



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

**For Immediate Release: April 1, 2009**

**FOODPLAY is coming to an Illinois school near you!**  
***National award-winning show turns kids on to healthy eating and exercise habits.***

**More information: Patti Dougherty / 413-247-5400/ info@foodplay.com / www.foodplay.com**

FOODPLAY, a national award-winning theater show, will be presented at 20 selected schools throughout Illinois, using the power of live theater to turn kids on to healthy eating and exercise habits — thanks to sponsorship by the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA).



FOODPLAY will be bringing its cast of colorful performers, amazing feats of juggling, motivating messages, music, magic, and audience participation to Illinois schools, April 13–24.

In response to the nation's alarming childhood obesity epidemic, Illinois soybean farmers with their soybean checkoff have partnered with FoodPlay Productions to bring the gift of FOODPLAY to 20 Illinois schools during April, National Soyfoods Month. The "Celebrating Soy! – FOODPLAY Tour" will reach up to 8,500 children and their families with essential nutrition and health information to help Illinois residents take charge of growing up healthy and fit.

While FOODPLAY makes good eating great fun, its messages are quite serious. In the last 25 years, obesity rates have doubled among schoolchildren and tripled among adolescents. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, of children born in the year 2000, one out of two African American and Latino children and one out of three Caucasian children are expected to develop diabetes if current eating and exercise habits don't improve. Less than one percent of U.S. children consume the recommended servings of healthy foods and fewer than half participate in daily physical activity.

"April is 'Soyfoods Month' and our partnership with FOODPLAY is helping get a great message out to thousands of students throughout Illinois," said David Hartke, chairman of the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) and soybean grower from Teutopolis, Ill. "FOODPLAY is effective in reaching children with important nutrition information, including the importance of lean proteins like the ones found in the soybeans growing throughout Illinois."

During the fun-filled performance, children follow the antics of Johnny 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.

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Children learn the importance of fueling up with breakfast and being active every day; how to increase their intake of fruits and vegetables; how to cut down on sweets and unhealthy fats; and how to read labels to get the most nutritional value for their money. They discover how to make healthy food choices at home, school, and on the run, and come to understand how to choose foods that are good for their health and good for the planet too.

As part of the “Celebrating Soy! – FOODPLAY Tour,” schools will receive a FOODPLAY theater assembly along with a comprehensive resource kit to keep the nutrition and health messages alive at home and in school all year long. Follow-up materials are provided for everyone involved — teachers, students, parents, school food service, and health staff. According USDA-sponsored evaluations, FOODPLAY programs produce dramatic improvements in students’ eating and exercise habits and trigger community-wide interest in building healthy environments.

The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) is the statewide organization for Illinois soybean growers. The farmers on its board administer soybean checkoff funds to support research, promotions, and educational programs designed to increase demand for Illinois soybeans and administer legislation and membership programs. For more information, contact ISA at 309.663.7692 or visit: **www.ilsoy.org**

Founded in 1982 by Barbara Storper, MS, RD, a leader in the field of children’s nutrition, FoodPlay Productions has spread its message of good health to over three million schoolchildren across the country. With its traveling theater shows and media campaigns, FoodPlay Productions uses the power of live theater to promote healthy eating and active lifestyles to the nation’s youth. For food and nutrition tips, free downloads, and fun-filled resources, visit: **www.foodplay.com**

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

**Photographers invited - great photo opps!**





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## FOODPLAY Shows in Illinois - April 2009

### Celebrating Soy! – FOODPLAY Tour

### Schedule

Perf Date	Perf Time	School Name	Phone	Street	City	State	Zip
4/13/09	9:00 AM	Nathaniel Pope Elem	773-534-1795	1852 South Albany Avenue	Chicago	IL	60623
4/13/09	1:00 PM	Nathanael Greene Elem	773-525-4560	3525 South Honore Street	Chicago	IL	60609
4/14/09	9:00 AM	Murray Language Academy	773-535-0585	5335 South Kenwood Avenue	Chicago	IL	60615
4/14/09	1:00 PM	Medgar Evers Elem	773-535-2565	9811 South Lowe Ave.	Chicago	IL	60628
4/15/09	9:15 AM	Eli Whitney Schl	773-534-1560	2815 South Komensky Avenue	Chicago	IL	60623
4/15/09	1:00 PM	George Washington Elem	773-535-5010	3611 East 114th Street	Chicago	IL	60617
4/16/09	9:30 AM	Cooke Magnet Schl	847-599-3925	522 Belvidere Road	Waukegan	IL	60085
4/16/09	2:00 PM	Wesley Elem	630-628-4060	1111 Westwood Trail	Addison	IL	60101
4/17/09	9:00 AM	Beye Elem	708-524-3070	230 North Cuyler	Oak Park	IL	60302
4/17/09	1:00 PM	Highland Elem	847-888-5280	190 N Melrose Avenue	Elgin	IL	60123
4/20/09	1:00 PM	Caledonia Elem	815-765-2081	2311 Randolph Street	Caledonia	IL	61011
4/21/09	9:30 AM	Brookview Elem	815-229-2492	1750 Madron Road	Rockford	IL	61107
4/21/09	2:00 PM	Northside Elem	815-772-2153	520 North Genesse Street	Morrison	IL	61270
4/22/09	9:00 AM	Graham Elem	217-525-3220	900 W. Edwards	Springfield	IL	62704
4/22/09	1:30 PM	Fox Creek Elem	309-452-1143	3910 Timberwolf Trail	Bloomington	IL	61705
4/23/09	9:00 AM	Madison Elem	708-339-2117	15700 Orchid Drive	South Holland	IL	60473
4/23/09	1:15 PM	Lincoln Cultural Center	815-933-0700	240 Warren Avenue	Kankakee	IL	60901
4/24/09	9:00 AM	Parkside Elem	618-377-4100	600 East Central	Bethalto	IL	62010
4/24/09	1:45 PM	LeClaire Elem	618-656-3825	801 Franklin Avenue	Edwardsville	IL	62025
4/27/09	TBD	Gallatin County School	618-272-7008	5175 Highway 13	Junction	IL	62954

**To cover a performance, please contact:**

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## 2009 Who's Who in FOODPLAY

**Thomas Keegan** (Coach) is a graduate of the University of Delaware, where he received a bachelor's degree in English and Criminal Justice. He has performed professionally with Periwinkle Productions, Texas Shakespeare Festival, Delaware Shakespeare Festival, and the American Shakespeare Center. His favorite past roles include Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the Bishop of Winchester in *Henry VI Part 1*. Some of his hobbies are reading, writing, bass guitar, running, weightlifting, and other sports.

**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) 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.

**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."

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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.