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Excerpts and Summary of the 30th Hunger and Nutrition Forum

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MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger

California Food Policy Advocates

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

**FOCUS: Child Nutrition: Linking Poverty,
Access to Enough Food, and Food Quality Issues**

Edie Jessup, Coordinator Fresno Metro Ministry Hunger Project: Good afternoon. My name is Edie Jessup, I am the coordinator for the Fresno Metro Ministry Community Hunger and Nutrition Project, and I want to welcome you all here today. This is our 30th forum on hunger and nutrition issues in the last two-and-a-half, years. Today we are focusing today on child nutrition issues, and if you have been with us through other forums, you probably are aware that **we are very concerned about linking poverty and access to enough food, to food quality issues**

I want to remind folks that in this time of budget woes, both at the federal level, at the state level, and here in our county that the importance of attention on how it is that folks here, where there is so much poverty, get adequate nutrition and are able to continue to learn and to work.

Ken Hecht, Director, CFPA-(California Food Policy Advocates): It is always a pleasure to be in Fresno. It is a particular pleasure today because, as you may notice from your agenda, today is Hunger Forum number 30. It takes a lot of work to do 30 of these things. It takes a lot of work to do one of these things, and it takes an awful lot of work to make them mean more than the hour-and-a-half that we all spend together, and that's the particular wonder that Edie has achieved, to really knit together a community of food advocates out of a monthly meeting of an hour-and-a-half. My main job here is...I've accomplished my main job, which was to deliver 30 cupcakes that my wife made for Edie, one for every one of those rotten forums. Anyway, our hat is off to you for a wonderful accomplishment and many more to go. And please help yourselves to the cupcakes.

Edie asked me to talk about **the connection** of what we have always thought of at California Food Policy Advocates as food access. **How do you get kids and families to federal food programs on the one hand and obesity prevention, which we're all suddenly so struck by, on the other hand.** When you first think about it is counterintuitive that those two should have much to do with each other, so I am going to talk about that. But I never do exactly what Edie asks me to do anyway, so there are a couple of other things I'd like to say on the road to discussing what she wants me to discuss. Let me just rehearse a little bit of the circumstances in which we look at these issues.

Hunger: As you know, the *USDA Survey on Food Insecurity and Hunger* shows that in the state we have in excess of **five million people food insecure and/or hungry of whom over two**

million are children. Then late in the fall of 2002 we had the release of the first *California Hunger Interview Survey, CHIS*, that paid attention to food insecurity and hunger. It looked at a little different slice from what USDA looks at. It looked just at adults and just at **adults who are at 200% of the federal poverty line or less, and it found over two million of that population hungry and food insecure**, and those numbers are very consistent with each other, the USDA number and the CHIS number. It's an extraordinarily large number of hungry people, and **when you look at Fresno the numbers are even worse than the rest of the state.** The only county that is worse than Fresno is Tulare, and then comes **Fresno with 35.7% of the population – that's over one in three – insecure with or without hunger and 11% – that's more than one out of ten – hungry right here where all that food comes from.**

Obesity: Now we have obesity numbers, which we're starting to collect from various sources. If you look at what's called a call to action that the Surgeon General of the United States issued about a year-and-a-half ago, now it shows that about **25% of the children, really, nationally and in the state are either overweight – which is the word that's used for children that means obesity.** If you were an adult you'd be termed obese, but children are called overweight – or at risk of being overweight, which means that you're just in that next category right below the kids who are already overweight. **Those are terrible statistics. They're even more terrible when you see that most of those kids are very likely to remain overweight all the rest of their lives.** So on the one hand as **children they are starting to experience illness and disease that is normally associated with adults**, and if it's not showing up in their younger years it has a very high probability of showing up in their older years, as they are likely to remain overweight.

