** Do you think it's good or does it need some improvement?

Participant comment: My understanding, **at the elementary level, and I'm not there, is that we don't have physical education specialists on the campus, so it's left up to the individual classroom teacher who also teaches language arts, social studies, history, geography, science, and anything else that comes across their plate, so if it's not their strength to teach physical education that would be the activity that would get short**

shift when it comes to their class. The other thing that's happening with the emphasis on reading and math, oftentimes **students are kept from recess to complete their homework, so not only do they not get the required minutes of physical education** because the teacher has so many subjects to teach, they also **are removed from recess, which is their free play, so their activity is limited there, so some kids get no activity at the elementary level.**

I teach in the middle school level and the **middle school statewide is where most of the good physical education is happening.** Most of your creative teachers are at the middle schools. **Kids are getting the required minutes, at least in Fresno Unified, I believe, which is 400 minutes every two weeks of physical activity unless we're prevented by health screening, picture day, life skills training, anything else that comes up. It's always done in physical education so the students are prevented from physical activity to do all of the sundry things that a district requires them to do, and the reason they do it in physical education is because every student is required to take physical education so you can hit the whole spectrum of the school in that one class. That's why they do it there.** Not every kid has history across the board because some have 7th grade history, some have 8th grade history and so on, but **every kid has physical education so they do anything that they need to do school-wide in physical education so teaching stops and activity stops** for whatever needs to be done in the district. Those kinds of things could be improved by not pulling students from physical education to do all the business that needs to be done in the school district.

Ray Ensher: I taught for 31 years at Sanger High School in North Fork and we have a lot of Indian children up in North Fork, and we had a specialist in physical education there because it was important to have one. **Is it not true presently that in particularly junior and senior high school they do not have to take any physical education?** Is that presently true?

Participant comment: The state mandates only one year of physical education in high school, or maybe it's two years. **Fresno Unified only offers two years so they get it freshman and sophomore year. Clovis Unified requires four years of physical education, so it's a district-by-district thing whether they want to emphasize physical education** based on what the state mandate is, and I think the state might be two years. So Fresno Unified is two. Clovis unified is four, **so if you wonder why Clovis schools are better in athletics than Fresno Unified, there's your answer.**

Leslie Mikkelsen: Well there's a very important reason to improve physical activity. Another thing that's come up, I think in terms of a **state legislation is about supporting and having physical education specialists in the school.** These are some of the things being considered. Some of it is ensuring that the **minimum standards are being enforced because, as you mentioned, a lot of times even though it's on the books that the kids should be going to physical activity they're actually not. They're being pulled out for other things.** And then finally another issue is **what kids actually do during physical education class.** Sometimes depending on what the goal of the instructor is they may have a couple kids up demonstrating something. **There's actually been some pretty good documentation that a lot of times in the P.E. classes kids aren't really active the whole time,** and so that's another improvement that I think through training and support for those programs we can perhaps do. There are some real **challenges because there is no question that schools are under a lot of pressure to do a lot of different kinds of**

things. I even know some people in Santa Ana who are trying to improve physical activity and they're actually willing to come in and lead an activity program and they're told there's just no space.

Edie Jessup: I'd like to add something on that. I think that our de-funding of education is just a horrific thing, and in physical activity not only is it space and funds put into what it takes, but also I believe that if students have been physically active for an hour I don't think that we even, in our high schools anyway, have showers anymore either, and we're talking about health issues here. I grew up in Tulare County at a big high school that was serving 50 miles around and we certainly had showers every day after P.E., and we groaned and moaned and hated it, but I know for a fact that with the migrant kids and some other kids that was where they got their shower. **The importance of looking at the whole person in what we do is just critical, I think.**

Leslie Mikkelsen:

