Dear Brighten 7th grade parents and students,

I want to alert you to an activity that out ELAE class is about begin as part of our unit on Social Justice. It is called the Two Dollar a Day Challenge and it is a follow up to our investigation into global poverty. For us to create this experience we need the support of the Brighten families. This is the first time I have attempted a project like this so I would appreciate your help.

**Put very simply, the challenge is for your child to try and live
for three days on only $6 of food.**

This sounds really hard, but it is totally possible (I promise!) by cooking your own meals from basic cheap food stuffs like pasta, rice, potatoes and veg. It is not a fast or starvation diet, it is a chance to find out how the other half live - the half of the world that has to live on less than $2 a day.

**Why $2 a day?** *$2 a day is the global poverty line below which people are defined as living in poverty. The World Bank produces estimates of the number of people living in poverty, and they estimated that 2.7 billion people were living on less than $2 a day. Of these, 1.1 billion people lived on less than $1 a day, the level of extreme poverty.*

**Wow!**

So why would you (my ELAE student) want to do this? Three reasons:

* You can learn how to cook really cheap meals for your self
* It's a unique way to find out what it is like to live in poverty - connect with the statistics!
* Have fun socializing and cooking with your family and/or new people

$2.00 a day is only to go on food, it doesn't include costs of housing, clothing, transport and stuff like that. The idea is that you go on living your life as you do normally, but just eat a little differently - there is no sleeping out in a cardboard box for a week (although if you want to, feel free!)

Here are the rules we have established for our class:

**RULES:** All goods and services consumed during the Two Dollar Challenge must be newly purchased out of your $2 a day income. These items include, but are not limited to: personal hygiene products, cosmetics, and all food or drinks.

You are limited to two complete outfits of clothing. Both complete outfits must be kept on your possession for the duration of the Challenge.

With a few exceptions (see below) you cannot use any part of the wealth you enjoyed before the Challenge (that includes stored food and drinks and meal plans if you are a student).

Exceptions Include:

* Health related goods and services
* Uniforms for school and extracurricular activities
* Stove top
* Pots and Pans for boiling water and preparing food
* Refrigeration for storing perishable food
* Reusable Water Bottle
* Backpack for carrying items
* Indoor heating and cooling is permitted.
* Gasoline for traveling to work, school, and/or activities

Students participate for 3 days and 2 nights.

* Think of your income as one lump sum ($6 or $2 per day for 3 days).
* You can carry over savings from one day into the next.
* You can sleep in your room or in the shelters.
* **If you eat school lunch/breakfast charge yourself 50 cents for each lunch or breakfast.**
* You can access water from both private and public taps.
* You can access both private and public restrooms.
* You can use electronics (phones and computers) during the day in any location but not after dusk.
* You can barter for additional goods and services that you wish to consume outside of your $2 a day income. You must provide a service in exchange for these goods (for example, cleaning a room).
* You can accept and consume unsolicited food donations that are perishable (non-perishable food items should be stored and donated to a local food bank).

We will engage in a few classroom activities to get the students ready but we will also need your help with helping them shop and prepare meals. I will also post receipes and suggestion on the class website for everyone to access. Students will be provided with a log to track the experience and will be required to synthesize the data into a narrative response – one paragraph for each day. They will explain their procedure. Describe what they ate, what it cost, problems, actions, events, thoughts, or comments. Finally, were they able to meet the Two Dollar a Day Challenge?

**STUDENTS –**

***How it will work:*** *At the start of next week, 6pm Sunday, April 22nd until 6pm April 25th, you will have just $6.00 to spend. You can buy whatever you like, but I recommend you spend it all on food. You are not allowed to buy candy and frozen pizzas the week before and eat it during the challenge, you can only eat what you buy that week!

Bear in mind the challenge doesn't take into account the costs of your housing, transportation, clothes etc. The focus of the challenge is on the day to day eating costs, to give you an idea what it is like having to make the most of every penny you have.*

 *Participants will be encouraged to fill in a diary of what they ate during the week, and how much it cost, as well as to confess to any lapses in frugality! It's your challenge, and I don't mind how you do it, but I am interested to know how found the experience, especially what you ate.

First and foremost though, this should be a fun challenge.

I want you to enjoy being involved, and feeling good about yourself.*

**I hope Brighten families you will join me in supporting your child in this learning experience.**

Yours Truly,

Michael Daly

Teacher of Social Studies and English Language Arts