As Edie pointed out, in your packet there is a great **analysis by assembly district** of three years of school children looking both at overweight and their fitness. You know, they have to do an exercise test at several different points during the school career. When you look at those numbers that are derived right off of the exercises and looking at the kids' weight you find in District 31, which is the one I used, for example – that's **Sarah Reyes' district – that 30% of the kids, that's almost a third, are overweight and more than 37% are unfit.** Some people think that the fitness criteria is even more critical than the overweight criteria in that overweight may vary a little bit from one culture to another. Fresno is enormously high on that scorecard as well, unfortunately. **What's contributing to the obesity? Very odd thing. Over the last 20, 25 years there has been a complete flip in whether low-income or high-income children were overweight.** In the old days, it used to be that the low-income kids were not overweight mainly because they didn't get enough to eat and they were very busy physically, often with labor that they needed to perform either around the house or the farm or for pay, and the wealthier children were suffering from obesity. Now it's just the opposite. The low-income children, particularly, because in some cases they're not getting the right food. One person at CDC has been looking at children whose families are on food stamps. **When the food stamps run out then those families become deprived of food, and when they have resources the next time they tend to eat a lot of food that is immediately satisfying, which often happens to be the least nutritious food.** And it isn't just how many calories or how much energy they're consuming, but then, of course, the other part of the equation is how much of that is getting expended. **For low-income children much of the opportunity for physical exercise that we associate with childhood simply isn't there anymore. The kids are being told by their moms to come home – they're latchkey kids – and lock themselves in the house.** There's a whole lot of television, there are a whole lot of computers, there are lots of games that kids can play without budging, and the opportunities to move, to walk to school, to ride their bikes, to have playgrounds that have good equipment for physical exercise are being more and more withdrawn as times get tighter. In the next few years with what's happening at the state, federal, and at the local level we can see all that opportunities are going to shrink all the more, so **there will be more children having less opportunity to move and more children having more opportunity to eat junk food.**

Fortunately, there are some answers to obesity and hunger, which are really, when you stop and think about it closely enough, about the same thing. **It's not enough of the right food in both**

cases that's causing hunger and obesity. There are federal food programs. You knew that would be the answer. **There are federal food programs which can provide an answer to both of these problems that are very good programs. If they were fully utilized, we would have a very small percentage of people still with problems of either hunger or obesity.** However, as you know also, many of these programs are tremendously underutilized. That's what we're all going to talk about, I hope, the rest the day: **why federal nutrition programs are underutilized and what we can do about it.**

The **Food Stamp Program, which we're not going to talk about much today, I guess is always the biggest and most important of the federal food programs,** and in the state the numbers show that roughly *half the people who are eligible for food stamps, have the families that are eligible for food stamps, are receiving food stamps.* Obviously there's lots to be done to increase access to food stamps. Of particular benefit in the Valley where there's lots of immigration are the **Child Nutrition Programs. The wonderful part of the Child Nutrition Programs is citizenship doesn't matter. All you have to do is go to school to be eligible** for the Child Nutrition Programs that are served at school, and if you go to school and if you take advantage of those programs you can go home at the end of the day with much of your nutrition taken care of. It's really a terrific opportunity. So, the question becomes very pressing. **Why are those programs underutilized?**

Well, I think there are two or three different answers. One is some of the programs are structured so as to make it **difficult either to administer the programs or to access them** to eat if you're a child that it's no wonder that they're underutilized. Some of that underutilization is just built into the programs, and the way you get at that is to **change the law that prescribes how that program is going to operate,** and we do that. Change has come from right here in Fresno among other places. The **Summer Food Program,** so dramatically underutilized, is a great example of how **Fresno plays a major role in what's happening in the country.** A year, year-and-a-half ago **Gary Joseph, who runs the food program for the Fresno EOC,** was complaining that he was able only to serve food at 25 sites, which is exactly what the regulations that operate the Summer Food programs say. So Gary said, "I could do much more if I could get over the 25-site limit". Lo and behold, CFPA was able to help Gary so that *he and all the other programs like him now have an opportunity to serve many more than 25 sites. I think Gary's up to about 40 now.* He runs a wonderful program, and it's **efficient and effective** enough for him to be able to do more than 25 sites. More kids get the benefit of that program than ever did before. We were able to change the way in which that program was structured.

Fresno Unified School District was feeding children on the same day but was required to feed them under two different programs depending upon whether those kids were attending school or were not attending school, and with year-round schools and odd calendars of all kinds. There are many districts throughout the state where you have two groups of kids eating exactly the same food prepared by the same people, often served in the same place, but the food service department has to keep **two entirely separate sets of books, in some cases has to segregate the food so that it can watch where the food comes from,** it goes into one program or it goes into another. It is insane, and it is enough to discourage anyone from wanting to do both programs, and that's exactly what happened. **But because Fresno had that problem and was noisy enough about it, all over the country now there is a "Seamless Waiver" that lets a school district serve kids who are in attendance or not in attendance under what used to be two programs. Now they do the whole things seamlessly, as if it were one program in terms of the paperwork and administration. It's terrific.** We had over 100 districts, over 600 sites in the State of California alone last year, which was the first year that this "Seamless Waiver" was available broadly. It's going to be many more this year, and that's true all over the country. **Those are ways in which these programs can be changed structurally if you all holler loud enough, and CFPA's able to help.**

