



# Five Companies Working to Create Healthy Futures for Kids

From supporting military families to fighting childhood hunger, these companies are making children's health everyone's business.

Contact us to learn more about partnering to create healthy futures for kids.

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**ACTION** FOR HEALTHY KIDS 

Children of today are tomorrow's workers, consumers, leaders and catalysts of change. Companies that invest in them know their health and well-being will dictate the future of our economy. Furthermore, consumers respond positively when businesses invest in social causes and prioritize the health and well-being of the children in their communities. In fact, a Unilever study showed a third of consumers are now buying from brands based on their social and environmental impact.<sup>1</sup>

From a bottom-line perspective, the data is clear: adult health problems that stem from poor health and lifestyle habits formed in childhood have numerous economic impacts:

- In 2016 alone, the **total cost** of chronic diseases due to obesity and overweight was \$1.72 trillion, between direct health care costs and lost economic productivity. This near-two trillion-dollar price tag is equivalent to 9.3% of the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>2</sup>
- Employers lose **28.2 million workdays** annually due to limitations from chronic illnesses<sup>3</sup>. This adds up to as much as **\$530 billion lost each year** due to employee absenteeism and poor health.<sup>4</sup>
- Estimates of the business costs of mental health and substance abuse range from **\$80 to \$100 billion annually**.<sup>5</sup>
- Renowned economist and Nobel Memorial Prize Laureate Professor **James Heckman's groundbreaking work** has demonstrated that investing in early childhood education and development, especially for children from disadvantaged environments, reduces deficits and strengthens the economy.<sup>6</sup> In fact, research shows high-quality programs for disadvantaged children between birth to five years can deliver a 13% per year return on investment through better outcomes in education, health, social behaviors, and employment.<sup>7</sup>

Business leaders and changemakers who support children's health—and make business decisions that impact children's health—know it is not only an economically smart decision, it's the right thing to do. See how five companies that partner with Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK) are making children's health and well-being their business.

## CSX

Driven by a desire to support the health and wellness of their employees and children living in the communities in which they operate, CSX began partnering with AFHK in 2013. As part of its “How Tomorrow Moves” campaign, CSX’s support enabled AFHK to launch our first ever Game On grants, based on our framework for building healthy schools with a focus on improving physical activity and nutrition. We started with 200 schools in 10 states in the 2013–2014 school year and grew our grant awards each year to reach 300 schools in 23 states, impacting more than 800,000 children in 1,250 school communities. In the 2018–2019 school year, we saw a 21% increase in schools implementing physical activity brain breaks in class and an average of 11 new minutes of new physical activity added to the school day among all AFHK Game On grantees. The investment in physical health translates into long-term societal benefits: Research shows a return of \$32 for every \$1 invested in school-based physical activity and physical education programs in the form of reduced healthcare costs and increased labor participation.<sup>8</sup>

CSX employees have embraced opportunities to get involved in this work by volunteering at service day events with our partner schools in their communities. Each year we have selected a number of stand-out schools with the greatest need for improvements to their built environments. Over five years we have held 24 service day events that brought together nearly 2,000 CSX employees with AFHK staff and school community and parent volunteers to refurbish play spaces, paint buildings, beautify cafeterias, plant school gardens and even an orchard, and much more. With CSX’s in-kind volunteer support, the value of these projects to AFHK and the schools was more than double CSX’s investment. Projects that schools could only dream of doing in a year’s time were brought to fruition in just one Saturday.

Additionally, CSX has supported our Urban School Wellness Coalition, the nation’s most important school health leader community of practice, helping AFHK grow this group of the largest urban school districts in the country from 10 districts in 2016 to 33 in 2019. CSX’s support has enabled the coalition to grow and facilitate best practice sharing and communication among these leaders that has led to the [strengthening of district health and wellness policies](#) to address the unique needs of urban students.

As a company with a fifth of its workforce made up of veterans, active duty military and first responders, CSX has expanded on its commitment to support health and well-being through its Pride in Service initiative. Through this initiative CSX is partnering with leading organizations that support military families to help them through issues related to transient living, finances, housing, physical and mental health and support for the children who are dealing with the deployment, injury or loss of a loved one.