3. Number three up there on the list is something that not as many people have heard about, and that's the **Safe Routes to School construction program. Have you heard of Walk Your Child to School Day or Safe Routes to School?** That's kind of really the campaign of let's get kids walking to school and make sure that it's safe for them. There also actually has been **money available. It is federal transportation dollars that at the state level were earmarked specifically for communities to improve the routes to school, so public works departments could apply for that money.** It's been \$20 million a year for the last five years to widen sidewalks, get rid of obstructions, to do whatever they have to do to make sure it's safe for kids to go. It's a pretty serious issue because while in some neighborhoods kids don't walk at all and everybody is being driven, the reality is in **neighborhoods where people have less resources they're less likely to have a car and the kids are probably walking, but there are very high rates of pedestrian injury. They're getting hit by cars. So this program is ending and there needs to be a new bill next year to renew it and to make that commitment again to devote those federal construction funds to this issue.** That's why that one is up there on the list. Are there any questions about the Safe Routes to School?

Participant comment: (Inaudible.)

Leslie Mikkelsen: One thing I will say is it is federal transportation dollars, so that is an excellent thing. It is federal money. But the other thing is it is being evaluated and the evaluation will be released this December, so we're waiting, and what they're going to be looking at is **were the changes that were made able to reduce injury.**

Participant comment: Just to add to this, there are a lot of other programs, both federal and state programs, that can provide funding for both pedestrian and bicycle facilities besides just this one, and I would take it a step further and say that **all the public works departments in every jurisdiction should be really considering these two modes of transportation as alternatives to what we're trying to do now, which basically revolves around motor vehicle transportation.** The Safe Routes to School program has been successful from what I've heard about it in other areas. **We don't have it here yet and we certainly need to apply, but it needs to be renewed before we do that.**

Leslie Mikkelsen: That's interesting because I heard a report as we were coming down here. I guess there has been some **discussion in Fresno County about sprawl and about the fact that when there is more construction farther out people have to drive to get places and that's so linked to asthma, of course. It's a two-for-one health issue to get people to be physically active and walk and bike because it helps reduce air pollution and asthma at the same time that it's good for people's bodies and means that they're less likely to get other chronic diseases,** so as you say, there is more that can be done than just Safe Routes to School, but it is a starting point.

Participant comment: Just to let everybody know, too, we are in the process within the next couple weeks of approving a **bicycle transportation plan for the City of Fresno**, so that's a big step forward.

Leslie Mikkelsen: That's fabulous! What I should say is that this list was generated by a steering committee of the Strategic Alliance and we very much want to get other ideas up there too, so I'm glad that you keep adding to it, but we wanted to have a starting point when we came out and talked to people. **We're having meetings in five different locations around the state, Fresno being one. L.A. and San Diego and the Bay Area are some of the others.**

4. Right now this issue is not being considered at the state level, but it seems to be an issue that a lot of people think is important. What can we do, particularly in neighborhoods where there aren't supermarkets, where residents don't have a lot of resources to go to other neighborhoods where there are a lot of food options? **What can we do to get fresh food into low-income neighborhoods?** I think this is an area that's really open for a lot of imagination. There are a lot of different kinds of demonstration projects going on around the state where people are trying different things. They're putting in **farmers' markets or working with small stores to train them to carry produce.** I frankly wanted this on the list because I wanted to get a **sense of whether or not this is an area we should be working on and really trying to share information on what people are trying in different places and what seems to be working.**

Edie Jessup: One thing is that we are embarking on a **Community Food Assessment.** Many of the people in this group have been involved over the last year planning and looking at the kinds of issues that we wanted to know about. We're going to be assessing neighborhoods, and we have a **celebration on the 23rd of the USDA grant that's going to support doing that throughout the county rather than just here in Fresno and looking at where people get food and what kind of food they get. We'll crunch the numbers by City Council and Board of Supervisor districts** so we have some place to take the data. Next month, we will be having a Forum on our pilot of the Community Food Assessment by CSUF students in a Geo-Mapping class.

Participant comment: In my research, looking statewide and looking locally here there's a **growing organic farming going on. I checked with the Farm Bureau and it is growing here in Fresno County and there is some education going along with that. People are beginning to wake up to store produce and they're looking for organic farmers'**

markets. You can go here at the Vineyard; you can go to Downtown Market here in Fresno. It's always crowded. So it's always happening.

