Dear Friends:

We’re so excited to be working with you to support healthy kids and communities! Like you, we believe the faith community – and women of faith in particular – are critical partners when it comes to making sure our children live healthy lives. Amazing changes are within our reach!

So many of you are already working to make sure that children and adults in your congregation, your community and across the country are able to live healthy, whole lives. Our organization – MomsRising.org – has heard so many success stories, from churches that have planted gardens in the lot behind their sanctuary, to congregations that have started health and wellness ministries alongside their Sunday Schools and Vacation Bible Schools. You are already answering the call to treat our bodies as “temples,” and to serve the “least of these” who may not be able to access healthy food on their own.

This toolkit is designed to help you take that work even further. Inside you’ll find information, tips, resources and inspiration you can use to further your work on health, wellness and obesity issues within your congregation, and then bring that work to the wider world. Future editions will also feature success stories from you– the people working on the front lines for change (so please do share what you find useful and what’s working for you!).

In the toolkit you’ll also find information on school foods, including important changes to lunch and breakfast, and the updated “Smart Snacks” rule. And we’ll brief you how to respond to the barrage of unhealthy messages that our kids receive about junk food from marketers everywhere. At home, we do what we can to make sure that the meals and snacks kids eat are nutritious. The health and wellness of our children is paramount, but our children aren’t always at home or in our care. It takes a community effort to ensure that kids have healthy options throughout the day to make the best choices possible.

We have much more work to do. But together – the faith community, MomsRising.org, and other key partners - we have the power to ensure our families, schools and communities offer the best-possible environment for raising healthy kids.

Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner
Executive Director/CEO and Co-founder
MomsRising.org
Greetings My Dear Sisters!

As I sit here attempting to address you anointed women of faith, the faint sound of today’s third load of laundry in the dryer hums in the background, I hear my husband, who is one of the busiest pastors in the Mid-South, on the phone with members of our congregation making plans for what we will do together next week, and I remember that I need to call my elderly mom about her meds and I need to email my adult daughter to make sure she made it safely to her weekend vacation spot. A woman’s work is truly never done! However, in the midst of all the things that God has assigned my hands to do, I know there is still much work for me and all women of faith to do.

I pray that this letter finds you well. I pray that you, like me, proudly embrace the many vocations and ministries that need the nurture and the compassion that only a woman of faith can offer. With that in mind, I invite you to join me and countless other women across the country in a movement to create change through faith based and community partnerships. Recently, I have been fortunate to learn about Values Partnerships, a grassroots organization comprised of faith and community partners. The organization is led by Joshua DuBois, best known for his work as leader of the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships during President Obama’s first term and called the President’s “Pastor in Chief” by TIME Magazine. Values Partnerships is partnering with MomsRising.org, a multicultural organization of more than a million members and over a hundred aligned organizations that works to increase family economic security, to end discrimination against women and mothers, and to build a nation where both businesses and families can thrive.

Together, MomsRising.org and Values Partnerships have put together this toolkit to help us collaborate, network and mobilize, so we can address health and wellness issues in our congregation and live happier, healthier, whole lives. After all, when women make positive strides, everyone benefits. The goals are simple: reduce childhood obesity particularly among children of color who often live in food deserts and get bombarded by targeted marketing that promotes unhealthy eating habits; increase the visibility of faith and health partnerships in rural and urban areas; help young mothers learn the skills they need to create better, safer environments for themselves and their children; and ensure that all women get fair and equitable treatment in the workplace. The list goes on. But I dare not take any more of your time with my letter. I simply ask that you do three things:

• Take a moment to read the enclosed toolkit put together by MomsRising.org and Values Partnerships to learn about the mighty work that God has ordained them to do;
• Spend some time in prayer about how you, the women of faith in your network, and your house of worship can join this movement; and
• Get on board by accessing the links on the enclosure.

I look forward to dialoguing with you and seeing real change happen for us and for the people we love!

Peace and blessings, Lottie L. Minor
Co-Chair, Faith-based Mobilization Network
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Problem</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Terms You Should Know</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MomsRising.org Campaigns</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What You Can Do</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Begin a School Wellness Committee</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Resources</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE PROBLEM
THE PROBLEM

Childhood obesity threatens the health of our young people and their future potential. Today, more than 23.5 million children and adolescents in the United States—nearly one in three young people—are either obese or overweight, putting them at higher risk for serious, even life-threatening health problems.

If we don’t reverse the childhood obesity epidemic, the current generation of young people could be the first in U.S. history to live sicker and die younger than their parents’ generation.

This is not just a public health problem - it’s a moral problem. Scripture tells us that our “bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:19) and that each of us is “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14). But if our children don’t have the opportunity to live healthy lives, they can’t live up to their full potential, and fully serve each other, their communities, and their God.

