



1 Sunset Avenue, Hatfield, MA 01038 • 1-800-FOODPLAY • 413-247-5400 • info@foodplay.com • www.foodplay.com

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Media Contact: Jenn Evans • 1-800-FOODPLAY (1-800-366-3752) • info@foodplay.com • www.foodplay.com

## **Wonder how to turn kids on to healthy eating and exercise habits? Emmy Award-winning FOODPLAY is coming to a school near you!**

FOODPLAY, an Emmy Award-winning nutrition theater show, is touring the nation's schools and special events using the power of live theater to turn kids on to healthy habits.

Featuring fantastic feats of juggling, motivating messages, music, magic, and audience participation, FOODPLAY's colorful characters entertain as they teach kids how to take charge of growing up healthy and fit.



## **While FOODPLAY makes good eating great fun, its messages are very serious.**

Childhood obesity has become the nation's number one health epidemic, with rates doubling among elementary school children and tripling among adolescents in the last 25 years. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, if current eating and exercise habits don't improve, one out of two African American and Latino children, and one out of three Caucasian children will develop diabetes.

FOODPLAY comes to the rescue, helping empower kids with the skills they need to make their choices healthy ones. During the fun-filled performance, children follow the antics of Johnny (or Janey) Junkfood, whose dream is to become a juggling star, but keeps dropping the balls. The problem – his diet stinks! With the help of the "Coach" of the National Junior Juggling Team and the children in the audience, Johnny learns how to juggle the foods he eats to wind up with a balanced diet.

FoodPlay Productions was founded in 1982 by Barbara Storper, MS, RD, a national leader in children's nutrition. According to Storper, today's kids face a very difficult and confusing food environment, with the average child seeing over 10,000 food commercials on TV each year, with the majority promoting junk food products.

"We have to fight fire with fire," says Storper. "For our messages to be effective, we need to use similar techniques that advertisers use in order to make healthy foods and healthy practices fun and cool for kids. And there's nothing like the power and magic of live theater to get kids excited and motivated to treat their bodies right!"

Today, the average American child drinks over 600 cans of soda and consumes more than 150 pounds of sugar a year! Less than one per cent of the nation's youth are meeting their daily nutritional requirements, with intakes of fruits and vegetables far lower than what's recommended.

-more-

As the FOODPLAY story unfolds, children learn how to see through TV commercials, decipher food labels, and make sense of today's confusing fast food marketplace. Kids witness the ten teaspoons of sugar found in a can of cola, and the effects of soda on a dinosaur's tooth in the old "soak in the Coke routine." For some fun beverage alternatives, and even cooler juggling tricks, Coach and Johnny trade passes with an array of milk, soy milk, water, and fruit juice juggling clubs.

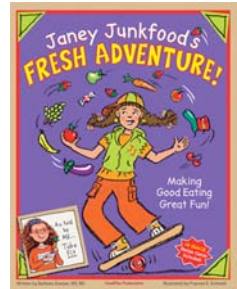
Kids cheer Johnny on as the more he learns, the better juggler he becomes, successfully demonstrating how easy it is to take five — eat at least five fruits and vegetable a day, that is. Together with the audience, Johnny learns how to eat healthfully at home, school, and on the run, and discovers that you can choose foods that are good for your health and good for the planet too.

Kids also learn the importance of fueling up with breakfast and being active every day. And, in the game show segment, "Pyramid Power," contestants are invited on stage to show their nutrition smarts by building a balanced diet. Body image is also covered, as kids learn that every body is different, and different is a great thing.

### **Keepin' the Messages Alive**

To keep the learning alive all year long, schools receive FOODPLAY's comprehensive resource kits, which provide follow-up materials to everyone involved — teachers, parents, school food service, health staff, and students.

And, to bring the experience home, Storper has published a new children's book, *Janey Junkfood's Fresh Adventure!* — designed to help kids get off the junk food track and make good eating great fun. The book (as well as a host of fun food and nutrition activities and snack recipes) is available at [www.foodplay.com](http://www.foodplay.com) and in bookstores nationwide.



### **Proven Results – It Works!**

FOODPLAY receives rave reviews, top awards, and outstanding evaluations showing dramatic improvements in children's eating and exercise habits. According to the USDA, after FOODPLAY, over 75% of children reported increasing their fruit and vegetable intake, cutting down on soda and other sweets, reading food labels more often, eating breakfast regularly, and enjoying more physical activity! And, schools report that FOODPLAY triggers community-wide excitement for healthy habits, helping get everyone from teachers to parents on board working together to create healthy schools.

### **FoodPlay Productions**

FoodPlay Productions' programs have reached over three million school children from New York to Alaska! The company now tours the nation with several different health shows and creates award-winning TV specials, media campaigns, video kits, and other resources to make nutrition come alive.

