



protecting communities
from commercialism

October 13, 2003

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Gary E. Knell
President and Chief Executive Officer
Sesame Workshop
1 Lincoln Plaza
New York NY 10023
Via telecopier: (212) 875-6088

Dear Mr. Knell:

As you know, the Sesame Workshop has begun showing "sponsorship messages" for McDonald's with its popular children's program, Sesame Street.

It is understandable why McDonald's would seek access to Sesame Street's audience of impressionable young children. But why you would deliver these children to the corporation is another question. Parents entrust their children to you because they believe you are trustworthy. We doubt that enticing kids with junk food is part of that trust.

McDonald's is the world's largest fast food chain. It pushes exactly the kinds of high calorie offerings that have helped to cause an epidemic of childhood obesity and soaring incidence of type 2 diabetes.

Regrettably, Sesame Street has now become yet another advertising vehicle for McDonald's to hook a new generation of children on its high calorie junk food.

Is it really the proper role of Sesame Street to seduce young children to nag their parents to take them to McDonalds? Should you not promote healthful eating habits rather than junk food eating habits? Which do you think the parents who entrust their children to you would prefer?

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We ask you to remove these McDonald's "sponsorship messages" from Sesame Street immediately.

Sincerely,

Enola G. Aird, Director, The Motherhood Project, Institute for American Values
Kelly D. Brownell, PhD, Professor and Chair of Psychology, Yale University; Director, Yale Center for Eating and Weight Disorders; author, *Food Fight*
Brian A. Burt, Professor, Department of Epidemiology, University of Michigan; Director, Program in Dental Public Health
Brita Butler-Wall, PhD, Executive Director, Citizens' Campaign for Commercial-Free Schools
Nancy Carlsson-Paige, EdD, Professor of Child Development, Lesley University
Greg Critser, author, *Fat Land: How Americans Became the Fattest People in the World*
Ronnie Cummins, National Director, Organic Consumers Association
Donald R. Davis, PhD, Research Associate in Nutrition, Biochemical Institute, University of Texas
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Sut Jhally, Founder and Executive Director, The Media Education Foundation
David L. Katz, MD, MPH, FACPM, Associate Clinical Professor of Public Health & Medicine, Yale University School of Medicine; Director, Yale Prevention Research Center
Francine Kaufman, MD, Professor of Pediatrics, Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California
Jean Kilbourne, author, *Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel*
Velma LaPoint, PhD, Associate Professor of Child Development, School of Education, Howard University
Frances Moore Lappe, author, *Diet for a Small Planet*, co-author, *Hope's Edge*
Diane Levin, Professor of Education, Wheelock College, author, *Remote Control Childhood*
Robert McChesney, Research Professor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; author, *Rich Media, Poor Democracy*
Jim Metrock, President, Obligation, Inc.
Mark Crispin Miller, Professor of Media Ecology, New York University
Alex Molnar, Professor of Education Policy, Arizona State University; Director, Education Policy Studies Laboratory; author, *Giving Kids the Business*
Diane M. Morrison, Professor and Associate Dean for Research, School of Social Work, University of Washington
Robert K. Musil, PhD, MPH, Executive Director and CEO, Physicians for Social Responsibility
Marion Nestle, PhD, MPH, Professor and Chair, Department of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health, New York University; author, *Food Politics* and *Safe Food*

Harold Pollack, PhD, Associate Professor of Social Service Administration, University of Chicago

Eric Rimm, ScD, Associate Professor of Epidemiology and Nutrition, Harvard School of Public Health

Vicki Robin, coauthor, *Your Money or Your Life*

Gary Ruskin, Executive Director, Commercial Alert

Donald Shifrin, MD, Clinical Professor of Pediatrics, University of Washington School of Medicine

Victor Strasburger, MD, Professor of Pediatrics, Chief, Division of Adolescent Medicine, University of New Mexico School of Medicine; co-author, *Children, Adolescents, & the Media*

V. Susan Villani, MD, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Johns Hopkins Medical School

cc: The Honorable John McCain
The Honorable Ernest Hollings
The Honorable Conrad Burns
The Honorable Billy Tauzin
The Honorable John Dingell
The Honorable Fred Upton
The Honorable Edward Markey
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