

Local News

[Video Games Get Kids Off Couch](#) (12/16/08)

The *Free Lance Star* reports that local schools and fitness clubs in Fredericksburg, VA, have learned that they can get kids moving and combat childhood obesity by combining vigorous exercise with a generous helping of gaming technology.

[Officials in San Diego Seek To Address Obesity, Diabetes Rates Among American Indian Children](#) (12/08/08)

According to the San Diego *Union-Tribune*, in San Diego County nearly one-third of American Indians ages five to 19 were obese in 2004, compared with 25% of the general population. Lisa Turner, a nutritionist and diabetes coordinator for the Southern Indian Health Council, said that it is difficult for many children living on reservations to engage in outdoor activities, such as riding bikes and skateboarding, because there are few sidewalks in remote reservations. Another hindrance to preventing obesity and diabetes among American Indians is access to healthy food. Many American Indians living in poverty rely on highly-processed and fatty government-issued food for their diets, the *Union-Tribune* reports.

[Somerville Wins Grant to Keep Shaping Up](#) (12/03/08)

The *Somerville News* reports that the city's health department was awarded a \$400,000 grant this week to continue its Shape Up Somerville program, which addresses obesity in children. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant will allow the city to expand the program and hire an additional health department employee to oversee it, said Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone. "Over the past five years Shape Up Somerville has shown us that through creative thinking and collaboration we truly can combat the challenges of obesity in our community," Curtatone said

[Grant Given to Fight Childhood Obesity](#) (12/03/08)

According to the *Washington Post*, Summit Health Institute for Research and Education will partner with six agencies and community groups to reduce childhood obesity in Washington, D.C., with a focus on youngsters in Wards 7 and 8. The partners include the D.C. Department of Health, the D.C. Office of Planning, the National Black Child Development Institute, D.C. Hunger Solutions and the Greater Washington Urban League. The money is part of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's [Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities](#) program, a new \$44 million national initiative aimed at finding community-based solutions to the obesity problem. Groups in eight other cities also received grants.

[How Somerville Became a National Model of Healthy Living](#) (12/02/08)

The *Boston Globe* reports that five years after Somerville embarked on an ambitious collaboration with Tufts University called Shape Up Somerville to see whether systemic changes that encourage healthy eating and physical activity would help children stave off

obesity, 10 communities across the country have begun testing whether they can replicate the city's success.

[Local Efforts to Combat Childhood Obesity Receive Grant](#) (12/02/08)

Columbia, MO Mayor Darwin Hindman announced Columbia as one of nine initial communities labeled as "leading sites" to receive [Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities](#) grants from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The goal is to have Columbia serve as a mentor and model for future communities attempting to combat obesity, the *Missourian* reports.

[Answers About Hunger in New York](#) (11/28/08)

In an interview with the *New York Times*, Joel Berg, executive director of the New York City Coalition Against Hunger, praised Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg for appointing the city's first food policy coordinator, starting a Healthy Bodegas Initiative to help small food stores increase the availability of fresh produce and low-fat milk, and creating a Health Bucks program to give low-income New Yorkers more purchasing power at farmers' markets.

[Town Working Together to Carry Groceries](#) (11/22/08)

When the residents of a tiny town band together to rescue the only grocery store from foreclosure, buying a jar of peanut butter anywhere else becomes an act of treason. Everybody who shops at the Walsh store, about 280 miles southeast of Denver, takes groceries personally, because most of them own a share. *The Denver Post* reports that last year more than 300 residents of Walsh (population 723) pooled money to reopen a grocery store that had closed for the first time since 1928.

[Mayor Curtatone Serving on National Board Attacking Childhood Obesity](#) (11/14/08)

Somerville, MA, Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone is serving on the Institute of Medicine's Committee on Childhood Obesity Prevention Actions for Local Governments. According to the *Somerville Journal*, the committee will research efforts by local governments across the country to curb childhood obesity and will produce a study containing best practices to share with local leaders. "I am excited and honored to serve on a national committee that addresses this crucial issue," said Curtatone. "Childhood obesity is a growing problem for communities across the nation. Here in Somerville, we have learned that it takes the will of an entire community to curb this epidemic."

