



October 16, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Bonnie Michaels at 847-308-0919; John de Graaf at 206-443-6747

TAKE BACK YOUR TIME CAMPAIGN ENCOURAGES 'GETTING BACK TO THE TABLE' THIS OCTOBER 24th!

SEATTLE, WA. The family dinner table stands empty. The card table collects dust in the closet. Cafes serve their drinks to go. In response, the US/Canadian Take Back Your Time campaign is calling for Americans and Canadians to "get back to the table!" this October 24th. October 24th is **Take Back Your Time Day**, the annual national series of events calling attention to the epidemic of time poverty and what can be done about it. Take Back Your Time is also partnering with Panera Bread® on a campaign called *Reclaim Dinnertime*.

"Due to increasing time pressures and a fast, stressed-out pace of life, Americans are neglecting relationships – not taking enough time for family, friends, community, and civic engagement," explains Take Back Your Time national coordinator John de Graaf. "So this year for *Take Back Your Time Day* we are reminding people about the joys and benefits of gathering around the table – from the dining room table to the card table to the picnic table, the ping pong table and the restaurant table."

October 24th will be the fourth annual *Take Back Your Time Day*. The date was set nine weeks from the end of the year to represent the nine more weeks (350 hours) the average American works compared to the average Western European. Events and activities are planned across the country, highlighting the importance of getting back to the table and reclaiming free time.

Take Back Your Time representatives point to research that shows strong, caring bonds are the primary ingredient for well-being. Yet recent studies report that Americans have fewer and fewer intimate friends, partly due to excessive work and other demands on their time.

"'Having people over' has been reduced by nearly half in the last forty years. Instead, we're eating fast foods alone in our cars, bringing a crisis in health and obesity and loneliness," says Cecile Andrews, author of *Slow is Beautiful*.

"It puts our democracy at risk," adds Take Back Your Time program director Gretchen Burger. "Who has the time to gather around the discussion table hashing over the ideas and events of the day? Robert Putnam, author of *Bowling Alone*, notes that the culture in which people talk with each other is the culture in which people vote. Educator John Dewey said that democracy begins in conversation."

On October 24th, Take Back Your Time members will be engaged in various activities encouraging a return to the table. Some activists plan to set up tables in public places encouraging passersby to "Save Our Suppers." Joe Robinson, leader of the effort, warns that "if current trends continue we may soon be seeing the Last American Supper."

In support of *Take Back Your Time Day*, Panera Bread, with bakery-cafes nationwide, is joining the call to get back to the table. Panera Bread will be launching a new website: www.reclaimdinnertime.com on October 18, 2006 to coincide with *Take Back Your Time Day* and the release of its new handcrafted pizza, Crispani®, which will be available exclusively at

participating Panera bakery-cafes after 4pm. The *Reclaim Dinnertime* website will offer additional tools and strategies for getting families back to the table.

“Time for family meals has disappeared as parents work long hours and kids scurry to activities intended to beef up their college applications,” says William Doherty, a professor of family studies at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Doherty, spokesperson for the *Reclaim Dinnertime* campaign, also points out that “shared family meals are a leading predictor of how well students do in school.”

“From the homespun ideal of ‘kitchen table wisdom’ to the religious ideal of ‘table fellowship,’ gathering around the table has a long tradition,” says Bonnie Michaels, a Take Back Your Time board member. “Coming together with others brings us feelings of security, belonging, and self-respect. We feel more cared for and we become more caring and healthier.”

Take Back Your Time (www.timeday.org) has a team of experts available to answer all media questions about these issues. Contact John de Graaf at 206-443-6747, or Bonnie Michaels at 847-308-0919.

About Take Back Your Time

Take Back Your Time is a national organization addressing the issues of overwork, overscheduling and time poverty. Offering a range of solutions from personal to cultural to workplace to policy, Take Back Your Time supports reclaiming time for family and relationships, health and exercise, and volunteering and community. October 24th is Take Back Your Time Day, an annual event to create a national dialogue about the costs of overwork and overscheduling and to celebrate slowing down and taking back time. "Let's get back to the table!" is the theme for this year's Take Back Your Time Day celebration. Take Back Your Time is an initiative of the Simplicity Forum and a project of the Center for Religion, Ethics and Social Policy at Cornell University. For more information, visit www.timeday.org.

About Panera

Panera Bread serves fresh baked, handcrafted artisan breads, sweet and savory baked goods, hand-tossed salads, wholesome soups, and signature sandwiches in a distinctly warm and welcoming environment. Panera Bread is committed to using high quality ingredients in the food they offer, and making a lasting contribution to the neighborhoods in which their customers and employees live and work through programs like Operation Dough-Nation. Headquartered in Richmond Heights, MO, Panera Bread operates 939 bakery-cafes in 37 states as released in the July 25, 2006 earnings statement. For more information, visit www.panerabread.com.