

PRESS RELEASE

# National Basketball Players Association and Tom Gores' FlintNOW Partner With Pediatric Public Health Initiative to Improve Access to Healthy Food for Flint Families.

## 8,000 Nutrition Backpacks to be Distributed Through Flint Public Schools on June 6.

June 1, 2016

Packs Will Provide Important Health Information and \$240,000 in Gift Certificates for the Flint Farmers' Market

FLINT, Mich. – June 1, 2016 – The National Basketball Players Association (NBPA) and Tom Gores' FlintNOW initiative today announced a partnership with the Michigan State University-Hurley Children's Hospital Pediatric Public Health Initiative to give Flint families better access to healthy food.

In connection with the partnership, 8,000 "nutrition backpacks" will be distributed on June 6 to Flint public school children in grades K-6. Each bag will include \$15 in Flint Farmers' Market gift certificates (three \$5 gift certificates), information about healthy eating, nutrition and lead, and a mini basketball. Every \$5 certificate redeemed will be rewarded on site with a second \$5 gift certificate for a later visit to encourage families to build sustainable healthy eating habits, bringing the total value of each bag to \$30.

Funding for the program is being provided by the NBPA Foundation and by Mr. Gores, owner of the Detroit Pistons and a Flint native who created FlintNOW as a private sector initiative to support a broad range of short and long-term relief efforts.

Mr. Gores praised the NBPA Foundation and NBA players from around the country for their continued support of Flint during the water crisis.

"One of the best ways to help kids and their families in Flint right now is to put more healthy food on the table," said Mr. Gores. "Our team in Detroit and NBA players throughout the league have really been stepping up to support Flint and this is another program that will make a big difference."

"Our players are committed to the health of the children and families of Flint," said Sherrie Deans, Executive Director of the NBPA Foundation. "This initiative is the first step in providing long term access to healthier food options, and a healthier future."

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The Pediatric Public Health Initiative was formed by Michigan State University and Hurley Children's Hospital to address the Flint community's population-wide lead exposure and help all Flint children grow up healthy and strong. The initiative is led by Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, director of the pediatric residency at Hurley Children's Hospital and assistant professor of pediatrics at Michigan State University College of Human Medicine.

According to Dr. Hanna-Attisha, foods that are high in iron, calcium and vitamin C can help mitigate the impact of lead poisoning in children. Moreover, she said, better nutrition is good for all children and families, whether they have been exposed to lead or not.

"More access to nutritious foods will not only help our children today, it will make them healthy for many years to come," Hanna-Attisha said. "This partnership will help make sure our kids have a bright, healthy future."

Operational support for the nutrition backpack distribution is being provided by the Flint Farmers' Market, Red Cross, United Way, the Flint public schools and many individual volunteers.

The Detroit Pistons will also help distribute the packs and encourage children and families to redeem the Farmers' Market gift certificates. Pistons legends Rick Mahorn and Earl Cureton, as well as Pistons mascot Hooper and members of the Pistons entertainment teams are expected to help support the program.

Participating schools include: Madison Academy, Richfield Public School Academy and Early Learning Academy, Brownell/Holmes Elementary, Doyle/Rider Elementary, Linden Charter Academy, Pierce Elementary, Durant-Tuuri-Mott Elementary, Woodland Park Academy, Eisenhower Elementary, Grand Blanc Academy and preschool, Freemont Elementary, Neithercut Elementary, Potter Elementary, Eagle's Nest Academy, Summerfield Head Start, Manley Early Childhood Education Center and Cathedral of Faith.

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#### **ABOUT THE NBPA**

The National Basketball Players Association (NBPA) is the union for current professional basketball players in the National Basketball Association (NBA). Established in 1954, the NBPA mission is to ensure that the rights of NBA players are protected and that every conceivable measure is taken to assist players in maximizing their opportunities and achieving their goals, both on and off the court.

#### **ABOUT FLINTNOW**

The FlintNOW Foundation ([www.FlintNOW.org](http://www.FlintNOW.org)) was created by Tom Gores, Chairman and CEO of Platinum Equity ([www.platinumequity.com](http://www.platinumequity.com)) and owner of the Detroit Pistons, to provide private sector support for immediate relief efforts during the water crisis in Flint, Michigan, and for long-term programs focused on economic development, nutrition and health care for residents of the city.

#### **ABOUT THE MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY-HURLEY CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL PEDIATRIC PUBLIC HEALTH INITIATIVE**

The Michigan State University-Hurley Children's Hospital Pediatric Public Health Initiative was established to address the Flint community's population-wide water lead exposure with a focus on education, nutrition and medical/health. The Initiative aims to help all Flint children grow up healthy and strong, bringing together experts in pediatrics, child development, psychology, epidemiology, nutrition, toxicology, geography and education, and includes the Genesee County Health Department, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and MSU Extension. For more information, please visit [humanmedicine.msu.edu/pphi](http://humanmedicine.msu.edu/pphi).

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**FlintNOW.org**