[County Lauded for Work to Curb Obesity](#) (11/13/08)

Cascade County is one of four counties nationally to receive a technical assistance award from the National Association of Counties for its work to prevent childhood obesity, the *Great Fall Tribune* reports. In a statement announcing the awards, NACo President Don Stapley said childhood obesity isn't just a health threat. "It leads to substantial financial costs to local governments and the overall health care delivery system," he said.

National News

[Stepping Up to the Plate on Greater Food Regulation](#) (12/16/08)

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, state and local officials are setting the pace and defining a public health agenda that focuses on food production, preparation and consumption. Local regulatory initiatives have gained momentum because of rising rates of obesity, diabetes and heart disease, according to Amy Winterfeld, a health policy analyst for the National Conference of State Legislatures.

[New York Times Magazine Cites Fast Food Zoning in its 8th Annual Year in Ideas](#) (12/12/08)

In an effort to provide residents with more nutritious choices, the L.A. City Council adopted landmark legislation in July mandating a one-year moratorium on the building of new fast-food eateries in a 32-square-mile area. (Fast-food zoning exists in other cities but is based on aesthetic considerations, not health factors.)

[Why Media Could Be Bad For Your Child's Health](#) (12/04/08)

The maxim holds true: too much of anything is bad for you. Nonprofit advocacy group Common Sense Media, and researchers from the National Institutes of Health, Yale University and California Pacific Medical Center, have published a report that draws links between media consumption and children's health. After reviewing 173 studies in various categories, the researchers found that the more TV, movies, music and technology a child is exposed to, the higher the health risks they face. This *Time Magazine* article interviews Stanford University professor James Steyer, founder of Common Sense Media, about how parents can keep their kids on the media straight and narrow.

[Nestle USA to Stop Marketing Candy to Kids](#) (12/03/08)

Bnet Food reports that Nestle is the 15th company approved for the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative, which the Council of Better Business Bureaus (BBB) started in 2006. And there's been a flurry of other children's health initiatives lately by companies already signed onto the pledge — last month Burger King [lowered the amount of sodium](#) in its kids meals, and Campbell Soup created [lower-fat, lower-sodium versions](#) of some of its products just for schools.

[U.S. Menu Labeling May be Gaining Steam](#) (11/14/08)

Laws requiring that fast-food chains post calories and other nutritional information have become increasingly popular as states and cities struggle to combat the country's growing obesity problem while promoting health and nutrition. At the same time, *Reuters* reports, lawmakers in Washington have struggled to get the practice adopted nationwide.

[Full Disclosure: Would a National Law Requiring Calorie Counts on Chain Restaurant Menus Help Curb the Obesity Epidemic, or Would We Stay in 'Dining Denial'?](#) (11/14/08)

Many health experts say labeling can be a useful tool in the war against obesity. Several cities, including Philadelphia and New York, already require calorie information to be displayed right up there next to the price of an item in fast-food joints and other restaurant chains.

Newsweek asks: will full menu disclosure make Americans too calorie-obsessed?

Reports and Studies

[Reversing Obesity in NYC: An Action Plan for Reducing the Promotion and Accessibility of Unhealthy Food](#) (PDF)

Mayor Bloomberg and city health officials have banned trans fats and mandated calorie postings in chain restaurants. But a new report is calling for an even greater effort to fight obesity. The Public Health Association of New York City and the City University of New York (CUNY) Campaign Against Diabetes released the report that included recommendations for the city and state: Use zoning laws to reduce the number of fast-food restaurants in high obesity neighborhoods; police deceptive health claims in food advertising; and tax unhealthy foods such as sweetened soda.

[HealthCast: The 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans: Development and Dissemination of New Federal Evidence-Informed Recommendations](#) (PDF)

George Washington University webcast and slides featuring Richard Troiano, Ph.D. CAPT, US Public Health Service Coordinator discussing the [2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](#).

[An Obesity Agenda for The Transition Team: Policy Recommendations from The Public Health Advocacy Institute](#) (PDF)

This report, developed by the Public Health Advocacy Institute (PHAI) at Northeastern University's School of Law, was sent to the Transition Team by Richard Daynard, a professor at the law school and president of PHAI. The report was based on recommendations developed earlier this fall by a group of leading national and international experts during a conference at Northeastern on stopping the obesity epidemic.

