preventobesity.NET
connect. organize. lead.

Strategy

Childhood obesity threatens the health of our young people and their future potential. Today, more than 23 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 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.

Driven by a belief that technology has created the opportunity to tap the talents, creativity, expertise and energy of potential collaborators, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) launched PreventObesity. net to harness the power of online networks to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic.

Our approach is to first identify both current successful approaches as well as unmet needs within the community of leaders working on childhood obesity issues. Where successful approaches exist, we see our role as highlighting and sharing those successes within the movement. Where unmet needs exist, we are creating innovative online services or leveraging existing tools to meet those needs. Through these approaches we aim to support a more effective movement for change and make it easier for all advocates to know and capitalize on current activities, strategies, successes and lessons. By using technology to bring together a greater number of people who seek to improve the health of our children, families and communities, we will create a network that becomes smarter and more helpful as more people use it.

The goals of the networking strategies are to:

- Build a base of grassroots advocates who engage in efforts to change policies and places in ways that will help to prevent childhood obesity and reverse the epidemic.

- Provide tools to help people organize more easily, more powerfully and with greater reach and awareness.

Current resources include:

- Our website hub at www.preventobesity.net, containing online organizing tools as well as training and support to help people most effectively use them.

- An interactive database and map of the movement to help recruit new advocates, improve our collective understanding of key activities and share information among allies.

- Blogger analysis and outreach support for communications and media efforts.

- Text messaging and organizing tools to help engage new audiences.

These activities are part of a growing web-based platform that collects and displays data designed to help allies make better decisions, collaborate with and learn from one another, and be more effective advocates. Future projects will involve experimenting with additional service and tools and investing in technology as needed in order to build effectively on the work of others.