



Edible Schoolyard NOLA

A signature program of FirstLine Schools, Inc.

For Immediate Release

Contact: April Neujean, ESY NOLA
(504) 228-4192, april@esynola.org

Edible Schoolyard NOLA Chef Teacher helps design Michelle Obama's "Chefs Move to Schools" Initiative

New Orleans (May 21, 2010) – Chef April Neujean of Edible Schoolyard NOLA (ESY NOLA) is part of a select group of chefs from around the country invited to the White House earlier this year by Sam Kass, Assistant White House Chef and food initiative coordinator and Janet McLaughlin, Director of Operation Frontline for Share Our Strength. They were joined by members of the USDA to discuss how to engage chefs in the work to end childhood obesity and improve overall health and nutrition in schools. As communities and organizations get behind the First Lady's "Let's Move!" campaign to solve the childhood obesity epidemic within a generation, one group that could have a tremendous impact on the health and well being of children is the nation's chefs. Mrs. Obama is calling on chefs to get involved by adopting a school and working with teachers, parents, school nutritionists and administrators to help educate kids about food and nutrition. By creating healthy dishes that taste good, chefs have a unique ability to deliver these messages in a fun and appealing way to children. These conversations led to the development of The "Chefs Move to Schools" program, run through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This program will pair chefs with interested schools in their communities so together they can teach young people about nutrition and making balanced and healthy choices. More than 31 million children participate in the National School Lunch Program, with more than 11 million also participating in the National School Breakfast Program.

This initiative is nothing new to Edible Schoolyard NOLA. Housed within FirstLine Schools, ESY NOLA aims to change the way kids eat, learn, and live by integrating organic gardening and seasonal cooking into the curriculum, culture and cafeteria programs of its schools. The mission of FirstLine Schools is to create and inspire great public schools in New Orleans. At Green Charter, ESY NOLA serves 460 students in grades K-8 with the vast majority of kids participating in the federal free and reduced lunch program. That lunch program incorporates fresh, seasonal produce along with whole grains, a daily salad bar, and menus that reflect the local food culture at no additional cost to families. In addition to regular classes, an Edible Education includes a variety of special events aimed at promoting seasonality and nutrition in a fun and engaging way. April Neujean is a full-time Chef Teacher who leads the kitchen programming at ESY NOLA. Chef April discovered and fell in love with New Orleans and ESY NOLA on a volunteer community service trip to the city through Culinary Corps, a chef service organization. Since that time she has worked to create opportunities to harness the incredible culinary talent of chefs and spark their spirit of service through a guest chef cooking series, Iron Chef-style competition, and other educational events. Chefs interested in signing up to be partnered with a local school can do so by going to www.letsmove.gov and clicking on the "Chefs Move to Schools" button. Likewise, schools looking for chef volunteers to add more nutrition education can sign up at the same address.

For more information on Edible Schoolyard NOLA, visit www.esynola.org.

For more information on FirstLine Schools, visit www.firstlineschools.org.