The childhood obesity epidemic is particularly severe in communities of color. Thirty-nine percent of Latino and children and adolescents ages 2 to 19 are overweight or obese, compared with 32 percent of black children and about 28 percent of White children. There are also significant disparities in access to healthy foods and safe places to play.

One major study of nearly 700 neighborhoods found that communities of color and racially mixed communities have access to fewer supermarkets than predominantly White communities. And communities with high levels of poverty are significantly less likely to have places where people can be physically active, such as parks, green spaces, and bike lanes.

While so many churches are doing great work to help our children get and stay healthy, many more don’t yet have the tools to make a change. Meals after worship service and Sunday School are often not based on healthy principles, and physical activity programming is still an exception among church ministries, rather than the norm.

But we can change this. Working together – clergy, lay leaders, congregants, First Ladies and more - we can begin implementing healthy habits in our local churches, and advocating for policy change in our communities and across the nation. By reversing the childhood obesity epidemic, we will make our nation healthier and stronger, save lives, and ensure that all of our children have what they need to thrive.
KEY TERMS YOU SHOULD KNOW
Understanding the barriers to healthier diets and healthier lives can be challenging. For starters, the vocabulary of health and wellness is like a language unto itself. Here are a few key terms that will equip you to understand and discuss this topic knowledgably.

**Junk Food**
Food that is of little nutritional value and often high in fat, sugar, salt, and calories. These types of foods are appealing or enjoyable but of little or no nutritional value.¹

**Food Justice**
Communities exercising their right to grow, sell, and eat healthy food. The results of food justice in practicing communities are strong local food systems, self-reliant communities, and a healthy environment.²

**Food Security/Insecurity**
Food security is defined as including both physical and economic access to food that meets people’s dietary needs as well as their food preferences. Food security is built on three pillars: food availability, food access, and food use. Food insecurity occurs when individuals are unable to consistently access nutritious and adequate amounts of food necessary for a health life.³

**Junk Food Marketing**
The marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages with a high content of fat, sugar or salt to children. Companies in the United States spend $1 million an hour, every hour of every day on advertisements to children and youth. This adds up to $10 to $12 billion a year on youth marketing alone.⁴

**Food Deserts**
Urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food. Instead of supermarkets and grocery stores, these communities may have no food access or are served only by fast food restaurants and convenience stores that offer few healthy, affordable food options. The lack of access contributes to poor diet and can lead to higher levels of obesity and other diet related diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease.⁵

**Type 2 Diabetes**
Diabetes is problem with the body that causes blood glucose (sugar) levels to rise higher than normal. Type 2 diabetes occurs when the body resists the effects of insulin (a hormone that regulates the movement of sugar into your cells) or does not produce enough insulin to maintain a normal glucose level. This is the most common form of diabetes. The causes of type 2 diabetes are unknown but genetics and environmental factors such as excessive weight and inactivity are contributing factors.⁶

**Childhood Nutrition Authorization Act**
This legislation authorizes funding for all of the federal school meal and child nutrition programs, which ensures that low-income children have access to healthy and nutritious foods. These child nutrition programs affect millions of children each day by improving educational achievement, economic security, nutrition, and health.\(^7\)

**Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act**
This legislation authorizes funding and sets policy for USDA's core children nutrition programs: the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the Summer Food Service Program, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program. This legislation allowed the USDA to make substantive reforms to school lunch and breakfast programs by improving the critical nutrition and hunger safety net for millions of children.\(^8\)

**Food Equity**
This takes place when access to fresh produce and healthy food options are available equally to everyone in a community.\(^9\)

**Smart Snacks**
Science based nutrition standards for snack foods and beverages sold to children at school during the school day while limiting junk food. These nutrition standards for snack foods include:

- Be a “whole grain-rich” grain product or
- Have the first ingredient be a fruit, a vegetable, a dairy product, or a protein food or
- Be a combination food that contains at least one cup of fruit and/or vegetables or
- Contain 10% of the Daily Value of one of the nutrients of public health concern in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (calcium, potassium, vitamin D, or dietary fiber).

The nutrition standards for beverages include:

- Plain water
- Unflavored low fat milk
- Unflavored or flavored fat free milk and milk alternatives
- 100% fruit or vegetable juice
- 100% fruit and vegetable juice diluted with water and no added sweeteners.

---

MOMSRISING CAMPAIGNS
10

MOMSRISING.ORG CAMPAIGNS

1 STOP JUNK FOOD MARKETING TO KIDS

In the battle for children’s health, when it comes to junk food marketing, we often hear that parents should just “turn off the TV.”

The problem is that junk food is advertised to kids everywhere - not just on TV. As soon as kids leave the house they come into contact with junk food ads on buses, smart phones, video games, billboards, in playgrounds and near schools, the radio, and the Internet. All these places run ads for junk food targeting kids. On top of that, in the supermarket, their favorite characters adorn packages of unhealthy foods.

