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Polls Open; Students “Vote for School Lunch” to Celebrate 60th Anniversary of National School Lunch Program

*Rocco Taco, Heddi Spaghetti and Pete Pizza Among Candidates Vying
to be Named “Favorite” for National School Lunch Week: Oct. 9-13*

August 2006, Alexandria, VA – The School Nutrition Association (SNA), the non-profit association dedicated to feeding children safe and nutritious meals, invites students across the country to ‘Vote for School Lunch’ throughout August and September 2006. To raise awareness of their nutritional value, *Pete Pizza, Sally Salad, Ricky Chicken, Heddi Spaghetti* and *Rocco Taco* are campaigning on their platform of flavor, dietary values and versatility to be elected and announced “favorite school lunch” during National School Lunch Week, October 9-13, 2006.

With children’s nutrition a prominent US health concern, the ‘Vote’ campaign will help educate parents and students on the nutritional programs available in schools and reveal the many ways school lunches have evolved since meals of past generations. Students can learn more about the candidates and cast their vote at www.VoteForSchoolLunch.org until October 6th, 2006.

In addition to getting students more involved in school, the campaign will provide parents and students with background and facts on what school meals consist of today, 60 years after the establishment of the National School Lunch Program. SNA’s nationwide membership of 55,000 work in schools and in communities to provide nutritious school meals and relay information on appropriate nutrition balance, proper portion sizes and nutrition education programs for children.

“Schools are really excited to host ‘Vote for School Lunch’ events; students can get involved and make their opinions count while learning lessons about the election process,” said Janey Thornton, SFNS, President of SNA. “It’s important to relay to students and parents that favorite foods can be made nutritiously at home as well as in school. Our members ensure that healthy meals are accessible to all students everyday through the National School Lunch Program.”

Within the federally funded National School Lunch Program:

- Nationwide, 95% of schools participate (approximately 100,000 public and non-profit private schools and residential child care institutions)
- 29 million children are served daily
- Dietary guidelines dictate no more than 30 percent of calories can come from fat and less than 10 percent from saturated fat
- Over the course of one week, lunches must provide 1/3 of the Recommended Dietary Allowances of protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, calcium and calories
- Well-balanced school lunches include protein, fruits and vegetables, grains and low-fat milk and are served in age-appropriate portion sizes.

Established under the National School Lunch Act signed into law 60 years ago by President Harry Truman, the National School Lunch Program provides nutritionally balanced low-cost and free meals to students. In recent years, school nutrition programs have introduced healthy cooking techniques and added more fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains to offer healthy school meals that children enjoy.

The ‘Vote’ campaign will be supported by incentive giveaways such as signs, buttons, stickers, mugs, t-shirts and hats during National School Lunch Week. Additional complementary programs can include:

- Election day: set up voting booths and establish a voting day
- In-cafeteria debates: members of the student government represent each candidate
- Supplemental elections: campaign for school favorite vegetables and fruits
- Essay contests: invent a Cafeteria Bill of Rights or amend the Constitution
- Recipe write-ins: solicit entries for creative and healthy versions of each candidate
- Media campaigns: Get school paper/broadcast journalism department to “follow the campaign trail”

National School Lunch Week was established in 1963 by a proclamation from President John F. Kennedy. It is designed to help raise awareness for the important role that school nutrition programs play in the lives of America’s children. Each year, the School Nutrition Association helps schools celebrate NSLW with an official theme, suggested menus and recipes, promotional resources, activity sheets, decoration ideas and more.

About School Nutrition Association:

The School Nutrition Association (SNA), www.schoolnutrition.org, is a national, non-profit professional organization representing more than 55,000 members who provide high-quality, low-cost meals to students across the country. The Association and its members are dedicated to feeding children safe and nutritious meals. Founded in 1946, SNA is the only association devoted exclusively to protecting and enhancing children’s health and well being through school meals and sound nutrition education.

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