Participant comment: One of the things we didn't talk about with the school meals pieces is that there is a **USDA Small Farms to School Meals program that provides support and funding to bring locally grown healthy produce into the schools.** I think when young people have a connection to the food, as you were talking about with school gardens, it **really motivates them to try new things, and when things are fresh and appealing they're more likely to be consumed.** So it's another way that we can think about taking the farmers' market initiative to the next level.

Edie Jessup: That is a critical thing. The access in low-income areas is a real problem. **We're working with the schools but there are some critical problems. We have a great opportunity in Fresno because they are building a new prep facility and our ability at this point in time to influence a little bit the direction of that and what kinds of foods get into that system is important.** We have a small group that is working around looking at getting the local access developed. **We don't have cold storage here.** One of the critical things about the news article this morning with Sue leaving is that the Community Food Bank has been working on trying to get cold storage but that has not been accomplished, and it means that our Community Food Bank is very limited in terms of what it can do with taking in and distributing food. Sandy's group, **Plant a Row, is doing a small gleaning effort, but there also isn't a gleaning operation here in Fresno County.** There are folks interested in that but once again **cold storage becomes a really big issue.**

In order to accomplish getting more fresh local produce into the schools, and I think that the schools are very willing, it's going to take folks working with schools to see that it can work. We're working with CAFF, which is the **Community Alliance with Family Farmers and they are beginning some pilot farm-to-school programs. There are already gardens in some of our schools. That's not a whole solution to a large problem. We're going to have to invest in the infrastructure it takes in order to reap the really big savings that we could reap with healthy kids and with the ability to use all the food that's produced here. But that means we have to decide to do it.**

Leslie Mikkelsen: I think as Edie is talking it's good to hear that it reminds us that **we just need to make change in a number of areas to create an overall healthy environment,** and what's exciting is we can do it. There's a lot going on already, and I think **the more all of us who are thinking similarly around the state connect up, network, share ideas, make sure our legislators hear from us what we think is important, the more of an impact we're going to have, and frankly, nationally, too.** Other states are doing things as well as California, although they do keep looking to us. They're very impressed with some of the bills we're passing at the state level and really trying to model that and really **building this movement.**

5. **Another area to build the movement, and one of the places that's actually in the Strategic Alliance platform, is talking about having friendly facilities when people go to the services they use often. Two great places to start are government facilities and healthcare facilities. Both have an interest in the public welfare, and as a matter of fact, at the Kaiser Oakland, which is near our office, they've started a farmers' market once a week. It's really fabulous. Every Friday it's there right**

around the noon hour, and you see lots of staff and lots of patients going out and chomping on apples because it's fall. So they're really taking that to heart and thinking about developing some **other policies like making sure the stairwells are open and having nice music and nice art so the people want to walk up them.** I think there are some other things you can think about. My own fantasy is exercise bikes in the waiting rooms, or at least videos, but just different things so that the whole environment is healthier. And, of course, the thing I left out but shouldn't forget is **vending machines. Exactly what we see in the schools we need to do in government facilities and in healthcare and beyond, I think all worksites, is make sure there are healthy options available.** There actually was a bill introduced last year in the Senate by Tom Torlakson who's from Contra Costa County. He's going to reintroduce it because it didn't get anywhere last year. It didn't get far enough. He's saying that *any time a government facility, and he's talking about the state facilities as a starting point, has a vending machine at least 50% of the options should be healthy.* People are then able to make a healthy choice. *If you're starving, and I've had this experience, and you run to the machine and it's like candy bar, candy bar, potato chips, and then maybe there are those cheese and crackers, which are very high fat but you kind of go, well, that's sort of healthy. Its' hard. It's really hard.*

Participant comment: I hope that a part of that legislation will include an **incentive for these agencies to do that, a tax write off or something. That seems to work when you put that carrot out there where if you convert your vending machine to apples and healthy things and juices they have more of a tendency to do that. I hope they consider some kind of incentive** for them to move in that direction.

