



present

LUNCH LINE

A film by Ernie Park and Michael Graziano

63 min TRT

PRESS NOTES

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SYNOPSIS

The documentary *Lunch Line* takes a new look at the school lunch program by exploring its past, current challenges and opportunities for the future. The National School Lunch Program began in 1946, and now more than 60 years later, the program feeds more than 31 million children every day. In the film, leaders from all sides of the school food debate including government officials, school foodservice experts, activists and students, weigh in on the program and discuss ways to continue nourishing America's children for another 60 years.

Lunch Line follows six kids from one of the toughest neighborhoods in Chicago as they set out to fix school lunch—and end up at the White House. Their unlikely journey parallels the dramatic transformation of school lunch from a patchwork of local anti-hunger efforts to a robust national feeding program. The film tracks the behind-the-scenes details of school lunch and childhood hunger from key moments in the 1940s, 1960s and 1980s to the present, revealing political twists, surprising alliances and more common ground than people might realize.

Lunch Line illustrates that while the National School Lunch Program has become an easy target for critics, the program has a unique capacity for addressing child welfare, the public good and the problem of hunger. Revealing the history and complexity of these issues, *Lunch Line* shows how those on all sides of the lunch line can work together for a common good: the health of America's kids.

ABOUT THE FILM

Every day, millions of school children across the United States grab a lunch tray and get in line. Few, if any, know the history behind the line or that they have the power to change what gets placed on the tray. The new documentary *Lunch Line* hopes to empower Americans to be part of solutions that can help build a better lunch for future students.

Lunch Line reveals the National School Lunch Program's surprising history and the unexpected ways it has grown and changed over the years by pulling back the curtain to reveal, through school lunch, how large-scale social change can work.

Lunch Line follows the personal story of six high school students from Chicago who enter a cooking contest to create a healthier school lunch and end up serving their winning meal to congressional leaders and touring the White House with mansion executive chefs. The tale of the students from Tilden Career Community Academy High School is interspersed with archival footage and interviews with current leaders from both ends of the lunch line, including government officials, school foodservice experts and activists.

The Tilden students were challenged to create a meal that exceeds United States Department of Agriculture standards and use only \$1 per meal for ingredients. One dollar is the average amount spent on food per child for the National School Lunch Program, according to Rochelle Davis, executive director of the Healthy Schools Campaign, the non-profit organization that holds the "Cooking Up Change" contest that the Tilden students won. "These students were faced with the challenges faced by foodservice directors across the country," said Davis. "Yet, they also seized the opportunity to learn about school food systems and the need for change."

SCREENING AND PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

A selection of the national screenings & events listed below:

Nov 16	Lexington VA	The Stackhouse Theater
Nov 11	Raleigh, NC	Meredith College
Nov 4	Denver, CO	SOAR Charter School
Nov 3	Kutztown, PA	Kutztown University
Oct 28	Houston, TX	The Health Museum
Oct 13	Atlanta, GE	Midtown Art Cinema
Oct 12	Auburn, AL	Auburn University
Oct 11	Birmingham, AL	University of Alabama
Oct 9	Waco, TX	Baylor University
Oct 7	La Grande, OR	Eastern Oregon University
Oct 6	New York, NY	Sunshine Theater
Oct 1	Chattanooga, TN	Crabtree Farms
Sept 26	Sacramento, CA	The Guild Theater
Sept 25	Louisville, KY	Healthy Foods Local Farms Conference
Sept 21	Washington, DC	Landmark E Street Cinema
Sept 16	New Orleans, LO	The Eiffel Society
Sept 11	Los Angeles, CA	Downtown LA Film Festival
Aug 28	Birmingham, AL	The Alabama Poverty Project
June 16	Austin, TX	Alamo Drafthouse Cinema
May 18	Detroit, MI	Ren Cen Theatre

A selection of a few national press breaks below:

Jamie Oliver's Website

www.jamieoliver.com

The Chicago Tribune

www.chicagotribune.com

Fox's Good Day New York

[Good Day New York](http://www.fox.com/gooddaynewyork)

The Atlantic Monthly

www.theatlantic.com

See a filmmaker interview with Bob Schieffer and CBS News in DC here:

<http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=6894383n>

Listen to a recent Chicago Public Radio interview about the film here:

<http://www.wbez.org/Content.aspx?audioID=43178>

FILM SUBJECTS

Footage of educators, policy makers and young people at the center of our film is complemented by a rich spectrum of individuals who are important to school lunch policy and administration, but who are rarely included in popular discourse on the subject. For example:

George McGovern—Former senator and presidential nominee, McGovern was essential to the formation of the Food Stamp Program and WIC, was very involved early school lunch legislation, and since retirement has done much to combat hunger worldwide.

