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Denver Public Schools Receives \$750,000 Grant from Life Time Foundation to Eliminate Highly Processed Ingredients from School Meals

Foundation support helps to increase meals cooked from scratch for nearly 90,000 students

DENVER, March 1, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- Denver Public Schools will receive a \$750,000 grant from the Life Time Foundation to provide healthier meals cooked from scratch in schools. Meals funded by the grant will be free of undesirable ingredients, also called "[The Harmful 7](#)," which are often found in highly processed foods.



Although Colorado carries the reputation of being one of the nation's leanest states, childhood obesity is significantly impacting Denver's children. Approximately one in six children in Denver are obese before reaching adulthood. Black and Latino children also experience obesity at higher rates than White children. Serving the majority of Denver's children (about 90,000 students), Denver Public Schools is poised to make a meaningful contribution to address Denver's childhood obesity epidemic. Establishing healthy behaviors early in life is easier and more effective than trying to change unhealthy behaviors during adulthood. Schools play a critical role in promoting the health and safety of students and helping them establish lifelong healthy behaviors.

As a result, the Food and Nutrition Services at Denver Public Schools has been working on a series of initiatives to improve the quality and content of food served to students. Through this grant, and in partnership with other funders, all 700 foodservice team members will receive chef-led training, and all kitchens will be fully operational to support cooking from scratch.

This three-year grant is funded by the [Life Time Foundation](#), which partners with school districts across the country to remove The Harmful 7 from their food. More than 50% of meals served at Denver Public Schools are already made from scratch and this partnership will aim to further accelerate fresh cooking techniques with resources for staff training and

new equipment at many of its schools. The ultimate goal of this partnership is to eliminate unhealthy ingredients in all school lunch menus:

- Trans fats and hydrogenated oils
- High-fructose corn syrup
- Hormones and antibiotics
- Processed and artificial sweeteners
- Artificial colors and flavors
- Artificial preservatives
- Bleached flour

Denver Public Schools currently serves 31,000 breakfast meals and 45,000 lunch meals daily, using 23,000 pounds of fresh produce by local farms. Since not all meals can be completely cooked from scratch, a key aspect of the partnership includes close collaboration with Life Time Foundation's Registered Dietitian, Megan Flynn, to identify products containing highly-processed ingredients.


"I am beyond excited for these resources and this partnership with Life Time to offer healthy, nutritious meals to our students," said Theresa Hafner, Executive Director of Food Services for DPS. "Our team has worked hard over the years to provide better quality meals in our schools, and this grant will help us make great strides in those efforts."

"We are thrilled for the opportunity to work with Denver Public Schools and help with this very important initiative to help every child succeed. What we love about this project is that it's focused on accelerating scratch cooking efforts, which is the best way to control ingredients" Kimo Seymour, Executive Director of Life Time Foundation, says. "Fueling students' minds and bodies with wholesome food is a wonderful way to help them embrace healthy habits at a young age and for a lifetime."

The Life Time Foundation is a public charity started by [Life Time](#), the nation's premier healthy lifestyle brand with more than 150+ athletic clubs across North America, including six Colorado locations. As of January 2021, the Life Time Foundation partners with 27 school districts, which impacts 3,554 schools and 256 million meals served to 1.7 million students each year.

About Life Time Foundation®

As a public charity created by Life Time, the Life Time Foundation is committed to helping children grow up strong, smart and loved. We believe that for children to reach their full potential, they must have access to nourishing meals. We partner with schools to eliminate foods containing highly processed and artificial foods in favor of wholesome, real food alternatives. Unlike many other charitable organizations in which a portion of donations is consumed by administrative costs, 100% of every dollar donated to the Life Time Foundation directly supports its mission because all administrative costs are contributed by Life Time, Inc. For more information, visit www.ltfoundation.org.

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