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Institute

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NIH's *We Can!* Partners With Subway Restaurants To Expand Movement To Prevent Childhood Obesity

National P.E.P. Rally Featuring Subway's Jared and World-Renowned Athletes Laila Ali and Tab Ramos Kicks Off Partnership

The National Institutes of Health's ***We Can!*** program has partnered with Subway Restaurants to reach families throughout the United States and beyond with practical tips and tools to help children and their parents maintain a healthy weight and prevent overweight and obesity.

The partnership will be launched today at a National P.E.P. (Play More, Eat Right, and Push Away the Screen) Rally at the D.C. Armory in Washington, D.C. The event will feature hundreds of youth, parents, and teachers, along with Subway spokesman Jared Fogle, boxing champion Laila Ali, Olympic soccer star Tab Ramos, and Lawrence A. Tabak, D.D.S., Ph.D., NIH acting principal deputy director.

"Obesity is a significant public health problem, not just for adults, but also for our children who could suffer from lifelong medical and psychosocial problems," noted Tabak. "We are delighted to work with Subway Restaurants to educate children and their families about three simple steps they can take for a healthy weight: eat right, move more, and limit screen time."

Nearly 1 out of 3 children in the United States ages 2 to 19 is overweight or at risk of becoming overweight, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Extra pounds can lead to lifelong health problems, such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease. In adults, overweight and obesity contribute to these and other chronic conditions, including certain cancers.

The NIH established ***We Can!*** (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition) in June 2005 to help prevent childhood obesity. The science-based national education program brings families and communities together to promote healthy weight in children ages 8 through 13 through improved food choices, increased physical activity, and reduced screen time.

Subway will promote ***We Can!*** messages and resources in restaurants and through the SubwayKids.com Web site. In addition, in collaboration with Subway and Scholastic, Inc. ***We Can!*** materials have been adapted into fun tools and activities for teachers, students, and parents, including a

“You Are What You Eat” poster, reproducible activities for students, and send-home sheets for parents. The partnership does not imply endorsement of Subway products.

The partnership also aims to strengthen **We Can!**’s extensive outreach in communities across the United States, with Subway providing funding for training programs for community-based educators and leaders to help them implement **We Can!**’s hands-on curricula for youth and for parents. Currently, more than 1,000 **We Can!** community sites nationwide and in 11 other countries have committed to providing **We Can!** programs at the local level.

At the National P.E.P. Rally, more than 300 elementary and middle school students will participate in fun and educational activities, such as Energy In/Energy Out, a tag-like game that emphasizes the importance of energy balance for a healthy weight. Ramos will lead participants in soccer training sessions, and Ali will encourage the youth to eat well and be active every day. Fogle, who is popularly known as “Jared from Subway,” will also share his story and talk about the importance of maintaining a healthy weight.

“Getting kids to stay healthy and active is something I work on all year long and I am constantly on the road, going from school to school to reach out to children,” said Fogle. “I’m proud to be here today to support the **We Can!** program on behalf of Subway Restaurants because my goal is to help children avoid the physical and emotional hardships I went through living with obesity.”

National P.E.P. Rally participants will be asked to sign a pledge to be active at least one hour a day, to make healthy food choices, and to limit recreational screen time to no more than two hours a day. All participants will receive educational materials to support their commitment.

"Helping America's children maintain a healthy weight is a priority," said Elizabeth G. Nabel, M.D., director of NIH's National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, which developed **We Can!** "By bringing together corporate partners with **We Can!** community sites, we believe we really can help families embrace healthy lifestyles."

For more information about **We Can!** and to learn more about the partnership, visit <http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov>.

To speak with an NIH spokesperson, please contact the NHLBI Communications Office at (301) 496-4236 or at NHLBI_news@nhlbi.nih.gov. To speak with a Subway spokesperson, please contact Megan Driscoll at Emanate, (212) 805-8034 (work); (646) 285-7165 (cell); megan.driscoll@emanatepr.com.

ABOUT We Can!

We Can! (Ways to Enhance Children’s Activity & Nutrition) is a national education program of families and communities coming together to promote healthy weight in children and youth through improved food choices, increased physical activity, and reduced screen time. **We Can!** was developed by the nation’s top research and health authority—the National Institutes of Health – and is a collaboration of four NIH institutes: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development; National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases; and National Cancer Institute. The program provides parents, caregivers and communities—from the smallest towns to the largest cities—with ready-to-use, science-based tools, trainings and educational sessions that encourage healthy lifestyles. Today, more than 1,000 community sites have committed to offering **We Can!** science-based educational materials and curricula to youth and parents in their communities. **We Can!** has also engaged dozens of corporations,

government agencies, and non-profit organizations to increase awareness and enhance product development and dissemination.

For more information about **We Can!**, visit <http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov> or call toll-free at call toll-free 866-35-WE CAN.

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NIH joins the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) as members of the National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research (NCCOR) to accelerate the progress of research to reduce childhood obesity. NCCOR seeks to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and application of childhood obesity research and to produce positive changes more rapidly through enhanced coordination and collaboration. For more information about NCCOR and its initiatives, visit www.nccor.org.