Leslie Mikkelsen: I think we can really make the case that there are all kinds of **benefits beyond the bottom line benefits connected to improving healthy eating options, and particularly in government facilities and facilities that are serving the general public we really need to be modeling something.** But it is interesting as we think about worksite promotion to think about how we **create some real incentives for worksites to move in that direction.** Thanks.

Edie Jessup: I would like to start taking inventory here in Fresno. **As you come across places just give me a call, leave me a message, of worksites that are making conversions and are making some efforts.** A friend of mine, **Hazel Creighton**, works for an agency that has about 250 employees, and they offered work time to do physical activity and they brought in people to demonstrate different kinds of physical activity. There was some incentive for people to quit smoking and support groups. The Business offered it. It was an offering that people could enroll and over 200 people in their agency did. They gave them incentive to work with their kids and change home eating habits and some physical education. ***I'd like to take inventory of all of our agencies that have made some of those changes, replaced things in vending machines and are paying attention to the kind of food they serve at meetings and what our congregations do and all of these arenas. It would be a great thing. We could make a big deal of it and give them some kind of recognition, and maybe it would encourage other folks.***

Diane Scott: I think that we all know that corporations are going to advertise and kids are going to eat it up and want what they've seen on TV. **Maybe a couple ways that might work would be to offer some kind of incentive to corporations to get them to put**

good food in the vending machines and in the schools. Another way would be, and this would take a long time I realize, but the **state could limit what the corporations could do, and if we had some legislation that said you can't advertise this junk food on any program meant for children under the age of such and such, various things like that, but that's a long-term thing. I know that. But we're going to have to do it.**

Dr. Edward Moreno: Regarding your idea number five, I think it's an excellent idea to expect government facilities present an example. I'm also thinking about private industry. There are some companies, and I believe they tend to be larger corporations, that do encourage healthy behavior in the worksite, and I think perhaps you probably could get a hold of some of these. I'm thinking of one in particular, and I can tell you about it later, but the private industry has particular incentives, I believe, built into having these incentives for employees. For example, they encourage their employees to take breaks for exercise, they have cafeterias where there is healthy food, they establish reasonable work hours, 35 to 40-hour work weeks so they have time for exercise and rest at home. **The incentive for the private industry is that this leads to job satisfaction, and so besides doing the right thing there are also monetary incentives because with increased job satisfaction within the corporation it leads to decreased turnover, attrition of employees, and that saves money for companies.** So they actually have built-in incentives to provide these things, and there are some companies that have done a very good job doing it.

Theresa Rogerson: Just one other thing. **The City of Fresno has recently chartered a Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and one of the things that we talked about was the fact that we have at least three that I know of major, huge, huge buildings opening up in downtown Fresno in the next couple years, and so we've talked about working with the folks at the city who have developed these capital projects in downtown to be able to go in before they open up – I think the federal building is going to be the first one and that's going to put 10,000 more people downtown every day – to talk to the City about building facilities that will encourage people to walk and bike, and so if anybody is interested in that let me know.**

Edie Jessup: I'm wondering on this issue if with all the Worker's Comp falderal going on if there isn't an **opportunity legislatively to make some encouragement for some of these things, and along with that the recognition that if kids' parents are doing some things that lead them to be more active and putting themselves in the way of healthier food that that will have an influence at the home level also.** When you talk about education about nutrition where people have limited choices and it takes some practice. **It's just like in order for kids to learn they have to practice, and the incentive in the work arena is really important.** The other thing is to always remember the choice --because **my concern is that we hit the folks that are easier to hit and we aren't concentrating what minor resources there are on those who really don't have access to choices because of poverty.**

Leslie Mikkelsen: I'll take Diane's comment and then I want to move to our small group discussions.

