



30 MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOLS RECEIVE INAUGURAL \$500 HEALTHY START AWARDS FOR PROVIDING UNIVERSAL FREE, BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM

Eos Foundation Commits to Increase School Breakfast Participation and Leverage Millions in USDA Reimbursements for Massachusetts Schools

Boston, Mass., May 20, 2014 – Today the Eos Foundation announced its 10-year commitment to support universal free, breakfast in the classroom in low income schools across Massachusetts as it acknowledges thirty schools with its first annual Healthy Start Awards.

There are nearly 600 schools in the Commonwealth which serve 60% or higher free- and reduced-price student populations in grades PK-12. On average, school lunch participation at these schools nears 80% whereas school breakfast participation averages just over 40% due in large part to the fact that it is served before the bell in the cafeteria. By increasing school breakfast participation to 80% these schools stand to leverage additional Federal USDA funds that make the program self-sustaining. Statewide schools are leaving more than \$25,000,000 in Federal reimbursements on the table due to low school breakfast participation.

“Universal free, breakfast in the classroom is a straightforward solution to combat childhood hunger in Massachusetts, with well-documented academic, behavioral, and financial benefits,” said Andrea Silbert, president of the Eos Foundation. “Breakfast in the classroom programs have been linked to improved student focus on morning lessons, performance on standardized tests, improved school attendance, fewer hunger-related visits to the school nurse, as well as long-term health benefits. When you add these benefits to over \$25,000,000 in unclaimed Federal funds due to low participation – breakfast in the classroom is a win-win for Massachusetts schools.”

The Eos Foundation’s Healthy Start Awards recognizes schools in Massachusetts that are known to reach 80% school breakfast participation rates. The dedicated efforts of these schools’ administrators, teachers, custodians, food service staff, school secretaries and nurses ensure hungry children in Massachusetts start their school day with a nutritious breakfast, ready to learn.

This year’s Healthy Start Leadership Award and accompanying \$10,000 grant recognized Donna Lombardi, RD, the Director of Nutrition for Worcester Public Schools for her tireless efforts to feed hungry children breakfast and to model expansion and sustainability of universal free, breakfast in the classroom programming; 18 Worcester Public Schools were recognized for reaching 80%+ breakfast participation –more than any other district in the Commonwealth. Additional Healthy Start Awards and a \$500 grant celebrated a total of 30 Massachusetts schools for their efforts to reach and maintain 80% or higher average daily participation (ADP) in their school breakfast program during the 2013-2014 school year.

Schools recognized include:

Brookfield Elementary School – Brockton, MA
Barrett Russell Kindergarten Center – Brockton, MA
Lawlor School Early Childhood Center – Lawrence, MA
Bentley Elementary School – Salem, MA
Carlton Innovation School – Salem, MA
Elias Brookings Elementary School – Springfield, MA
Lincoln Elementary School – Springfield, MA
Mary Walsh Elementary School – Springfield, MA
Milton Bradley Elementary School – Springfield, MA
Springfield Public Middle Day School – Springfield, MA
Safe Early College at Holyoke Community College – Springfield, MA
Galligan Elementary School – Taunton, MA
Belmont Street Community School – Worcester, MA
Canterbury Street School – Worcester, MA
Chandler Elementary School – Worcester, MA
Chandler Magnet School – Worcester, MA
City View Elementary School – Worcester, MA
Clark Street Developmental Learning School – Worcester, MA
Elm Park Community School – Worcester, MA
Francis McGrath Elementary School – Worcester, MA
Gates Lane Elementary School – Worcester, MA
Goddard School of Science and Technology – Worcester, MA
Grafton Street School – Worcester, MA
Lincoln Street School – Worcester, MA
Quinsigamond Elementary School – Worcester, MA
Rice Square Elementary School – Worcester, MA
Union Hill School – Worcester, MA
Vernon Hill School – Worcester, MA
Wawecus Road School – Worcester, MA
Woodland Academy – Worcester, MA

Schools in our country are on the front lines of fighting childhood hunger. Teachers and school nurses see the yawns and glazed eyes, and hear about the belly pains and headaches that result from an empty stomach. They witness the morning disturbances in class from children who cannot focus, and they stock their drawers with snacks that help students make it through to lunch, often allowing students to come back at the end of the day to take food home for themselves or their siblings.

“Hungry children can’t learn – they’re focused on their grumbling stomachs not the lessons of the day,” said Valerie Brower, principal of the Brookfield Elementary School in Brockton, MA. “Breakfast in the classroom has transformed our school community. Students start the day eating breakfast in a quiet classroom setting versus the chaos of the cafeteria, they work on lessons

while they eat, and after they are able to concentrate on their schoolwork. It's been a true school community effort to implement the program, and we do it because it's what's best for our students."

Through the Healthy Start Awards program, the Foundation aims to celebrate the great work that is being done across our state to implement universal free, breakfast in the classroom initiatives while calling attention to the need and benefits for expanding this important program across the Commonwealth.

About the Eos Foundation

The Eos Foundation is a private philanthropic foundation committed to breaking the cycle of poverty by investing in children's futures. Specifically, the Foundation supports nonprofit organizations, public policies, and systemic solutions aimed at nourishing children's bodies, nurturing their minds, and building family economic security. For more information about the Eos Foundation please visit **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid..**