



# HAWAI'I APPLESEED

## CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

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### WHOLE FOODS MARKET'S "5% DAY" WILL EXPAND ACCESS TO MEALS FOR CHILDREN

For keiki who rely on free and reduced-price school meals to get a healthy start, Whole Foods Market's donation to Hawai'i Appleseed's school meal expansion efforts will have life-altering implications.

HONOLULU, Hawai'i – On October 17, 2019, Whole Foods Market will donate 5 percent of net sales from its four locations throughout the state (Kailua, Kaka'ako, Kahala and Kahului) to Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law & Economic Justice to fight childhood hunger in Hawai'i. Funds from the Whole Foods Market's "5% Day" will help launch an initiative designed to support sites that offer free meals to children when school is out.

For many Hawai'i children, school is the only place they get access to balanced, nourishing meals. This means that when school is out, students have to rely on cheap, unhealthy snacks to fill their stomachs—things like SPAM, Cheetos and dry ramen. Some go without meals entirely.

Two underutilized programs in Hawai'i can help make sure kids get the nutrition they need, even when school is out: after-school suppers and summer meals. Less than one in 10 of the 65,000 Hawai'i students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals currently take advantage of these programs.

"One reason for the low participation rate is that involvement in these programs is rife with barriers, especially for community organizations with limited staff and funds," said Daniela Kittinger, Director of Anti-Hunger Initiatives at Hawai'i Appleseed. "There is room for significant improvement with proper funding, and that's why we're excited to partner with Whole Foods Market for its annual '5% Day.'"

Offering free, healthy food is a great way keep kids engaged outside the classroom. Program sites can offer educational programming in cooking, gardening and health and wellness programs.

Summer and after-school meals can also stretch the budgets of low-income families, who often have to choose between purchasing food and other necessities such as rent or medication.

"Raising a generation of informed eaters requires the support of the community," said Kittinger. "In

addition to nourishing children's brains and bodies when school is not in session, these programs can build social capital, bringing together the community in ways that can create new opportunities for future generations.”

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The Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice is committed to a more socially just Hawai'i, where everyone has genuine opportunities to achieve economic security and fulfill their potential. We change systems that perpetuate inequality and injustice through policy development, advocacy and coalition building.