



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Montreal, October 18, 2006

It Takes a Society: Fighting Childhood Obesity Around the World

The undisputed pandemic of childhood obesity worldwide threatens to be the major public health problem of the new century. We have created a modern society in which the first generation of children of the new millennium could be the first since the rise of the industrial revolution to have a shorter lifespan than its predecessors.

Dr. Laurette Dubé, internationally respected professor in consumer and lifestyle psychology and marketing, food and health specialist, and founding chair and scientific director of the McGill University Integrative Health Challenge Think Tank, is a passionate proponent of the view that we need to mobilize individuals, organizations and society on a grand scale to unleash enough action to affect the tipping point of a healthy lifestyle epidemic.

To that end, the McGill Integrative Health Challenge Think Tank: Forging a Societal Action plan in Preventing Childhood Obesity Around the World, will be held in Montreal October 26-27, 2006 (opening session 6pm October 25) at the Mount Royal Center, 2200 Mansfield, across from the historic McGill University campus. The think tank is an invitation-only event. Only the opening and closing sessions will be open to the general media.

The Think Tank will convene leading academics, professionals, and decision-and policy-makers from the domains of health, education, agriculture and food, leisure and sports, urban planning, media, finance, management, law, politics and economy to develop a bolder approach to the prevention of childhood obesity around the world. Participants will forge the draft version of a societal plan for childhood obesity prevention currently in the making the by the Global Prevention Alliance, a partnership among five international medical associations that works in close collaboration with the World Health

Organization. The opening keynote speaker will be economist and *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman, with a word of welcome by the Quebec Minister of Health, Philippe Couillard.

Participants will address key challenges to be faced if societal action plans currently being pushed by the health community around the world are to galvanize action instead of opposition. They will also examine key premises in society that need to be revisited to reach any critical mass in efforts to curb obesity, including freewill/personal responsibility for individuals, persisting in the prescribe/comply model for health organizations, being in the “business of doing business” for corporations, and operating along the ‘health/economic divide” for governments. The conference will conclude with the launch of The Montreal Call to Challenge “Business as Usual” on childhood obesity in the presence of the Mayor of Montreal, Gerald Tremblay, and the unveiling of a worldwide e-think tank to solicit ideas, encourage public feedback and broaden the fight.

This event is organized by McGill University in partnership with the Global Prevention Alliance, the American Heart Association, the Canadian Institutes for Health Research and other health, philanthropic, agriculture and economic organizations. More detailed information of the think tank content, partners and participants is available at www.mcgill.ca/healthchallenge

CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRS:

Laurette Dubé, Professor, James McGill Chair in Consumer and Lifestyle Psychology and Marketing, Desautels Faculty of Management; Founding Chair and Scientific Director, McGill Health Challenges Think Tank, Canada.

Philip James, Chair, Global Prevention Alliance. Founder and Chair, International Obesity Task Force (IOTF), UK

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

Opening keynote address:

- Paul R. Krugman, Professor, Economics and Public Affairs, Economics Department, Princeton University. Columnist, *The New York Times*, USA

Keynote Commentaries offered by:

- Catherine Le Gales-Camus, Assistant-Director General, Non-communicable Diseases and Mental Health, WHO, Switzerland
- Alan Bernstein, President, Canadian Institutes for Health Research, Canada
- Robert Eckel, President, American Heart Association, USA

Confirmed participants:

From Health:

- Michel Marmot Chair, WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health, UK
- Jean-Marie Le Guen, Physician and Deputy, Paris, President of the Study Group, National Assembly, France
- William Dietz, Director, Nutrition and Physical Activity Program, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, USA
- Kaare Norum, Professor Emeritus and Rector Emeritus, Institute for Nutrition Research, School of Medicine, Oslo University. Former Chair, WHO Reference Group on "Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health", Norway
- Boyd Swinburn, Professor and Chair, Public Health and Nutrition. Founder, WHO Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention and Related Research and Training, Deakin University, Australia
- Robert Beaglehole, Director, Department of Chronic Diseases and Health Promotion, WHO, Switzerland
- Chunming Chen, Professor and Senior Advisor, Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Founding President, Chinese Academy for Preventive medicine, China
- Carlos A. Monteiro, Professor, School of Public Health and Center for Epidemiological Research in Health and Nutrition, University of São Paulo, Brazil
- Benjamin Caballero, Director, Center for Human Nutrition. Professor, Johns Hopkins Center for Human Nutrition, USA
- Thomas N. Robinson, Departments of Pediatrics and Medicine, Stanford University School of Medicine, USA
- Adam Drewnowski, Professor, Epidemiology, School of Public Health and Community Medicine. Director, Center for Public Health Nutrition, University of Washington, USA

From Economics, Business, Agriculture and Other Disciplines:

- Daniel Kahneman, 2002 Nobel Laureate, Economic Sciences, USA
- Kevin Murphy, Economic Sciences, University of Chicago
- T. S. Srinivasan, Economic Sciences, Yale University
- Lance Friedman, Senior Vice President, Kraft Foods Inc., USA
- Wilbert J. Keon, Canadian Senator. President & CEO, University of Ottawa Heart Institute, Canada
- William Bernstein, Author of *The Birth of Plenty* and *The Four Pillars of Investments*, USA
- George Loewenstein, Professor, Economics and Psychology, Department of Social and Decision Sciences, Carnegie Mellon University, USA
- Brian Wansink, Cornell University. Director, Cornell Food and Brand Lab, USA
- David Fidler, International Law, Indiana University
- Louise Fresco, Former Assistant Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations. University Professor, Universiteit van Amsterdam, Netherlands

- Gary W. Evans, Human Ecology, Departments of Design and Environmental Analysis and of Human Development, College of Human Ecology, Cornell University, USA
- Per Pinstrup-Andersen, Professor, Food Nutrition and Public Policy, Division of Nutritional Sciences, Cornell University. Former Director-General, International Food Policy Research Institute, USA
- Nick Drager, Senior Advisor, Department of Ethics, Trade, Human Rights and Health Law, WHO, Switzerland
- John Holland, Author of *Emergence: From Chaos to Order*, USA
- David Bornstein Author of *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas* and *The Price of a Dream: The Story of the Grameen Bank*, USA
- Claude Fischler, Sociologist, Director of Research, National Center of Scientific Research, France

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