Food on the Run

Lessons from a Youth Nutrition and Physical Activity Campaign

California Project LEAN

California Project LEAN (Leaders Encouraging Activity and Nutrition) (CPL) is a joint program of the California Department of Health Services and the Public Health Institute focusing on youth empowerment, policy and environmental change strategies, and community-based solutions. CPL's mission is to increase healthy eating and physical activity to reduce the prevalence of obesity and chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, osteoporosis, and diabetes.

CPL works with state and local physical activity and nutrition leaders to conduct programs in communities throughout California. Through an infrastructure of ten regions, CPL implements local interventions that utilize the Spectrum of Prevention model which describes six levels of prevention activities—from strengthening individual knowledge and skills to influencing policy.

Food on the Run: Lessons from a Youth Nutrition and Physical Activity Advocacy Campaign

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Food on the Run operated in the following 29 low-income high schools from rural, suburban, and urban communities across California. Their participation was vital.

School	City
Alps View High School	Weaverville
Amos Alonzo Stagg High School	Stockton
Anderson High School	Anderson
Andrew Hill High School	San Jose
Arcata High School	Eureka
Balboa High School	San Francisco
Cajon High School	San Bernardino
Colton High School	Colton
Del Norte High School	Crescent City
Encina High School	Sacramento
Ernest Righetti High School	Santa Maria
Farmersville High School	Farmersville
Firebaugh High School	Firebaugh
Fontana High School	Fontana
Francisco Bravo Medical Magnet	Los Angeles
Gabrielino High School	San Gabriel

School	City
Hoover High School	San Diego
King City High School	King City
Mendota High School	Mendota
Parlier High School	Parlier
Portola High School	Quincy
San Juan High School	Citrus Heights
SELF High School	Irvine
Southwest High School	El Centro
Southwest High School	San Diego
Theodore Roosevelt High School	Los Angeles
Venice High School	Los Angeles
Westminster High School	Westminster
Zoe Barnum High School	Eureka

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Introduction: Making Change Happen

This guide is intended to provide real life examples of how *Food on the Run*, a California-based project, worked with youth advocates to make healthy eating and physical activity easier to do at their schools.

Each chapter describes a step of implementing a nutrition and physical activity youth advocacy program. Chapters include the following:

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Chapter 1
Description of the *Food on the Run* Structure and Outcomes

Goals

California Project LEAN (Leaders Encouraging Activity and Nutrition), a joint project of the Public Health Institute and the California Department of Health Services, works with state and local physical activity and nutrition leaders to conduct programs in communities throughout California. *Food on the Run*, a program of California Project LEAN, was a multi-component high school-based intervention to promote healthy eating and physical activity among adolescents as a way to improve health and reduce the risk of chronic disease. *Food on the Run* became a statewide project in 1997 with a grant from The California Endowment. The fully-funded project ran until 2002.

The goals of *Food on the Run* were to conduct a high school-based program that:

- Prompted high school students to advocate for additional healthy food and physical activity options.
- Advanced policy and environmental changes that promote healthy eating and physical activity options in the school and surrounding community.
- Motivated students to eat healthier and engage in more physical activity.

In carrying out its work, *Food on the Run*'s primary target audience was multi-ethnic, underserved high school students. Secondary target audiences included families, school staff, community leaders and policymakers. *Food on the Run* operated in 29 low-income high schools from rural, suburban, and urban communities across California.

Program Components

Food on the Run used the Spectrum of Prevention (Prevention Institute, Oakland, California, www.preventioninstitute.org) as the basis for its program design. The Spectrum states that in order for programs to affect behavior change, they must accomplish a variety of activities that affect the influencers of behavior. Each level of the Spectrum represents a strategy necessary for change. Levels include:

- Strengthening individual knowledge and skills.
- Promoting community education.
- Educating providers.
- Fostering coalitions and networks.
- Changing organizational practices.
- Influencing policy and legislation.

Each *Food on the Run* site had an adult coordinator who was asked to accomplish required activities on a yearly basis which reflected each level of the Spectrum of Prevention, including:

- Form, maintain, and expand relationships with at least two local partners to work collaboratively on *Food on the Run*. Partners could include nutritionists, physical activity specialists, educational leaders, policy/decision makers, and/or parent groups.

- Convene a core group of at least 10-20 students from the collaborating high school to serve in a leadership and advocacy capacity promoting healthy eating and physical activity policy/environmental changes within the school/community.
- Prepare the core group of students to serve as advocates by using California Project LEAN resource tools such as *Jump Start Teens* and *Playing the Policy Game* (see Chapter 3). A minimum of four lessons were to be utilized from *Jump Start Teens* including:
  Lesson #1: ABCs of Healthy Eating.

  Lesson #2: Let's Get Physical.

  Lesson #3: Teens Making a Difference (in conjunction with *Playing the Policy Game*)
  Lesson #8: Making News
- Pursue one to two written policy changes that would increase healthy eating and/or physical activity options at the school. Student advocates, partners, and existing data were to be involved in the process. Utilize *Playing the Policy Game* and Lesson #3 of *Jump Start Teens* to identify and address policy/environmental issues.
- Work with student advocates to conduct at least one activity that would inform a policy maker (i.e. principal, food service director, city council member, school board member, other elected official) about the identified healthy eating and physical activity policy goals.
- Work with student advocates to implement one activity that involves families in the advancement of the identified policy goals.
- Disseminate *Food on the Run* educational materials to the school and school district including the following:
  - TV PSA
  - Radio PSA
  - Posters
  - Counter Display and Tip Sheets
  - Press Materials
  - Parent brochure
  - *Jump Start Teens*
  - *Playing the Policy Game*
- Implement measures to ensure the sustainability of *Food on the Run* goals. For example, written policy changes, and/or integration of *Jump Start Teens* into the curriculum.
- Work with student advocates to conduct five to seven school-based activities to promote healthy food choices and physical activity as well as the identified policy goals.

Project Outcomes

Based on evaluation results, actual program implementation mirrored the required activities. The table below describes the level of activity per year that the adult coordinators had with student advocates over the course of the intervention.

