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NEWS RELEASE

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PHOTOS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

Public-Private Partnership Helps Launch Salad Bars in Fort Worth Schools

Mayors Join with Produce Industry Partners to Increase Children's Access to Fresh Produce

Fort Worth, TX - On Wednesday March 22, Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price and City of Benbrook Mayor Dr. Jerry Dittrich, joined representatives from the Fort Worth Independent School District, local produce industry, and community partners to announce the "Grand Opening" of a new salad bar at Westpark Elementary School.

Dr. Dittrich joined students for a salad bar ribbon-cutting ceremony in the morning, and Mayor Price engaged with students in the cafeteria as they used their new salad bar during lunch. Both salad bar dedications highlighted the role public-private partnerships can play in helping to create healthy school food environments in Fort Worth, and in schools across the country.

The salad bar at Westpark Elementary is the first to be implemented by Fort Worth ISD, and is one of five new salad bars that will be installed in Fort Worth-area schools by the end of the year. Westpark Elementary was selected as the recipient of the district's first salad bar in response to a petition developed by students who serve on the school's Blue Zone Project committee, a group which works to identify ways to help students make healthier choices during the school day.

"This is a smart first step toward incorporating healthy, fresh foods into the lunches our children are eating at school," said Mayor Dittrich. "The salad bar is a tangible example of this school's commitment to student wellness. Thank you to all community partners that made this donation possible, and also to our local students who wanted these healthy choices."

"Healthy kids learn better. And we know that if you reduce obesity, you reduce the chance of diabetes, and you reduce the chance of absenteeism (at school), said Mayor Price. "The kids here are going to be better students because they're being healthy."

The salad bar donations to the Fort Worth Independent School District were organized to support Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price's "Spooky Bike Ride & Ball", a community bike ride that occurred last October, and which was developed in conjunction with the Mayor's FitWorth initiative to spotlight the benefits of healthy lifestyle choices in the days surrounding Halloween.

The district's five salad bars were made possible by Snappy Salads, DMA Solutions, and the California Giant Foundation, all contributed as part of the United Fresh Start Foundation's partnership in the national "Salad Bars to Schools" initiative.

"Last fall, Tour de Fresh, partnered with FitWorth in a local cycling event with the same mission as our annual summer Tour de Fresh cycling fundraiser to support the national 'Salad Bars to Schools' initiative," said Cindy Jewell, vice president of marketing for California Giant Berry Farms and the California Giant Foundation. "When we heard about Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price's Halloween biking event and her FitWorth initiative, we decided to encourage our supporters to participate in the Mayor's event along with a local restaurant chain that wanted to make a difference in their community. We all worked together on this project to provide Fort Worth-area children with healthier choices at school, so the collaboration was perfect and today we saw the positive results when presenting the salad bar."

The Fort Worth Independent School District serves over 60,000 meals daily, including breakfast, lunch, and snacks, from 133 school sites throughout the city.

"The salad bars align well with our child nutrition department's mission to provide outstanding menu choices, and to promote nutrition education among our students," said Ashley Phillips, Assistant Director of Child Nutrition Services. "We are committed to helping children make healthy choices every day and a salad bar that offers a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables will certainly help us do that."

Current USDA nutrition standards for school lunch require serving a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables each week, and salad bars provide an easy way for schools to serve these options. Research and experience in schools across the country demonstrates that children significantly increase their fruit and vegetable consumption when given a variety of choices in a school salad bar, and recent Pew data, highlights salad bars as the most effective strategy for increasing children's produce consumption at school. When offered multiple fruit and vegetable choices, children respond by incorporating greater variety and increasing their overall consumption. Schools nationwide also report that salad bars help increase participation in their lunch program, decrease overall waste, and encourage students to, "take what they want, and eat what they take."

The salad bar donations in Fort Worth support the national "Salad Bars to Schools" initiative, which since 2010 has helped facilitate salad bar donations to 5,000 schools across the U.S., benefitting 3 million kids. The initiative has also been a catalyst for encouraging additional schools to implement salad bars.

According to Andrew Marshall, Director of Foundation Programs & Partnerships for the United Fresh Start Foundation, "It's great to see salad bars expanding to more of our country's largest school districts. Prominently displaying a salad bar in a school lunch line encourages students to select more fresh produce. We're hoping today's announcement will spark a conversation amongst leaders in Fort Worth, encouraging more schools to adopt salad bars and to offer more healthy, fresh produce options each day."

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About FitWorth Healthy City Initiative

FitWorth is a family-focused initiative of Mayor Betsy Price and the Fort Worth City Council launched in September 2012 to address the growing trend of childhood obesity in the city. In 2014, FitWorth became an independent program of Foundation for Wellness, Texas, tasked with promoting health and active lifestyles through an individualized and sustainable approach to community wellness. In 2016, FitWorth affected more than 40,000 children in the Fort Worth, and since its inception has been a part of the collaborative effort that has contributed to a 6 percent decrease in the number of FWISD students who are overweight or obese. More information at: <http://fitworth.org/>

About Fort Worth Independent School District

With over 86,000 students in 83 elementary schools, 29 middle schools and 6th grade centers, 18 high schools and 16 other campuses, Fort Worth ISD enjoys a diverse student population and strong community partnerships. Under the leadership of the superintendent and the Board of Education, the District is undergoing a series of initiatives that will redesign, transform, and revitalize Fort Worth ISD Schools. The Fort Worth ISD mission is, "Preparing all students for success in college, career and community leadership. More information at: <http://www.fwisd.org/>

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 kids achieve the public health goal to make half their plate fruits and vegetables to live longer and healthier lives. The Foundation works 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. The Foundation is also a founding partner of the national "Salad Bars to Schools" initiative, which was established to support former First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! initiative. More information at: www.unitedfreshstart.org.