Dear Teacher,

Did you know that 70 percent of boys and 90 percent of girls ages 9-18 are not meeting their daily calcium recommendation?[[1]](#footnote-1) A recent study found that 1000 milligrams a day of calcium, as recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and USDA, can significantly improve bone health in children and be the best defense against osteoporosis later in life.[[2]](#footnote-2) An 8-ounce glass of milk has 300 mg of calcium. Only 30 percent of children consume the recommended three dairy servings daily. With Halloween skeletons decorating schools and stores, there is no better time to remind kids to get their 3-Every-Day of Dairy™ to help build strong, healthy bones.

The [Name of Town] Child Nutrition Program will be doing its part with our *Build a Healthy Skeleton* promotion. Based on current usage and dietary needs of the students, we have set a goal for October of [enter number] milks. We will be tracking the number of milks used throughout the month. As we make progress towards our goal, we will add bones to build a skeleton on the wall. We hope to reach our goal and *Build a Healthy Skeleton* by the end of the month. Once we reach our goal, all students will win a special prize to commemorate the occasion.

You can support our efforts by discussing the role of calcium and dairy in building healthy bones during the Halloween season. I’ve included some web links to free nutrition education resources below that will be helpful in your classroom.

Fuel Up to Play 60’s educator site has nutrition education lessons and activities in the Tools and Resources section at <http://school.fueluptoplay60.com/tools/nutrition-education/school-nutrition.php>

The School Nutrition Association’s Bridges to Wellness program provides information and materials for 5th to 10th grades. Program information can be found at [www.schoolnutrition.org](http://www.schoolnutrition.org)> Resource Center> Teaching Kids About Nutrition> Bridges to Wellness.

If you have any questions or would like more information about our *Build a Healthy Skeleton* event, please contact me in the [Name of Town] Child Nutrition Office.

Sincerely,
[Name]
[Title]
[Phone Number]

**Build a Healthy Skeleton!**

1. USDA’s 1994-96 continuing survey of food intakes by individuals and 1994-96 diet and knowledge survey. Riverdale, MD: US Department of Agriculture; 1999. Available at: [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov) Search under “Food Surveys.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Huncharek M, Muscat J and Kupelnick B. *Impact of dairy products and dietary calcium on bone-mineral content in children: results of a meta-analysis.* *Bone* 2008; 43(2):219-410 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)