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**MAYOR DE BLASIO, CHANCELLOR FARIÑA AND BOROUGH PRESIDENT  
ADAMS ANNOUNCE 15 BROOKLYN SCHOOLS TO PARTICIPATE IN MEATLESS  
MONDAYS**

*Mayor de Blasio and First Lady McCray will also eat all-vegetarian meals every Monday*

**BROOKLYN**— Mayor Bill de Blasio, Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña and Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams today announced that 15 Brooklyn schools will participate in Meatless Mondays next spring. The program will provide participating schools with healthy, all-vegetarian breakfast and lunch menus every Monday. The Mayor, First Lady Chirlane McCray and Gracie Mansion will also go meatless for all Monday meals.

"Cutting back a little on meat will help make our City healthier and our planet stronger for generations to come," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "Chirlane and I are excited to participate in Meatless Mondays at home, and we thank Borough President Adams for leading the charge behind this healthy and sustainable initiative."

"Meatless Mondays will expose our children to an exciting variety of delicious vegetarian meals that provide excellent nutrition and support their growing bodies. And the best way to encourage our children to eat healthy is for everyone to join in!," said **First Lady Chirlane McCray**.

"Teaching students about nutrition and exposing them to healthy food options from an early age is critical," said **Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña**. "Like our Garden to Café program and the New York Thursday initiative, Meatless Mondays is one more way in which we are using school meals as a teachable moment to educate students on the importance of making healthy choices."

"I am living proof of the power of a plant-based diet to transform one's health," said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**. "I believe that Meatless Mondays is an extremely significant initiative that has the power to transform the health of thousands of our city's students, as well as open the door to a powerful conversation that children can have with families on nutrition and wellness. I thank Mayor de Blasio for working with me on this mission to change our

relationship with food and tackle nutritional health in a real way. As Hippocrates said, ‘let food be thy medicine.’”

This initiative builds off the plant-based health advocacy of Borough President Adams, who has committed himself to combating poor nutrition following his successful battle against Type 2 diabetes last year. In 2015, less than 20% of NYC children aged 6-12 ate 5 or more fruits and vegetables a day. Eating fruits and vegetables provides important vitamins and nutrients and can reduce the risk for heart disease, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity. Furthermore, Meatless Mondays can also help reduce carbon footprint and preserve resources like water. Approximately 1,850 gallons of water are needed to produce a single pound of beef, while only 39 gallons of water are needed to produce a pound of vegetables.

DOE's Office of SchoolFood will engage school communities across Brooklyn to finalize the schools that will participate in the program based on interest and ability to incorporate an all-vegetarian menu. Schools included in the program will receive customized menus each with vegetarian entrees. There is no additional cost to the City.

Today’s announcement was made at PS 1 in Sunset Park, one of five schools in New York City currently serving an exclusively vegetarian menu every day of the week. The Peck Slip School in Manhattan and The Active Learning Elementary School in Queens, as well as two non-public schools – Hanson Place Seventh-day Adventist Elementary School and the R.T. Hudson Seventh-day Adventist School – also participate in the program. These schools serve a variety of options including spinach wraps, vegetarian chili, roasted chickpea tagine, black bean quesadillas, crispy tofu, zucchini parmigiana, and margherita pizza.

"Eating fruits and vegetables can lower your risk of heart disease and possibly some cancers. Diets higher in plant-based foods are associated with lesser environmental impact than the average American diet," said **Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett**. "Meatless Mondays are a great way to encourage our students to include more produce in their diet, any day of the week."

“Meatless Mondays are a great way to expose students to healthy foods that can lower their risk of obesity as well as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes later in life,” said **Michelle McMacken, MD, director of the Adult Weight Management Program at NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue**.

"I commend Chancellor Carmen Fariña and the NYC School Food team for their leadership in providing healthy and sustainable menu options for New York City's students," said **Director of Food Policy Barbara Turk**. "Sourcing and serving healthy school meals, with more fruits and vegetables, support our goal of building a more sustainable and healthy food system for New York City."

“New York City is proud to join Los Angeles, Miami, Detroit, San Diego, and others cities in this important initiative. We understand that the health of our city and our planet depends on all of us, and programs like this are a great start,” said **Community Affairs Commissioner Marco Carrion**. “We are eager to work with New York’s diverse communities to implement Meatless Mondays.”

Meatless Mondays is also part of the City's ongoing effort to ensure every student is provided with a free, healthy lunch. This year, the DOE launched Free School Lunch for All, which provides free school lunch to all public school students in New York City. Through the Summer Meals program, the DOE provides free breakfast and lunch to anyone age 18 or younger free of charge each summer. Schools across the City also participate in NY Thursdays, which provides schools with locally sourced or produced food every Thursday. Over 1,400 salad bars in NYC School cafeterias offer students a selection of fresh and healthy vegetables to complement their lunch entrée each day.