It’s like a full frontal assault.

Parents can’t be everywhere and marketers know that. According to the American Psychological Association, “Most children under age 6 cannot distinguish between programming and advertising and children under age 8 do not understand the persuasive intent of advertising.”¹ Marketers also know exactly when, where and how to access the eyes and ears of children. On their own, the only way that parents can shield their children from harmful junk food ads would be to cover their eyes and ears from the time they leave home until they return.

That’s not realistic.

Nickelodeon is the biggest children’s media outlet. Join us in asking them to help parents out and stop marketing junk food to children.

Why Nickelodeon? A 2013 Yale Rudd Center study of advertising on children’s television stations found that “Nickelodeon was responsible for more than one-quarter of food ads viewed by children 8 and younger. In addition, one Nickelodeon program, SpongeBob SquarePants, delivered 12% of all food ads viewed by 2- to 5-year olds and 11% of ads viewed by 6- to 8-year olds.”²

² Dembek, Cathryn R., MBA, Jennifer L. Harris, PhD, MBA and Marlene B. Schwartz, PhD. Where children and adolescents view food and beverage ads on TV: Exposure by channel and program. Yale Rude Center, March,
It’s like it’s Joe Spongebob. What!? Remember Joe Camel? He was a “Smooth Character,” a colorful, grinning cartoon camel, who smoked Camel cigarettes.

He was everywhere – on TV, billboards, and playgrounds. While parents urged children and teens to not take up smoking, Joe Camel enticed them to start. In 1997, because of concerns that Joe Camel unfairly targeted children, Joe Camel was forced into retirement, but his legacy lives on.

Today, companies like Nickelodeon use cartoon characters that appeal to children in ways that may promote unhealthy food choices, sabotaging parents’ attempts to develop healthy eating habits in their children.

The solution isn’t for parents to just “turn off the TV.” It’s time for a change! Consider these facts:

- A Federal Trade Commission report found that companies spent $1.79 billion in 2009 on advertising food to kids.³
- Almost 1 in 3 young people is at risk for nutrition-related diseases like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol.⁴

Join us in demanding corporate responsibility! Moms and dads must stand up for children and tell Nickelodeon to do the right thing and adopt strong nutrition standards for advertisements and marketing through all of their child-directed media!

Nickelodeon, unlike Disney and other companies, does not yet require all advertisers to meet nutrition guidelines. ⁵

It’s time for Nickelodeon to get with the program. Join us in telling them it’s time for a change.

**ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE:**

- We’re collecting signatures to deliver to the company, here: http://moms.ly/NOJunk
- Also find a print version of the Save School Lunch petition later in the toolkit
- Talking about the impact of junk food marketing on kids, communities and congregations is powerful. Consider writing a blog or starting a conversation about this topic!

---


⁴ American Heart Association: http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/Overweight-in-Children_UCM_304054_Article.jsp

Ever have someone tell you they’ve got “sugar” when you asked how they are doing? It’s an old Southern term that means he/she is sick, stricken with a form of diabetes, and in most cases, type 2. Type 2 diabetes is a debilitating, life altering, deadly and preventable disease. For decades, it was considered a condition developed in middle-aged adults who had experienced a lifetime of nutrition imbalances.

Sadly, there is a new growing demographic of people afflicted with this form of diabetes, our children. Their little bodies are facing the potential harsh health complications that come with type 2 diabetes, including amputations, organ failure and early death. One of the many causes of developing type 2 diabetes is being overweight or obese.

Soda and other sugary drinks promote obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Drinking just one additional sugary drink every day increases a child’s odds of becoming obese. With one in three children overweight or obese in the United States, it no longer makes sense to include sugary beverages in restaurant meals for young children.

8 American Heart Association
McDonald’s made a shift in what they offer to kids because parents raised their voices. Now’s the time to increase our impact and get unhealthy beverages off of kids’ menus everywhere.

In addition to the action McDonald’s is taking, Subway, Chipotle, Arby’s, and Panera do not offer soda. We need other top restaurants like Burger King and Wendy’s to come around too.

Let’s face it. Even without the soda, kids meals have a ways to go before being as healthy as they can be. Getting rid of soda is an important first step.

**ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE:**

- We’re collecting signatures to deliver to the company, here: http://moms.ly/KidsMeals
- Also find a print version of the kids meal petition later in the toolkit
- Talking about the impact of soda in kids’ meals to kids, communities and congregations is powerful. Consider writing a blog or starting a conversation about this topic!

---

**3 PROMOTE HEALTHY MEALS IN SCHOOL!**

We need all hands on deck to tell Congress that pizza and french fries, five days a week, is not a menu we want in school cafeterias.