The second place where you can make a difference or where there's underutilization that's worth noticing is in agencies that ought to be running some of these programs and don't. Summer Food Program is the easiest to look at because there are a whole variety of agencies that can run the Summer Food Program, and that season's coming up, so we really need to focus on

Summer Food right now. The principal sponsors of Summer Food Programs are schools, and that's always true. Throughout the country that's true. **The problem with the school administration of Summer Food – and it's not the schools' fault – is that sometimes those programs are operated just for summer school, and when summer school ends the feeding program ends and those kids are without a place to get good nutrition.** We need to figure out ways to help schools do that. **In the case of schools that are running year-round, the food program is probably running year-round and there's not a problem. But when a school shuts down after six weeks of summer school then we've got a problem,** and we've got to figure out either some way to help the school district provide that food or go somewhere else for it. We've got to get the school district to help because they know so much about how these programs operate. But a **nonprofit organization, like Gary Joseph's can operate those food programs.** It's really terrific when *community-based organizations that know the kids, that are located where the kids are located and know where the needs are can pick up those programs and operate them.* However, they need help to operate them, and all of us need to provide that help. So that's the second place.

Then the third place is just looking at the problem in terms of individuals. **What can you do as an individual? What can your organization do to support these programs?** One way you can support the child nutrition programs and make a difference for schools is supporting schools **reexamining their School Nutrition Policies and looking to see whether they have good policies that are bringing most of their kids to most of their meals and giving them mostly nutritious food.** In 2004 the law (SB 19), becomes operable. In January of 2004, SB 19 goes into effect, and **it will require much more stringent nutrition standards at the elementary schools** than we have ever been accustomed to before. It doesn't do as much at the middle and high schools with these same problems, though no one is doing better **than Sequoia Middle School right here in Fresno where the kids led the revolt to get the junk food off the campus and the good food onto the campus.** I know Sequoia has come here and presented, so I'm not going to begin to tiptoe into their turf, but if you haven't heard them, you should make a point to go there or to invite them to your next get-together to hear the wonderful things that are happening at Sequoia Middle School. **Those same things are going to happen throughout Fresno Unified School District sooner rather than later because the good news from Sequoia is going to spread and because there's a board and administration at Fresno Unified that wants to do those things.** But they're going to need a lot of help to do it, and you all can play a role in that.

Now I want to come down to one thing that is new. I guess it's not new at Cutler-Orosi, but it's new in a lot of places. About a year ago Sharon Davis, who is California First Lady, agreed to form a really Blue Ribbon Taskforce of all the stakeholders in children and children's food from around the state, and it is called, cleverly enough, **Child Nutrition Taskforce.** It's got the head of the PTA, the Dairy Council, the School Food Service Association, the Teachers Association and the School Board Association, everybody who's got to buy in when something important is going to happen with nutrition for kids. **What that taskforce decided to do first was to look at the School Breakfast Program as being critically underutilized.** There are a 1.2 million children in the State of California who are certified for free and reduced-price meals – certified for those meals – who do not get breakfast, which is outrageous, and that's the target of the taskforce's Breakfast Campaign.

The way in which the Taskforce hopes to start getting at that 1.2 million kids is through **Universal Classroom Breakfasts.** Universal means that all the children may eat free. The way that that happens most prevalently in the United States and in California is by a school implementing what's called Provision 2 to the National School Lunch Program. **Provision 2 says a school is free to skip collecting applications** every year for free and reduced-price meals, and it **doesn't have to count kids noses every day and plunk them into three categories of free, reduced-price, or full-pay kids depending on their family's income.** That is also a very cumbersome process and an expensive process and one which tends to stigmatize children and discourage them from participating in these programs. Schools can skip all of that if they'll promise to feed everybody free. The theory is that you can save so much money by not doing applications and counting kids and administrative gobbledygook, and you can lower your unit cost so much by increasing participation that you can make money and you can pay for the kids for whom you do not get full reimbursement from the

federal government. There are thousands of schools now in California who are on Provision 2, which means that every child in that school is entitled to eat free. **Once you've done that, you can feed children well in their classroom, and when you feed them in the classroom, the participation goes very close to 100%.** When you feed them in the classroom that classroom bonds as a community in a way that it doesn't any other way. I asked the principal at one of the **Modesto schools** where I went to visit a few months ago now, I said, **"Why do you like Breakfast in the Classroom?"** And she said, **"There is a calm that comes over the school that we've never had before, and kids are really ready to learn and they stay that way until lunchtime."** That's a remarkable insight, I think, for a school administrator who has so many things to do, to notice that there's just an *entire change of atmosphere, of environment, at a school when you do this classroom breakfast.* We also have a video on School Breakfast in the Classroom.