The DOE is making strides in ensuring students are served high-quality foods in a sustainable way and converted from using a polystyrene tray to serving all meals in an eco-friendly compostable plate. This year, the DOE's Office of Sustainability provided every school with new Recycling Stations and each cafeteria recycling station now features a blue bin for metal, glass, plastic, and cartons, a grey bin for general trash, a brown bin for food scraps, and a small white bin for liquids. Additionally, eight schools received cafeteria renovations last year and the Five-year Capital Plan includes funding to update 18 additional cafeterias.

"Meatless Mondays is a great way to introduce kids to good-tasting and healthy options and teach about nutrition in a practical way," said **Assembly Health Chair Richard Gottfried**.

"I applaud the Mayor and Chancellor Fariña for continuing their commitment to healthy food throughout our schools. As a vegan myself, I have seen what a great effect such diet can have on my own health and I am excited to see this coming to public schools. I hope that this great pilot project comes to the Bronx next," stated **Assemblyman Luis Sepulveda**.

**Council Member Carlos Menchaca** said, "The new 'Meatless Mondays' pilot being introduced to 15 Brooklyn Public Schools, including our very own PS 1, marks a new chapter in childhood health improvement. This is an important step in providing healthy options and education for children. The epidemic of childhood obesity must be taken seriously, and we must address it in public schools. A special thank you to Chancellor Carmen Fariña and President Eric Adams for their incredible work to make this a reality. Schools are meant to prepare our children for the future. Their health and wellbeing is a part of that. Together we are fighting back against childhood obesity, fighting for the future of our children, and building a culture of healthy living."

"I'm incredibly excited to see the Meatless Mondays Pilot launch in Brooklyn. Encouraging young people to select healthy vegetarian options is good for public health, the environment, and our animals. And, as I've learned during my time as a vegan, going meatless can be delicious," said **Council Member Helen Rosenthal**.

"Our work is to help as many schools as possible transition to the fully vegetarian menu that is available to New York City schools, and to provide education about the benefits of plant foods to the students, families, teachers, and other staff. We applaud the NYC Office of SchoolFood for making these choices available," said **Amie Hamlin, Executive Director of Coalition for Healthy School Food**.

"The new Meatless Mondays pilot program in Brooklyn schools is a great step forward for the City of New York in the movement to make our food system more humane," said **Matt**

**Bershadker, President and CEO of the ASPCA.** “The ASPCA is excited to see the city joining school districts across the country that are inspiring the next generation to make food choices that are better for people, the planet and animals.”

“It’s heartening to see Brooklyn schools launching Meatless Mondays,” said **Wayne Pacelle, President and CEO of the Humane Society of the United States.** “It sets them on a course to pursue healthier lifestyles, while also promoting the value of sustainability and more humane treatment of animals.”

**Bill Telepan, Wellness in the Schools Executive Chef,** said: “We applaud the NYC DOE for implementing Meatless Mondays as part of the school lunch menu. With one million children fed daily in NYC, this effort will not only make a difference on children’s health and the environment, but it is also a strong symbolic statement that will pave the way for other school districts.”

**Jonathan Safran Foer, author of *Eating Animals*,** said: "Reducing meat consumption is uncontroversially necessary for our health, and necessary for the health of our planet. But it requires a brave leader to try to change old behaviors. Mayor de Blasio deserves great credit for acting to protect our children and our shared future."

**Mark Bittman, food journalist, author and faculty member at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health,** said, “This is such a great step for Brooklyn and its schoolchildren, who will be learning that when it comes to a sustainable future, the food they're eating matters as much as anything. We can only hope that the pilot becomes universal throughout the city.”

"As a preventive cardiologist I see firsthand the effect of a healthy diet on overall heart health," said **Robert Ostfeld MD MSc, Director of Preventive Cardiology at Montefiore Health System.** "The DOE's pioneering Meatless Mondays program, exposing kids to the importance of more fruits and vegetables in their diet, starts them on a lifelong path of making healthy food choices. It's as important as any lesson they could learn in a classroom! "

“We commend New York City schools for providing plant-based meals,” said **Farm Sanctuary President and Co-Founder Gene Baur.** “Today’s youth are the future, and eating more plants instead of animals is shown to curb some of the biggest challenges we face regarding personal health and the health of the planet. Failing to provide meatless meals at school would be doing future generations a terrible disservice.”

“We’re thrilled that New York City schools will participate in Meatless Mondays to introduce kids to delicious plant-based options that can create healthy eating habits for life. Congratulations to Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Fariña for their leadership in taking Meatless Mondays into the future, for our health and the health of the planet,” said **Sid Lerner, Chairman and Founder of The Monday Campaigns and Meatless Monday.**

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