



## Value [the] Meal Farmer's Market Action Guide

Thank you for taking action to challenge corporate abuse of our food, and the harm caused by the fast food industry to our health and the environment!

Value [the] Meal is calling on fast food corporations to value our health – and the health of our children – over short-term profits. We are in the midst of a public health crisis, with two-thirds of American adults already overweight or obese, and one-third of American children now obese. In fact, rates of childhood obesity have tripled since 1980, putting millions of kids at risk for diabetes and other chronic, diet-related conditions associated with being extremely overweight. **If we don't change course, one out of every three of the children born in the year 2000 will go on to develop type 2 diabetes in their lifetimes.** This is primarily a result of poor diet – with corporations like McDonald's marketing some of the unhealthiest food to our kids and teens.

That's why we're starting by exposing the dangerous reality behind the all-American image of fast food. We're mobilizing people to demand that these corporations stop their irresponsible and dangerous actions. And you can help!

**By going to your local farmer's market and signing up 25 friends and neighbors, you can help build a powerful corps of volunteers and activists to challenge fast food industry abuses all across the country.**

**And to help get you going, we are offering a stylish, fair trade, recycled cotton Value [the] Meal tote bag for every 25 friends and neighbors you sign up for Value [the] Meal!**



Value [the] Meal is challenging corporate abuse of our food and galvanizing support for healthy, sustainable food systems. The campaign is a project of Corporate Accountability International, a membership organization that protects people by waging and winning campaigns and challenging irresponsible and dangerous corporate actions around the world. For more information about the organization and the campaign, check out [www.ValueTheMeal.org](http://www.ValueTheMeal.org).

## **Campaign Details**

**Value [the] Meal is mobilizing people all around the country to get McDonald's and the other fast food industry giants to stop abusive actions that fuel the global epidemic of childhood obesity and diet-related disease. We are calling on the industry to:**

### **1) Stop fast food advertising, promotion and sponsorship that appeals to children and teenagers**

Studies show that increased exposure to food marketing causes kids to eat more. Fast food giants know this, and work hard to hook our kids when they're young, hoping to gain loyal customers for life. They do this by every means available, including:

- Targeting locations to be near schools – Fast food giants like McDonald's aim to be the before, during and after-school destination for kids and adolescents, by siting restaurants close to schools;
- Product tie-ins with kid's favorite cartoons, athletes and other celebrities – from Happy Meals with Shrek to Ronald McDonald, the industry ties their brand to characters kids love;
- Targeting children and adolescents on social networking sites, like Facebook – even sending promotional text messages right to their phones.

### **2) Stop manipulating public health policy**

Fast food giants keep their products cheap and widely available by greasing the wheels of public policy. We're calling on Big Fast Food to stay out of the policy process, and let health and nutrition experts do their job, and keep our children healthy. By fighting common-sense fast food menu labeling initiatives and transfat bans, McDonald's and other fast food corporations put their profits ahead of our health and well-being.

### **3) Provide complete, accurate and non-promotional information about the health risks of fast food.**

How much salt is in that Big Mac? What exactly is in that shake? Are those items that seem healthier really any better for you? If Big Fast Food has its way, you might never find out; they hope you won't think about the long-term health consequences of eating these foods high in fat, sugar and sodium. We're calling on the industry to let nutrition experts and policy makers warn people about the true health effects of eating fast food.

## **Description of Event**

Signing up people at a farmer's market is easy. Bring an ironing board to use as a table, bring a friend or two, and you're ready to go! Sign people up by using our easy "rap" for talking to folks about the campaign (see below).

### **Event Goals:**

- Recruit and train 1-5 other volunteers to help collect petition signatures
- Generate 10-15 signatures per person per hour
- Win a Value [the] Meal tote bag, when you get 25 people to sign onto our letter to McDonald's with complete information – see below for details!

As a campaign volunteer coordinator, you are a critical component of Value [the] Meal. By signing up 25 new people, your participation will help to:

#### **1. Create direct pressure on the fast food industry**

There is no pressure more direct than citizen activism! Each person who signs up is important and helps establish a stronger campaign, putting pressure on McDonald's and helping us alert policy makers that people are ready for change. Getting just 25 new petition signers in your town helps us create a powerful base of support to challenge Big Fast Food!

#### **2. Raise the visibility of Value [the] Meal, and help build our grassroots network!**

In the coming months, we will challenge the fast food industry through increasing grassroots action, to stop fast food marketing and political interference in our local communities. With every local event, the campaign becomes more visible, putting us one step closer to changing public attitudes about the abuses of the industry.