This summer, some members of Congress are trying to weaken school lunch standards. So the clock is ticking to make our voice heard.

Now is not the time to go backwards! Just last year, parents, students, and many school leaders celebrated as the U.S. Department of Agriculture updated nutrition standards for school lunches for the first time in 15 years, ensuring that students eat more fruits, vegetables and whole grains and avoid sugary snacks and foods that are high in fat or sodium. The vast majority of schools (90 percent) are already meeting the standards and serving healthy choices to the 31 million students who eat school meals every day.

It’s unfortunate that Congress is even considering blocking efforts to improve the health of the 31 million children served through these programs.

If we don’t act, Congress may weaken these standards and take our kids back to pizza and french fries every day of the week – instead of helping the struggling few schools meet the healthier standards, they want to lower the bar.
Specifically, the proposed measures would allow schools to:

- Exclude fruits and vegetables from meals
- Serve meals high in sodium and low in whole grains
- Sell foods full of sugar, fat and salt in snacks and a la carte lines without having to meet evidence based nutrition standards
- Delay or even prevent the implementation this fall of the Smart Snacks standards, which apply to foods and beverages sold outside of meal programs.

**ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE:**

- We’re collecting signatures to deliver to Congress, here: http://moms.ly/SaveSchoolLunch
- Also find a print version of that petition later in the toolkit
- Talking about the importance of healthy school foods for kids.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME*</th>
<th>EMAIL*</th>
<th>STREET ADDRESS</th>
<th>CITY, STATE</th>
<th>ZIP*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* REQUIRED: MomsRising can’t submit your name to the USDA without this information.
SHARE YOUR STORY WITH MOMSRISING.ORG

Remember, your network of friends and family is a powerful community who likely feels as you do about junk food in schools. YOU are their most powerful inspiration to action – they will take to heart your story, appeal and invitation to join the cause. Don’t be shy!

MomsRising.org will in turn commit to harnessing the collective power of these stories. We’ll deliver them to our decision-makers, including the USDA and First Lady Michelle Obama. We’ll also post highlights on our popular website and on social media. In short, you’re the voice, we’re the megaphone.

So, help us tell the story of how you and your congregation are on the front lines of promoting healthy eating and fighting childhood obesity! MomsRising.org is collecting short thoughts and reflections from individuals like you!

Please take a few minutes to tell us what’s working or not working in getting your congregation and children to eat healthy. What are your major challenges? What’s working at your neighborhood schools and other area congregations? How can we educate our families and communities about making healthy choices? There’s no right or wrong here – your words and experiences are inherently powerful.

And be sure to share photos, comments and feedback on how things went! This will help us learn how to do this work better in the future, and inspire other MomsRising.org members! Snap a photo and we’ll post it on our Facebook page!
STORY TITLE: 

YOUR STORY: 

PLEASE SHARE:
Your First Name* 
Your Last Name* 
Email Address* 
Street Address 
City, State, ZIP * Required

CHECK ALL THAT APPLY:
☐ YES Please share the information I have provided above, and share my email address with the media and decision-makers. (It’s super important that we find people who can speak to the media.

☐ YES Please share the information I provided above, except for my email address & last name. (Please DO NOT check this box if you checked the box above.)

☐ YES I am a small business owner.
WHAT YOU CAN DO
WHAT YOU CAN DO

So we know the problem – and it’s a big one. But the helpful thing is, this is a fight that can be won. Churches and faith-based organizations are in a unique position to tackle the obesity epidemic, and make sure that every child can live a healthy, happy life.

You are a change leader. You see a problem and you have access to other leaders so why not take action! There are many ways you can join the fight in making our children and congregations healthier! You don’t have to do everything right now. Since we know that getting started is the hardest part, we have provided some interim, baby steps to help you. Here are ten easy ways to get involved, make an impact, and inspire others to live their best lives now!

1. GOT 5 MINUTES?
   • Spark a conversation with your congregation
   • Share the call to your church or organizations

2. GOT HALF AN HOUR?
   • Prepare a conversation starter

3. GOT AN HOUR?
   • Reach out to 13 friends via email or social media
   • Write a letter to your local newspaper

4. GOT A DAY?
   • Organize a faith and food Bible Study

5. GOT A MONTH?
   • Join or establish a school wellness committee
   • Challenge your church or organization to a 30 day wellness challenge
   • Create a blog for your church
SPARK A CONVERSATION

Start a conversation about obesity, health and wellness within your congregation: bible study group, women's groups, prayer circles etc. Chances are the people in your congregation think a lot like you do, and will jump on board.

Many of us are a little intimidated about speaking to groups, or voicing our opinions publicly. We get it! But it can be fun and easy to do, and a great skill to cultivate. Following are some tips to get you started.

