Good afternoon, thank you Karin for your kind introduction. Its great to be here, and thank you to the International Association of Culinary Professionals for inviting me today.

Last week, the First Lady celebrated the first anniversary of a campaign to solve the problem of childhood obesity in a generation.

It was a celebration of a new conversation in this country about the health and well-being of our children.

It’s a conversation about what our kids eat and how they move.

It’s about how they feel…and how they feel about themselves.

And it’s about what that means, not just for their physical and emotional health, but for their success in school and in life.

And over this past year, we’ve seen the first signs of a fundamental shift in how we live and eat.

We’ve seen changes at every level of our society – from classrooms…to boardrooms…to the halls of Congress.

We have begun to see this change because people from all over the country, parents and teachers, doctors and small business owners have started demanding change, we have started to move in a different direction.

You see, that’s really what *Let’s Move!* is all about.

This started by the First Lady listening to what families were struggling with, and what they needed to ensure that kids are able to fulfill their hopes and dreams.

Parents asked for more fresh, nutritious food in communities.

So we’re working to bring more grocery stores into underserved areas.

Parents wanted healthier, more affordable options on those grocery store shelves.

So we collaborated with food companies and retailers to provide healthier products. For example Walmart promised to sell products with less sugar, salt and trans-fat – and to reduce prices on healthy items like fresh fruits and vegetables.

Parents asked for more information about the food you buy for your kids.

And today, we’re seeing better, clearer labels on beverage cans and you will see many other products with improved labeling in our grocery stores over the coming year.

Parents asked for better food in your kids’ schools – the kind of balanced meals they trying to make at home.

So we’re working to put salad bars in 6,000 schools across the country.

Congress passed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act…historic legislation that will provide healthier school meals to millions of American children.

Parents asked for healthier communities that can sustain healthy families.

And through Let’s Move Cities and Towns, 500 mayors have committed to tackling obesity in their communities.

They’re building bike paths…they’re planting gardens…they’re starting youth sports leagues…and so much more.

Parents asked for practical, affordable, real-life advice to keep kids healthy.

So we launched a public service campaign and a website – letsmove.gov – with helpful tips on exercise and nutrition.

The American Academy of Pediatrics is now urging doctors to not just screen kids for obesity, but to actually write out prescriptions for exercise and healthy eating.

And all of this has happened in just one year!

So if we can do all this in the first year…just imagine what we’ll achieve next year, and the year after that.

So we’re making some real progress here.

We’re gaining momentum.

But as far as we’ve come, when nearly one in three kids in this country is still overweight or obese…then we’ve still got a long way to go.

The truth is that today, we have more choices than ever about how we live and eat…but so many of those choices simply aren’t good for our kids.

And little by little…sometimes without us even noticing…those choices have started to add up.

Currently 1 in 3 kids are projected to develop diabetes in their lifetimes and we are currently spending 147 billion dollars treating obesity related conditions.

Believe it or not, right now, nearly 27 percent of 17-24 year-olds are too overweight to serve in our military.

The First Lady visited Fort Jackson down in South Carolina…it’s the largest facility in the country for training Army recruits.

She learned that the recruits they’re seeing today are the kids who were born back when public schools across the country started cutting physical education and sports.

And after years of inactivity and poor nutrition, the recruits are overweight…they’re out of shape…and they’re far more likely to injure themselves in basic training.

As a result, the Army is spending millions of dollars a year in medical and dental costs just to get trainees combat-ready.

So it’s now clear that the choices we’ve made aren’t just endangering our kids’ future – they’re endangering our country’s future as well.

In light of this, as a community of people who love and live food, we ought to step back and think about a simple question: Why do we eat?

The most common answer that I hear to that question, is we eat for pleasure and enjoyment. Eating is certainly an experience full of pleasure, in fact it sometimes seems my main source of pleasure, relaxation, entertainment, rest and relating to friends these days is dinner.…. But pleasure is not the primary reason we eat. The reason we eat is to nourish ourselves and sustain life. We eat to maintain our health.

The challenges to maintaining our health—specifically that of the next generation--is something that everyone can relate to.

The First Lady has asked all of us to step back and reflect how we can become part of the solution to the problems we face. As teachers and business people, parents and little league coaches, what can we do to make changes that will ensure our kids grow up to be healthy.

For us in the food world, we know there are lots of steps we can take. A quick look at some numbers illustrates some possibilities. All told, we’re eating 31 percent more calories than we were forty years ago – including 56 percent more fats and oils and 14 percent more sugars and sweeteners. Today, the average American is actually eating fifteen more pounds of sugar a year than in 1970. And we are consuming on average approximately twice as much sodium as recommended. So we know we need to cut down on sugar, salt and saturated fat. Food portions are two to five times bigger today than they used to be so we know there is room for change there. We know we need to find ways to serve more fruits, vegetables and whole grains because as a nation we are under consuming those critical parts of a healthy diet.

These kinds of changes will not come easily.  The efforts to change the composition of the food made and served is occurring within the context of the American palate, which has grown accustomed to foods that are sweet, rich and salty.  As a chef, I know that if I go into the kitchen tonight and take out half of the salt in a given dish, which is what the IOM says we need to do across the food system, I wouldn’t be cooking in the White House for very long.  But if over time I reduced the sodium little by little, the flavor profile would remain intact, the folks I cook for would continue to enjoy my food.  The same is true for the food we’re served in restaurants and the products we buy. If industry is asked for changes that result in people not eating their products, industry is not going to go along.  We must work together to produce healthier foods that Americans will eat.

But possibly the most effective tool we have at our disposal to improve the health of our kids and our country just might be the time honored tradition of cooking…. One if the greatest challenges we face is figuring out how to put healthy food on the table at an affordable price. For my chef friends out there, like Bill Telepan whom you get to hear from in a moment, we have been given the knowledge to put together quality meals that don’t cost that much. We need to work to make sure that American families have the information and skills they need to cook healthy meals for their children.

Another way the food world, and chefs in particular can engage is through the First Lady’s Chefs Move to Schools Program. This program pairs chefs with interested schools in local communities.  Chefs are uniquely positioned with their deep knowledge of food and cooking, their relationships with farmers and their star power to engage in our schools and have a lasting impact. While many have struggled for generations to get kids to eat vegetables, I have seen time and time again, chefs actually getting kids excited about vegetables. (\*Garden) The First Lady is looking to tap into that power to help schools become healthier places. So far we have over 2,000 chefs signed up across the country which is exciting. Chefs are helping students learn where food comes from, planting gardens, working in school cafeterias and helping kids develop healthy habits We are seeing great progress. (Orlando)

So if you havent already signed up, please go to letsmove.gov to sign up. If you have signed up we need to know that you have matched with a school so please make sure you are going back to the website to let us know that you have registered. Once you do that, All Clad has donated fantastic toolkits for chefs to do cooking demos with. But we cant get these to you until you are matched.

This is hard. Schools are tough places to get into. There will certainly be many roadblocks and set backs. But we need to keep working to break through and work in a collaborative way, building on the successes of the school. With dedication and perseverance, I am confident that we will look back and feel a great sense of pride that through our collective efforts, we were able to ensure our youngest generation once again was given a chance to live a healthy and vibrant lives.

Thank you….