February 2014 Newsletter

Have you heard of 'healthy food financing initiatives,' but wonder what that really means? You're not alone!

Voices for Healthy Kids, a joint initiative between the American Heart Association and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, pursues policy-change strategies that research and practice suggest will have the greatest impact on reversing the childhood obesity epidemic.

One of those strategies is Healthy Food Financing Initiatives.

Finding healthy foods can be hard for many families. Did you know that 29.7 million Americans live in low-income urban and rural neighborhoods that are more than 1 mile from the nearest supermarket?

We want to ensure stores are conveniently located for residents of all communities and stock healthy foods. Healthy Food Financing Initiatives (HFFI)-which establish grocery stores in underserved communities where none exist-can be an effective strategy for realizing that goal. The recent passage of the Farm Bill authorizes federal Healthy Food Financing Program under the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Similar programs at the state level provide access to healthier foods and help boost local economies.

Voices for Healthy Kids is working to increase the number of healthy food outlets, such as grocery stores, supermarkets, farmers’ markets and corner stores in underserved communities.

Find out more from our team of experts at The Food Trust in their new report on Access to Healthy Food and Why It Matters, take the Healthy Food Access Challenge at PreventObesity.net, and request a copy of the Voices for Healthy Kids toolkit What's in Store? to learn how your community can start making healthy food choices easier today.

Visions of Voices

"I fundamentally believe that 'leaders don't create followers, they create more leaders.' Before joining the American Heart Association, my portfolio of campaign and policy advocacy work in California included socially responsible health and wellness reforms but stopped short of squarely
addressing the critical food justice and food systems reforms that offer more Americans a better chance at redesigning healthier communities for generations to come. I saw the "Voices for Healthy Kids" initiative as an opportunity to leverage my expertise to pass science-based policies across the country, cultivate effective national partnerships that make a material difference on-the-ground, and develop future leaders in the movement to keep kids safe and healthy - no matter where they live."

- Nii-Quartelai Quartey, Health Equity & Multicultural Partnerships Manager

**News from the Field**

**Rethink Your Drink Month in Illinois**

The Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity (IAPO) declared January 13 - February 13 “Rethink Your Drink Month” in Illinois. Sugary beverages make up 46 percent of added sugars in the American diet. The Rethink Your Drink campaign urged people to "go on green," by drinking water, seltzer water and skim or one-percent milk and to "stop on red " by rarely (if ever) drinking regular sodas, energy or sports drinks and sweetened coffee or tea.

Each week during the month-long educational campaign, IAPO worked with a key sector in the community and brought the message to health departments, local government offices, afterschool programs, nonprofits, schools, universities, worksites, and hospitals. Each location was provided with tools and activities appropriate to their audience.

In addition, Illinois Governor Pat Quinn officially proclaimed February 2014 Rethink Your Drink Month, which brought additional attention to the campaign.

On February 19, IAPO held a Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) Act press conference at the Illinois State Capitol. Representative Robyn Gabel (D-18th District) and Senator Mattie Hunter (D-3rd District) announced the introduction of bill HB 5690/ SB 3524. The event highlighted the dangers of sugar-sweetened beverage consumption and obesity, as well as the benefits of investing in prevention. Other speakers included Elissa Bassler, Illinois Public Health Institute; Rhonda Pour, American Cancer Society; Bridget Williams, American Heart Association; and Ramon Gardenshire, SEIU Healthcare IL, IN.

To learn more about the Rethink Your Drink campaign, visit IAPO's website at [www.preventobesityil.org](http://www.preventobesityil.org) and 'Like' IAPO's Facebook Page for event updates.

**Statement: Farm Bill an Alphabet Soup of Wins/Losses for Nutrition**

American Heart Association CEO Nancy Brown [issued a statement](http://www.americanheart.org) on the Agricultural Reform and
RISK MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2013, PASSED BY CONGRESS EARLIER THIS MONTH:

"The passage of the Farm Bill today has been long-anticipated and the American Heart Association is pleased that Congress has come to an agreement on this important legislation. While it took two long years of negotiations and a lot of hard work, we wish the final bill was less of an alphabet soup of wins and losses for health and nutrition programs."

RAISE YOUR VOICE

Were you one of the nearly 7,000 participants who took the Healthy Food Access Quiz last month from PreventObesity.net?

If not, you might be surprised to learn just how difficult it is to buy healthy food in many communities. Test your knowledge - take the quiz!

CHILDHOOD OBESITY NEWS FLASH

**Added Sugars Add to Your Risk of Dying from Heart Disease**
American Heart Association, 02/4/2014

According to the study published in *JAMA: Internal Medicine*, people who got 17 to 21 percent of calories from added sugar had a 38 percent higher risk of dying from cardiovascular disease compared to those who consumed 8 percent of their calories from added sugar.

**Most Supermarket Coupons Promote Junk Food, Sugary Drinks: Study**
HealthDay, Brenda Goodman, 01/28/14

A new study in the journal *Preventing Chronic Disease* found that coupons offered by grocery stores often reduce the costs of calorie-laden foods such as chips, desserts and sugary drinks. By contrast, relatively few markets discount lean meats, low-fat dairy products or fresh fruits and vegetables.

**This Vending Machine Sells Fresh Salads Instead Of Junk Food**
Fast Company, Adele Peters, 01/30/2014

Among the fast food vendors in Chicago's Garvey Food Court stands a vending machine that sells kale.

**The Center of Hope**
AxisPhilly, Natalie Pompilio, 01/13/2014

A grocery store in North Philadelphia brings hope to a traditionally impoverished community in the middle of a food desert. The store not only improves the quality of life for locals, but brings a new outlook for the community.

DON'T MISS...

**Visit Voices for Healthy Kids at EPI/NPAM**

Are you attending EPI/NPAM Spring 2014 Scientific Sessions? Visit Voices for Healthy Kids at...
Booth 10!

We'll be in San Francisco, March 18-21, 2014 at the Hilton San Francisco Union Square. On Thursday, March 20, join us at the Early Career Luncheon where you'll hear the latest news on the Voices for Healthy Kids initiative and learn how you can get involved in the movement to reduce childhood obesity.

New Website: How to Grow a Healthy Change for Latino Kids in Your Area and Beyond

The new Salud America! Growing Healthy Change website is a first-of-its-kind clearinghouse of Latino-focused news, resources and "Salud Hero" stories to promote and empower changes-healthier marketing, improved access to healthy food, and physical activity options-for Latino kids in your neighborhood and across the nation.

From the Twitterverse

March is National Nutrition Month at the AHA

March is National Nutrition Month at the American Heart Association! We'll be celebrating healthy food habits and learning how to increase food access and healthy food financing. Join in the conversation on Twitter by using: #HealthyHabits

Did you know?

Nationally, low-income areas have significantly more convenience stores and far fewer supermarkets, limiting healthy options for our children and families.


Voices for Healthy Kids, a joint initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and American Heart Association (AHA) works to help all young people eat healthier foods and be more active. Nearly 1 in 3 kids and teens are overweight or obese. We seek to reverse the nation's childhood obesity epidemic by 2015. Learn more about the epidemic and how you can help turn it around at Voicesforhealthykids.org