Mean number of lessons taught	6 lessons
Mean number of minutes spent per lesson	55.25 minutes
Mean number of weeks spent training	9 weeks
Mean number of hours advocates spent on activities outside of training	20 hours

Food on the Run was successful at engaging students in advocacy activities. Student advocates reported statistically significant increases in advocacy activities each year from 1998 to 2001. Such an increase was not seen in the general student body. *Food on the Run* student advocates were successful at increasing the number of healthy food and physical activity choices at participating high schools. Below is a list of changes reported at individual schools for the 1999-2000 school year.

To increase access to and promotion of healthy foods, schools:

- Started a LEAN cart on which only healthy items were sold.
- Added yogurt, salads, sandwiches without mayonnaise, low fat crackers, and low fat salad dressings.
- Added healthier menu items to the cafeteria.
- Added 1% milk, bagels, and yogurt as ala carte items.
- Added healthy items to vending machines.
- Made more water available in the vending machines.
- Introduced 1% milk district-wide as the standard.
- Introduced whole wheat bread, turkey franks, and more fresh fruit.
- Instituted a healthy food vending machine.
- Made fresh fruit available in the cafeteria.
- Added more vegetarian dishes.
- Added two types of salads.
- Added yogurt to the breakfast menu district-wide.
- Used marketing techniques to dramatically increase student participation in the school breakfast program.
- Promoted and sold branded all-fruit smoothies.
- Instituted bagel Fridays at the cafeteria.
- Made healthy foods available at food sale days.
- Offered salads in the cafeteria.
- Made fruit smoothies, frozen juice bars, and yogurt available.
- Added beef/broccoli/rice bowl to cafeteria and snack bar.
- Increased availability of fruit bowls, rice bowls, and healthy sandwiches at campus food carts in addition to the cafeteria speed lines.
- Added pita sandwiches and yogurt to the menu.
- Added vegetarian items, potato boats, and fruit juice to the cafeteria menu.
- Added salads, smoothies, and baja bowl to food cart.

- Added healthy Meal Deal to the cafeteria menu.
- Added healthy items to the snack bar.
- Introduced healthy entrées to the school lunch menu.
- Added baked chips, bagel chips, pretzels, and granola bars to the student store.
- Added an “all healthy” vending machine on campus with fresh fruit, whole grain options and milk.
- Established a healthy breakfast cart.

To Increase access to and promotion of physical activity options, schools:

- Started a hiking club.
- Promoted available physical activity facilities and activities offered on and off campus.
- Promoted the use of community physical activity resources.
- Made a dance class available.
- Began an intramural basketball league.
- Petitioned the city for bike lanes.
- Added a fitness class.
- Extended the hours of operation for the campus fitness center.
- Produced a guide to all King City physical activity opportunities and mailed it to all parents in the school with a letter from the principal encouraging families to be active.
- Opened the gym at lunch for physical activity.
- Started softball and basketball intramural tournaments.
- Offered a semi-organized sports activity at lunch.
- Highlighted local physical activity options for teens through creation and distribution of a teen brochure.
- Began basketball tournaments at lunch.
- Offered noontime physical activities.
- Added aerobic kickboxing classes to the after-school program two days per week.
- Added dance classes to the physical education course offerings.
- Organized to extend after-school activity hours and to provide public swimming lessons after school and on Saturdays.
- Started a walking and adventure Club.

Individual Change

During the course of *Food on the Run*, student advocates demonstrated statistically significant change (at least .05 significance) in the areas of:

- Healthy eating and physical activity knowledge.
- Healthy eating and physical activity attitudes.
- Healthy eating behavior.

The general student body was evaluated for changes in attitudes and behaviors related to healthy eating and physical activity. During the course of *Food on the Run*, statistically significant change (at least .05 significance) was demonstrated in:

- Healthy eating behavior.
- Physical activity attitudes.

Although the level of significant change varied across years, the occurrence and direction of the change indicated a programmatic effect.

Chapter 2
Recruiting and Working With Teens

Working with teen advocates can be a very powerful way to find workable solutions to seemingly complex nutrition and physical activity problems. This chapter provides the details that can make an adolescent-focused advocacy campaign successful, and includes advice and "best practices" from the field on recruiting and working with teens. Specifically, this chapter includes tips for:

Effectively working with teens.
Finding teens who are interested in nutrition and physical activity.
Organizing a team of teens.

Effectively Working With Teens

Young people bring many important characteristics to the table: energy, creativity, and firsthand experience with the physical activity and nutrition environment in their school. It is important to provide the adult leadership that can support the youth-driven campaign. Some potential barriers and solutions for working with teen advocates are described in the table below:

Barrier	Solution
Time Teens often have a lack of time and/or tight schedules.	• Find creative meeting times including before school, lunch meetings, electronic workgroups. • Be organized and purposeful when you meet. Don't meet just to meet. • Incorporate your activities into other "can't miss" teen activities like noon rallies. • Integrate time for homework or tutoring opportunities, if possible. • Offer incentives such as community service hours. • Limit the time students are pulled out of class.
Level of Self-Sufficiency Teens still needed guidance in order to complete tasks.	• Use email to remind teens of meetings, due dates, and tasks. • Provide teens with your contact information so they can reach you. • Divide tasks into small steps and check in with youth frequently. • Arrange for tools such as telephones, email, computers, faxes, etc.

Barrier	Solution
Logistics The “where, when, and how” of working with teens can be challenging.	• Hold meetings at school or gathering places so teens won’t have to travel. • Remember that teens are busy with school generally from 8 am to 3 pm so they are usually unavailable for meetings that adults schedule during the work day. • Arrange carpools or hold meetings along public transportation routes. • Get parental permission and contact information early in the process. Utilize a release form granting permission to work with media and be photographed. • Find a way to provide meals or allow time to eat.
Develop Rapport Teens work best with adults they like and respect.	• Respect the ideas and creativity of the teens. • Celebrate success. • Allow time for the group members to get to know each other. • Allow time for socializing.
Clear Expectations Adults sometimes speak a language and have expectations that teens do not understand.	• Provide clear guidance on what you are asking of each person. • Utilize written job descriptions. • Be prepared to answer “so what do you want us to do?”

Case Study

Providing Clear Guidance
Anderson Union High School

Working with adolescents can be rewarding and challenging. It is important to be very clear about your expectations and the level of involvement you anticipate from your teen advocates. Many students are strapped for time. As the school year progresses, activities such as final exams, prom, sporting events, and graduation may limit participation. One approach developed by the Sierra Cascade Region of California Project LEAN was to have the students elect a teen Project Leader who had the responsibility to contact teen advocates, assume leadership for the group, and assist the adult or community coordinator. Together with a Teacher Advisor and a Media Committee, this small group would maintain the program with support from the adult or community coordinator. Here are the job descriptions developed by this group. You may use or adapt these to suit your purposes.

