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Sara Lee Cooking Up a Good Deed for a Good Cause

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NEW YORK -- Sara Lee is going back to school with a cause-marketing effort to put badly needed school supplies in the hands of needy kids.

The food company is earmarking up to \$1 million worth of supplies to come from a percentage of sales of leading Sara Lee brands like Ball Park, Jimmy Dean and Hillshire Farm to be donated to The School, Home & Office Products Association's (SHOPA) Kids in Need Foundation, from Aug. 21 to Sept. 30.

Sara Lee is the first food marketer to team up with the group, but beverage marketers like Coca-Cola have been making unspecified monetary donations to the group for several years. Coke also sponsors one of the group's many outreach centers around the country.

"There are over 13 million children living below the poverty line in this country, and for the millions of families who are already struggling financially, school supplies are one of the main items that they simply are without," said Jon Harris, vp-public relations for Sara Lee Food & Beverage.

SHOPA, the trade group for the school and office-products industry, established the Kids in Need Foundation 10 years ago as well as the first Kids in Need Resource Center in Chicago.

Now with 21 Resource Centers, teachers from low-income schools visit the center to "shop" for free supplies. "Teachers and principals report to us that when students have the supplies they need, absenteeism drops dramatically, children's behavior in the classrooms improves and test scores rise," said Paul Bierhaus, senior vp of Lockermate and chair of the SHOPA Kids in Need Foundation Board of Directors.

To support the program, Sara Lee will drop 42 million FSI on Aug. 21, and will have its retail grocer partners to promote the Kids in Need effort with in-store events, circular ads and in-store signage.

--Sonia Reyes

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