Diane Scott: On the subject of educating people and needing to educate parents, **Community Access Channels that we're hoping to get here in Fresno would be perfect places to have programs about nutrition for your family.**

Leslie Mikkelsen:

6. Measures we can take to actually **eliminate soda from the schools and to eliminate the contracts and basically to say that they can't be done, the contracts that soda corporations are making with the schools to have exclusive rights to market their products in the schools.**

Participant comment: I'd like to address that because **San Diego didn't eliminate the contracts but they rewrote the contract with vending and the individual that helped them write the contract put in clauses that stated what types of beverages went in, what percentages of beverages went in, and there was also funding for nutrition education and health.** So "eliminate" may not be what we need to do because children still need water and they still want choice, so in this instance instead of reducing revenue and with the fear of reduction, Vista **Unified has actually increased revenue by increasing the number of vending options, but all are healthy food choices** and the vendor was happy to work with them and give them **funding for nutrition education or P.E. programs instead of billboards and sports arenas.**

Leslie Mikkelsen: And that's, I think, been pretty consistent that where healthy options have been put in, schools seem to be able to maintain the funding, so that's really good news.

So what I'd like to do now, we actually want to have people choose what their priorities are, and we have some dots over there on the side for people to do that. I want you to first take about five minutes to just talk at your table about which thing you think is your first priority and why. Then I'll explain the voting, which will be your chance for some physical activity.

Table discussions.

Leslie Mikkelsen: Realistically there are only so many bills we as a network can really support just because it takes a lot of letter writing and phone calls, so we need to come up with some priorities. I'm going to ask you to think about which issues you think is the priority and to give that a green dot; second priority a blue dot; and third priority a yellow dot. And I'm also going to put up a sheet to write some alternative ideas and put your dot there. Those red dots are only if you think something is a bad idea and you just think, no, let's not go forward with this at all. We know we want to do a lot of things but we can't do them all at once, so we're just trying to get some **sense of priority.** So dots are on the side and then we'll just take a couple minutes to wrap up after that.

Prioritizing.

Leslie Mikkelsen: It is really interesting to do this exercise because you really see where things cluster. We do see some spread but there is **definitely a lot of interest in improving availability of fresh food in low-income neighborhoods,** and it's a great issue to work on. So we'll take this and tally this and give you all some kind of feedback on how things laid out in terms of first, second, and third choices. Those of you who are standing near there, do you see any clear clustering of the blues? They're sort of spread around, aren't they? There are

some around **government activities, and physical education in the school** has a fair amount of blue. **There aren't a lot of reds (don't want), but it seems like they have clustered around the renewing safe routes and eliminating soda contracts, and I'm guessing that folks are not so much not wanting to work on the soda issue but are looking at number six and thinking about revising the strategies for increasing availability of some healthier options and getting the sodas out and water, juice, and other good things in.**

I just really wanted to thank you all for what I think was a really stimulating and interesting conversations and I'm hoping that it's the beginning of a long relationship between the Strategic Alliance and the work that you all are doing here. We certainly will be staying in contact with all of you, and again, as I said, there are some forms in the back by the door. If you're interested in joining the Strategic Alliance organizationally or individually please take a form and leave it for us here today. You can also do it online if you don't have time for that. Our website information is on the Strategic Alliance handout that we gave you, the orange and blue sheet. So again, I'm really excited about the work you all are doing. I'm looking forward to spending some more time out in this area and thinking about how we can support your efforts. We'd like to take your good ideas. I tried to take some good notes while you all were talking and I know Edie does these fabulous transcripts, so we're going to be taking some of your good ideas. We'll probably post them to the website and we'll be thinking about ways to facilitate conversations between the other Strategic Alliance network groups that are going to be meeting around the state so that we can support each other's efforts, and if people want to move forward on policy initiatives we're going to be able to build this really strong statewide coalition to make some significant changes.