Project Coordinator
A community member who oversees the activities for the project:
- Recruits and identifies the teacher advisor.
- Provides training for the activities and goals of the projects.
- Assists the teacher advisor in recruiting advocates and electing group officers.
- Provides materials and program training to the group.
- Communicates regularly with the teacher advisor and student leader.
- Conducts surveys, research, and activities as required by the project.

Teacher Advisor
A teacher at school (e.g. home economics, physical education, nutrition, or other) who will serve as an advisor to the teen advocates:
- Assists the project coordinator in recruiting teen advocates for the project.
- Helps coordinate teen group meetings and projects.
- Oversees the election of teen officers.
- Assists the project coordinator in training new officers.
- Provides guidance, information, and supervision to advocates for meetings and projects.
- Solicits and maintains contact with parents, group officers, project coordinator, and community.
- Attends school and community meetings.

Project Leader
An elected student in grades 9-12 who will serve as leader of the advocacy group:
- Helps recruit students to participate in the group.
- Collaborates with the teacher advisor to plan meeting agendas and facilitate meetings.
- Serves as the group representative to the school principal, food service director, school board, school Nutrition Advisory Group, and project coordinator.
- Maintains advocacy group activity binder.
- Attends nutrition advisory group meetings, takes minutes, and reports back to the advocacy group.
- Coordinates group events and projects with assistance from the teacher advisor
- Keeps advocates informed of important information, dates, and events.
- Collaborates with the media committee to plan campus media campaigns for activities and events.

Media Committee
A group of 2-3 teen advocates who will develop and distribute media materials for activities throughout the campus and community:
- Attend a media training seminar conducted by project coordinator.
- Collaborate with the project leader and teacher advisor to develop a media campaign to promote group goals and activities
- Develop and distribute a quarterly newsletter to all campus students.
- Serve as the media spokesperson for TV, radio, and print publications, when appropriate.
- Give presentations to parents, schools, community, and professional groups as requested.

Finding Teens Interested In Nutrition and Physical Activity

In order to successfully recruit teens, it is important to know what will motivate students to join your cause and where to recruit interested students. The success of your program requires interested and motivated students who will participate and devote a portion of their time to creating healthier food and physical activity options on campus. Teens may be motivated by the following opportunities and benefits:

- Developing leadership skills
- Building their resume
- Enhancing college applications
- Collecting letters of recommendation
- Working with the media
- Obtaining marketing experience
- Developing public speaking skills
- Working with policy makers
- Acquiring community service hours
- Contributing to graphic design
- Working with foodservice
- Participating in physical activity and fitness training opportunities
- Participating in social activities

Here are some strategies that *Food on the Run* coordinators found successful:

Partner with Existing Student Leadership Programs
Contact the staff advisor for student clubs to schedule a meeting or arrange for a presentation to the club. Students in these activities are often looking to improve their school community and are interested in developing their leadership skills. Possible groups include:

- Student Government.
- Key Club.
- Scholastic Federation.
- Student Council.

Partner with a Teacher on Campus
Work through a contact on campus to identify students to participate in your project. It may be possible to conduct some classroom activities or lessons on nutrition and physical activity in exchange for the opportunity to recruit advocates. Possible departments to partner with are:

- Health.
- Science.
- Physical Education.
- Home Economics.
- Civics.

Hold a fun event to recruit students

Case Study

Using a Contest to Create Student Interest
Francisco Bravo Medical Magnet High School

Francisco Bravo Medical Magnet High School in Los Angeles used a billboard contest to engage students in nutrition issues and to recruit student advocates. The *Food on the Run* community partner, California State University, Los Angeles, organized the contest in which students designed healthy billboard messages and then sponsored the production of the billboards. Students came up with messages that promoted fruit and vegetable consumption. English-language and Spanish-language concepts were chosen and made into billboards that were located in East Los Angeles. This activity educated students and the community about healthy eating and began to demonstrate to students how their direct involvement and planning efforts could facilitate change in their own communities.

Organizing a Team of Teens

Once you've found interested teens, you need to have an idea of how your advocacy team will work. Important logistics such as meeting times and locations should be determined early on, so that the group can focus on their advocacy ideas.

Gain Buy-in from the School

A key to success is having support and buy-in from the school. Whether you are working as an outside entity, or within the school system, establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), or some kind of partnership agreement with the school is a helpful way to ensure some level of support. A sample MOU is included in Chapter 10.

Add legitimacy to your effort

Establishing ground rules or bylaws for the group and affiliating the group with other known associations can help build confidence that your group is an organized, legitimate entity for change. There are many ways to do this.

One example is to form a Nutrition Advisory Council (NAC) through the American School Food Services Association (ASFSA).

Case Study

Establishing a Nutrition Advisory Council (NAC)
Andrew Hill High School

Students at Andrew Hill High School in San Jose, California, utilized a NAC to build a relationship with their food service director and to network with other students in the state on nutrition issues. Chartering as a NAC through the American School Food Association (ASFSA) allowed the group notoriety, inclusion, and participation at a greater level than in just their school and district. "Being a NAC opened doors for the group with the district, the state, and other high schools. Students had to work in collaboration (with food service) in order for the program to be effective," said Holly Weber, California Project LEAN coordinator of the Bay Area Region and *Food on the Run* Coordinator at Andrew Hill.

An application and a small fee are required to charter as a NAC with ASFSA. There must also be an active advisor on campus and one of the associated contacts must be a member of ASFSA. Upon sending in an application and fee, ASFSA sends a handbook and quarterly newsletters. The NAC is eligible to participate in contests throughout the year, with cash incentives offered as prizes. Additional NAC information and application forms may be accessed at www.asfsa.org.

Another way to involve and access students is by establishing a "sanctioned" club on campus. Often this requires establishing by-laws and identifying an advisor who will volunteer to be the coordinator from the school staff. Some high schools have introduced "club day" on campus, when all of the clubs have a specific amount of time scheduled in the day to allow for meetings, as well as to recruit new members.

