



NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION

to get **REAL FOOD** in schools · Labor Day, Sept. 7, 2009

A SLOW FOOD USA CAMPAIGN

COMMUNICATIONS

Keeping the local media informed of your Eat-In will be important to our campaign. The National Office will also be keeping the national media abreast of what Slow Food USA is doing surrounding the overall campaign. We'll need to work together to be successful in our communications efforts.

Quick steps:

1. **Prepare a media alert** with details about your Eat-In.
2. **Call your local media** to follow-up and secure a placement.
3. **Send a letter to the editor** to your local newspaper.
4. **Invite the local media to attend** and cover your Eat-In.
5. Send media alerts, letters to the editor and any coverage you receive to the National Office.

What the National Office will provide:

- **Our news release:** Since this is a national campaign, the National Office will be taking the lead in developing a news release to announce our campaign (on June 23) and another news release announcing our Day of Action (just prior to Labor Day) describing the Eat-Ins across the country.
- **About:** an organizational backgrounder on Slow Food USA
- **FAQ:** a frequently asked questions (FAQ) document that you can use
- **Artwork:** To help promote your *Time for Lunch* Eat-In, the National Office will also create artwork for posters, buttons and banners that can be printed locally.
- **All of these are available on our web site** at <http://slowfoodusa.org/timeforlunch>.



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PREPARE A MEDIA ALERT

A media alert is easy to write. Focus on the 5 Ws: Who, What, Where, When, Why. To make it effective, use each of the Ws as a key component and write a few brief sentences to describe each. It should fit on one page. If not, it's too long. Here are some examples:

Who: Slow Food USA's [Insert Chapter Name or City/Town's Name] *Time for Lunch* Eat-In.

Join [insert list of dignitaries to your event] in sending a message to Congress that we can build a strong foundation for our children's health by serving real food at school.

What: Slow Food USA's [Insert Chapter Name or City/Town] is planning a public potluck to draw attention to the need for Congress to pass a better Child Nutrition Act that brings real food to schools. Our Eat-In is part of a National Day of Action when thousands of people across the country will share a meal to demonstrate our commitment to getting real food in school lunches.

Where: [Insert location and directions.]

When: [Insert date and times.]

Why: In a time of escalating obesity and diabetes epidemics, our schools are serving children precisely the fast food and junk food that endangers their health. This year, Congress can give schools the resources to serve real food by:

1. Increasing school lunch reimbursements by \$1/child/day in this year's Child Nutrition Act. Providing real food at school is a down payment on health care reform.
2. Protect against food that threatens children's health.
3. Teach children healthy habits that will last through life.

[Insert additional details surrounding the unique Eat-In you've planned.]

Note: Include the National Office's news release with your media alert as background.



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WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Guidelines for letters-to-the-editor vary, so do your homework. Go to the web site of your local newspaper to find out the exact word count and any guidelines they provide. However, below are some of the basics to remember:

Step 1 Focus on your personal experience or passion for getting real food in school lunch programs

Step 2 Think of new ways to discuss the topic and present unique solutions to the challenge.

Step 3 Write clearly and concisely, following the limitations usually given on the editorial page or letters-to-the-editor page.

Step 4 Include your major points within the first few paragraphs. Use statistics and facts to support your argument.

Step 5 Type your letter and double space between lines.

Step 6 Use your spell check and then proofread. Use correct grammar and punctuation.

Step 7 Sign your name and include your phone number and email, as newspapers/magazines will verify you are whom you say.

Step 8 Mail, fax or e-mail your letter to the address listed for the publication.

Step 9 Call the editor to verify receipt and ask when they will be able to run your letter.

Remember: The National Office will be sending letters to the editor for all national and major metropolitan newspapers and magazines (e.g., USA Today, The New York Times, The Washington Post, etc.) Focus your efforts on your local newspapers and magazines, so we can secure the most coverage possible. Send us a copy of your letter to the editor and the names of the newspapers or magazines where you sent it by emailing us at timeforlunch@slowfoodusa.org.