### **Prepping the Event:**

- ☑ Scout and decide on the location for the event. The most important thing is for it to be in a highly visible area with a lot of foot traffic. We strongly suggest farmer's markets, as they are a perfect location to find individuals concerned about our food system. Other possibilities include: In front of food co-ops, a natural foods store, or at a local festival, town square, or busy college campus.
- ☑ Get any necessary permissions to collect signatures – you may want to ask the week before you plan to go if permission will be necessary and, if so, whom to contact.
- ☑ Find a friend! Try to recruit at least one friend to help you – it'll make it much more fun, and you'll get more signatures more quickly.
- ☑ Choose the date and time of your event. You want to set up when there will be the most traffic. Weekends tend to be good, as is lunch time and evening commuter time.
- ☑ Compile the materials and confirm volunteer schedules the day before the event.
- ☑ Practice the "rap" with your friend(s) before you go out so that you're comfortable talking about the campaign before you head out.
- ☑ Sign your name and enter all of your information on the first petition line of every Value [the] Meal petition page. This lets us know who is to thank for their hard work and it encourages people to fill out the entire form (which is important). Don't forget to check the "Get more involved" box, so that others do the same!

### **Materials:**

- ☑ An ironing board to use as a table – light-weight and easy to carry and set up. If you can't find one, use a portable table or you can stand in a good location with a clipboard and fewer materials.
- ☑ Value [the] Meal petition sheets – print out five copies for every hour you will petition (see below)
- ☑ Sample raps for obtaining signatures – one for each volunteer (see below)
- ☑ Clipboards with pens attached by string (so you don't lose them) – one for each volunteer
- ☑ Volunteer schedule with phone numbers
- ☑ 15-20 Value [the] Meal fact sheets – download at [www.ValueTheMeal.org](http://www.ValueTheMeal.org) under “Resources.”
- ☑ Green and yellow balloons (optional) – a fun thing to tape to your ironing board to draw passersby.
- ☑ One decorated sign to catch attention of passer-bys. Some possible sign slogans:
  - “What is McDonald's hiding?”
  - “Get fast food nation out of our education”
  - “McDonald's, stop clowning around with our kids' health”

### **During the Event:**

- ☑ Make sure your volunteers are briefed on the campaign and know what to do.
- ☑ Get all volunteers to sign in and report how many folks they signed up at the end of the shift.
- ☑ Approach passersby to ask them to join you in standing up against fast food corporations.
- ☑ Strongly encourage individuals to check the “get more involved” box, so we can contact them for important news or upcoming events, and build our grassroots network!
- ☑ If you have at least one other volunteer with you, try having one of you bring folks over to the ironing board, while the other signs them up. *“Hi there, do you eat fast food? Great! My friend Anna over here at the ironing board will tell you about a campaign that you should know about.”*

### **Wrapping up the Event:**

- 1) Turn in your Value [the] Meal petition pages by mailing them to:  
Corporate Accountability International  
Attention: Value [the] Meal Campaign, 10 Milk St., Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108
- 2) For every 25 usable signatures you get, you will receive a Value [the] Meal tote bag, perfect for shopping at the farmer's market! A usable signature needs to have the signer's complete information filled out (full name, address, phone and email address) and must have the “Yes, I want to get more involved” box checked off by the signer.
- 3) Call to thank your volunteers and give them your final totals.

### **Tips on How to Run a Good Event:**

- Don't be shy. If you have an ironing board, stand in front of it instead of behind. Approach people with a smile and an assumptive demeanor.
- Ask everyone; don't assume that they won't sign without asking. You will be surprised how many people will say yes to participating.
- Create a buzz. Liven it up with good visuals and friendly people to draw people over.
- Expect that half of the people who committed to volunteering will show up and plan accordingly.
- Ask people to put all their information on the petition and check the box to get more involved. There are many ways to get involved in the future and we will need their help!

## SAMPLE RAP FOR RECRUITING PEOPLE TO ECHO OUR DEMANDS TO THE FAST FOOD INDUSTRY

- I. **Introduction** Hi, there, do you eat fast food?
- Never! – Great, you’re just the type of person I want to talk to!
  - Sometimes (or other indecisive response) – Great! You really need to know about this campaign on fast food!
  - All the time! – Great! You really need to know about this campaign on fast food!
- II. **Problem** We have an epidemic of childhood obesity. Our kids are getting diseases [like diabetes] that used to primarily affect adults, while fast food corporations like McDonald’s are making tremendous profits. They do this by targeting our kids with manipulative marketing, interfering in public policy, and doing their best to hide the nutritional information we could use to make healthier choices.
- III. **Solution** (*Put clipboard in their hand.*) It is part of a campaign called Value [the] Meal that calls on the fast food industry to value our kids’ health over short-term profits.
- IV. **Commitment** Will you sign on to our letter to the McDonald’s CEO?
- V. **Catapult** Thank you so much for helping! Also, we have exciting and ambitious campaign plans. Just check the “Get More Involved” box, and we can keep you updated on our progress and ways you can take action! (*Point to the box.*)

### *Useful Fast Facts:*

- *One out of every five public schools in the United States now serves brand name fast food for lunch.*
- *In a 2007 study, preschool children reported that food – from chicken nuggets to broccoli – tasted better when wrapped in McDonald’s wrappers than in plain wrappers.*
- *The average child sees about 20,000 fast food commercials every year.*
- *In 2006, fast food restaurants sold more than 1.2 billion kids meals with toys.*

