



Jeb Bush  
Governor

John O. Agwunobi, M.D., M.B.A.  
Secretary

**PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

For immediate release:  
June 24, 2003

For more information, call:  
Elaine Fulton-Jones, 727-824-6908  
Director of Public Information



## Kids Get a Healthy Boost From Restaurants

The Pinellas County Health Department  
Asks Restaurants To  
Join Fight Against Childhood Obesity

ST. PETERSBURG -- Our Nation is facing a health crisis of obesity and, sadly, many of the victims are children. The rate of obesity in children has doubled in the last 20 years, according to the United States Surgeon General. Twenty percent of school-age kids are *obese*, not just overweight, and according to The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), childhood obesity has reached its highest level in 30 years.

Aware of this alarming trend, Pinellas County Health Department nutrition experts want to help bring about change for children in our community. Our nutritionists noticed the majority of items listed on many restaurant children's menus are high in fat and/or sugar content and decided to invite local restaurants to join in the fight against obesity in children and become a healthy food hero in our community.

Restaurants are enthusiastically saying "yes" to the idea and are featuring or adding healthier choices to their children's menus such as grilled or broiled meat and fish entrees and offering veggies, salad, fruit and rice as alternatives to French fries, the notorious children's staple. The idea is to give children and parents choices when they dine out. Some restaurants are helping to sell the idea with cute or funny names for the menu items and with attractive presentations. Participating restaurants are listed on the Pinellas County Health Department website at [www.pinellaswellness.com](http://www.pinellaswellness.com) as Healthy Kids Heroes along with other nutritional information for parents.

Pinellas restaurants on board are: **Dan Marino's, Dish, Mangos** at the North Redington Beach Hilton, the **Salt Rock Grill, Boulevard Bistro, Seminole Family Restaurant, Saffron's** and **Durango's** and **Subway's** at all their Pinellas locations. **Johnny Rockets** is offering veggie burgers and restaurants with healthy fare themes, such as **EVOS** and **Stone Soup Café**, signed on to the project to lend their support and send a message of health for Pinellas children. Restaurants expected on board soon are **Macaroni Grill, Leverock's** and **Roadhouse Grill**.

Participating restaurants receive a *Pinellas Healthy Kids Hero* decal for their front windows and special menu stickers for the healthy food items. The Health Department expects the project to grow as more parents and restaurants learn the benefits of healthy food choices for children. For more information about the project, please call Elaine Fulton-Jones at 727-824-6908. Restaurants can access the website to find out how to participate or call Nutritionist Marla Russell at 727-824-6900, ext. 11407.

--30--