John Block—Secretary of Agriculture under Ronald Reagan. Currently works as an agricultural lobbyist and serves on the Boards of The Farm Foundation, Hormel Foods Corporation, and Digital Angel Corp.

Dan Glickman—Secretary of Agriculture under Bill Clinton and former congressman. Glickman is currently Executive Director of Refugees International.

Saxby Chambliss—Republican Senator from Georgia. In addition to being the ranking Republican on the Senate Agriculture committee, Chambliss has a personal connection to these issues as his mother, wife, and daughter have each had long careers as teachers.

Janey Thornton, PhD—Current Deputy Under Secretary of the US Department of Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition Service (the office that runs federal school lunch). Thornton is past president of the School Nutrition Association, and has more than 20 years experience in school food administration.

Margo Wootan, D.Sc.—Director of nutrition policy at the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI)

Anne Cooper—Well-known chef and school lunch reformer. Cooper was hired by Alice Waters' Chez Pannisse Foundation to revamp school food in Berkeley, CA, and is now embarked on similar efforts in Boulder, CO.

Susan Levine, PhD—Professor of History at University of IL, Chicago. Author of *School Lunch Politics: The Surprising History of America's Favorite Welfare Program*

Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach, PhD—Professor of Public Policy and Economics at The University of Chicago. Her research focuses on education policy, child health, and food consumption.

Debra Eschmeyer—Food and Society Policy Fellow and the Outreach Director of the National Farm to School Network and the Center for Food & Justice.

Janet Poppendieck, PhD—Professor of Sociology at Hunter College, lifelong hunger activist and former Kellogg Foundation National Fellow, Poppendieck's most recent book is titled *Free for All: Fixing School Food in America*.

Maureen George—Child nutrition advocate and project manager, Organic School Project

Jane Black—Food writer for *The Washington Post*

(Interviewed, but not appearing)

Nick Kotz—Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and author of several books including *Let Them Eat Promises: The Politics Of Hunger*.

David Martin—Antibiotic free (ABF) & organic turkey farmer in rural PA

Joel Berg—Executive Director of the New York City Coalition Against Hunger, former executive at the US Department of Agriculture (1993-2001), and author of *All You Can Eat: How Hungry Is America*

Steve McDonnell—Successful entrepreneur, McDonnell is CEO and co-founder of Applegate Farms

Bill Ayres—Lifelong anti-hunger activist and advocate for the poor, Ayres is Executive Director and co-founder of NY-based anti-hunger organization, WHY (World Hunger Year).

Peter Edelman—lawyer, policy maker, and law professor at Georgetown University Law Center specializing in the fields of poverty, welfare, juvenile justice, and constitutional law.

Kristin Groos Richmond—An experienced social enterprise entrepreneur, Richmond is CEO and co-founder of Revolution Foods

Kirsten Saenz Tobey—Former teacher and advocate for corporate responsibility, Tobey is COO and co-founder of Revolution Foods

FAST FACTS

Rates of Childhood Obesity

In 2004, then-U.S. Surgeon General Richard Carmona testified that, “Because of the increasing rates of obesity, unhealthy eating habits and physical inactivity, we may see the first generation that will be less healthy and have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.” Six years later, this health crisis still exists. In January 2010, first lady Michelle Obama stated, “In fact, the health consequences are so severe that medical experts have warned that our children could be on track to live shorter lives than their parents.” Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and U.S. Surgeon General Regina Benjamin then joined her as they announced a plan to combat childhood obesity in conjunction with the release of *The Surgeon General’s Vision for a Healthy and Fit Nation*.

Healthy habits can last a lifetime so it’s essential to start building a nutritious diet, including more natural and organic meat products, at a young age. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- Approximately 80% of children who were overweight at ages 10-15 years old were obese adults at age 25.
- Trends in obesity prevalence among children and adolescents over the past nearly four decades have steadily risen.
 - Between 1971 and 2008, the prevalence of overweight increased from 5 to 10.4 percent in preschool children (2–5 years)
 - School-aged children’s (6–11 years) prevalence of overweight increased from 4 to 19.6 percent
 - Similarly, prevalence of overweight among adolescents and teens (12–19 years) shot up from 6.1 percent in the early 1970’s to 18.1 percent in the most recent survey period
 - While there was only a small increase in the prevalence of high BMI for age among children and adolescents aged 6-19 years from 2003-2006 to 2007-2008, almost 32 percent of US children and adolescents aged 2-19 are overweight or obese

Hunger in America

According to the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reported that in 2008:

- Of the 49.1 million people living in food insecure households (up from 36.2 million in 2007), 32.4 million are adults (14.4 percent of all adults) and 16.7 million are children (22.5 percent of all children).
- 17.3 million people lived in households that were considered to have "very low food security," a USDA term that means one or more people

in the household were hungry over the course of the year because of the inability to afford enough food. This was up from 11.9 million in 2007 and 8.5 million in 2000.