In addition to everything else I have to say today, let me urge you to look at **California Food Policy Advocates' website** www.cfpa.net frequently. We have a whole lot of information on there about all of these programs and about what's happening in terms of the legislative process both at the state level and at the federal level. This is a very important year because **Congress is reauthorizing all the Child Nutrition Programs.** It's an opportunity for big changes to happen to these programs. **We hope that by the end of the process that the Seamless Waiver that started here in Fresno will be a permanent feature of the Summer Food Program. We're hoping that Gary Joseph's ability to do over 25 sites will be permanently embedded within that program.** It's going to be a tough year for budget reasons everywhere, so CFPA is going to need your support, and every week we put up information about what's happening and what you can do about it. The easy way to get that information is to sign on to our **weekly alert as an e-mail.** It's a one pager designed for busy people. You can read it quickly and you can click a button and it will tell you what to do to help. So please take that as my takeaway message. **Stay with us throughout the year electronically and let us help you figure out how you can be active as an individual down here in Fresno.** Also let California Food Policy Advocates hear, mainly through the Fresno Metro Ministry and Walt, Edie, and Phoua and interns what your food problems are. We can respond to some of those problems, and we don't know what to do nearly so well as you know what we should do. So, we need that help from you too.

Edie Jessup: Thank you Ken Hecht, California Food Policy Advocates. Next, Robert Schram will tell us about his successful program of Breakfast in the Classroom in Tulare County.

Robert Schram (Food Service Director for Cutler-Orosi School District): First off let me tell you how I got where I got with the **Breakfast In the Classroom Program**, which might help you realize what happened. I went to Cutler-Orosi School District, which is 18 miles east from Highway 99 on Mountain View, and when I arrived at the district as the new Food Services Director, they gave me only really one task, and that's to balance the budget, and if I lost any money then I didn't have to worry about coming back. So the first thing I did was I started looking at the lunch and breakfast program, and it was the start of the year which at most times in most schools you're doing your application process. And so it was August and I started going through applications and saw an extremely high amount of applications for free school meals, and I mean people who could have qualified for free twice over. **We have a very high farm labor makeup in our district, so the average income for probably 90% of the people was about \$150 a week, so when you talk about hungry people that's exactly what you're talking about.** Well, the person that was there prior to me had aggressively tried bribing students into the cafeteria through gifts. They had all these gifts. **When I showed up in my office it was full of CDs and tapes and Barbie dolls and all types of things that they would give the students if you pulled the plate that had the sticker. It wasn't working.** In the average school site of over 600 students, we were serving about 100. **So, I identified clearly that the problem was that our students weren't coming to breakfast.** So I said, well, there's got to be a reason. So I told the staff, well, take all these toys and give one to everyone that shows up tomorrow at one school site, and maybe more will show up the next day.

Let's see if we can get them in. Besides that, they were just taking up space and they obviously weren't working. So I said, well, **let's look at the bus schedule. Do our buses get the students there?** Most of them were there. **So, I went out to school site after school site, watched students walking to class, and had the door open in the cafeteria, and they weren't stopping. But we knew there was hunger in our district because I would speak to the nurse and find out that there's 30, 40 children in the office that have nausea, they've got stomachaches, they have headaches.** So, I talked to Gloria Cabrera, the **CNC (Child Nutrition Consultant, Dept. of Education)** for our area in Tulare County, and I said what are other people doing? And she said, 'Well, maybe you need to go look in Modesto'. So, this idea really wasn't mine. **I went to Modesto** and I said what are these people doing. I got in the car, I drove up there, I watched the program, and I said, **Wow, this is just fabulous. Everyone's eating, and it is a family atmosphere. The students are quiet. They sit down. They eat. They understand that they have 10 minutes.** We only give them 10 minutes. And everyone says, oh, you can't do it. Well, I went to a School Board meeting and I introduced the program after I met with the CSEA representative. I met with the Teacher Association representative, and they both said oh, it sounds like a great idea. And I got in the Board Meeting and the Teacher Association president hated it, and the custodian who was the lead of CSEA said it's the worst idea I've ever heard of, it's trash, your carpet's going to be shot. So I thought, this is a great welcoming after I had spent the legwork to do it. So, I told the Board that it could happen and the Board said, well, it doesn't make sense. It's not going to work. So, I said to the Board, you put me in a position to financially stabilize this program and now I'm telling you how I'm to do it. If you want it stable, this is what we need to do. And the board member said, well, you can't serve the students in 10 minutes. I said I'll tell you what. Let's get in the car tomorrow and we'll drive to Modesto. Well, I did. I took two board members up there, and they walked out of the meeting and said, they ate in 10 minutes. Oh my gosh, they're so quiet. How does this happen? What's going on? Well, that was enough. The board decided it's going to happen, so it did. I went to the first site. After going to the first site we got started. By the time we started the second site everybody wanted it. **So, the Breakfast in the Classroom program does work. In the program the students do eat. The nurses don't have anything to do now.** They can do teeth checks and all the other necessary things. **It does not have to be a Provision 2 school to do it.** We did our whole first year as not Provision 2. **It does mean more work. The challenges to keep changing the food is huge because you're using packaged food and you're feeding students packaged food, so that brings into play nutritional integrity, which is a challenge because anything that seems to be packaged needs sugar. So, you spend a great deal of time looking after that. We got past most of those issues. We do a nutrient analysis every month and we have since we started the program, and we are well within the RDAs.**