It's an interesting time as we have a change of governorship and sort of post recall and all of that, but I think more than ever it's **time for us to be vocal and organized and making sure that our concerns don't get lost in the chaos in Sacramento right now.**

Edie Jessup: I want to thank you both for coming and getting us going on this. **I want you and the Strategic Alliance to commit yourselves to keeping in touch with us so we can tap back into where you are with this. We know the legislative process takes its own sweet time and becomes very complicated, but we are available here because we are working on these issues here and will come up and testify to the legislature. We can help through our many organizations. Even though we might be non-profits or might be governmental institutions we have the obligation to educate people, and education is an allowed activity and that is the way that we can begin to change and transform and begin to make the systemic changes that need to be made.**

On Friday at 9 at Metro we're looking at the **Child Nutrition** issue and this will certainly be on the table. Next week we have two important meetings. One is on **Food Resources here in Fresno** and the other is on **Food Stamp Advocacy and issues around access and EBT. Please do join us in doing something here in Fresno and we can then join the statewide efforts to make a real systemic change that will make a huge difference for our families and for our friends in our neighborhoods. The Community Food Assessment is going to give us the data that we need to take to our local people to make the policy changes that really need to be made. When Teresa talks about what kind of building are going to be built and how are people going to move from one place to**

another, how are they going to zone things so it's not Wal-Mart at the edge of town where people can get their food but that they can actually get good quality fresh produce in their neighborhood. These are things that are really important and we can do something about them. **These things can change.** So I want to thank you again for being here. **Thank you Leslie and thank you Colleen, and we will be perched and ready when your state consensus comes about and we'll be behind these issues.** Thank you very much.

***The Packet:** Agenda, calendar, information on the Strategic Alliance, article in today's Fresno Bee; changes at our Community Food Bank. We should be aware of that and not neglect them in this time when they're looking for a new director in terms of our support **because the Community Food Bank is indeed where food comes from and we do need to be supportive** of that. We wish Sue well and Cary also. There is a Summary of last month's Forum on Soda in the Schools, a news article from the New York Times on the continuing issue of poverty and people not having enough to eat. **Thanksgiving is coming up and many of us are very thankful and grateful, using this as a mindful time to not only support people in our community who do not have enough to eat but also to realize that we have to change the systems so that they have enough to eat reliably and that it is of good quality for their good health.** Hopefully you will consider in your Thanksgiving meditations some **commitment to act to make those systemic changes where we have so much food and we have so many people who are hungry.** WHY, World Hunger Year Organization; press release on federal money at work in Fresno county. Our Senior Nutrition Group last year created **a Real Meals for Real People, Holiday and Everyday. These are some suggestions if you are going to donate food to our local pantries and the food bank.** Fresno Metro Ministry is having their 20th annual Thanksgiving Concert, *A Celebration of Our Community in Harmony*. Please join us. There is no cost. We would love to have you there. Thursday, December 4th Fresno Metro Ministry's 33rd annual anniversary and awards dinner: Awardees this year: Rollin Pickford for seeing and enabling others to see the beauty of the Valley. So much of his wonderful art is of our agricultural area and the wonderful things that we produce. Pat Pickford, for her leadership and social work in our community and continued support of folks in need. Art Dyson, who is an architect and community leader, is being honored for human rights and social justice and for his vocation of creating open, free, and beautiful architecture in our city. Su Kapoor for his steadfast commitment to promoting nonviolence and peace in our community. And the Saint Paul Newman Center for multi-faith leadership and call to justice. The Local Healthcare Coalition celebrating its 10th anniversary and enabling better healthcare. Californians for Budget Accountability. Proposition 56 is going to be on the ballot in March, and this is information about that and speaker training here in Fresno. Plant a Row's annual citrus gleaning and distribution; this year they're going to need more hands because more people are aware of this and it is an opportunity to get really wonderful local produce out to people who really need it. Conference on Restorative Justice.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: WWW.FRESNOMETROMINISTRY.ORG
WWW.PREVENTIONINSTITUTE.ORG/STRATEGIC
WWW.CFPA.NET

SAVE THE DATE:

January 21 Tuesday

Regional Summer Lunch Summit

Goal for Summer of 2004

All 100,000 Fresno County children eligible for free lunch during the school year Eating Lunch Everyday during the summer!

All Central Valley Schools and Community Organizations are available with adult volunteers passing out nutritious food for kids ready to learn and grow.

Hosted by Fresno Metro Ministry 485-1416