January 2014 Newsletter

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the Voices for Healthy Kids newsletter. Voices for Healthy Kids, an advocacy collaboration between the American Heart Association and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is giving voice to people and community groups to advocate for policy changes that help children and adolescents eat healthier foods and be more active.

Over the past 40 years, rates of obesity have risen dramatically among children of all ages, more than quadrupling among those ages 6 to 11. Currently, more than 23.5 million children and teens - nearly a third of all young people in the United States - are overweight or obese.

Thank you for your interest in our initiative and for your continued support in reducing childhood obesity. We hope this newsletter will give insight into our monthly activities, deliver news from the movement, and provide resources that you will find useful in your efforts to reduce childhood obesity.

Visions of Voices

"Voices for Healthy Kids works to empower Americans to change the way their communities view childhood obesity. We are working to ensure that the places where children live, learn and play make it easy and enjoyable for them to eat healthy foods and be active."
- Jill Birnbaum, Executive Director, Voices for Healthy Kids

News from the Field

This past December, Voices for Healthy Kids hosted the first in a series of regional trainings where partners from across the country came together to learn more about childhood obesity policy within communities and states across the country. Attendees learned about the core foundations of strong campaigns, including ways to engage media, key decision makers, coalitions and other stakeholders.

A total of seven trainings will be held across the country with more than 100 partners being trained.

Voices for Healthy Kids Statement: Food Companies Marketing to Kids
"It doesn’t seem fair that while parents are trying to teach their kids how to eat healthy, they see ads
on TV, billboards, even at school that tell them junk foods are delicious,” said Dr. Rachel Johnson, professor of nutrition at the University of Vermont and a volunteer for the American Heart Association's Voices for Healthy Kids movement.

"Unfortunately, two-thirds of elementary schools sampled in this study provided fast food coupons to students. This sends the wrong message to our kids and our parents by a trusted source of learning."

**Building Healthy Communities for Our Kids**
Mamiverse, 01/21/2014

Where do mothers turn when healthy foods and safe places to play aren’t right around the corner? Read this inspiring piece from Mamiverse featuring Voices for Healthy Kids.

**Raise Your Voice**

Want to know you how can get involved in the movement to reduce childhood obesity? Join [PreventObesity.net](http://PreventObesity.net) to become a leader and learn how you can raise your voice to improve our children’s health.

PreventObesity.net is currently hosting a Healthy Food Access Quiz! This quiz is an interactive way to test your knowledge and learn about the challenges of healthy food access. Take the quiz [here](http://PreventObesity.net).

**Childhood Obesity News Flash**

**American Heart Association Applauds Food Industry's Calorie Reduction Pledge**
Newswire, Nancy Brown (Statement), 01/9/2014

American Heart Association CEO Nancy Brown issued comments on the announcement from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that 16 food companies have exceeded their pledge to reduce calories sold to consumers.

**Make 2014 the Year Your Kids Play**
CNN, John Bare (Opinion), 01/01/2014

We don't have to run kids through a Marine boot camp to improve their physical fitness. All we need to is allow them to play.

**Dr. Yancy's Prescription: Addressing Healthy Food Access**
PreventObesity.net, Elizabeth Brotherton-Bunch, 01/09/2014

As one of the nation's most respected cardiologists, Dr. Clyde Yancy knows the negative impact that unhealthy food consumption has on our nation's health. Improving access to healthy, affordable food must be a priority, he says.

**Washington Gov. Jay Inslee Unveils Healthcare Agenda, Focuses on Childhood Obesity**
The News Tribune, Jordan Schrader, 01/09/2014

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee (D) announced this month that his administration would address childhood obesity by seeking to revise health and fitness standards in schools. Gov. Inslee noted that
children "are exposed to a lack of physical exercise...and a lack of access to good, nutritional, wholesome, food."

**Don't miss...**

**Webinar Recording: Advancing Healthy Out of School Time**
Did you miss the original airing of the Advancing Healthy Out of School Time webinar from National Afterschool Association Standards for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity? You can access the recording above. This wonderful resource features our Voices for Healthy Kids expert, the YMCA of the USA.

**Report from the Field: Mexico and Telluride's Sugary Drink Taxes**
The Yale Rudd Center, Center for Science in the Public Interest, and California Center for Public Health Advocacy recently held a webinar featuring leaders from the latest sugary drink tax campaigns. You can access a recording of the webinar to hear strategies and lessons learned from Telluride.

**New Partners for Smart Growth Conference**
The 13th annual New Partners for Smart Growth conference is February 13th-15th, 2014 in Denver, Colorado. This year's program includes a dynamic mix of plenaries, breakouts, implementation workshops, peer-to-peer learning opportunities, and coordinated networking activities. It will also feature exciting tours of local model projects in and around the greater Denver region. Learn more about the event at [http://newpartners.org/](http://newpartners.org/) or on Twitter @NewPartnersConf.

**From the Twitterverse**
Voices for Healthy Kids provides daily updates on social media! Follow us @Voices4HK and on Facebook for news on the initiative, events and the latest research from the childhood obesity movement.

Every month, we celebrate a different childhood obesity-related theme. February's theme is: **Mothers and Childhood Obesity**. Join in the discussion with Voices for Healthy Kids and the American Heart Association by using #Childhoodobesity.

This month, we participated in HealthCentral's Heart Health Twitter chat. Read a summary of the event [here](#).

**Did you know?**
The percentage of K-8 children who walked to school in the morning increased from 12.4 percent to 15.7 percent (27 percent increase). Similarly, the percentage of K-8 children who walked from school in the afternoon increased from 15.8 percent to 19.7 percent (24 percent increase). Find out more.

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