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ST. CHRISTOPHER'S FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN LAUNCHES 'DINE IN, HELP OUT' TO INCREASE ACCESS TO FRESH, HEALTHY, AFFORDABLE FOOD IN NORTH PHILLY

Celebrity Chef, Media Leaders and More Will 'Dine In, Help Out' This May

PHILADELPHIA (April 15, 2011) – Jose Garces. Dennis Bianchi. Greg Osberg. Steve Madva. This May, they'll join hundreds of Philadelphians in a grassroots movement to forgo one night of dining out, 'Dine In' with friends and family, and 'Help Out' by donating dollars saved to help families access fresh, healthy, affordable food in North Philadelphia – one of the nation's hungriest and poorest neighborhoods.

"We can spend \$50, \$75 or \$100 on a single dinner out, without blinking. Meanwhile, many families in North Philadelphia don't even dream of going out to eat at a restaurant; they have to stretch that kind of food budget over weeks. And too often, healthy foods don't make it onto the table – or even into the neighborhood – due to high costs and access barriers in a pervasive food swamp," said Jan Shaeffer, executive director of St. Christopher's Foundation for Children, a nonprofit organization that works to support the health and well-being of children in North Philadelphia.

"To reconcile that disparity, the Foundation came up with the idea for 'Dine In, Help Out' – a one-month movement that will materialize as hundreds of 'Dine Ins' across the region, helping thousands of North Philadelphia children and their families who are, quite literally, starving for nutrition," said Shaeffer.

'Dine In' hosts sign up online at www.DineInHelpOut.org, and contribute to the cause by inviting friends and family to their homes and providing a communal meal. In turn, 'Dine In' guests are encouraged to donate dollars they would have spent at restaurants to St. Christopher's Foundation for Children, in support of the Farm to Families fresh food share program in North Philadelphia.

Mobilizing the Movement

To frame the North Philadelphia food problem and put a public face on the 'Dine In, Help Out' movement, St. Christopher's Foundation for Children has recruited lead Ambassadors across various corporate sectors: Iron Chef Jose Garces, of the Garces Restaurant Group empire; media leader Dennis Bianchi, president and general manager of NBC 10; and Montgomery McCracken managing partner Steve Madva, Esq.

These Ambassadors, along with Greg Osberg, CEO and publisher of Philadelphia Media Network Inc., which owns *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Philadelphia Daily News* and *Philly.com*, rallied support for the movement at a private kick-off event at J.G. Domestic last week.

"I couldn't think of a better cause right now. This is happening right here in our backyard," Garces said to a group of 50. "So for one night in May, don't come to Garces Restaurants – instead, dine in with friends and family and support the work of the Foundation."

Hosting a 'Dine In'

The 'Dine In, Help Out' movement aims to bring fresh food awareness and fundraising efforts to a grassroots level. Anyone and everyone can get involved: community and corporate leaders, philanthropists, politicians and elected officials, members of the media, parents and their children, and more. In this way, fundraising can take root organically in neighborhoods throughout the city, on the Main Line and in the suburbs – in any format, anytime throughout the month of May. To sign up as a host, or to make a secure online donation, go to www.DineInHelpOut.org.

To facilitate 'Dine Ins,' St. Christopher's Foundation has put together a full set of online planning resources, from introductory video footage and information to share with guests, to healthy shopping tips and ideas for themed 'Dine In' invitations – everything from a *Home Sweet Home-Cooked Meal* to *Garces Gourmet*, with a special menu and recipes provided by Iron Chef Jose Garces. These resources, plus more information on the movement, also live at www.DineInHelpOut.org.

How It 'Helps Out'

North Philadelphia is one of the hungriest neighborhoods in America. It's also among the 10 poorest places in the country and poorer than any other in Pennsylvania. At the same time, 70 percent of children there are obese, in part because of their lack of access to healthy food options.

To help thousands of North Philadelphia children and their families improve their nutrition, eating choices, and access to good health, proceeds from 'Dine In, Help Out' will support Farm to Families, a St. Christopher's Foundation for Children fresh food share program. With the support of six of the nation's largest health funders and a broad network of local community-service providers, Farm to Families facilitates the purchase and delivery of farm-fresh food to North Philadelphia neighborhoods, while addressing the financial challenges of sustainable healthy eating.

"The Philadelphia Inquirer series 'A Portrait of Hunger' painted the devastating realities of hunger and poverty in North Philadelphia, and was a true awakening and call to action for the city," said Shaeffer. *"We know from experience that addressing the food problem there isn't solely a matter of quelling hunger – it's about introducing access to nutritious options that are self-sustaining for families, in place of the highly processed, highly caloric, 'fast' food that abounds. With Farm to Families, we're creating availability of fresh fruits and vegetables, eggs and poultry in North Philadelphia; ensuring the consistency of local food deliveries, year-round; and managing the affordability of those high-quality, healthy foods for the families we serve, with reasonable pricing and flexible payment options,"* said Shaeffer.

Pilot programs are running at Temple Presbyterian Church (7th and Thompson streets) and Girard College as part of the school's 'Fit Campus' program, with a view to expand to six or seven total sites in the coming year. And St. Christopher's Foundation is currently working with St. Christopher's Hospital for Children CEO Carolyn Jackson and Dr. Hans Kersten at The Grow Clinic, to bring the Farm to Families healthy food option to those 300 families with young children diagnosed with 'failure to thrive' (not gaining an appropriate amount of weight for their age and height) and another 30,000 children who utilize the hospital's Center for Child and Adolescent Health.

Funds raised from 'Dine In, Help Out' will expand Farm to Families programming and advocacy efforts to create long-term change in North Philadelphia. For more information about 'Dine In, Help Out' and Farm to Families, go to www.DineInHelpOut.org.

About St. Christopher's Foundation for Children

St. Christopher's Foundation for Children (SCFC) is a grantmaking public charity that provides responsive and proactive funding to children's health programs in North Philadelphia. Over the last decade, St. Christopher's Foundation for Children has made hundreds of grants and committed millions of dollars to

support diverse children's health efforts in North Philadelphia. And, through support from generous donors, SCFC has helped to fund and manage myriad charitable projects at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children, including the Community Oral Health Initiative and Ronald McDonald Care Mobile. For more information, visit <http://www.scfchildren.org/>.

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