Case Study

Utilizing a Club Day to Recruit Advocates
Ernest Righetti High School

The *Food on the Run* program at Ernest Righetti High School in Santa Maria, California, set up a table during a club day event in order to promote its "LEAN and Mean" club and to recruit students who were interested in becoming advocates for healthier food and more physical activity on campus.

When students came to the table, they were given a flier promoting the club activities. Some of the major incentives the club offered were:

- Free personal fitness training for students who joined.
- Free one week passes from the YMCA.
- Access to a certified personal trainer and registered dietitian.

In order to establish an official club, they needed to:

- Secure a school faculty advisor.
- Compose club bylaws, rules, and regulations.
- Elect officers of the club.
- Schedule a regular meeting time.

This was a very successful way to recruit students. Many opportunities occurred to discuss healthful eating and physical activity habits with students. The students with the most interest became student advocates and really showed an interest in making their high school a healthier place.

Chapter 3
Training Teens on Physical Activity and Nutrition

It is important to provide teen advocates with the skills they will need to succeed. They need to know the basics of nutrition and physical activity, as well as to feel they have the power to make a change in their environment. This chapter outlines some creative ideas for teaching:

- Nutrition and Physical Activity 101.
- Advocacy Skills.

Nutrition and Physical Activity 101

During the course of *Food on the Run*, California Project LEAN developed several tools to teach high school students about nutrition and physical activity. All print materials can be downloaded free as PDF files or purchased on the California Project LEAN web site www.CaliforniaProjectLEAN.org.

Jump Start Teens: A resource kit of eight interactive lessons that can be used to integrate nutrition and physical activity into language arts, math, social studies, and more. The kit includes complete, easy-to-follow lessons and worksheets, creative, stand-alone activities, and Spanish-language handouts.

Simple Solution to the Energy Problem: Promotional materials that encourage teens to eat well and be physically active as a way to increase their energy level. Materials include a poster, television PSA, radio PSA, and a counter display with take-away tip sheets that provide healthy eating and physical activity ideas.

California Project LEAN teen website: www.CAProjectLEAN.org. This web site provides accurate nutrition and physical activity information for teens in a creative manner. The site includes a section where teens can submit nutrition and physical activity questions, which are answered by one of California Project LEAN's registered dietitians.

Food on the Run—Healthy eating and physical activity for your teenager: This brochure for parents provides tips for helping teens practice healthy behaviors. The brochure is available in English and Spanish.

The following examples demonstrate how to take nutrition and physical activity information and make it exciting and interesting for teens. Most students have had the basic Food Pyramid and physical education class information.

The following activities breathe new life into the same old information and help to get students more enthusiastic about making things happen on their campus. Some general recommendations from the field include the following:

- **Make it fun**

Case Study

Take Aim… A Nutrition Game
Firebaugh and Mendota High Schools

In order to engage and train students, a game was utilized to bring some fun to the process. You can order this interactive "Jeopardy" type game from the Oregon Dairy Council ($11.00) at www.oregondairycouncil.org. **The key to success with these teens was the fierce competition for prizes.** A tip to extend the life of the game is to have students develop new questions. You can easily place these over the old questions using small Velcro circles or double-sided tape.

- **Practice hands-on**

Case Study

Judo Demonstration
Francisco Bravo Medical Magnet High School

Instead of simply reading about different ways of being physically active, the *Food on the Run* program partnered with a Kinesiology Department at a local university to host an after-school Judo demonstration in the school auditorium. All students were invited to attend.

- **Teach younger students**

Case Study

Student Teachers
Portola High School

Teen advocates brought their energy and creativity to the county elementary schools. Advocates developed and presented a series of nutrition lessons to the young students as a way to share the importance of healthy eating. In the process, they learned a few things about themselves. This activity was quite time consuming, but in the end it gave the teens a greater understanding of nutrition and what it takes to manage 25-30 seven-year-olds.

- **Be as interactive as possible**

Case Study

Milk Mustache Booth
Arcata High School

This event worked because it was fun, easy, and popular with students. Advocates and the adult coordinator assembled the supplies (tongue depressors, vanilla yogurt, Polaroid camera and film), "Got Milk?" signs, and empty milk cartons) for this lunch time booth. A booth was set-up with the supplies and information on the calcium requirements for teens. A few sample photos were also hung up so that participating students could see what they were about to do. Each student who approached the booth was educated about the importance of calcium as they applied yogurt to their top lip with the tongue depressor. A Polaroid photo was taken of each student with the "Got Milk?" sign and milk cartons. Participants were given a photo of themselves.

- **Peer-to-peer**

Case Study

Give Students A Voice
McKinleyville, Arcata, Eureka, and Zoe Barnum High Schools

"Teens are good consumers of information, but have little or no experience in providing information for their peers and the public. They are anxious to be a part of marketing to teens," said Joyce Houston, project director. The following outline describes how *Food on the Run* successfully partnered with a local radio stations to give student advocates a public voice.

Step 1: Researched the radio stations that target teens and their receptivity to partnership.
Step 2: Identified one media company that was connected with rock/pop and country music stations with broad teen appeal.
Step 3: Identified teen spokespeople to be used for radio interviews.
Step 4: Trained teen spokespeople on interview topics and interviewing techniques. Topics included: Calcium; Fast Food; Sports Nutrition; Healthy Snacks; How to Fit Physical Activity into Your Day; Physical Activities in Humboldt County, and How Physical Activity Decreases Stress.
Step 5: Each student was accompanied to the station by a health department staff member for moral support and back-up information.
Step 6: Educational incentives were presented to the radio DJs to encourage future discussion regarding healthy eating and increased physical activity.

The results of this campaign were very empowering. The teens were very effective in giving messages on the radio to their peers, and they loved being on the radio. This was a very exciting activity for everyone involved.

Advocacy Skills

To become active members of their community, teens must feel comfortable using multiple skills ranging from research to public speaking. It is important for students to feel they can make a positive impact on their school campus and community and to discover the value and usefulness of their opinions.

Training and empowering students to help shape their school environment are powerful. Teens need to know they have a role to play in shaping decisions that affect their lives. Some key elements to developing this include:

- Educating teens on the skills necessary to be an advocate, such as writing letters, problem solving, budgeting, working with the press, conducting surveys, and dealing with set-backs.
- Providing an opportunity for students to have a voice.
- Involving students in decision making that impacts their lives.
- Listening to and acting upon solutions that students provide.
- Acknowledging the outcomes and successes of the group.