According to a national survey by Action for Healthy Kids\*, nearly 100% of parents and caregivers would be more loyal to companies that support causes related to childhood health. More than three in five (63%) Hispanic parents agreed strongly with the statement, “I would be more loyal to companies that supported causes related to children’s health,” compared to non-Hispanic (52%) parents.

\*The AFHK Checkup: Whole Child Health Survey surveyed 1,000 nationally representative U.S. parents and caregivers of children in pre-school through 8th grade. The study was conducted by Wakefield Research January 2–10, 2020 via email invitation and an online survey.

## ALDI

ALDI’s long-standing support of Action for Healthy Kids aligns with its company focus on supporting the health and well-being of families and children. What started as three school grants in Chicago in 2011 has grown to a partnership that has reached 250,000 kids in more than 220 school communities nationwide.

Research shows that when parents and caregivers are involved in their children’s health and education, children have greater self-esteem, do better academically, and are more likely to engage in healthy behaviors and less likely to engage in risky behaviors.<sup>9</sup> As the lead sponsor of our Parents for Healthy Kids initiative, ALDI has helped AFHK expand this initiative nationwide to engages thousands of parents in improving health at school and at home through school grants, online content and a grassroots parent ambassador program. Additionally, more than 500 ALDI employees have volunteered at school-based events during [Every Kid Healthy Week](#), offering their expertise and extra hands for everything from family fitness nights and smoothie stations to health fairs and fun runs. Through this partnership, ALDI has helped us grow our network of parents to 25,000 and counting. Additionally, ALDI provides its own grants to other local organizations through its Smart Kids program in support of education, physical activity, nutrition, socializing and the arts.

Known for offering an affordable grocery shopping experience, ALDI has also been recognized as [one of the healthiest grocery stores in the U.S.](#)<sup>10</sup> The chain lives up to its commitment to support the health and wellness of consumers and their families through a focus on offering more organic foods, healthier food options, removing MSG, trans fats and synthetic colors from its private label products, and highlighting nutrition information on the front of their packaging. They have also been recognized in the industry for their efforts around health and sustainability.

With its eye on 2,500 stores in the U.S. by 2022, ALDI is demonstrating the power of supporting health and offering customers and employees a connection to a cause right in their communities.

## Kellogg Company and Kellogg Company Fund

Nearly one in seven kids across the country go without breakfast every day. Just under half of students participating in the National School Lunch Program also participated in school breakfast programming in the 2017–2018 school year (nearly 30 million lunch participants compared to 14.6 million breakfast participants, according to FRAC<sup>11</sup>), indicating that millions of low-income children are still not receiving a nutritious breakfast available to them at school. The importance of breakfast for growing children cannot be understated: Research shows its positive effect on behavior, academic performance, overall diet, and participation in physical activity.<sup>12</sup>

In many communities, the first step is to simply ensure that a school breakfast program exists, is economically viable, and is being used by students with the greatest need. Kellogg's has been a dedicated AFHK partner since 2009, helping us to provide funding for equipment and technical support to schools in order to increase participation in the National School Breakfast Program—and thereby reduce childhood hunger and support learning by ensuring more kids have access to a healthy school breakfast to start the day.

For more than a decade, the Kellogg Company and Kellogg Company Fund have helped AFHK impact more than 1.3 million students in over 1,900 school communities through school breakfast grants. In particular, Kellogg's support has enabled AFHK to help these schools overcome the many barriers to student participation in school breakfast—including location in the school building, stigma associated with free meals, cost and time—through alternative school breakfast programs, such as breakfast in the classroom, grab-and-go breakfast kiosks, and second chance breakfast. This critical work is an important part of Kellogg's® Better Days initiative (formerly Breakfast for Better Days), with a goal of feeding 375 million people in need through food donations and expanded child feeding programs in partnership with organizations like AFHK. This program also includes supporting farmers and their families and communities with climate-smart agriculture, committing employee volunteer time, and engaging millions of consumers in their efforts to address food security issues.

With a focus on nutrition education and supporting both the the physical and emotional well-being of students, we've built upon our work with Kellogg's in recent years to provide additional Game On nutrition and physical activity focused grants to schools.

