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Warm and fuzzy school promos and murder and intimidation.

Nestlé is muscling its way into US elementary schools with [Go Play!](#) loyalty program

In a shameless move to compete with Coke and Pepsi's exclusivity contracts with school boards in the United States, Nestlé has launched a loyalty program designed to promote its Pure Life bottled water brand in schools.

Go Play!, allows elementary schools (K-8) to earn points that can be redeemed toward fitness and sports gear, or transportation cost assistance toward field trips. Schools need only register their school at www.goplaylabels.com, collect Pure Life labels and redeem them by October, 2007 for their rewards. Also, by simply registering, each school is entered into a draw for a \$75,000 (US) playground structure.

It seems like a win-win situation; elementary schools in the United States receive up to \$10,000 in sports equipment for 'simply' drinking water, while Nestlé gets their logo and brand name plastered in front of young children who, as every good PR person know, will be hooked on Pure Life and its logo if they start buying it at a young age. In reality, however, school kids are being tricked by a huge multinational to buy overpriced water in return for a small band aid solution to the chronic under funding of US school boards¹.

This move by Nestlé is timely as it comes on the heels of a voluntary shift towards the sale of healthier drinks in US public schools by Coke and Pepsi. The Swiss multinational knows that its main bottled water competitors in the US, Coke and Pepsi, are now

¹ Dave Gibson, in a 2004 Mother Jones [article](#), points out that President Bush's 2005 budget cut 38 federal education programs for a total of \$1.4 million (US) in cuts.

focused on selling bottled water and juice to school kids. This has opened up a huge potential market for Nestlé's bottled water brands.

Go Play! is a clear attempt by Nestlé to compete for student dollars. Unlike Coke and PepsiCo, Nestlé does not seem to have any exclusivity contracts with school boards in the US. This promotion is one way for the company to capture student customers through a one-time promotion.

As of mid-October a number of schools nationwide had signed on to the program. Various Parent Teacher Associations across the country are promoting the program as well as the Indiana Department of Education, which has posted a web link Go Play! on its [website](#).

This is another disturbing trend in the bottled water industry. Bottled Water companies have now moved into public schools to increase sales by promoting their products directly to children.

Nestlé, one of the most powerful companies in the world, is looking to generate profits by taking advantage of struggling schools. Coke and Pepsi have been at it for over ten years, and now Nestlé wants a piece of the pie.

Nestlé and two of its subsidiaries sued in Florida for complicity in the death of Colombian union leader

Nestlé and two of its subsidiaries, Nestlé USA and Nestlé Colombia, have been sued for complicity in the murder of a Colombian trade unionist and former Nestlé employee Luciano Enrique Romero Molina.

The lawsuit was filed in US District Court for the Southern District of Florida on October 25, by Romero's widow, Gladys Francisca Mendoza Mejia, the Colombian labour union [SINALTRAINAL](#) and the International Labor Rights Fund ([ILRF](#)).

The suit claims that Romero was murdered by members of Colombia's paramilitary United Self-Defense Forces in retaliation for his discovery and exposure of Nestlé's use of expired milk in its Milo brand drink in 2002. A group of Colombian senators confirmed the validity of the expired milk claim in a November report from that same year.

The September 2005 murder came one month after Romero, a 20 year employee of the company and respected leader and member of food and beverage workers' union SINALTRAINAL, sued Nestlé for wrongful termination. Romero was fired by Nestlé after exposing the expired milk scandal. He was one of several SINALTRAINAL union leaders assassinated by paramilitaries after the scandal became public.

The lawsuit also claims that Nestlé operated in complicity with AUC paramilitaries and that plant managers met openly with them on many occasions inside the factory in

Valledupar, in northern Colombia. AUC paramilitaries were also allegedly permitted to freely enter the plant and set up camp for 'public security.'

According to the lawsuit, Nestlé and its two subsidiaries "acted in concert with, conspired with, aided and abetted or otherwise retained as agents the individuals" who murdered Luciano Enrique Romero Molina. The suit also claims that the murder was committed in connection with and to help further Nestlé's business interests and activities.

These alleged crimes took place in Colombia and are related to Nestlé's dairy operations. Regardless of where these alleged events took place, the defendant is the same company that is responsible for aggressive marketing toward elementary school students in the United States. This is the same company that owns and operates water bottling plants in Southern Ontario, around North America and the world. And this is the same company that will invest millions of dollars to fight this lawsuit in order to protect its image from being tarnished any further.

This case has already spawned protest actions in the United States surrounding Nestlé's bottled water brand Deer Park. A recent ILRF press release stated that campaigns targeting universities in the US that are involved in exclusive contracts with Nestlé/Deer Park are being considered.

Deer Park, or any Nestlé bottled water brand, can become a target for campaigns against the company's human rights abuses in Colombia. People who drink Nestlé bottled water need to know that when they consume Nestlé products they are supporting a company that is being sued for complicity in the torture and murder of Luciano Enrique Romero Molina.

To read the complaint please click [here](#)

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