The financial impact for our district was an increase of \$700,000, but the cost of food, as well, went up substantially, so we took a \$1.3 million budget and turned it into a \$2 million budget. Our groceries two years ago were about a half million and it's now close to pushing three-quarters of a million dollars. The reward in the whole program if you do it is you know that no one goes hungry. You know that every child every day has the opportunity. We don't have behavior issues that we had prior to this, so the students win, the staff wins. I was sitting at the time when I arrived at the district with \$750,000 in labor in the food services budget. **I just basically moved people to meet the students' needs versus just having people show up.** In a lot of districts, clerks show up, they take those numbers, and they do that hundred and then they sit there and they wait for lunch. That doesn't happen anymore. **We use the wagon system.**

There are challenges, because **now in my district I have 200 teachers who can tell me everything about how to feed students.** They're going to tell you what they do like, what they don't like, what the challenges are, and that's good. That's good and that's bad, and as you had mentioned, Stephanie, about **nutrition in the classroom, the Five-A-Day Program, this program opens all of those doors because now your teachers are saying, well, what about the cereal, what about this, what about that, and in doing that what you say is okay, well, let's use it for math.** Can they go ahead and chart it? Can you talk about the food, and can you tell them why

they're drinking the milk, why the milk comes every day and other things don't? So, they open up to it, and the teachers, a lot of them even though at first...and **be forewarned for anyone that does it, the teachers will not like you. It will take probably six months before the teachers go, wow, we should have started this 20 years ago.** But, at first, they're going to be against you. In our particular district, I think it's a great program. Other districts have contacted me and will probably want to start Breakfast in the Classroom. I'm not sure if it's right for every program just because of the financial impact that it may have, **but in our district Breakfast in the Classroom has been nothing but a plus, plus, win, win type of situation.** So, does anyone have questions related to the program?

Thad Mummert, Tools for Schools: It sounds like the reason it works in part to keep you in the black financially is that there are so many kids eligible for a free meal. And if you're getting reimbursed by the federal government for those free kids don't you still have to do the applications? You don't get out of the application business, is that right?

Robert Schram: Well, **we went to the Provision 2, which means we don't have to do the applications,** which does alleviate a lot of frustration. Now, the original year that we started we weren't Provision 2. That first year it meant that a roster had to go daily to the classroom, the teacher would have to take attendance the same time she'd fill out the roster of students who ate, it would need to be returned. Those numbers would need to be keyed into a computer program so that we had tracking, and then we would have to do each student by eligibility. And it was pretty scary the first few times we did it because you have to get those in, you have to get it into the computer, get the breakfast broken down, and get ready for lunch. So the first year it was quite challenging, but it works. So, if someone doesn't qualify for the free lunch it doesn't mean that they cannot do the breakfast in the classroom.

Thad Mummert: The customers I have who are challenged by that, you know, are really looking at how to make it cost effective, so I'm trying to look at those numbers and see how you made it work. I can see what you're saying about it, but do you think the districts with a lower ratio of kids who qualified for free meals and so don't qualify for Provision 2 can do Universal Breakfast in the Classroom. What's the threshold? Do you have any idea?

Robert Schram: I don't have an actual figure, no. I think it's a site-by-site issue. **Every district has different needs and demands.** When I was at the West Fresno School District, I was a cook, a dishwasher, responsible for doing the production records, a lot of issues. **This Breakfast in the Classroom program, you have to pay a great deal of attention to it. You have to cost your menus and know in fact that when it goes out that you're truly not losing money. So, you're sitting here challenged with nutrient-based menu planning. Even if you're doing food-based it's still going to have to be cost, and it's still supposed to meet the regulations of the nutrient standards,** so to do that can be cumbersome. I don't mind doing that. I work in a large enough district now where I have time to do that. In a smaller district, you may or may not have the time, and that's a challenge. In some districts the director is expected to receive the order, expected to receive the commodities and put them away, expected to maintain the storeroom and the staff in all of those issues. One of the benefits of being at a larger district is an absentee worker is not as great a problem. You have 20 subs and you have cross-training already done, so it's easier to do.