To help groups train youth advocates, *Food on the Run* developed *Playing the Policy Game: Preparing Teen Leaders to Take Action on Healthy Eating and Physical Activity.* This 27-page workbook guides youth through the process of identifying problems and solutions and then advocating for change. It contains sample campus and student healthy eating and physical activity surveys, a sample action plan, and tips for working with the media. The guide is available in English and Spanish (see Chapter 5).

An important part of advocacy skill building is providing opportunities for students to have positive and successful interactions with policy makers and decision makers in the community. The following case study from Encina High School in Sacramento details a legislative visit that was conducted by student advocates.

Case Study

Conducting a Legislative Educational Visit
Encina High School

The adult coordinators of the project conducted the groundwork for this visit by contacting legislators' offices to schedule meetings and arranging permission slips and transportation for the students.

Students educated the legislators about student experiences with the cafeteria and campus snack bars and what students were doing to make changes in the school environment. The students shared their challenges and successes and identified the role state legislation might play in providing more healthy food and physical activity options for students on campus.

Key components of this activity included the following:

- Student advocates created a fact sheet on the food choices available to them during the school day.
- Student advocates invited legislators to visit the school campus during lunch to provide an opportunity to see first hand the food choices available to students.
- Adult coordinators asked legislators to explain the legislative process and what goes on "behind the scenes" to students.
- The legislative visit educated students on the lengthy process and sometimes frustrating barriers that arise when trying to draft and pass legislation.

After this visit, students had a better sense of the progress and process of policy development. They also learned that their state and local elected officials are approachable and responsive to the needs of youth. Students from this school became very active the legislative process after this visit. They were called upon to testify at a hearing on school nutrition at the State Capitol.

Chapter 4
Building Group Dynamics

Maintaining a cohesive group of interested teens with regular participation is one of the true challenges for most adult leaders. In this chapter, we provide some examples of activities that have been used to excite teens, as well as to help them feel connected and willing to participate in creating change. Topics include:

- Building a sense of trust.
- Empowering youth.
- Generating excitement.

Building a Sense of Trust

Policy and environmental change can be difficult and surprisingly controversial. Many adults are as ill-equipped to advocate for change as are 15- and 16-year old youth. A seemingly benign topic such as providing healthy options in school vending machines can turn into a very heated debate. If student advocates feel unsupported, you may quickly lose participation and momentum. Being an advocate for change is not always comfortable for teens or adults.

Here are some tips to help build group dynamics so that there is a feeling of support and trust:

1. *Get to know each other.* Learn why each person in the group has decided to participate and what their strengths and weaknesses are.
2. *Think of your group as a team*. Teens are often used by adults to achieve an end and are not considered part of the solution. Make an effort to develop consensus among the group of youth.
3. *Set ground rules for decision making.* When the tough decisions have to be made, have a process in place to ensure everyone is heard and the group process is followed.
4. *Celebrate successes.* Change is a very slow process. To an adolescent, it can seem like a lifetime. Take time to acknowledge the small, intermediate steps.
5. *Provide training.* Prepare your team so they are in a position to be successful. Adult leaders in this position walk a fine line between guiding the process and leaving the group in chaos. Help your teens understand the issues, the arguments, the benefits and the pitfalls, so they are prepared to address the problem and create solutions.
6. *Practice what you preach.* Nobody likes a phony, and teens are very likely to spot one. Nothing will kill the group dynamic more than hypocrisy. Don't bring doughnuts to the planning meetings.
7. *Follow though.* If a plan is made, make sure it happens. There are many student clubs and competing activities. Youth will find other options if they realize the group isn't going anywhere.
8. *Be realistic.* Shape dream lists of changes into viable options. Set yourself up for success.
9. *Provide opportunities for socializing.* Youth love time to just have fun! They will stay committed to the hard work if they have regular time to socialize.

10. *Check in.* Find out if the group is getting what they want out of the experience. Ask what can be done differently to better meet their expectations.

Case Study

Coat of Arms
Firebaugh and Mendota High Schools

The students in the advocacy group began learning about each other from the first day of the club. This activity was adapted from: the Big Book of Team Building Games, John Newstrom and Edward Scannell, McGraw Hill, New York, 1998.

The group members fill in five sections of a coat of arms with their answers to various questions:
Space 1. Draw something that characterizes a recent experience in which you performed at your best.
Space 2. Sketch out something about yourself that very few people know.
Space 3. Draw a symbol of how you like to spend your spare time.
Space 4. Fill in something you are very good at.
Space 5. Write or draw your personal motto.

After everyone has finished, have the group share what the coat of arms signifies.

Another suggestion is to develop questions/directions for each section of the shield that apply to your specific objective for your group (e.g. "Draw something that signifies why you are participating in this group").

You can continue the discussion with these questions:

1. What major themes were communicated with the Coat of Arms?
2. Why do we tend to withhold information from others?
3. How does this exercise contribute to feelings of mutual trust?

Empowering Youth

Advocacy work can be a chance to really have an important impact on the personal growth of youth. It has been demonstrated that young people with greater adult connections are more resilient and have more opportunities for success. Nutrition and physical activity advocacy projects provide many more benefits to young people than just healthier snacks in the vending machines. Students can learn skills like public speaking, letter writing, and negotiation that have life-long benefits. Providing training, time, and support to youth connects them to their community in a way that allows them to know that they are important. It can be their first experience that demonstrates that their voice and opinions matter.

Case Study

Regional Leadership Training
Firebaugh and Mendota High Schools

There are many models for leadership training with youth. The trainings conducted with students at Firebaugh and Mendota High Schools incorporated a ropes course for personal and team development, and utilized "Playing the Policy Game" for advocacy training. Personal goal identification was also an integral part of the activities. Some important tips and recommendations about putting on a leadership training include:

1. Supervision of students is very important. Make sure there is an adequate number of staff to assist in this endeavor.
2. Off campus sites are most attractive to high school students. Camps or colleges work well.
3. Allow time for students to "process" what they've learned among themselves.
4. Assign student facilitators and have adults serve as the record keepers.