For food and nutrition tips, free downloads, and fun-filled resources, visit [www.foodplay.com](http://www.foodplay.com).

# # #

**Reporters:**

To cover a FOODPLAY show,  
interview nutritionist, Barbara Storper, MS, RD,  
or for a review copy of Storper's new children's book,  
*Janey Junkfood's Fresh Adventure!* (ISBN 978-09642858-5-9)

Please contact Jenn Evans at:  
1-800-FOODPLAY (800-366-3752) or info@foodplay.com

**Photographers Invited!**  
**FOODPLAY makes for great photo opps!**

High-resolution images are downloadable at:  
[www.foodplay.com/news/press.html](http://www.foodplay.com/news/press.html)

"The kids were laughing so hard, they didn't realize how much they were learning!"  
*-New York City Board of Education*





1 Sunset Avenue, Hatfield, MA 01038 • 1-800-FOODPLAY • 413-247-5400 • info@foodplay.com • www.foodplay.com

## 2009 Who's Who in FOODPLAY

Please note: We have three different troupes on tour, and all members of each troupe are listed below. Each troupe has three members—Coach, Johnny or Janey Junkfood, and a stage manager. Each show's cast will vary.

### TROUPE 1

**Mariette Booth** (Coach) a California "native" and a Furman University Theatre Arts graduate, enjoys blending a theater and film career. Favorite theater performances include *Best Christmas Pageant Ever* (Mom, Regional Southeast tour), *Annie* (Lily), *Three Sisters* (Masha), *The Miser* (Marianne and Arrow), *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* (Germaine) and *The Shadow Box* (Agnes). Mariette is excited for this opportunity to bring live theater to young audiences.

**Simon Siegel** (Johnny Junkfood) is a recent graduate of Marymount Manhattan College where he received his B.A. in Theater Performance. Born and raised in Northeast Ohio, Simon is now based in Queens, NY, where he pursues acting full time. Recently, Simon was seen playing the title role in the Windy City Players' tour of *Aladdin*. Simon would like to thank his family and friends for all of their love and support.

**David S. Cohen** (Stage Manager) is happy to be joining *FOODPLAY*. David attended conservatory in Atlanta, GA, with a concentration in Technical Theater, then continued to Florida State University's B.F.A. program in Stage Management and Technical Design. David has stage managed for Holland America Cruise Lines, Theatre Gael, Solstice Rep, the Aurora Theatre, and 14th Street Playhouse. He was the resident stage manager for the Chelsea Opera, and production stage manager for Florida State University's PBS recording of the USO Tribute. Many thanks to the cast and production team for all their hard work.

### TROUPE 2

**Tom Hodgskin** (Coach) is very excited to be working with FoodPlay Productions. In 2007, he received his bachelor's degree from DeSales University in Theater Arts. He has been seen as Venticello #2 in *Amadeus*, Joe Farkas in *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*, and Banjo in *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, among many others. He wishes to extend special thanks to everyone at FoodPlay Productions for this great opportunity.

**Carlton Hall** (Johnny Junkfood) is an Alabama native who earned his B.F.A. in Acting and Directing from the University of Montevallo (PV!) in Montevallo, AL. Carlton likes to juggle, dance, and just be an all around silly guy. He's been involved in productions with Birmingham Children's Theatre and Jasper Children's Theatre. He is also the co-founder and director of Run! Theatre Group in Jasper, AL. Carlton is very thrilled to be a part of *FOODPLAY*!

**Michelle Baxter** (Tour Manager/Understudy Coach) is a graduate of William Carey University, with a B.F.A. in Theater. Michelle has worked as a stage manager for Carey Dinner Theatre, Mississippi Summer Arts Institute, and the Bologna Performing Arts Center. Michelle has also been fortunate enough to work for Royal Caribbean International as a lighting technician, and the following year saw her with Cirque du Soleil's *Quidam*, where she acted as the local production assistant. Michelle is thrilled to be part of the *FOODPLAY* family for a third tour, which allows her to combine both her love of working with children and theater.

**Adam L. Oliveri** (Director for Troupe 1 & 2) is originally from Western Massachusetts and has been involved in the arts for all of his adult life. He entertained for two years at Busch Gardens in Williamsburg, Virginia, as a singer, actor, and juggler. He also had the privilege of sharing the stage with Bobby Vinton, in Branson, Missouri, at Bobby's Blue Velvet Theater. He is a former *FOODPLAY* actor (Coach), who loves children and truly believes in FoodPlay Productions' mission of spreading the word about the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle.

