Subway Joins Michelle Obama's 'Let's Move' Campaign

DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Michelle Obama is getting a new ally in her campaign to get kids to eat more fruits and vegetables.

The first lady was expected to announce Thursday that the Subway sandwich chain will spend $41 million over three years to encourage finicky young eaters to eat more food that comes out of the ground or grows on trees. The announcement was being made at a Subway shop near the White House.

Subway will only offer a kids' menu that mirrors federal standards for school lunches. That includes offering apples on the side and low-fat or nonfat plain milk or water as a default beverage.

"It's a natural extension of what we do," Tony Pace, Subway's chief marketing officer, told The Associated Press in a telephone interview. The chain offers a line of lean-meat and vegetable sandwiches that have been certified by the American Heart Association, as well as a trio of breakfast sandwiches each with less than 200 calories.

Pace said the public is becoming more aware of nutrition and the need to make healthier food choices.

Subway's commitment follows a summit on food marketing to children that Mrs. Obama held at the White House last September. At the meeting, she urged the private sector, from food and beverage makers to media and entertainment companies, to do more to promote healthier foods to children.

A month after the gathering, Mrs. Obama announced that the nonprofit organization that produces TV's "Sesame Street" had agreed to let the produce industry use Elmo, Big Bird and its other furry characters free of charge in advertising and promotions to help encourage children to eat more fruits and vegetables.

Sam Kass, a White House chef and executive director of the first lady's "Let's Move" campaign, told The AP that Subway was "raising the bar for what a responsible, quick-service restaurant can do to help support the health of the nation."

Subway will work with the Partnership for a Healthier America, a nonprofit organization that works with the private sector to help advance the goals of "Let's Move." Mrs. Obama launched "Let's Move," a nationwide campaign against childhood obesity, in 2010, a year after becoming first lady.

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