

****INTERVIEW ALERT****

RENEGADE LUNCH LADY ISSUES CALL TO ACTION WITH *LUNCH LESSONS*

Lunch Lessons: Changing the Way We Feed Our Children Hits Book Stores Sept. 5

Who: Chef Ann Cooper, director of Nutrition Services for the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD)

What: Chef Ann is at the fore front of the movement to transform the National School Lunch Program into one that places greater emphasis on the health of students than the financial health of a select few agribusiness corporations. Chef Ann's lunch menus emphasize regional, organic, fresh foods, and nutritional education, helping students to build a connection between their personal health and where their food comes from. Chef Ann's newest book, *Lunch Lessons: Changing the Way We Feed Our Children* hit bookstores on September 5 and is bursting with strategies for parents and school administrators to become engaged with issues around school food—from public policy to corporate interest. It includes successful case studies of school food reform, resources that can help make a difference and healthy, kid-friendly recipes that can be made at home, or by the thousands for a public school cafeteria.

As childhood obesity in the United States has exploded from 5 percent to 17 percent between 1980 and 2004, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Child Nutrition Program has failed to properly address this growing epidemic. With more than 28 million students participating in the National School Lunch Program and no organized national leadership in the battle against childhood obesity, Chef Ann is demanding that the issue become a part of the 2008 presidential race. And she is calling for all parents, teacher, school food service directors, family farmers — anyone with a vested interest in the future of our children — to join her in changing the way we feed our children, one school lunch at a time.

Why: Chef Ann has proven her approach to incorporate regional, organic and fresh foods into public school menus can work and that simple changes within budget can be made. Accompanied with wellness education, her model of school food delivery can transform children's health and their approach to eating. She has taken this program from its pilot form at the Ross School, a private school in East Hampton, NY, to public school systems in Harlem and in Berkeley, CA — illustrating that change can happen anywhere with the support of the community, the schools, local government and most importantly, the parents and the kids.

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****Media Note:** To request an interview please contact Brandi Dobbins at (202) 331-4323 or at bdobbins@vancomm.com.

Chef Ann is the director of Nutrition Services for the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD), improving meals at 16 public schools with a population of over 9,000 students. In addition to her work with BUSD and the Chez Panisse Foundation in Berkeley, CA, Chef Ann collaborated with the Center for Ecoliteracy and Slow Food USA to develop a Model Wellness Policy Guide that provides language and instructions for drafting school wellness policies that place health at the center of the academic curriculum. Her newest book, Lunch Lessons: Changing the Way We Feed Our Children (Harper Collins, Sept. 2006) draws attention to and provides solutions for addressing the dire predicament facing American lunch rooms.

For more information on Chef Ann or to request a copy of Lunch Lessons: Changing the Way We Feed Our Children, visit www.lunchlessons.org.