• Be personal, and tell your story. This is a great way to break the ice. If you’re making a short statement at church, for example, start by reminding folks of your name and your kids’ names. Talk about why you got fired up about this issue. Even share the fact that you’re really nervous speaking to the congregation, but that you think this is an important issue for folks to know about! Breaking the ice and appealing to others on a personal level will make you – and the folks you’re speaking to – more open and excited.

• Be yourself. Don’t try to be an expert on healthy eating and school nutrition if you’re not. Often we feel uncomfortable if we’re thrust outside of our element. Share why you – as a church goer and parent – are concerned about this issue. That’s plenty, and very powerful. Share facts you’ve learned. Offer to find out more information if people ask for it.

• Appeal to people on a personal level. We want to tap into the shared experience of being a women of faith, a parent, and someone trying to take good care of their community.

• Think about the culture of the group before you make your pitch. Adapt this content to the nature of the group. Since you will most likely be speaking with these individuals before or after a church event, it would not be appropriate to dominate this time with a discussion of school nutrition. People will get annoyed. Rather, you might try bringing it up as people are working, or passing information around as folks are cleaning up. Similarly, if you’re approaching a group that might be sensitive to what they consider to be “political topics”, think about how to phrase this issue so it doesn’t overwhelm / scare people off. You should take the approach that health eating is something that all members of the church you should take an interest in for the welfare of the church community. One tactic we use is to present this as an issue “all parents should know about” and related to “parents being able to choose what their kids eat – healthy or not”.

• Practice! If you’re giving a public speech or announcement, practice it a few times at home, and/or around friends. Write key points on a notecard, or print out what you’d like to say.

• Ask for help! We are here to practice, review and plan with you!
SHARE THE CALL TO ACTION THROUGH YOUR CHURCH OR ORGANIZATION.
These are issues that should be of interest to everyone in the congregation, whether they be parents or individuals that are interested in making healthy life choices. And speaking with people face-to-face is the most powerful way to share information and inspire action. Below please find tips on connecting with a group and getting conversations started.

1. Find your group. You’re already involved in church community that would find value in this conversation so you are already ahead of the game! Now you just have to decide which time to speak to them. Bible Study? Prayer group? Before, during, or after the church social? These interactions don’t have to be formal either – finding your friends and fellow moms where they’re already meeting is a brilliant way to exchange ideas. Once you know what group you’d like to approach, check in with the leader and ask if you can have a few minutes of time at the next gathering. And note: you can make a quick pitch, or suggest this as a longer conversation topic. Either are fine!

2. Prepare your quick pitch. If you think you’ll only have a couple of minutes, you need a strong and clear pitch. Your pitch should be personal, and include a concrete call to action. Here’s a sample you can personalize (and/or create your own!)

SAMPLE PITCH: Hi everyone! I want to take a minute to encourage folks to join me in asking Congress to protect healthy school foods and promote healthier eating within our congregation. This is an issue that’s really important to me. I struggle to keep my kids healthy, and get really frustrated by the enormous amount of junk food they can get at school and also within our own church home. A group I’m involved with – MomsRising.org – is collecting signatures and stories from moms and other women of faith that are facing this challenge too. Please take a minute to sign or share your story!
PREPARE CONVERSATION STARTERS.
If you have a bit more time, try launching a conversation on this issue. Don’t worry – you don’t have to act as an expert. Ask questions as one churchgoer to another. Be sure to finish up with a proposed action (for example, signing the petition!). Here are some questions to get you started:

• Share your story!! This is the #1 way to kick things off. Explain why you, as a woman of faith, think this is important. Encourage others to do the same.
• What do you think about the food served in your child’s school?
• What foods do you think schools should and should not serve to children?
• How is the church contributing to the problem or the solution?
• What can the church do to prevent childhood obesity?
• What actions do you think need to happen to help lower the childhood obesity crisis in our country?
• Do you know what is the leading cause of heart disease, high rates of type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure in children? (Answer: Childhood obesity)
• Multiple choice – How many children and teens in the U.S. are overweight or obese? (Answer: 23 million)
• How can we get our children to care about the food they eat in their school?
• What type of smart snacks or healthy menu options have you seen served at your child’s school?
• Has your local school system taken any steps to address food choices in their schools?
• How can we help our children make the decision to choose healthier food options?
• How do you reinforce healthy eating and making smart food choices with your children at home?
• How can church promote healthier eating amongst its congregation?
• How can the church promote healthier eating within its community in general?

