



UNITED STATES  
*Potato*  
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UNITED FRESH START FOUNDATION

### PRESS RELEASE

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## **Potato Industry Teams with United Fresh Start Foundation To Move Salads Bars to Schools**

### **Potato Board challenge results in large influx of salad bar donations, benefitting thousands of students and school meal programs**

**Denver, Washington D.C. (March 3, 2016)**—Inspired by the United Fresh Start Foundation’s efforts to get the produce industry involved in the *Let’s Move Salad Bars to Schools* initiative, the CEO of the United States Potato Board, Blair Richardson, challenged the potato industry to donate salad bars to 300 schools each year, as part of the program. The Board leadership approved using assessment funds to match every salad bar donated by the potato industry starting in July 2015. Through February 2016, the potato industry has donated 84 salad bars which have been matched by the Board. Together with additional bars donated by the Board, a total of 180 salad bars have been placed in schools. The potato industry has now donated more salad bars to the program than any other sector of the produce industry.

According to Richardson, “Salad bars donated by the potato industry have been placed in school districts in sixteen different states. The Board is excited about the involvement of the potato industry in this program as state commissions, individual farms, and industry members have stepped up and become contributors.”

To facilitate the program, the Board is working closely with the United Fresh Start Foundation, which is coordinating outreach to schools, tracking donations and ordering salad bars, and facilitating connections between school foodservice leaders and potato industry donors.

“We are very appreciative of the potato industry for their significant contributions to support salad bars for schools,” said Tom Stenzel, President and CEO, United Fresh. “Working together, we can ensure children have access to a wide variety of vegetables in school meals. Salad bars are an excellent way to give kids choices and highlight new and innovative options that speak to a generation of students who want more fresh and healthy options.

“Today’s students recognize good food quality when they see it and crave food that is on-trend and customizable,” said Richardson. “They want choice—whether at home, dining out or at school. Potatoes are the perfect healthy canvas for everything from global flavor inspired salads and sides to simple herb-oven-roasted spuds, providing the choice today’s students demand.”

To capture the palates of today’s students, the Board has also partnered with Chef Garrett Berdan, a registered dietician and child nutrition specialist, to develop over a dozen new school-friendly, potato-centric recipes. The recipes range from Potato Wedge Nachos to Smokey Chipotle Potato Salad to Thai Potato Veggie Curry, for variety that appeals to students, meets the USDA guidelines and fits within the diverse school foodservice operations. The tasty recipes have been featured in leading school foodservice and nutrition publications, School Nutrition Association conferences and at several industry events through the Board’s *Potatoes Raise the Bar* program.

The *Potatoes Raise the Bar* program works to increase overall vegetable consumption in schools by integrating potatoes into salads and other vegetable items being served at schools. Students consistently choose items with potatoes and are more willing to try something new if their favorite vegetable is included. By raising the bar on all vegetable consumption with school kids, the Board hopes to help establish healthy eating habits that will last a life time.

The United States Potato Board and the United Fresh Start Foundation look forward to continuing the salad bar collaboration and other opportunities to increase children’s access to fresh fruits and vegetables in school meals.

**About the United States Potato Board**

The United States Potato Board (USPB) is the nation's potato marketing and research organization. Based in Denver, Colorado, the USPB represents more than 2,500 potato growers and handlers across the country. The USPB was established in 1971 by a group of potato growers to promote the benefits of eating potatoes. Today, as the largest vegetable commodity board, the USPB is proud to be recognized as an innovator in the produce industry. For more information on the USPB's mission to "Strengthen Demand for U.S. Potatoes" by creating positive change in the industry through innovative and inspiring approaches, please visit [www.uspotatoes.com](http://www.uspotatoes.com). In an effort to enhance diversity of the Board, USDA encourages women, younger growers, minorities, and people with disabilities to seek positions on the board.

**About the United Fresh Start Foundation**

The United Fresh Start Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization focused exclusively on increasing children's access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Affiliated with the United Fresh Produce Association, the Foundation is committed to helping today's children achieve the public health goal to make half their plate fruits and vegetables in order to live longer and healthier lives. We work to create an environment in which kids have easy access to high-quality, great-tasting and affordable fresh fruits and vegetables, whenever and wherever they are choosing snacks or a meal, ensuring kids everywhere are *Growing Up Fresh*.

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