- Very low food security had been getting worse even before the recession. The number of people in this category in 2008 is more than double the number in 2000.
- African-American (25.7 percent) and Hispanic (26.9 percent) households experienced food insecurity at far higher rates than the national average.

Food Deserts

Food deserts are nutritional wastelands that exist in both urban and rural communities where adults and children do not have access to supermarkets.

- Approximately 23.5 million Americans, including 6.5 million children, live in food deserts, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).
- The Institute of Medicine (IOM) reported that adults and children living in these areas have high rates of diet-related diseases, such as obesity and diabetes, because residents must rely on small neighborhood stores that offer few, if any, healthy food options.

Through *Let's Move* and the Interagency Task Force on Childhood Obesity, the current administration is working to eliminate food deserts within seven years.

- The Healthy Food Financing Initiative, an interagency partnership, will invest \$400 million a year to bring grocery stores to food deserts and help existing convenience stores carry healthier food options.
- First lady Michelle Obama recently stated “tackling the issue of accessibility and affordability is key to achieving the overall goal of solving childhood obesity.” She recently launched the *Let's Move* campaign, which is now leading this movement.

A variety of organizations, such as the Food Trust and GrowingGreat, have been tackling food deserts for years by promoting nutrition education and community and school gardens. They have also developed partnerships between grocers, school and communities to solve the problem of accessibility.

National School Lunch Program (based on information from the Food and Nutrition Services department of the USDA)

The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program operating in more than 101,000 public and non-profit private schools and residential child care institutions. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to more than 30 million children each school day. In 1998, Congress expanded the National School Lunch Program to include reimbursement for

snacks served to children in afterschool educational and enrichment programs to include children through 18 years of age.

- The Food and Nutrition Service administers the program at the Federal level. At the State level, the National School Lunch Program is usually administered by state education agencies, which operate the program through agreements with school food authorities.

Generally, public or nonprofit private schools of high school grade or under and public or nonprofit private residential childcare institutions may participate in the school lunch program. School districts and independent schools that choose to take part in the lunch program receive cash subsidies and donated commodities from the USDA for each meal they serve. In return, they must serve lunches that meet Federal requirements, and they must offer free or reduced price lunches to eligible children. School food authorities can also be reimbursed for snacks served to children through age 18 in afterschool educational or enrichment programs.

School lunches must meet the applicable recommendations of the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans. School lunches must meet Federal nutrition requirements, but local school food authorities make decisions about what specific foods to serve and how they are prepared.

Farm to School Program

Farm to School (www.farmtoschool.org) connects schools (K-12) and local farms with to serve healthy meals in school cafeterias, improve student nutrition, provide agriculture, health and nutrition education opportunities, and support local and regional farmers.

The growing Farm to School movement is supported by eight regional lead agencies that comprise the National Farm to School Network, which offers training and technical assistance, information services, networking, and support in policy and media and marketing activities.

- 41 states with operational programs
- 2,111 Farm to School programs in the U.S.
- 8,944 schools involved
- 2,105 school districts involved

RESOURCES

Applying the School Health Index to a Nationally Representative Sample of Schools

The School Health Index (SHI) is a self-assessment that helps individual schools identify the strengths and weaknesses of their health policies and programs.

<http://www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/news/downloads/BrenerSHI.pdf>

Eat to a New Beat

As part of its sponsorship of *Lunch Line*, Applegate Farms created an online resource to help kids get involved in their own “lunch lines.” The site uses art, music and dance to empower kids to eat better, learn about real food and understand how they can create change in their own schools.

<http://www.eattoanewbeat.com>

Farm to School Program

Farm to School supports family farms and improves student health by bringing nutritious food from local farms to schools. The program teaches students about the path from farm to fork, and provides a new direct market for farmers. It also alleviates environmental impacts of transporting food long distances.