ONE IN THREE CHILDREN ARE OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE

OBESITY ADDS $150 BILLION A YEAR TO NATIONAL HEALTH CARE COSTS

ABOUT HALF OF WHICH PAID BY TAXPAYERS

REACH OUT TO 13 FRIENDS.
Send an email or Facebook post to 13 of your buddies within church. Your networks are powerful. These friends will respect what you think is important, and it’s very likely that they think and act a lot like you do. We’ve created some fun, educational, mobilizing content you can share on your Facebook and Twitter pages. This is a fantastic way to reach lots of people at once. Here’s some text you can use / adapt to your needs.

SHORT MESSAGES: (Good for Twitter or text messaging)
- Nickelodeon is the biggest children’s media outlet. Join us in asking them to help parents out and stop marketing junk food to children. btt://moms.ly/NOJunk
- Sugar-sweetened beverages like soda are the single largest source of added sugar in children’s diets. Tell Wendy’s and Burger King that moms want soda out of kids’ meals. http://moms.ly/KidsMeal
- 90% of schools are already meeting healthy meal standards. Tell Congress to #SaveSchoolLunch http://moms.ly/SaveSchoolLunch

MEDIUM MESSAGES: (Great for Facebook, email, newsletter, etc.)
Stop junk food marketing to kids!
In the battle for children’s health, when it comes to junk food marketing, we often hear that parents should just “turn off the TV.”

The problem is that junk food is advertised to kids everywhere - not just on TV. As soon as kids leave the house they come into contact with junk food ads on buses, smart phones, video games, billboards on playgrounds and near schools, the radio, and the Internet. All these places run ads for junk food targeting kids. On top of that, in the supermarket, their favorite characters adorn packages of unhealthy foods.

It’s like a full frontal assault. Parents can’t be everywhere and marketers know that. On their own, the only way that parents can shield their children from harmful junk food ads would be to cover their eyes and ears from the time they leave home until they return. That’s not realistic.

Nickelodeon is the biggest children’s media outlet. Join us in asking them to help parents out and stop marketing junk food to children.

Get soda out of kids’ meals!
Sugar-sweetened beverages like soda are the single largest source of added sugar in children’s diets. And, they are the third highest source of kids’ calories overall. So why is soda the default beverage in many children’s meals at fast food restaurants?
Soda and other sugary drinks promote obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Drinking just one additional sugary drink every day increases a child’s odds of becoming obese. (2) With one in three children overweight or obese in the United States (3), it no longer makes sense to include sugary beverages in restaurant meals for young children.

Join us and tell Wendy’s and Burger King that moms want sodas out of kids’ meals.

**Save School Lunch:**
Some members of Congress are trying to weaken school lunch standards. So the clock is ticking to make our voice heard.

Now is not the time to go backwards! Just last year, parents, students, and many school leaders celebrated as the U.S. Department of Agriculture updated nutrition standards for school lunches for the first time in 15 years, ensuring that students eat more fruits, vegetables and whole grains and avoid sugary snacks and foods that are high in fat or sodium. The vast majority of schools (90 percent) are already meeting the standards and serving healthy choices to the 31 million students who eat school meals every day.

Tell Congress to #SaveSchoolLunch

**LONG MESSAGES:** (Great for email): Check out the issue summaries on the previous pages, and feel free to use any of that text directly!

*By no means are you restricted to the above! Remember, your personal story and touch are inspiring to others!*

**WRITE A LETTER TO YOUR LOCAL PAPER.**
Share your concerns about childhood obesity and your commitment to promoting healthy snacks in schools. This is a timely and important issue, and you have a great chance of getting published. In addition, you’ll be educating and mobilizing your community around issue that impacts everyone.

Use this as part of a broader approach to gather signatures in the church and throughout the community. For example, once your letter is published you or a friend can add a link to the petition in the comments. You can also use the published letter as content of an email you send to friends, churchgoers, and others asking them to share stories and sign the petition.

Check the website of your local paper to find out how to submit your letter. Look for “Letters” or “Letters to the Editor”. You’ll be able to submit online, and should have options about what personal information to include (i.e. whether you want your full name included when published, which you won’t have to do).
ONE DAY ACTIONS

ORGANIZE A FAST AND FOOD BIBLE STUDY.
This will allow for members of the congregation to apply biblical principles to healthy eating. At the Bible study, distribute a one page MomsRising.org study outline that gives general information about adult and childhood obesity.

- Include scriptures and biblical principles that relate to healthy eating like:
  - “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.” – 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
  - “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” – 1 Corinthians 10:31
  - “And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.” – Genesis 1:29
  - “But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.” – 1 Corinthians 9:27
  - “It is not good to eat much honey, nor is it glorious to seek one’s own glory.” – Proverbs 25:27
  - As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. – Romans 14:1-23
  - Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. – 3 John 1:2
  - Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple. – 1 Corinthians 3:16-17
  - Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you every-thing. – Genesis 9:3
  - “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be enslaved by anything. – 1 Corinthians 6:12

- Talk about the biblical principles condemning gluttony and overindulgence in food and drink.

