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NEWS RELEASE

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### **Propeller Fights Childhood Obesity By Bringing Healthy School Lunch to 10,000 S. Louisiana Children**

NEW ORLEANS -- August 7, 2012-- Currently in Louisiana, more than one in three (36%) 10 to 17 year olds are overweight<sup>1</sup> with low-income and minority children being disproportionately affected<sup>2</sup>. Propeller: A Force for Social Innovation and our partners are excited to announce the launch of 10,000 healthy and delicious school lunches per day to 9,000+ public school students in New Orleans and 1,000+ Baton Rouge students beginning this 2012 school year in order to fight childhood obesity. The new healthy school meals will comply with our healthy food standards such as no fried food, no high-fructose corn syrup, no canned fruits or vegetables, no nitrates in meat, five percent of the food must be locally procured, a fresh fruit and vegetable available at each lunch, and everything prepared from scratch daily.

Not only is the food incredibly healthy, but according to Jonas Green, a 5th grader at ReNEW Schools' Batiste Cultural Arts Academy, one of the first schools to kick off this program with food vendor Revolution Foods, "it is delicious!" According to Jonas' teacher Ms. Sara Quinn, Jonas asked if she had tasted the healthy "chow mein" at lunch and said that he would choose to eat that over chips for the rest of his life.

"One of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's (WKKF) core beliefs is that all people – particularly vulnerable children – deserve access to good food," said William Buster, program officer at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, a key supporter of Propeller. "Schools are public tables from which 30 million children eat up to two-thirds of their meals. Improving the nutritional quality of the food we serve our children at school directly impacts their health and well-being and that's why we are supporting this very important work."

Propeller recruited healthy food vendor Revolution Foods to New Orleans and provided seed funding necessary to launch the KIPP New Orleans Schools healthy meals School Food Authority (SFA), led by Propeller social entrepreneur James Graham. The healthy meals SFA allows individual charter schools to release a Request for Proposal (RFP) with the Propeller healthy food standards and to individually choose their own vendor. In total, Propeller is providing more than \$190,000 in grant funding for schools to transition to a healthy food vendor through the generosity of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Irene W. and C.B. Pennington Foundation, and Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools.

"Our schools, students, and families told us they wanted a healthier, higher-quality school lunch, and we are thrilled that in our first year we will bring the healthy school lunch program to 20 percent of New Orleans public school students. We have changed the school food contracting

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<sup>1</sup>Pennington Biomedical Research Center. Louisiana's report card on physical activity and health for children and youth – 2009. Kick it up... better health for all children. Baton Rouge, LA: Pennington Biomedical Research Center, Louisiana State University System. 2009.

process to tackle Louisiana’s obesity epidemic as children from high-poverty backgrounds typically consume the majority of their calories at school. In addition, this is a significant economic opportunity for our local farmers since vendors are required to buy local as part of the Healthy Foods RFP, and it has previously been almost impossible for small farmers to crack the farm-to-school market,” explained Andrea Chen, Executive Director at Propeller.

Revolution Foods CEO Kristin Richmond says, “It is such an honor for Revolution Foods to be serving healthy, fresh, affordable meals to the New Orleans student community. We’ve been working with Propeller and key stakeholders throughout the region for three years to make this healthy initiative a reality, and it has kicked off with incredible success. By far the most encouraging feedback we’ve received was from Batiste teachers who told us ‘since Revolution Foods has been their food provider, kids are more attentive and feeling fuller for longer after lunch.’ Seeing positive student outcomes linked to our program is our most important goal in our work.”

The 28 charter school sites and the four participating food vendors have contractually committed to these standards. The Louisiana Public Health Institute’s (LPHI) School Health Connection program and the Tulane Prevention Research Center has partnered with Propeller to monitor food quality, student participation, and student behaviors and attitudes in the program.

“KIPP New Orleans Schools is excited to support other public schools in New Orleans to provide healthy food options to their students. In order to climb the mountain to college, all students need delicious, nutritious meals, and KIPP New Orleans Schools is eager to provide technical support in food service management to help schools provide healthier meals to more students,” James Graham, Propeller Fellow and KIPP Director of Federal Grants and Contracts.

Partners include: W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Irene W. and C.B. Pennington Foundation, KIPP New Orleans, Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools, LPHI’s School Health Connection program, Tulane Prevention Research Center, our 28 charter school partners, and our food vendors—Chartwells, Liberty’s Kitchen, Revolution Foods, and Sodexo—who have signed commitments to these food standards.

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### **About Propeller: A Force for Social Innovation**

Propeller is a nonprofit organization that launches financially sustainable social ventures—for-profit and nonprofit—that tackle pressing social problems. We aim to systematically “move the needle” on local social challenges through a collaborative problem-defining process and hands-on support for social entrepreneurs. Our 2012 Social Venture Accelerator generated 40 new jobs (30 full-time) and \$2.2. million in external investment and revenues in 10 months. To learn more, visit [www.GoPropeller.org](http://www.GoPropeller.org).

### **About KIPP New Orleans Schools**

KIPP New Orleans Schools is a high-performing network of open-enrollment public charter schools serving 3200 students at nine schools across New Orleans. As part of the national Knowledge Is Power Program network of schools, KIPP New Orleans Schools is dedicated to empowering all students with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in college and

life. As an SFA for other charter schools, KIPP provides expertise in food service management, allowing schools to provide more healthy food options to students. For more information, please visit [www.kippneworleans.org](http://www.kippneworleans.org).

If you would like the full list of the Propeller healthy food standards or to schedule an interview with Propeller or any of our partners, please contact Andrea Chen ([achen@GoPropeller.org](mailto:achen@GoPropeller.org)). We are also adding participating schools and vendors on a daily basis, so please reach out to us for the most updated list.