

PRESS RELEASE

The Program on Food Aid and Promotion of Healthy Nutrition – DIATROFI standing for children for the 7th consecutive school year - One in two children come from families facing food insecurity

October 11, 2017 - On Monday, October 16, 2017, World Food Day, the Program on Food Aid and Promotion of Healthy Nutrition – **DIATROFI** begins to daily provide healthy meals to thousands of children. The Prolepsis Institute continues to respond through purposeful interventions to the problem thousands of children face on a global scale and in Greece regarding access to safe and quality food. For the 7th consecutive year, the Institute, with Funding Donor the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, implements the **DIATROFI** Program in public schools of underprivileged areas of Greece, where one in two children come from families facing food insecurity.

The **DIATROFI** Program has distributed **more than 14 million** meals in **593 schools** and almost **110,500 students throughout Greece** since 2012. According to data collected in school year 2016-2017 in schools which participated in the **DIATROFI** Program and are located in underprivileged areas, more than half of the students (61.1%) face food insecurity, while one in four students (24.7%) face food insecurity and hunger. More than 9 in 10 parents (93.7%) want the Program to continue, as they believe that it offers financial support to families. 51.4% of the families state that at least one parent has no income and 20.3% state that there is no source of income available in the family. Moreover, last year 9% of the households underwent a power cut that lasted over a week.

According to data provided by Prolepsis Institute, the daily provision of healthy meals to children is an effective response to food insecurity and hunger and to children's physical and psychological health. More particularly, by the end of the school year 2016-2017, 18.5% less families reported to be facing food insecurity in contrast to the numbers recorded at the beginning of the school year, while 35.5% less families reported to be facing both food insecurity and hunger. Furthermore, 29.4% of the students that did not have normal weight at the beginning of the school year reported to returning to normal weight at the end of the Program. Improvements were also reported to the physical health of 33.6% of the students and to the psychological health of 36.3%. Further research brought to light that the improvement noted in sectors connected with the students' quality of life was more significant in the cases of children facing food insecurity, with or without hunger, as well as in cases of overweight or obese children.

Prolepsis Institute will keep providing healthy meals daily also during this school year with the support of institutions, organizations, bodies, companies and hundreds of individual citizens from Greece and abroad that have embraced the efforts made by the **DIATROFI** Program. Due to the ever-growing need, Prolepsis Institute calls everyone, as well as the regional and local

authorities, to contribute to this important task and to support children and families in need. It is worth noting that the local government administration of the Region of Sterea Ellada and of the Municipality of North Kynouria have actively participated in the Program with great results.

The Stavros Niarchos Foundation, Funding Donor of the Program since the beginning its implementation, offers matching funding and doubles each donation gathered with the goal to provide healthy meals to even more children.

The **DIATROFI** Program was implemented last year in 184 schools in the regions of Attica, Thessaloniki, Imathia, Thrace, Magnesia, Sterea Ellada, North Kynouria and provided healthy meals to 14,115 students. **1,381,738 healthy meals** were provided in total, which included among others: 1,438,847 baked goods or pies, 572,256 milk cartons, 185,920 yogurt packages and 1,415,855 fruits.

For more information you can visit our websites www.diatrofi.proleptis.gr and www.proleptis.gr or contact Mr. Yannis Koutelidas at the number: 210-6255700 (int. 104) or at the number: 6936631702.

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*The Institute of Preventive Medicine, Environmental and Occupational Health, **Proleptis**, is a scientific, non-profit organization, active in the field of public health since 1990. Mission of the Institute is to respond to the challenges of public health in Greece and in Europe by conducting academic research and applying the results on humanitarian and educational actions, which aim to fight poverty and social exclusion and to contribute to the promotion of a healthy lifestyle for the vulnerable parts of the population. Under its humanitarian actions the Institute **Proleptis** is implementing the Program on Food Aid and Promotion of Healthy Nutrition – **DIATROFI** since 2012.*

*The **DIATROFI** Program promotes in practice healthy nutrition both through meals that are prepared in accordance with strict specifications and through specialised educational actions. This way the Program contributes significantly to the development of healthy nutritional habits and is considered a long-term social investment on a large scale, having children as its main recipients that soon enough are going to become the adult population of Greece.*