I'm not saying you can't do it in a small district. But to know what an actual number is, we went ahead and did it by the percentages of the student population with another small district. We used actual figures, and at one school site it was a do-able situation. At the other, it was not. Financially that district would have lost money. So, she had to make a decision there. **You know, \$.22 doesn't go that far. You know, milk is \$.13,** and I bid it every year so I know I get a reasonable price. Packaged goods are extremely expensive, and you know you've spoken to me on the phone and I try to beat vendors on the price if I get the opportunity. **And, I try for the best price with every vendor because I know why I'm doing it. I know I'm doing it for the children, and I**

know I can go home at night and I can put my head on the pillow and I know I can feel good that the students in my district are fed.

But the financial challenges for smaller districts., I'm not sure they can carry the burden.

Larger districts utilize more commodities. You're involved in more, you get in co-ops and things that give you the benefits of the price structure that a smaller district. When I was over at West Fresno I was paying \$.15, \$.16 for a milk. **I like my breakfast at \$.65, and if it's not at \$.65 I'm redoing the menu. Last month alone the menu was redone four times, and so I'm committed to staying in the evening and I'm going to get it done.** At a smaller district you may still be cleaning up at 5 o'clock some days, so that's a challenge.

Participant Question: Robert, you said that in your district you were able to shift the labor and that was able to occur when you increased production. Would you have had to increase labor from your production if you had not had extra labor to utilize for the breakfast program in the classroom?

Robert Schram: That issue has to be looked at site by site. Because I already had clerks that had grown into 7 and 8-hour positions, they did the breakfast counts, they ran the reports, they'd do some applications, then it was lunchtime, and then they'd get done with lunch and do a few applications and then they were done. **So in the case of the provision, if you're not doing those applications that individual...and we did it...but part of the goal was I didn't want to go out and lay off people in a small town. I mean, yes, we have four thousand students, but we're still Cutler-Orosi, and it's a very small town. So if we go in and we start cutting one of my concerns was, well, I'll be out of here quicker than anybody to begin with, and there's enough poverty in the area already. These are jobs that need to be there. So I talked to my staff and I said to them, How would you feel about packing breakfast? And they said, 'well, you know, if that's what we've got to do to work.' So, we rotated staff.** Now I know there are some districts that a person comes in for two hours in the morning and that's the morning clerk, and they're gone. A person comes in and does lunch for an hour or two and they're gone. They're going to probably have to add additional labor, but the degree of how much added labor is questionable because now that person is no longer the clerk. They're sending out wagons and they're getting them back. Now we also had in our particular district having multiple sites, **one of my first thoughts is, well, we'll put this all in a commissary kitchen and ship from there, but I was totally wrong and my staff let me know that. We have a guy that distributes the food to the sites, but then the individuals who were there originally package it, distribute it, break it down when it comes back. It's just a challenge of saying how do we get there.**

Now, if we could all go Provision 2 schools it would probably work. But the financial impact of doing the Provision 2 schools... This is my first year of Provision 2, and daily I'm running the calculator and saying 'What if all the pay students show up and all the reduced show up? Where are we at for that day?' **And so applying percentages is very challenging, and to get a clear picture, I think, is the biggest challenge because we have these benefits for people that they won't come and get. Part of the issue, I believe, is pride. No one wants to fill out an application that says: I need food, I can't support my family. You know, in an area where we're at, you know, predominantly farm labor these are some of the hardest working people in the valley. I mean, they're out there at 4 o'clock in the morning. I know because I see them some mornings when I go to work, and they're getting home at 5 or 6 in the evening and they're giving 110% and they're saying I'm not going to say I'm poor. I'm not going to put that on the application. I'm not going to tell people that I can't feed my family.** So that application challenge is huge because they won't fill it out and then the district is asking the question: are we going to take this child for paid for three years? It's a commitment. I mean, you're in there for a three-year term and you're saying can we do it. **Well, again, we're in a district that, as sad as it seems to say, we're fortunate to have as much free and reduced as we have because the program is being very successful because of that.**

If people have questions, you can feel free to contact me and I'll be as honest as I can with you. **I think universal breakfast in the classroom is a great program, I think it takes care of the students. But, do your numbers and do it right so that you don't have to pull it out after you started it.** Thank you.

