



children's home + aid



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**The Sara Lee Foundation Supports Children's Home + Aid's Efforts to Help Children and Families in Humboldt Park Community Learn Healthy Habits for Themselves and the Planet**

The Sara Lee Foundation is the Corporate Partner of the Lowell Lions After School Nutrition and Wellness Program, part of Children's Home + Aid's Community Schools Initiative. The Community Schools Initiative, a part of Children's Home + Aid's Clinical and Community Services, works to alleviate the barriers to learning created by poverty and violence for students attending Chicago Public Schools. Through a competitive process, Children's Home + Aid was chosen by Chicago Public Schools to serve as lead non-profit partner in seven struggling schools that lack the financial resources and professionally trained staff necessary to adequately address the complexity of issues faced by their students. The students come from low-income families in communities that are plagued by violence and poverty, creating a great need for supportive services to help encourage students' academic achievement and healthy development.

Since 2002, Children's Home + Aid has provided academic support, enrichment, counseling services and parent and community programs at its partner schools during the after-school hours. Students and families receive a variety of health services through the Community Schools Initiative, such as health workshops and community health fairs, nutrition education, dental care, and asthma and lead poisoning screening, as well as clinical counseling services, including group and individual therapy. More information about the Community Schools Initiative is available at:

[www.childrenshomeandaid.org/page.aspx?pid=318](http://www.childrenshomeandaid.org/page.aspx?pid=318)

The purpose of the Lowell Lions After School Nutrition and Wellness Program is to transform students at Lowell Elementary School in Humboldt Park, the neighborhood with the highest rate of childhood obesity in Chicago (60% of children age 6-11 are obese), into more mindful eaters with healthier lifestyles. Children's Home + Aid's needs assessment of Lowell showed it was in need of services to combat obesity. At Lowell, 98% of students come from low income families and the large immigrant population is linguistically isolated, limiting their access to community resources. Humboldt Park is a "food desert" with limited availability of fruits and vegetables. Despite the need for physical activity, limited funding and the need to focus on core subjects result in Lowell only being able to provide 40 minutes of P.E. once per week and extracurricular sports limited to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

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Through an integrated wellness services model, students at the Lowell Lions After School Nutrition and Wellness Program are taught the value of a healthy, sustainable lifestyle, providing them with the foundation for developing healthy habits. Students are also be provided with tools to allow them to make more positive choices for themselves and the environment, and to become stewards of healthy lifestyles in their community. The Program will serve approximately 150 students and their families this year. Services include nutrition education classes taught by volunteer graduate interns from Dominican University's Dietetic program, parent health/wellness workshops, gardening activities and physical activity opportunities (such as dance and Hip Hop Yoga classes).

#### **About Children's Home + Aid**

Children's Home + Aid is a leading child and family service agency in Illinois. Each year, it protects, educates and counsels more than 40,000 children, youth and families to improve their lives. Since 1883, Children's Home + Aid has been a compassionate advocate helping to shape public policy in child welfare, early childhood and juvenile justice. Children's Home + Aid is recognized for establishing best practices and achieving outstanding results through its programs and services that focus on child abuse prevention, healthy child development and strengthening families. For more information about Children's Home + Aid, visit [www.childrenshomeandaid.org](http://www.childrenshomeandaid.org)

#### **About the Sara Lee Foundation:**

**The Sara Lee Foundation** is the philanthropic arm of Sara Lee Corporation. The Sara Lee Foundation was founded in 1981 to formalize Sara Lee's dedication to community service. Since then, the Foundation has grown, touching millions of lives, helping those in need, and fostering diverse artistic expression. For more information about the Sara Lee Foundation, visit [www.saraleefoundation.org](http://www.saraleefoundation.org)