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**Whole Foods Market® Launches Salad Bar Project to Improve School Lunch Programs Nationwide in Partnership with Chef Ann Cooper's [thelunchbox.org](http://thelunchbox.org)**  
*In-Store and Online Donation Drive Helps Shoppers Fund Salad Bar Kits in Schools Across the Country*

**AUSTIN, Texas (Aug. 12, 2010)** — Whole Foods Market (NASDAQ: WFMI), the leading natural and organic foods supermarket, its shoppers and Chef Ann Cooper, the nation's "Renegade Lunch Lady," have joined forces for a second year to help bring fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and healthy proteins to school lunch programs and raise awareness around healthier school food through a project that will fund salad bars for public schools across the country.

"With childhood obesity levels at an all-time high, everyone has a stake in this fight and must take action to help change the way our children eat both at home and school," said Walter Robb, co-chief executive officer for Whole Foods Market. "We see partnering with our shoppers to raise funds for salad bars in local schools as an immediate way for us to come together and make an impact on our children's health in the communities we serve. Our goal is to provide a salad bar in a local school in each of the communities we serve with our 300 stores."

From now until Sept. 29, shoppers may donate to the project at the check-out or make a donation online through [saladbarproject.org](http://saladbarproject.org). Each salad bar kit costs approximately \$2,500 dollars, and includes a Cambro® portable 5-well salad bar unit with all the necessary insert pans, cutting boards, knives and shipping costs. Salad bar training tools and videos for school nutrition staff will also be available through [TheLunchBox.org](http://TheLunchBox.org), which Whole Foods Market shoppers helped to raise funds to build last year so all schools can have access to tools for healthier food.

The salad bars will be donated to local schools through a simple online grant process. Whole Foods Market is partnering with Cooper's nonprofit, F3: [Food Family Farming Foundation](http://FoodFamilyFarmingFoundation.org), which will administer the process. Any public elementary, middle or high school within 50 miles of a Whole Foods Market is eligible to apply with the support of the school principal, nutrition service director and the superintendent of the district. The online application and full criteria is available at [saladbarproject.org](http://saladbarproject.org).

The application asks for basic school information such as the percentage of students enrolled in the Federal Free and Reduced Meal Program and participation in the school's Reimbursable School Lunch Program. Grant applications will be accepted between Sept. 1 and Nov. 1. Applicants chosen based on the grant criteria and the level of the school's commitment to sustaining the salad bar will be announced in early January 2011.

"The time is ripe for 31 million children. They deserve a solution and this Salad Bar Project is just that. I know we can make thousands of salad bars a reality for schools everywhere. Since adding a healthy salad bar to

school lunch options is the number one thing parents and advocates can do to help improve school food, this is a win-win for schools and their students,” said Chef Ann Cooper.

Last year, Whole Foods Market and shoppers donated more than \$700,000 to fund “[The Lunchbox Project](#),” an online resource created by Chef Ann Cooper’s [F3 Foundation](#), which helps public schools provide more nutritious lunches for kids. The funds were used to develop [thelunchbox.org](http://thelunchbox.org) Web site, which was launched for the 2010 school year. The online tool offers free, comprehensive resources to help schools replace highly processed foods with fresh, natural, made-from-scratch foods in a realistic, cost-effective manner.

“Making small changes, like replacing French fries with fresh fruits, steamed or raw vegetables and whole grains can make a big difference,” said Robb. “A fresh, healthy salad bar with an array of colorful choices empowers children to make smart food choices.”

More than 31 million children eat a federally funded school lunch daily through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). On average, only 90 cents per lunch is spent on food and many children are eating mostly frozen, highly processed, packaged foods. With no national standardized limit on sugar or other ingredients like artificial colors, flavors or preservatives, it is common to find hamburgers, chicken nuggets, French fries, chocolate milk and corn dogs offered as a typical school lunch.

Last week, the U.S. Senate passed its version of the Child Nutrition Act that would make changes to the types of foods that can be sold in schools. The House of Representatives now needs to pass its version of the bill in time for President Obama to sign the legislation before Sept. 30, when the current Act expires. Failing to do so puts the new funding and other policy changes in jeopardy.

Robb and Cooper will head to Washington, D.C., again this year to urge Congress to pass a strong child nutrition bill and ask policy makers to continue expanding options for healthier eating in schools.

For more information about [The Salad Bar Project](#) as well as solutions for affordable, healthy lunches and recipe ideas visit Whole Foods Market’s Web site at: <http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/backtoschool/>.

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#### **About Whole Foods Market®**

Founded in 1980 in Austin, Texas, Whole Foods Market ([wholefoodsmarket.com](http://wholefoodsmarket.com), NASDAQ: WFMI), is the leading natural and organic food retailer. As America’s first national certified organic grocer, Whole Foods Market was named “America’s Healthiest Grocery Store” by Health magazine. The company’s motto, “Whole Foods, Whole People, Whole Planet”™ captures its mission to ensure customer satisfaction and health, Team Member excellence and happiness, enhanced shareholder value, community support and environmental improvement. Thanks to the company’s more than 55,000 Team Members, Whole Foods Market has been ranked as one of the “100 Best Companies to Work For” in America by FORTUNE magazine for 13 consecutive years. In fiscal year 2009, the company had sales of \$8 billion and currently has more than 280 stores in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

#### **About Chef Ann Cooper, the Leader of the School Lunch Revolution**

Chef Ann Cooper, aka, “The Renegade Lunch Lady” and author of *Lunch Lessons: Changing the Way We Feed Our Children*, is on a mission to ensure that every child in America receives healthy, delicious food every day in school. Her work over the past decade has already transformed the school lunchroom experience for tens of thousands of children. She will share her methodology and tools through The Lunch Box, which has the power to help all schools to make simple, yet revolutionary changes to their lunch programs. Chef Ann Cooper is currently serving as the Interim Nutrition Director for the Boulder Valley School District and is the former Director of Nutrition Services for the Berkeley Unified School district. She is the author of four books and is a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park with more than 30 years working in the culinary world. For more information visit: <http://www.chefann.com/html/about-chef-ann/bio-photos.html>