Edie Jessup: Vicky Day works for Fresno Unified School District and is going to tell us not only what they are doing but also where they are going with what they're doing for one of the largest school districts in California.

Vicky Day, Fresno Unified School District Food Services: Fresno Unified rates third in meals served in California. We had over 13 million meals that were served to students this year. Eighty-eight percent of the meals are served to students who qualify for free and reduced meals. Forty thousand students, or 49% of our district enrollment, have been served meals at no charge at our 49 Provision 2 sites. We have 466 permanent employees and 95 subs. Our meal prices have not increased since 1988. Students who qualify for reduced meal prices have not been charged the co-pay for over 12 years. We have only seven sites total that do not serve breakfast. Our goals are to increase nutrition awareness and to increase meal participation, which we have increased. The programs that we have include National School Lunch at 98 sites, School Breakfast at 87 sites, After School Snack Programs at 38 sites. We have Summer Feeding Program and Summer Seamless Waiver Pilot at a total of 45 sites last year, 29 of them being open to the community for ages 18 or younger. Unless there are budget cuts, we expect the same number of sites and hopefully more this year. Last year we served 61,500 lunches and 10,000 breakfasts in our summer programs. We're just now getting our information out again to see who is interested and hopefully we'll pick up some more on that. **We need to get more students and the community involved.**

Our Menus: as of January 1, 2002, FUSD Food Services changed to the nutrient-standard menu planning, and it provides one-fourth of the recommended dietary allowances at breakfast and one-third at lunch.

Our satellite Menus: **We have a packaging center that can provide special menus for students who have diseases, disorders, or allergies or students who may need lactose-free diet, low sodium, low phosphorus, no peanuts, strawberries, or meals that need to be pureed, ground, or chopped.** Currently our packaging center provides 120 breakfast meals per day and 160 lunches.

Some of the things that we do to help educate the students include tours of the packaging center. **Students get to come and see their meals prepared from start to finish there. We do job shadowing. Just last week we had students from Cambridge High come and interview us at the Education Center and look at all the different departments to kind of get an idea of what we do. We have taste testing for the students at our annual food show, and we're having that at McLane April 26 if anyone is interested in coming. This is a favorite. It gives the kids a chance to try new products, and they let us know what they'd like to see on the menus.**

Participant question: Is there a way that individuals can help you?

Vicky Day: I'm sure. Any suggestions?

Participant question: Or in terms of your summer food sites, can you use extra adults hanging around or...?

Vicky Day: Mostly our (food service) employees that are off over the summer sign up and run our food summer programs, so we have plenty of help there.

Participant question: With the 49 Provision 2 sites where you're serving free meals, are you giving a Universal Free Breakfast or a free lunch and breakfast to those kids?

Vicky Day: Yes.

Participant question: Free lunch and breakfast to those kids?

Vicky Day: Yes.

Participant comment: That's fabulous. **Are you trying to expand that at all in the numbers scenario we were talking about just now?**

Vicky Day: Yes. **Lunch, of course, everybody eats lunch. Breakfast we're trying to have some ideas to capture some of that through games and drawings and different things like that to try to get more breakfast participation.**

Participant comment: **And I'm certain if you've got 49 sites where you're doing free breakfast because the numbers work no doubt you've also been number crunching to see whether universal breakfast throughout the district is feasible. How does it look?**

Vicky Day: *That I don't have any answer on.*

Participant comment: Okay. Thank you.

Participant question: You stated a statistic of seven sites that do not qualify for, and it was...?

Vicky Day: Oh, did you not hear that? **It was seven sites that we do not offer breakfasts.**

Participant question: **And then can you give us an update on your blue-ribbon panel for the building of the new production center?**

Vicky Day: It looks like they're asking us to go forward with more. They're open to the idea, and Billie has all that information. I'm sorry she wasn't here today to tell you about that, but she's at a manager's meeting and discussing that with our managers at our school sites, too, today.

Marian Mosely: **What is the menu for breakfast? Is it the same at every site?**

Vicky Day: It is. Some of our on-sites it's a little bit different than what the satellite meals would be because we can offer different choices there, but we have pretty good choices. **We have some real favorite breakfasts, and only on a Monday would we give out cereal and cold items. Everything else is a hot breakfast.**

Marion Mosely: **So you have several different items that the children can choose?**

Vicky Day: Yes.

Marion Mosely: Are some of them maple bars and donuts?

Vicky Day: No. **No maple bars or donuts.**

Marion Mosely: **At any school?**

Vicky Day: No.