(over)

### TROUPE 3

**Frantz T. Excellent** (Coach) has twenty-five years' experience in theater arts and performance. He moved to Philadelphia in 1992 and attended Temple University. He began his theater experience in 1993 with Venture Theatre under the tutelage of H. German Wilson. He has performed in many theater venues along the east coast. Under his CamEyes Production Company, he has written two screenplays, *Camden Eyes* and *Ideale*; and a script for a television drama, *The Crew*. He has written, produced, and directed a documentary, *Queens Little Faces*; a variety show, *An Evening of Song: Featuring Toni Richards*; a music video, *Party All Night*; a 3-minute trailer, *Ideale*; an info-video, *Do What You're Built For*; a feature short film, *Mio Sogno: My Dream*; and the pilot to the TV script, *The Crew*. He is much honored for the opportunity to work with Bruce Robinson, Richard Murray, and the whole *FOODPLAY* company!

**Kaylah Fitzgerald** (Janey Junkfood) has been performing since she was six. Also as a child, she began writing her own plays. She attended The School for Creative and Performing Arts in 10th grade, majoring in theater. She started KASH Productions a few years later, which enables young people to pursue acting by starting on the small screen. She has acted in many independent films such as *Gods of Hellfire* and *Bittersweet Innocence* as well as several feature films including a supporting role in *The Ritual* and bit parts in *The Pearl* and *Our Lady of Victory*. She has played roles in upcoming pilots for FOX, Lifetime, and CBS. Kaylah has played supporting roles in commercials on ESPN and Discovery Kids. Her theater roles have included an English colonial in *A Christmas Carol*, a gothic maiden, an elf, a spoiled teenager, and a little boy, and has even been a storyteller for the Historic Philadelphia program *Once Upon a Nation*.

**Richard A. Murray Jr.** (Tour Manager) is an accomplished writer, author, playwright, poet, and also has his own line of greetings cards aimed at the sobriety and recovery market. He has written two plays, two poetry books, and a self-help book. He has worked in the theater since 2000 as a stage manager and dramaturge, and as a sound and lighting technician on many plays including the recent run of *Fences* at The Ritz Theatre. Richard recently graduated from The Connecticut School of Broadcasting. He is a member of the production company, Landmark Productions, and has worked on two of their upcoming projects, the television pilot, *The Saints*, and the feature film, *Welcome Home Eddy*.

**Bruce Robinson** (Director, Sound Designer, Script Collaborator, Lyrics Collaborator) is founder and executive artistic director of FreshVisions Youth Theatre Company in Philadelphia. A thirty-year theater veteran, Bruce is a producer, director, actor, writer, theater arts teacher and workshop leader. He is a winner of Philadelphia theater's prestigious Barrymore Award for Theater Excellence as well as KYW TV-3's "People Making a Difference" award.

### COMMON TO ALL TROUPES:

**Michael Karas** (Juggling Consultant) earned his B.F.A. in acting from Point Park University. Michael has always had an interest in juggling, and began seriously pursuing it in the summer of 2001 when attending the Pennsylvania Governor's School for the Arts. Since then he has become one of the juggling world's key players, winning multiple awards in international juggling competitions and inspiring other jugglers with his creative tricks. Michael toured with *FOODPLAY* as Johnny Junkfood for two seasons and is very excited to continue supporting *FOODPLAY* as a juggling consultant. Michael created the "Learn How to Juggle with *FOODPLAY*" video that some audience members receive as a prize.

**Rihki Kennebrew** (Music Creator, Sound Engineer, Lyrics Collaborator) is a composer, arranger, producer, and more. His musical career spans over 20 years and includes credits from music pioneers such as LA and Babyface to Philadelphia legends Gamble & Huff. Rihki's formal training includes New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and the American Academy of Dramatic Art. In addition to being a multi-genre songwriter, Rihki is also an accomplished radio/television personality. From pop, rock, and R&B to choral classical and theatrical, he continues to build a successful legacy writing hits for the music industry's most noted artists and the stars of tomorrow. More info: [www.phillybrew.com](http://www.phillybrew.com)

**Barbara Storper, MS, RD** (Artistic Director, Playwright, Nutritionist, and Executive Director of FoodPlay Productions) is a leader in the field of children's nutrition. Barbara has received a host of national awards including the Society for Nutrition Education's first "Outstanding Young Nutrition Educator in the Country Award," the American Dietetic Association's "Outstanding Nutrition Entrepreneur Award," and an Emmy Award for "Outstanding Children and Youth Special."

---

FoodPlay Productions is an Emmy Award-winning nutrition and health media organization presenting the best in live touring theater shows for school assemblies, conferences, and special events. The company also creates fun-filled video kits, curricula, media campaigns, exhibits, and hands-on resources to help parents and educators make nutrition and health come alive for children and families. Founded in 1982 by Barbara Storper, MS, RD, a leader in the field of children's nutrition, FoodPlay Productions' live touring theater shows and campaigns have reached over three million school children coast to coast and have been widely featured in the national media.