Dear Teacher,

**What's On My Tray?**

March is National Nutrition Month. Your school cafeteria would like to offer you a unique opportunity to work together. We are excited to launch the *What’s on My Tray Challenge* this month, focusing on USDA’s MyPlate and nutrient-rich foods. We will be offering a wide variety of foods from the MyPlate food groups and encouraging students to try them all. This Challenge provides an excellent opportunity to discuss MyPlate and nutrient-rich foods and build the classroom-cafeteria connection. I’ve included some background information and additional resources for you to use in your classroom.

MyPlate is the interactive food guidance system developed by the USDA that encourages Americans to make healthier food choices. It encourages the incorporation of a variety of foods into the diet each day. More information and resources can be found at [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/). Additional handouts and posters featuring MyPlate can be ordered or downloaded at [www.beefnutrition.org](http://www.beefnutrition.org) in the Materials section.

It’s no secret that obesity in America has reached epidemic proportions. As a nation, we are overfed and undernourished and are consuming too many foods that are high in calories and low in nutrients. Teaching students to make wiser food choices within each food group is vital to their health as well as their ability to learn. Choosing foods that are nutrient-rich will provide the most vitamins, minerals and other nutrients for the fewest calories. These include:

 -Brightly colored fruits and vegetables

 -Fiber-rich whole grain foods

 -Low-fat and fat-free milk, cheese and yogurt

 -Lean meat, skinless poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts

More information and teaching resources for nutrient-rich foods can be found at [www.nutrientrichfoods.org](http://www.nutrientrichfoods.org). Additional nutrition education programs and materials can be ordered or downloaded for free by visiting [www.NewEnglandDairyCouncil.org](http://www.NewEnglandDairyCouncil.org) and [www.FuelUpToPlay60.com](http://www.FuelUpToPlay60.com).

If you have any questions or would like more information about our *What’s on My Tray Challenge*, please contact me in the [Name of Town] Child Nutrition Office.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

[Phone Number]