[Can Low-Income Americans Afford a Healthy Diet?](#) (PDF)

This article, published by the United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, examines the difference between low-income households' food choices and those of other households and raises concerns about the affordability of healthy foods. Affordability, defined as the ability to bear a cost, is a surprisingly complex concept to measure.

[New Directions in Obesity Prevention and Treatment: AcademyHealth 25th Annual Research Meeting](#) (PDF)

This document, published by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, summarizes presentations and discussions from a June 2008 conference on the implications of childhood obesity. Among other topics, the conference covered obesity treatment and prevention, the costs and consequences of adult obesity, and restricting food marketing to children.

[Food and Beverage Marketing to Children and Adolescents: What Changes Are Needed to Promote Healthy Eating Habits?](#) (PDF)

This research brief provides an overview of research on media use by children and youth, the channels and marketing techniques food and beverage companies use to market to them, and the influence on their diets. Published by Healthy Eating Research, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the brief also outlines recommendations for improving marketing regulations.

[Prevention for a Healthier California: Investments in Disease Prevention Yield Significant Savings, Stronger Communities](#) (PDF)

Published by Trust for America's Health, this report estimates how much the state and the nation could save in healthcare costs by investing in disease prevention through community programs that increase physical activity, improve nutrition and reduce tobacco use.

Tools You Can Use

[Mayors' Guide to Fighting Childhood Obesity](#)

The *Mayors' Guide to Fighting Childhood Obesity* provides suggested action steps that mayors and other local government leaders can take to address the childhood obesity epidemic in their communities in three areas: the community food environment; the physical environment; and the school and out-of-school environment.

Funding Resources

[Funding Sources for Healthy Food Retail](#)

This Web site is a clearinghouse for funding opportunities related to developing food retail outlets. Funding sources, which are categorized by eligibility, source and type of assistance for easy searching, include several available to local governments.

[General Mills Champions for Healthy Kids Grant Program](#)

The General Mills Foundation, in partnership with the American Dietetic Association Foundation and the President's Council on Physical Fitness, developed the Champions for Healthy Kids grant program in 2002. Each year since inception, the General Mills Foundation awards 50 grants of \$10,000 each to community-based groups that develop creative ways to help youth adopt a balanced diet and physically active lifestyle.

Deadline: January 15, 2009

[Fiskars' Project Orange Thumb](#)

Gardens and/or gardening projects geared toward community involvement, neighborhood beautification, sustainable agriculture, and/or horticultural education are eligible. Community garden groups, as well as schools, youth groups, community centers, camps, clubs, and treatment facilities are all encouraged to apply. Only group applications will be considered. Single individuals are not eligible for a Project Orange Thumb grant.

Deadline: February 17, 2009

[Jenny's Heroes Community Grant Program](#)

Talk show host and philanthropist Jenny Jones has announced that she will donate an additional \$1 million to continue her community grant program. Jenny's Heroes provides grants of up to \$25,000 each to fund projects that promise long-term community benefits.

Deadline: Open

[William T. Grant Foundation](#)

The William T. Grant Foundation is now accepting Letters of Inquiry for its field-initiated major grants program. The foundation's current research interests include understanding how social settings such as families, schools, peer groups, and organizations work; how these social settings affect youth; and how such settings can be improved. The foundation's interests also focus on when, how, and under what conditions research evidence is used in policy and practice that affect youth, and how the use of such evidence can be improved.

Deadline: April 1, 2009

[Bikes Belong Offers Funding for Bicycle Advocacy and Facilities](#)

U.S. nonprofits and public agencies working to put "more people on bicycles more often" will be awarded grants of up to \$10,000 for facilities and advocacy projects.

Deadline: Quarterly

Upcoming Conferences

Save the Date: Leadership for Healthy Communities' 2009 Childhood Obesity Prevention Summit, May 7-8, in Washington, DC

Leadership for Healthy Communities, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is hosting a childhood obesity prevention summit on May 7-8 in Washington, DC. Keynote speakers include RWJF Foundation President and CEO Risa Lavizzo-Mourey. Policy-makers from the federal, state and local level of government will be participating. More information about the summit as well as online registration will be available on the Leadership for Healthy Communities Web site (www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org).