- Ask the group about the types of foods they eat on a regular basis. Then have a discussion about the foods that can replace any unhealthy foods that the group may be consuming.

- Brainstorm about the types of events the church can have in the future to promote healthy eating in the congregation and to combat childhood obesity.
JOIN OR ESTABLISH A SCHOOL WELLNESS COMMITTEE.
This is a great way to work with administrators and other parents at your child’s school to make sure that unhealthy food choices are not available to your children!

A school wellness committee is essentially an advisory group that is concerned with the health and well-being of students and staff. A committee can be formed at the district or school building level. This group typically has 6-12 members and includes staff, students, family members, and community members.

*Roles and Responsibilities of the School Wellness Committee*
The school wellness committee is an action-oriented group that makes the implementation of the district wellness policy and other health-related priorities possible.

The SWC will:
- Support the school in developing a healthier school environment
- Create the vision and goals for the local Healthy Schools Program
- Assist with policy development or revision to support a healthy school environment
- Promote parent, community, and professional involvement in developing a healthier school environment
- Advocate for school health programs and policies within the broader school community
- Tap into funding and leverage resources for student and staff wellness
- Plan and implement programs for students and staff
- Evaluate program and policy efforts
- Provide feedback to the district regarding progress on the implementation of the local wellness policy

ONE MONTH ACTIONS
HOW TO BEGIN A SCHOOL WELLNESS COMMITTEE
HOW TO BEGIN A SCHOOL WELLNESS COMMITTEE

The staff, family members, students, and community members should be notified of the opportunity to join the committee. In order to get started, we have provided a sample invitation letter as a guide!

Dear (Title, Name),

Childhood obesity is one of the most serious health epidemics facing America today. The American Medical Association now recognizes obesity as a disease. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about one third of children and teens in the United States are overweight or obese. Childhood obesity is leading to a range of health problems that previously were not generally seen until adulthood, including high blood pressure, type II diabetes and elevated blood cholesterol levels. We believe we have a responsibility to improve the health and well-being of our children.

Experience shows that schools can be powerful places to make behavioral and environmental changes for students and staff. To make our school environment healthier, our school is forming a School Wellness Committee. The purpose of the committee is to bring together representatives from the school and community who can help us address issues facing the health and well-being of our children and youth.

As a (designate particular role or background), your input is particularly important and we would be honored to have you as a School Wellness Committee member. We understand that your time is valuable and we want you to know we are committed to making changes in policies and programs that will positively affect the health of our students and school staff. We will be examining and planning for changes in the classroom, cafeteria, playing fields and more. We are fortunate to have the support of the Healthy Schools Program through the Alliance for a Healthier Generation. The Alliance was founded by the American Heart Association and the Clinton Foundation, aimed at reducing the prevalence of childhood obesity. The Healthy Schools Program provides technical assistance, resources, and tools to help our school create a healthier environment for students and staff.

Our first meeting will take place on (date) at (location) from (time to time). We anticipate holding meetings every 8-10 weeks during the school year. If you have any questions, or want to know more about what sort of responsibilities you would have as a member, please contact me (contact information here). We hope you will accept our invitation and join us in taking action against the growing youth obesity epidemic.

Sincerely,

(Concerned Parent and Member of ________________ Church)
CHALLENGE YOUR CHURCH OR ORGANIZATION TO A 30-DAY CHALLENGE.
This is a very simple and comprehensive way to start your congregation on the path to healthy eating. Share a month of one-sentence suggestions for making one healthier meal choice per day.

SAMPLE TIPS
Sunday: Only drink water or natural fruit juices today. Stay away from soda and all other sugar sweetened beverages.
Monday: Have fruit and vegetables as a part of at least one meal today. Try having a piece of fruit with lunch and a vegetable with dinner.
Tuesday: Bake or grill your meat for dinner instead of frying.
Wednesday: Try new herbs and spices during a meal today. For example, use paprika on potatoes instead of salt or put cinnamon in your oatmeal instead of sugar.
Thursday: Try low fat dairy today. Use nonfat, 1%, or 2% milk today instead of whole milk or cream.
Friday: Cut down on your portion size for each meal you eat today. For example, one less piece of bacon for breakfast or only one slice of pizza for dinner. Avoid having any dessert.
Saturday: Avoid having any snacks between meals that are not fruit or vegetables. Try to only eat your three meals today.

• This “one pager” can be added to the Sunday church bulletin on each Sunday of the month.
• At the end of the month, ask members of the congregation how successful they were with the challenge.
• Enact this challenge once every two months, with different healthy eating suggestions that come from MomsRising.org toolkit.
• You can also vary this challenge by making one geared toward increased physical activity.

