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On World Children's Day, Mary's Meals Underscores the Importance of School Feeding to Uphold Rights

From nourishment to knowledge, Mary's Meals provides daily school meals and access to education—offering children a powerful path out of poverty and hope for the future.

Bloomfield, N.J. — Tuesday, November 18, 2025 — U.N. [World Children's Day](#) on November 20 is a global call to action, raising awareness of children's rights and inspiring efforts and action to build a better future for every child. In a year marked by ongoing conflict, displacement, poverty, disrupted education, and widespread hunger—even famine in some regions—children often bear the heaviest burden.

For 23 years, global school-feeding charity Mary's Meals has worked to uphold two fundamental rights: access to food and education. [Mary's Meals](#) believes this promise can be fulfilled. In a world that produces enough food to feed everyone, no child should go hungry. Today, the organization serves daily school meals to more than 3 million children across 16 countries at an average cost of just \$25 per child for an entire school year.

The U.N.'s theme this year urges action to uphold children's rights, recognizing them as essential human rights. Mary's Meals founder and CEO Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow reinforced this principle in his address at the first [Vatican Summit on Children's Rights](#) earlier this year.

"In his speech, Magnus highlighted that for the world's poorest children, the rights to food and education are inseparable. School meals not only uphold these fundamental rights but also support others," said Mary's Meals USA Executive Director, Terry Bonet.

"He outlined that school meal programs do not need to remain reliant on outside aid forever. In fact, by supporting the emergence of an educated young workforce, they play a key role in setting communities free from dependence on aid and helping to build economies that can eventually support their own provision of school meals," Bonet said.

She added, "Our work in the U.S. to bring attention, create opportunities, and support school feeding programs amplifies this vision by fueling the resources and advocacy needed to make these school feeding programs possible worldwide."

Globally, Mary's Meals partners with communities in areas of greatest need to establish locally led programs that reduce hunger, boost enrollment, support children's well-being, and ease pressure on food-insecure households.

This World Children's Day, Mary's Meals reaffirms that every child has the right to health, safety, education, and development and, most importantly, the "right to hope." Hope for a future where they can reach their full potential.

— ENDS —

About Mary's Meals

Now in its 23rd year, Mary's Meals is a global movement that sets up school-feeding programs in some of the world's most vulnerable communities, where conflict, poverty and hunger often prevent children from gaining an education. Mary's Meals works with in-country volunteers and trusted partners to provide one daily nutritious meal in a place of learning to bring children into the classroom to receive an education. This simple solution to help end world hunger also enables children to lift themselves from the cycle of hunger and poverty.

Mary's Meals began by feeding 200 children in Malawi in 2002. Today, the organization feeds more than 3 million children every school day in over 5,800 schools in the following countries: Benin, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Haiti, India, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Mary's Meals is part of the global School Meals Coalition, an emerging initiative of governments and partners to drive actions that can urgently reestablish, improve, and scale up food and education systems. For more information about Mary's Meals, visit marysmealsusa.org.

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