Marian Mosely: **And if the school has it, it's because the principal decides to provide it?**

Vicky Day: It's that we're not aware of it.

Marion Mosely: And the children, do they...is everything you serve very nutritious for breakfast?

Vicky Day: Yes, yes.

Marion Mosely: So that any one that they choose would be a good breakfast for them?

Vicky Day: Yes, yes.

Marion Mosely: Do you have any sites where they eat in the classroom?

Vicky Day: No, not that I know of unless it might be like a special education site or something like that where they might have one special group that does, but we don't do breakfast in the classroom in FUSD.

Marion Mosely: Do you have any plans to do it that way?

Vicky Day: That's an interesting question, and I was just aware of this today through this conversation, so I would like to go and see how this school district or maybe go to Modesto and see how it works.

Sue Nylander: Having been on a Fullbright scholarship to Japan, you need to look at what they do because not only do they serve the meals in the classroom but the children have the responsible of going down, picking up the food, the dishes, the silverware, they wear their aprons and their hats and their masks and they bring it back and they joyfully serve each other. And, the teacher stays in the classroom with the children. It's a time that they are community, and I'll tell you the other thing they do. Every child has a toothbrush and toothpaste in his desk, and at the end of the meal, they brush their teeth because there's water in every single classroom. We certainly don't have that with our portables. But, they have a really healthy direction, and I ate those meals with the children and it's steamed rice with ground beef and scrambled eggs. I mean, they do not have all the sugar and all of the things that we load our kids up with, the sugar, fruits, and those kinds of things, so we need to look at a model that really works for healthy, slender children.

Vicky Day: Uh huh. Absolutely.

Participant question: Is it possible that ala carte is being sold by students that include maple bars and donuts at breakfast?

Vicky Day: Not that I'm aware of.

Participant question: Or is there ala carte program that's being put out by food services that serves maple bars and donuts?

Vicky Day: No, not that I'm aware of.

Edie Jessup: Vicky, thank you so much, we really appreciate your keeping us updated, and we will follow up with you as to when you've been down to visit Robert and what we might expect here in Fresno next

Sue Nylander: Empty Bowls announcement: I have to tell you that this is our seventh year that we have had a Fresno community committee. A lot of teachers are on that and work for our children through Empty Bowls. **March 18** is our big fundraising event for the year. We raised almost \$12,000 last year, and as you can see by the flier in your packet, there are six groups that will be receiving funds. We are going to have a wonderful evening of entertainment, three hours. We're at LaRyan's Event Center, and a good time is had by all. Entertainment: Roosevelt School of the Arts is on board and they are trying to get their steel drum band in with us. The Chicklettes are joining us, one of their dance groups as well as Hoover said they'd be disappointed if they didn't get to bring their combo group back in to perform for us. The restaurants around town totally donate all of the soup that is served for the evening as well as the breads, and our luscious cheesecake for dessert again this year. So come and have a good time with us, bid on silent auction, and bring friends. Tickets are here and available. Dianne's waving them over there. **Thirty dollars** apiece. So if you have any questions Edie's on the committee also. You can always get a hold of her at Fresno Metro Ministry, or me at Fresno Unified.

Edie Jessup: And Sue, you're responsible so much for this as the director of arts and all culture in Fresno Unified School District. The bowls you get to take home. They've been made by Fresno Unified students.

Sue Nylander: We have over 20 schools and teachers, from 5-year-olds all the way through high school students who hand make the ceramic bowls in which your soup is served. You get to come in and scramble with your friends to get your favorite, and it goes home with you to remind you. You get to select it, and you get to keep it to remind you that you helped fill Empty Bowls.

Edie Jessup: Thank you, Sue. Okay, we'll have the first lady's taskforce video.

Videotape.

Edie Jessup: Thank you, Ken, for bringing that down. And people can call the first lady directly to find out more about school breakfast, is that right?

Ken Hecht: They can call me.

Edie Jessup: Oh, they can call Ken. **The first week in March is National School Breakfast Week, and we hope to be promoting that. Vicky, I believe that Billie Richardson, Director of Food Services at Fresno Unified is planning to do Breakfast in the Classroom in 18 or 20 classrooms, is that right? Breakfast in the school?**

Yes, and that is a wonderful model. I went to Sequoia Middle School when they did Breakfast in the Classroom during their free reading time, and I'll tell you, as far as marvelous things to see is to see kids sitting around reading Old Yeller and eating breakfast was just a wonderful, wonderful thing. It's how it should be. We hope to encourage Fresno Unified to take on Universal school breakfast.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST WEEK: March 3-7

Ask your neighborhood school if they serve Breakfast!

Feed Hungry Minds