CREATE A BLOG FOR YOUR CHURCH.
This is a great way to have your congregation’s voice heard in the conversation on why it’s so critical to get junk food out of schools and the church. And we’ll repost what you write on the popular MomsRising.org blog!

Blog posts are a great way further connect with your church and community in order to get the word out about making your children and congregation healthier.

• Use general statistics provided by MomsRising.org to support your point.
• Use your own voice and flavor so that it sounds authentic.
• Begin with a personal story or reflection in order to grab the reader’s attention.
• Needs to be specific to the audience that is being addressed. Sample blog post specific to the African American Community
You’ve heard the stats. African American women and girls are suffering from nutrition related illnesses at a higher rate than any other demographic in America. Heart disease is the #1 killer of all women and black women are more likely to develop heart disease than other groups of women. A shocking 78% of Black women are overweight or obese and 37% of us have high blood pressure. Sadly for our girls, African American women develop hypertension much earlier in life than our counterparts.

Why does it start earlier? Here’s one factor: According to the CDC, nearly 25% of black girls ages 6-11 years old are overweight or obese, making them more susceptible to Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension during their lifetimes, specifically during their childhoods.

This is a national emergency! The Black Women’s Health Imperative offers this startling fact: “Nearly 50% of Black females born in the year 2000 and beyond will likely develop Type 2 diabetes in their lifetime.”
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

You don’t have to do this alone! Here are a few resources to help you! These resources just scratch the
surface of what’s available to you. Check these out for starters, and reach out to us if there are others
you’re interested in or if you have any specific needs.

Let’s Move Faith and Communities Resources

MomsRising.org believes that faith based community leaders are key partners in combating the problems
that lead to childhood obesity and unhealthy lifestyles. The Department of Health and Human Services
has established a Let’s Move Through Faith and Communities initiative that does just that! Their website
provides resources, community practices, curricula and other ideas that we hope will help your church
make healthy choices the easy choices! You’ll also find helpful links to federal resources that can help
guide your work.

You can find this information at http://www.hhs.gov/partnerships/letsmove/communities_on_the_move/

You can also join Let’s Move Faith and Communities for a special series of webinar trainings that equip
health leaders to run the National Institutes of Health’s (NIH’s) We Can! program in their community. We
Can! is a science- based national education program that provides parents, caregivers and communities
with tools and strategies to help families improve food choices, increase physical activity and reduce
screen time.

We Can! Offers Two Core Curricula:

1. Media-Smart Youth®: Eat, Think and Be Active! is an after-school program designed to help young
people ages 11 to 13 understand the connections between media and health and to help youth build
media analysis and production skills. The program uses nutrition and physical activity examples to help
youth think critically about how media influences the choices they make.

2. The Energize Our Families: Parent Program is a multiple-session curriculum designed to provide par-
ents and caregivers with the knowledge and skills they need, along with practical tools, to help families
maintain a healthy weight. Specific topics include shopping for healthy food on a budget, controlling
portion sizes, increasing physical activity in youth and reducing family screen time.

You can find more information on these webinars at http://www.hhs.gov/partnerships/letsmove/index.html

VIDEO

First Lady Michelle Obama addressing MomsRising.org’s Food Power Conference, and a post about the
First Lady appearing at the event on the White House Blog of Record

• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6__psZkav1g
• http://obamafoodorama.blogspot.com/2013/03/lets-move-video- message-first-lady.html
Background on the USDA regulations:
• Proposed USDA Rule: https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/02/08/2013-02584/national-school-lunch-program-and-school-breakfast-program-nutrition-standards-for-all-foods-sold-in


• Comparison of Different Competitive Foods Standards: http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/priority_nutritionprogram.html


Fact Sheets, Infographics and Reports:
• Center for Disease Control and Prevention Childhood Overweight and Obesity: Strategies and Solutions http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/solutions.html

• Center for Disease Control and Prevention Adult Overweight and Obesity: Adult Obesity Facts http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/adult.html


• Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Health Policy Snapshot on Competitive Foods: http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2013/rwjf72649


• National Black Church Initiative http://www.naltblackchurch.com/health/family-health.html
CONTACT
CONTACT

Monifa Bandele, MHS
Senior Campaign Director
http://www.MomsRising.org/blog/author/monifa-bandele/ MomsRising.org
917.407.3018
@monifabandele #Risers

Karen Showalter
Campaign Director
MomsRising.org
Cell: 914.589.0983
Email: karen@MomsRising.org
Skype: karen.showalter

• #FoodFri: tweetchats on healthy foods, families, schools and communities. Every Friday at 1pm ET. Follow @MomsRising.org and #FoodFri to participate.

• MomsRising.org blog: http://www.MomsRising.org/blog/

• MomsRising.org food campaign webpage: http://www.MomsRising.org/page/moms/school-foods-making-the-school-day-healthier