

Barbados Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition
For Immediate Release

Thursday September 14th 2023

Healthy Hampers Back to School Edition Aimed at Packing Hampers on a Budget

The Barbados Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition (B-COP Coalition) has once again placed childrens' health as its top priority, this time with the donation of 120 packed healthy hampers, aimed at giving them healthy snacks for a week.

The implementation of the national school nutrition policy by the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training in April this year ushered in much national attention and debate across the island about the access to healthy food and its affordability. The leading voice advocating for the policy was B- COP C and given that back to school is usually a busy and expensive time for parents and guardians they have partnered with key sponsors to ensure they could provide these hampers.

Outgoing Chairperson of the B-COP Coalition Dr. Kia Lewis explained, "In light of the new National School Nutrition Policy, the Coalition is very happy to roll out this Healthy Hamper: Back to School Edition, which are both healthy and cost-effective. We are targeting children in our childrens' homes, at-risk youth, and our children in the Yute Gym of the Heart & Stroke Foundation."

Giving further details about the purpose of the initiative, Dr. Lewis, posited, "With this drive we wanted to show parents that it is possible to eat healthy on a budget. We know our schools have at least three water days, so the hampers have at least three bottles of water, an even cheaper way would be to buy a water bottle, you will also see several fruits in the hampers, given schools will be having two fruit days. Also, we have packed snacks as well, these are very reasonably priced and they would be compliant to the Alternative Snack and Beverage list, which shows the list of products on the market, which can be bought and given to our children for school."

The former Coalition Chair said, "We are just really pleased to roll out this initiative, and we are hoping it can help Barbadian parents to make good decisions when it comes to choices for their children while at school."

This is the second hamper drive of B-COP Coalition, with the first being in 2020 during the COVID-19 Pandemic, targeting Barbadians who have Non-Communicable Diseases, (NCDs) and would have been more susceptible to COVID-19 virus.

A number of partners and sponsors made the initiative possible including Signia Globe, Supreme Distributors, Guardian General and the Jesus Christ Church of the Latter Day Saints in Rendezvous where the hamper packing was done.

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Marketing Officer of Signia Globe Richelle Lucas stated, "We got a request and it was absolutely a no brainer for us to join with the Coalition. We know people think it is expensive to eat healthily, so we want to thank the Coalition for using these excellent examples of fruit and water. We are not saying that there are no snacks yes there is a snack in the hampers but moderation is the key. Additionally, being able to work with the Heart and Stroke Foundation and get our children active and getting them active from young, so it sticks with them is important." We are very happy to partner along with the Coalition and the other sponsors who have jumped on board for this worthy cause."

Meanwhile, Rhiyad Juman of Supreme Distributors said, "we are happy to give back to the community in this way by providing our 100 % natural Juices, our Fan juices and our crystal waters in order to provide for those children who may not know about the healthy options in Barbados. We are happy to help those who need the help."

Speaking about the sponsors and partners for the initiative, Dr. Kia Lewis said, "We are also very thankful to corporate Barbados, as we have been able to have sponsors on board, who have made this donation initiative possible. So we want to encourage corporate Barbados and other service groups to get involved with supporting children who are less fortunate, and other Barbadians in this process as we look to move our country at large toward a healthier way of living.

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