



# Youth Advocacy

## *Youth Involvement in Advocacy in Childhood Obesity Prevention*



**HEALTHY  
TEENS ON  
THE MOVE  
IN  
BALDWIN  
PARK, CA**



## *Learning Objectives*

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- Understand the rationale for and importance of youth involvement in advocacy regarding childhood obesity prevention
- Develop strategies for engaging youth
- Identify different arenas for youth participation or leadership in advocacy efforts to promote healthy environments

## What we know...

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- Adolescence is a time of biological, cognitive, emotional and social changes
- Youth need to be included as part of a group and they need to be heard!



ADOLESCENTS  
ARE  
PORTRAYED  
AS  
POWERLESS  
CONSUMERS



# Youth Advocacy

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## *Why involve youth in advocacy regarding childhood obesity prevention*

- Youth can be catalysts for change in arenas where change is sometimes slow and drawn out
- Youth invigorate discussions for change in a way no other community person can
- Youth demand changes now that can excite a momentum in any movement

# HEAC Framework

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Policy Change in all Sectors of Community

- Schools
- After-school programs
- Neighborhood
- Health Care
- Marketing and Advertising



# Healthy Teens on the Move

## (Baldwin Park)

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- Think Your Drink
- PhotoVoice
- Snack Standards Trainings
- Walkability Assessments
- Training for other Youth Sites
- Statewide Youth Conferences




# PhotoVoice: An Advocacy Tool

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## What problems in our environment did youth find through PhotoVoice?

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- Environmental inequity
  - Lack of open space
  - Lack of park access
  - Unwalkable streets
- Food inequity
  - Lack of healthy food restaurants
  - Lack of fresh fruits and vegetables in corner markets

# PHOTOVOICE OF THE SCHOOL FOOD ENVIRONMENT

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- Students captured the realities of food access demonstrating barriers such as long-lines at lunch 4 minutes before lunch was over





# YOUTH ADVOCACY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF SB 12/965

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- As a result of ongoing adult and youth meetings with HEAC, ASB directors, and the Food Services Department, students are monitoring progress of the implementation of state snack standard in their schools and reviewing an audit of teen consumption of fruits and vegetables in schools.
- Students have committed their support to a “Teen Marketing” to promote healthier fundraising.
- Students have conducted taste testing of snacks & beverages to determine healthier snacks and beverages preferred by the entire student body.



# YOUTH POLICY ADVOCACY IN SCHOOLS

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- Teens are encouraging policy and environmental change at with school district (i.e. increased healthy eating and physical activity resources in schools and health components into existing curriculum).
- Teens requested that school wellness policy be modified to include healthy marketing and charter a Health Commissioner position into Associated Student Body Govt. to ensure school compliance with SB 12/965 and increase healthy marketing on campus.

# PHOTOVOICE OF THE COMMUNITY FOOD ENVIRONMENT

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- Students captured potential solutions to increasing healthy eating in communities



# PHOTOVOICE OF THE COMMUNITY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ENVIRONMENT

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- Students capture positive elements of city programming that supports physical activity



# YOUTH WALKABILITY ASSESSMENT: UNSAFE SIDEWALKS/BRIDGE

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- Youth have led audits of parks and neighborhoods
- Teens requested that walk routes from home to school be evaluated and an improvement plan for these areas be adopted



# Teens empowered



## TEEN FOOD JUNKIES TARGETED

ALL THESE SWEET DRINKS MEAN TOO MUCH SUGAR!	
PEPSI COLA 12oz	9 TEASPOONS SUGAR
7UP 12oz	10 TEASPOONS SUGAR
FRUIT FLAVORED SODA 20oz	9 TEASPOONS SUGAR
LEMONADE 20oz	12 TEASPOONS SUGAR
ICED TEA 20oz	12 TEASPOONS SUGAR
SUNNY DELIGHT 20oz	11 TEASPOONS SUGAR

**DIANE MOTISE**, a clinical dietician from Kaiser Permanente Hospital in Baldwin Park, tells a class of teens at the Baldwin Park Community Center the downside of drinking too much soda.

**Young people's diets can lead to serious consequences**

*By Michelle Rester  
STAFF WRITER*

**BALDWIN PARK** — It's a love affair that just won't quit. Teen-agers' obsession with sodas and fast food is causing an alarming rise in obesity and diabetes, experts say. The average teen-age boy, age of 16, consumes an average of 1,000 teaspoons of sugar a year. Just behind the boys are the girls, who drink an average of two cans of soda or 20 teaspoons of sugar a day.

Along with the dangers of a diet too high in sugar, fat and calories, diets high in sodas pose another problem, Motise said. Sodas contain phosphorous, which can deplete the body's calcium. "What we recommend is that you choose less of the sodas and choose milk," Motise said.

"Load up with calcium now, because after 30 years bones won't absorb anymore of it."

The soda facts, along with a fat and calorie guide to popular fast foods, hit home for many of the teens. "I think I'm going to start eating salads," said Edwin Flores. The 17-year-old is a member of the group's teen sub-committee.

"What I'm learning is that teen-agers need to eat smart and play sports — even if it's just to walk around or play hoops instead of video games."

The daylong event comes on the heels of a recent push to approve legislation that would ban sodas and fast food from K-through-11 school campuses.

Authorized by state Sen. Marsha Escutia, D-Whittier, Senate Bill 12 has brought attention to the increasing rate of childhood and teen-age obesity and diabetes.

Assemblyman Ed Chavez, D-Industry, who co-authored the bill, had some advice for the Baldwin Park teens. "It's easy to eat the junk food," he said.

"It's also just as easy to pick up an apple or a banana."

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*Photo by DANIEL J. QUIMAJON*



# Engaging Youth

- Eat Well Live Better.org – focus groups
- Resource Development for Health Providers
- New Websites geared at youth





# Youth Advocacy

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*Develop strategies for engaging youth*

- Involve youth in every step of the policy advocacy process
- Data gathering opportunities are lead youth
- Youth sit at the policy table to discuss the need for changes that affect them directly with policymakers and health organizations
- Youth are trained in presentation skills



## Youth Advocacy

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*Youth participation leadership in healthy environment advocacy*

Youth have educated the city and the school district about the challenges they face when trying to make healthier lifestyle choices through:

- Input into City's Parks Master Plan
- Input into the School District Wellness Policy



# YOUTH/ADULT Partnerships are Key!

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Citrus Valley Health Partners Southern California Public  
Health Association City of El Monte Foothill Transit  
Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Suburban  
Water CHOICES Program Baldwin Park Unified School  
District Albertson's California Center for Public Health  
Advocacy Arrowhead California Endowment  
SPIRITT Family Services City of La Puente Food-4-Less  
Inland Empire Trader Joe's City of Irwindale  
County of Los Angeles Department of Health Services-  
Public Health Tropicana Healthy Body Products PHFE-  
WIC California Parks and Recreation Society City of  
West Covina 5-A-Day Power Play! Department of  
Water and Power City of South El Monte Naked Juice  
Assemblymember Ed Chavez California Pistachio  
Commissions Children's Bureau



# FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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THANKS!