

MEET A FOOD PIONEER: CHAKA KHAN

Yvette Stevens, better known as [Chaka Khan](#), is an American funk and soul vocalist as well as longtime activist for equity within the black community. You may know her for songs such as “[Tell Me Something Good](#)” or “[I’m Every Woman](#)”. But did you know that at the age of 16 Yvette was a Black Panther and she started the free breakfast program? It was around this time that she took on the name *Chaka Adunne Aduffe Yemoja Hodarhi Karifi*.



The [free breakfast program](#) was created to feed kids that otherwise would have gone without breakfast— the most important meal of the day for growing minds! It was started in an Episcopal Church in Oakland, California and went from feeding a few kids to hundreds, then thousands. This program operated in a very simple manner; party members and volunteers coordinated with grocery stores for donations, nutritionists were consulted on what would be a healthy meal for kids, and the meals were prepared and served. This program inspired what we know today as the “School Breakfast Program,” a federally funded program which feeds roughly 11.6 million students.

Years later, in 1999, Chaka established the “Chaka Khan Foundation,” which then focused on campaigns surrounding awareness and education about autism. As her foundation expanded, so did her mission; it is now more broadly focused on the empowerment and education of underserved women and children in the Los Angeles area.

Tell me something good, Chaka!

WATCH:

- Here’s another song you may be familiar with: [Like Sugar](#)
- What you may not know about the [Black Panthers](#)

READ:

- A glimpse at the [life of Chaka Khan](#)

*Hall KD, Guo J, Dore M, Chow CC. The progressive increase of food waste in America and its environmental impact. *PLoS One*. 2009;4(11).
6. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Reducing Food Waste for Business. 2014.