Generating Excitement

One of the most important elements in building group dynamics is generating excitement for the project among the youth. Try to frame the issues in terms they can relate to and in ways that interest them. It may be that nutrition and physical activity are not the most exciting components of the campaign. Instead, you may highlight the chance to be creative, work with the media, or practice public speaking.

Case Study

Cafeteria Enhancement
Francisco Bravo Medical Magnet High School

Club members met with the vice principal and asked if they could develop billboards with nutrition and fitness information to display in the cafeteria. Students were given permission to decorate one area of the cafeteria near the healthier vending machines. Additionally, the students were allowed to design a glass exhibit case, displaying pictures of student members, newsletters, and nutrition information, that was continually updated.

The keys to this activity were obtaining approval from the administration and networking with the teachers. It was important to demonstrate the contributions the project and students were making to the school. This activity gave students the opportunity to express their creative side and provided them an additional venue to promote their club and policy messages.

Chapter 5
Generating Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy Ideas

Once you've developed an excited and cohesive group of teens who are interested in making changes in their school or community environment, you are ready to generate policy ideas. This chapter provides some key steps that will help ensure a successful outcome.

- Establish a logical framework.
- Don't get stuck.
- Prepare for anything.

Establish a Logical Framework

It is helpful to have a structure to frame the exciting and creative ideas that teens generate. You might want to consider utilizing one of the following tools in order to facilitate this process. Increasingly, there are tools available to assist you in setting nutrition and physical activity policy priorities. These include:

- School Health Index, www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash.
- Changing the Scene, www.fns.usda.gov/tn.
- Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Learn, www.nasbe.org/Educational_Issues/Safe_Healthy.html.
- Playing the Policy Game, www.CaliforniaProjectLEAN.org.
- Reaching School Board Members, www.CaliforniaProjectLEAN.org.

The basic framework for action should look something like this:

Step 1: *Conduct an assessment of what is happening in the school in terms of nutrition and physical activity.* What is working? What is not working?

Step 2: *Identify strengths and areas for improvement within the school.* What do you want to improve? What do you want to keep the same?

Step 3: *Brainstorm solutions to the identified problem areas within the school.* What are the best, most feasible solutions to the problems?

Step 4: *Determine who needs to take action on the problem and how to get them involved.* Who are the influential people who can help you?

Step 5: *Develop an action plan.* What are the steps needed to make change happen?

Case Study

Healthier Options for the School Snack Shop
King City High School

Staff and student advocates developed a survey to assess healthy food choices in the school snack shop and presented the survey results to the King City Food Service Supervisor and the representative from the foodservice management company. The youth advocacy team then met with the school food service representative and proposed new healthy food choices. A plan was made to demonstrate new healthy food choices at a food fair for students and staff.

Student advocates wrote a press release for local papers that promoted the event. Fliers, banners, and announcements were made to promote the event. All of the samples were donated by the vending companies.

The results of the demonstration at the food fair showed that the favorite food choices were: string cheese, low-fat yogurt, carrots with low-fat ranch dressing, 100% fruit juices, baked chips, pretzels, and bagels with low-fat cream cheese. All of the students' selections were then offered in the snack bar.

The following table shows the policy goals for some of the *Food on the Run* student advocate groups.

Food on the Run **Site**	**1999-2000 Nutrition Policy Goal**	**1999-2000 Physical Activity Policy Goal**
Balboa High School	Offer healthier food options based on positive student response, as shown by the consumption of healthier test foods.	Offer a variety of physical activity options for students at lunchtime.
Andrew Hill High School	Increase healthy food choices in the cafeteria.	N/A
Mendota High School	Offer only 1% milk in the cafeteria.	N/A
Firebaugh High School	Offer only 1% milk in the cafeteria.	Add bike lanes to the town of Firebaugh.
Farmersville High School	Offer 1% Milk and low-fat dressing district-wide. Offer healthier snacks in vending machines.	Increase the physical education requirement.
Ernest Righetti High School	Offer appealing low-fat food choices of vegetables, fruit, and dairy products consistently in the school cafeteria.	Provide a wide variety of competitive and non-competitive physical activities at school with an emphasis on lifetime physical activities.
Amos Alonzo Stagg High School	Offer healthy breakfast choices for all students.	N/A
Encina High School	Increase the availability of healthy food options on campus.	Expand the open gym policy on weekends for student/community use.
San Juan High School	Incorporate the development and modification of low-fat recipes into the Culinary Academy curriculum and restaurant.	N/A

Food on the Run **Site**	**1999-2000** **Nutrition Policy Goal**	**1999-2000** **Physical Activity Policy Goal**
Southwest High School	Offer healthier foods and a bigger variety on the cafeteria menu.	N/A
Fontana High School	Offer healthier food choices by advocating for the food cart to carry healthy foods.	N/A
Cajon High School	Offer 1% milk in the cafeteria district-wide.	N/A
Gabrielino High School	Increase the number of student-driven healthy choices on campus.	Increase after school fitness programs and services on campus.
King City High School	Increase availability of healthful lunch and snack food options inside and outside the cafeteria.	Establish school and community links to increase student access to physical activity options.
Zoe Barnum High School	Restore the healthy food items previously made available in school vending machines.	Utilize 21st Century Grant to continue ongoing non-competitive PE class for students
Arcata High School	Expand availability of healthy food choices in student store and/or snack bars on campus.	N/A
Del Norte High School	Offer nutritious foods whenever food is available to students.	N/A
Portola High School	Increase healthy snack choices.	N/A
Anderson High School	Expand the choices for low-fat and healthy food in the school cafeteria.	Establish school/community links for accessible physical activity for students.
Hoover High School	Increase the visibility and selection of healthy options on campus. Incorporate Nutrition into the physical education curriculum using *Jump Start Teens*.	Increase usage of the school gym before, during, and after school by permanently staffing it.

Don't Get Stuck
One pitfall in policy work is getting stuck and not moving forward toward success. You can help to avoid this by:

Having fun!
Nothing causes more attrition than when a project is no longer fun. Keeping students engaged in the process and enjoying the work of the group can be challenging once you begin to work in the area of policy change. Some tips to keep it fun include:

- Allow time for socializing.
- Get out of the classroom and get first hand exposure to the issue.
- Take physical activity breaks.
- Keep checking in and involving the youth in the process. Ask them if they are still having fun and if there is anything that could be changed to make the experience better.