<http://www.farmtoschool.org/>

FoodRoutes Network

The FoodRoutes Network (FRN) is a national nonprofit that provides communications tools, technical support, networking and information resources to organizations that are working to rebuild local, community-based food systems. FRN is dedicated to reintroducing Americans to their food and understanding the farm to fork path. <http://www.foodroutes.org/>

The Food Trust

The Food Trust works with communities, schools, grocers, farmers and policymakers to ensure healthy food is available to everyone. They developed a comprehensive approach that combines nutrition education and greater availability of affordable, healthy food to address these issues.

<http://www.thefoodtrust.org/index.php>

The Future of Children

Childhood Obesity, *The Future of Children*, vol. 16, no. 1, Spring 2006

Researchers are tracing today's obesity epidemic back to the changes in the ways Americans work, live and eat over the past 30 years. This volume reviews evidence on how each of these changes may have caused obesity to increase and examines how best to address each of the possible causes.

http://www.futureofchildren.org/futureofchildren/publications/docs/16_01_ExecSummary.pdf

GrowingGreat

GrowingGreat is dedicated to inspiring children and adults to adopt healthy eating habits through classroom nutrition lessons, school gardens and community events. They currently serve over 8,000 students in Los Angeles County, operating in 20 schools in 6 school districts.

<http://www.growinggreat.org/>

Healthy Schools Campaign

Healthy Schools Campaign, an independent not-for-profit organization, advocates for policies and practices that allow all students, teachers and staff to learn and work in a healthy school environment. It addresses issues of environmental health and wellness in schools by teaching stakeholders to become leaders in an effort to create change at the school, district, state and national levels.

<http://www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/getinvolved/action/>

Healthy School, Healthy You

Workplace and Environmental Health and Safety Conferences for School Personnel, Managers, Youth and Parents

http://www.uic.edu/sph/glakes/ce/seminars/healthy_schools/

Hunger in America: More Data on Hunger, According to FRAC

The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) is working to improve public policies and public-private partnerships to eliminate hunger and undernutrition in the United States. FRAC utilizes the nation's resources to address these issues, while also partnering with national, state and local nonprofit organizations, public agencies, and corporations. <http://frac.org/data/>

Let's Move!

The *Let's Move* campaign addresses the childhood obesity epidemic by focusing on providing healthier foods in schools, increasing physical activity and making foods more affordable and accessible to everyone in the country.

www.letsmove.gov

The Lunch Box

The Lunch Box is a project of the F3: Food Family Farming Foundation and provides "Healthy Tools to Help All Schools." The Lunch Box is a web-based portal that helps transition any processed food based K-12 school meal program to a whole foods environment. www.thelunchbox.org

Making It Happen: School Nutrition Success Stories

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion provides a free publication illustrating a wide variety of approaches that schools have taken to improve student nutrition. <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/nutrition/Making-It-Happen/index.htm>

National School Lunch Program

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools, as well as childcare institutions. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/>

Purple Asparagus

Purple Asparagus is dedicated to bringing families back to the table by promoting healthy eating. They believe sharing food strengthens family and community ties and supports local farmers, as well as builds traditions for future generations. www.purpleasparagus.com

Real Food Challenge

The Real Food Challenge aims to increase the procurement of real food on college and university campuses, with the national goal of 20% real food by 2020. It leverages college and universities' purchasing power in an effort to transform the larger food system. <http://realfoodchallenge.org/>

School Food FOCUS

School Food FOCUS enables participating school districts to purchase and serve foods that are healthier, more sustainably produced and more locally sourced. School Food FOCUS is led by Liquori and Associates, and is being implemented in collaboration with the C. S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at Michigan State University. <http://www.liquoriandassociates.com/focus.html>

Team Nutrition and the HealthierUS School Challenge

Team Nutrition is an initiative of the USDA to support child nutrition programs through foodservice training, nutrition education, and school and community support for healthy eating and physical activity. The HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) was established to recognize schools create healthier environments through promotion of good nutrition and exercise. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/>

WereFedup.com

WereFedUp.com is a "by youth for youth" network identifying ways to fight obesity. It focuses on healthier and more affordable food options, safe places to exercise outdoors and local policy changes. <http://www.werefedup.com/>

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

About Uji Films

Ernie Park and Michael Graziano formed Uji Films in 2007. Their films have aired nationally and internationally in more than 100 countries, are distributed in the educational market, and have screened at a variety of well-known film venues and festivals in the US and abroad. In addition to making films, Park and Graziano have also taught and written on an array of subjects within film and media studies, each having achieved doctoral candidacy in the field – Park at New York University and Graziano at Northwestern University.