September 16, 2014

Mr. Scott Bergren  
Chief Executive Officer  
Pizza Hut, Inc.  
7100 Corporate Drive  
Plano, TX 75024

Ms. Leslie Tubbs  
Director  
BOOK IT! Program  
9920 E. Harry Street, Suite 114  
Wichita, KS 67207

Mr. Doug Terfehr  
Director, Pizza Hut Corporate Social Responsibility  
Pizza Hut, Inc.  
7100 Corporate Drive  
Plano, TX 75024

Re: Pizza Hut’s Marketing to Children, including through the BOOK IT! Program

Dear Mr. Bergren, Ms. Tubbs, and Mr. Terfehr:

We are writing to encourage Pizza Hut to stop promoting low-nutrition food through the BOOK IT! program.

Although encouraging reading is a laudable goal, there is no reason to do it at the expense of children’s health. Using food as a reward can undermine children’s diets and cultivate unhealthy eating habits, particularly when the food is of poor nutritional value. The BOOK IT! Program exposes children to marketing in schools and encourages unhealthy eating.

In light of continued high levels of child obesity, we strongly urge Pizza Hut to adopt a comprehensive marketing policy and set nutrition standards for all food marketing to children ages 14 and under, including through programs like BOOK IT!. Your policy should cover all types of marketing aimed at children ages 14 and under, including advertising through television, print, radio, and on the Internet; marketing in schools; and the use of licensed characters on food packages.

One way that Pizza Hut could signal its sincerity in protecting children from marketing for low-nutrition foods would be to join McDonald’s, Burger King, and other companies as a member of the Council of Better Business Bureaus’ (BBB) Children’s Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI). Working through the BBB framework can add credibility and transparency to your efforts.
The time to act is now. Schools across the country are now implementing “Smart Snack” standards to limit fast food, cookies, candy, and other unhealthy foods and beverages in schools. A proposed rule from the U.S. Department of Agriculture also will require school districts, as part of their local school wellness policy, to implement policies for the marketing of foods and beverages on school campuses, in elementary, middle schools, and high schools, consistent with nutrition standards for “Smart Snacks.”

Feeding kids well is a shared responsibility. Parents and food companies both have a role to play. We hope that Yum Brands will take this important and positive step towards addressing childhood obesity, and we look forward to hearing your plans to better address food marketing to children.

Sincerely,

Michael F. Jacobson, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Margo G. Wootan, D.Sc.
Director, Nutrition Policy

cc: Elaine Kolish, Children’s Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative
Jonathan Blum, Yum! Brands