**As a leading global plant-based food company, achieving food security is at the heart of Kellogg Company's commitment to society. In particular, we're working to help children around the world reach their full potential through support of feeding and nutrition education programs. No child should lack critical resources needed to support their well-being—and no child should go hungry. We're proud to partner with Action for Healthy Kids to ensure children across the U.S. are healthy, active and ready to learn.**

*Stephanie Slingerland, Director, Philanthropy and Social Impact, Kellogg Company*

## Materne GoGo squeeZ

For a brand known as an on-the-go snack for busy families, one might be surprised to hear GoGo squeeZ ask parents and kids to do something completely the opposite—to slow down. But after improving physical activity and nutrition for more than 63,000 students in 140 school communities with AFHK since 2016, GoGo squeeZ asked us how we could partner with them on a new initiative to promote the importance of unstructured time for kids. The goal: to help families and schools free up space and time for kids to nourish their imaginations, bodies and relationships through what the company calls BE Time. It was clear there was a great need to support these efforts in underserved communities where students may not have access to, among other things, extracurricular activities, safe places to play, and access to parks and nature.

As play, mindfulness, exploration and social connections are a natural part of many school activities AFHK promotes, like recess, brain breaks in class, school lunch and school gardens, it was a natural fit to help incorporate more free time into the school day. We piloted a grant program with three high-need urban elementary schools in the 2018–2019 school year, providing larger traditional Game On grants with a BE Time component to help schools build the systems and infrastructure and implement programs that would support more free time during the school day. The schools increased mindfulness breaks, expanded school gardens, and built fully-equipped creative



sensory rooms for kids to unwind, explore new hobbies, and interact with each other in ways they didn't normally get to during the school day. The results, both quantitative and qualitative, underscored the need for and the benefit of this program. At one school, the program has helped students manage severe anxiety, while another school reported a 140% increase in students participating in before and after-school activities. Schools also saw incremental positive changes in social emotional learning outcomes.

Understanding the value of free and unstructured time for students, 15 more schools are implementing BE Time projects around the country in the 2019–2020 school year. Through GoGo squeeZ's initiative, hundreds of hours of BE Time have been pledged by families nationwide to date.



## Nike

Nike has believed in and generously supported the Let's Move! Active Schools initiative since its launch under former First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! platform in 2013. They serve as anchor funder for the national movement now called Active Schools, whose organizational home is Action for Healthy Kids. Active Schools is a collective impact coalition of public and private sector partner organizations working to prioritize physical education and physical activity in schools. As a key member of Active Schools' Strategic Advisory Council, Nike provides thought leadership for how Active Schools can help schools provide students with equitable access to 60 minutes of physical activity and play every day and ultimately revolutionizing how schools incorporate activity into student learning.

Nike's commitment to children's health and well-being through movement to combat the normalization of physical inactivity was codified in a 2012 report, *Designed to Move*, which called for the "creation of early positive experiences for children in sports and physical activity, and to integrate physical activity into everyday life," particularly in the critical first ten years of a child's life.

In 2013, Nike announced an investment of \$50 million in the U.S. to increase physical activity among kids in schools and communities as well as targeted advocacy efforts to inspire kids and draw additional resources to the effort. Nike believes in the power of sport to unleash human potential and build community. Nike fuels this belief through Made to Play, its commitment to getting kids moving through play and sport so they can lead healthier, happier and more successful lives. Together with community partners and Nike employees around the world, Nike is designing innovative solutions to get more than 17 million kids playing, running and jumping their way to a brighter future.

**Nike believes that kids are made to play, and we know that kids who are active are healthier, happier and perform better in the classroom. We have supported Active Schools since its inception and recognize the critical role Active Schools plays in leading the movement to get kids active before, during and after school.**

*Caitlin Morris, General Manager of Social & Community Impact, Nike*

### Footnotes:

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- 12 Adolphus K, Lawton CL, Dye L. The effects of breakfast on behavior and academic performance in children and adolescents. *Front Hum Neurosci.* 2013;7:425. Published 2013 Aug 8. doi:10.3389/fnhum.2013.00425.



**Every kid healthy, active and ready to learn**

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