Encouraging and shaping ideas
Teens have a lot of energy and creativity to bring to the process. Often the ideas they generate seem outlandish or unrealistic to adults. Try to help youth refine their ideas into realistic possibilities rather than completely disregarding their contribution. Gently guiding the process and helping them to be more strategic or logical can facilitate some very rewarding policy ideas and discussions.

Case Study

Developing a Successful Project
Fontana High School

Student Advocates wanted to increase the variety of healthy options available to students at Fontana High School. The advocates had many ideas for change; so many that their adult leaders felt overwhelmed at times! The leader needed to help the students pick and refine projects so that they could be successful. One successful project involved Future Business Leaders of America. Annually, the group had conducted a candy bar sale that raised $300. The group decided to switch to a fruit smoothie sale on Back to School Night. They enlisted community business leaders to help them plan the sale. On Back to School Night, the fruit smoothie sale generated more money for the group than weeks of selling candy bars! With careful planning and assistance from adult leaders, the student idea became a solid success.

Building confidence
Making changes and generating policy ideas can be frustrating, frightening, and a brand new concept for most teens. It takes time and experience to understand the complexity of the nutrition and physical activity environment and the policy changes that can help create healthy options. Most teens won't be confident that they have the skills or the "say so" to make changes happen. Adult leaders need to build youth confidence by positively reinforcing suggestions and providing opportunities for success. Teens often believe that adults don't listen to them and they have no control over the decisions that are made for them. Adult leaders need to demonstrate the commitment to listen and consider all ideas.

Prepare for Anything

This is new territory. Be prepared for obstacles such as attrition, confusion, and controversy. It is important to remember that adults do play an important role in the success of teen ideas. The success of youth efforts depends on a logical and clear roadmap about how change is to occur. Ensure that:

- The policy idea is one that will address the problem and has a likely chance for success.
- Teens do not work on this alone. The voice of youth is important, but don't rely on them to take care of all of the details. Adults need to be prepared to make contact with key decision-makers, confirm appointments, research legal and nutrition information, arrange transportation, and facilitate communication with partners.
- Develop a broad base of support within the school and community that you can count on to advocate for change. The teen call for change needs to be echoed by an adult call for change.

Chapter 6
Taking Action For Change

Moving your policy ideas into action takes a great deal of time and commitment from many people. Change can be difficult and frightening and requires many small steps in order to be truly successful. This chapter highlights some of the steps taken by advocates. To begin the policy action phase:

- Figure out who to talk to.
- Be flexible.
- Demonstrate success.

Figure Out Who to Talk to

Policies can be established at many levels. It is important to know who the key decision makers and influential people are so that you can build support and create relationships. Some potential partners are:

- Food service directors.
- Cafeteria managers.
- School administration.
- Superintendents.
- School board members.
- Parents.
- Parent organizations.
- Students.
- Teachers.
- Coaches.
- Maintenance staff.
- Community members.

A word of caution: these groups can also be opponents to your call for change.

People utilize a wide range of experiences to examine policy situations and to decide how to act. In order to be effective, it is important to learn more about your potential allies and opponents. For example, you might research their:

- Special interests and/or key focus areas.
- Position on key issues, especially health-related ones, facing the school and community.
- Interest in health and chronic disease—sometimes a family experience with cancer, diabetes, or heart disease will give a person a unique interest in health promotion.
- Concerns with your policy recommendation.
- Interest in your policy recommendation.
- Interest in serving as an advocate for you.

School Board Members can be important allies. You can learn more about them by:

- Visiting the school district's web site. Many sites contain biographies on school board members that cite their key interests.
- Meeting with community advocates who have worked on school board issues and/or helped elect school board members.
- Meeting with former school board members. They can often give you insight into the inner workings of the school board.
- Meeting with the school board members themselves. Although very busy, members often like to meet with community members, particularly if they are constituents. Consider having youth conduct the interviews. Board members often are very receptive to youth and the interview process can help students gain valuable skills.
- Attending candidate forums during election time. Publicly ask candidates where they stand on school nutrition and physical activity issues. Remind them of their position after they are elected.

The information you learn will help create a nutrition policy message that meets the interest and needs of policymakers. For instance, a policymaker with diabetes might have a special interest in the rising number of children in the district who have type 2 diabetes. This person might be a strong partner when advocating for nutrition policies. A policymaker who is a strong advocate of the district athletic program might have a strong concern with changing the fundraising practices that generate money for the athletic program. You may need to make a special effort to calm the fears of this policymaker (see Chapter 10 for fundraising resources). The more you know about allies and opponents before you present your policy recommendations, the more prepared you will be.

You always want to try to link the nutrition and physical activity policy message to the priority issues in the district. Think creatively about how your nutrition policy priorities can be linked to the pressing issues facing the district. For example, if achieving academic standards is a priority, provide information that links nutrition with academic performance (see Chapter 10 for a useful fact sheet). Also be aware that as school nutrition and physical activity are covered more and more in the media and in school publications, policymakers may develop a greater interest in understanding the nutrition and physical activity issues in their district. This is an excellent opportunity for you to create policy change.

Case Study

Healthier Vending Machines and Salads
Francisco Bravo Medical Magnet High School

Students determined they wanted healthier choices in the vending machines in addition to the high fat, high calorie, high sugar choices already available. They also noticed there were no fresh salads or fruit offered on a daily basis. After hearing of the successful addition of salads at a nearby school, *Food on the Run* advocates decided this would be a great option for their school as well.

Step 1: Student advocates established a relationship with the cafeteria manager and vice principal to discuss bringing the healthier offerings to campus.

Step 2: The vice principal contacted school vendors about obtaining samples of healthier options and the cafeteria manager developed two salads to taste test.

Step 3: The advocates sampled the items and voted on the healthy options to test with the general student body.

Step 4: The healthier options were introduced to the rest of the campus. The healthy vending machines and the bottled water machine sold more items than the regular machines. They became permanent on campus. The salads also proved to be very popular, and are now offered on a daily basis in addition to fresh fruit.

The keys to success included involving the key people from the school in the decision-making process and holding taste tests to determine student acceptability.

Be Flexible

Sometimes a group's original plan doesn't work out. It is important to think through all of the scenarios you might encounter and identify potential alternative solutions. Some efforts have been successful through negotiation. Start by asking for the maximum and leave room for compromise. This is essential in policy negotiation.

