



May 29, 2010 – Grand Rapids, MI

School Lunch

Our local newspaper, the Grand Rapids Press, decided it was time to go to lunch with grade school students last week. The week-long emphasis was supposed to be on foods from Michigan. The writers were just going to chow down with the kids at area schools, snap pictures of the Michigan foods such as cherry burgers, and then post them on-line. They created a little more interest by the photo of the lunch in a Grand Rapids city school. Why? It was Texas toast with cheese, chocolate milk, an apple, and three baby carrots with a string bean. One string bean? You bet. The suburban schools were much better, and some had salad and fruit bars. But one string bean? As you might expect, this didn't sit well with anybody—parents or school administrators. It didn't sit too well with this pair of City of Grand Rapids taxpayers, either.

The saddest part of the story is that many of the kids getting the least nutrition in their school lunches are the inner-city kids from low-income families; research has shown repeatedly that they're the kids least likely to get nutritious meals at home. How can they build healthy bodies, do well in school, and create good lives for themselves when their bodies are starved for the right nutrients?

In previous messages, I talked about Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution. He started by focusing on school lunches on the theory that if you can reach the children, you have a chance at stopping the obesity epidemic from continuing into the next generation. Now I can see why more than ever before. But here's the thing: what's going on in your school lunch program? Maybe it's time you went to school and had lunch with your children. Enjoy this holiday weekend with your family. Then continue it on Tuesday by going to lunch with your children.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

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