Case Study

Healthy Foods for Fundraising Events

Del Norte High School

The student advocates at Del Norte High School in Crescent City wanted to see more healthy snack alternatives sold at school functions such as dances and sporting events. They came up with a coalition and an action plan that was dedicated to this purpose. Their action plan covered all of the angles.

Step 1: Advocates surveyed students to see what snacks they would like at the events.

Step 2: Advocates sent letters to teachers and staff who were responsible for providing food at events to see if they would sell healthy alternatives so students would have more nutritious options.

Step 3: Advocates suffered a minor setback—none of the staff members responded to the letter. Students sent another letter to let staff know about the project and what the group wanted to accomplish.

Step 4: Advocates tallied the student surveys and obtained donations of the most popular healthy foods: pretzels, fruit by the foot, and water.

Step 5: Advocates held a trial run at Winter Ball.

Step 6: Advocates surveyed Winter Ball attendees regarding how they liked the healthy food. The effort was a huge success!

Step 7: After a successful trial run, advocates developed a plan to open the snack bar at basketball games to sell healthy items like water.

Demonstrate Success

There is a lot of fear in change. Keep this in mind, as you move toward creating healthier food and physical activity environments. Sometimes it is important to demonstrate that your proposal will be successful before it will be embraced.

Case Study

Ensuring Success
Hoover High School

The students at Hoover High School wanted to have more fresh salads sold on campus. As they began to move through their policy action plan, they discovered that their plan needed to be adjusted in order to succeed. As they discussed with the food service dietitian the option of having more fresh salads, she pointed out that food service continually introduced tasty fresh fruit salads, chef salads, and other entrée items that were high in fiber and contain ample fruits and vegetables. So, the problem was not that food service was not offering the options, but that the students did not choose them enough to continue production. With this in mind, the club members started making signs showcasing one fresh salad or hot item each day for one month. The club members also held free taste tests of the items during lunchtime, compliments of food services.

After the marketing efforts by the club members, the results were in.

1. The fresh fruit salad sales went from 10 to 80.
2. The Baja Bowl sales went from 20-65.
3. Other entrees also showed an increase in sales after peer marketing.

After two months, the signs were discontinued and the sales dipped down. Youth advocates believe that the marketing of healthy items needs to be continuous. The student advocates implemented a plan to continue the marketing via the foods and nutrition class each semester. The food service manager will keep the foods teacher updated on which items should be marketed.

Chapter 7
Sustaining Your Policy and Momentum

After all of the hard work it takes to recruit and train teens, build group dynamics, generate policy ideas, and take a plan to action, the last thing you want to do is to lose the momentum and have the issue fall off the radar screen. This chapter outlines how to:

- Integrate your program or policy change into existing activities.
- Establish written policies.
- Keep your issue "hot."

Integrate your Program or Policy Change into Existing Activities

It is important to build an aspect of sustainability into your work. One of the best ways to do this is to incorporate your policy or activities into an already existing part of the campus or curriculum.

Case study

Integration of *Jump Start Teens* Lessons into the Physical Education Curriculum
Hoover High School

Training Hoover's physical education teachers to integrate the *Jump Start Teens* lessons as well as other nutrition lessons into the high school curriculum was a great way to sustain the project within the school. During the physical education period, the *Food on the Run* project staff taught a weekly 20-30 minute lesson about nutrition, including the lessons in *Jump Start Teens*. The physical education teachers observed the *Food on the Run* staff teaching these lessons during the first semester. This in-service time not only provided the teachers with basic nutrition training, but also linked the physical education department to nutrition issues. The teachers then taught some of the lessons the second semester and all of the lessons during the following academic year.

After one year of training and teaching by the *Food on the Run* staff, all of the P.E. instructors and the principal signed a contract committing them to the continuation of the classes at Hoover. As a bonus incentive, Hoover High School was also linked to San Diego State University Foods and Nutrition students to have a nutrition student teach some of the lessons for the instructors. This provides valuable teaching experience for the college students, an in-service for the P.E. instructors, and a variety of speakers for the P.E. students.

Establish Written Policies

A written policy will help guarantee that your efforts will continue long after you leave. This is an important factor in today's world of limited time and budgets. There are many ways to develop a written policy. You will want to utilize the work of other school districts as models when you work on your nutrition and physical activity policy. California Project LEAN and the California School Boards Association developed The Healthy Food Policy Resource Guide to assist school board members in crafting district nutrition policies. More information about this guide is available at the CSBA website (www.csba.org). The manual provides sample policies and case studies from some districts that have tackled nutrition policy.

The California Project LEAN web site also offers a Bright Ideas section where users can submit and read about projects that have increased student access to healthy foods and physical activity (www.CaliforniaProjectLEAN.org/brightideas).

Case study

Implementing a 1% Milk Policy
Fresno Unified School District

The Central Valley Region of California Project LEAN discovered through a community campaign to promote 1% milk that the local school district was using whole milk as its standard offering to students. Although Fresno Unified did not have a *Food on the Run* site, California Project LEAN decided to work with the district to change its milk policy. It is important to note that the project decided to focus on policy change instead of just building an education campaign to encourage students to choose lower fat milk. The project wanted to select a strategy that would make it easy for children to have a healthier milk selection and to promote a strategy that would be sustainable. The project successfully worked with food service staff and district administrators to establish a policy designating 1% milk as the standard milk given to students on their lunch tray unless they ask for another type of milk. This policy change has affected all 70,000 students in the district.

Keep your Issue "Hot"

Media Advocacy

A very powerful tool to help move your issue to the forefront and generate momentum is to work with the local media to create public awareness and push for policy solutions. This is an option that should be considered and planned carefully so your efforts to promote your cause do not end up hurting your cause. A few tips to keep in mind:

1. *Develop strategic solutions*: Be very clear and convincing when talking to the media about your policy solutions. Media outlets love to cover the bad news, but require extra prompts to report on possible solutions. Make sure your solutions are captured in the coverage by the development of speaking points.
2. *Train your spokespeople*: Identify and train youth and other partners to speak to the media on your policy recommendations. Practice what you would like each person to say and make time to do a mock interview, if possible.
3. *Develop relationships with the media*: Get to know some of the reporters and news outlets that cover your issue in your community. Maintain and nurture this relationship so you can work through them to position your policy story.
4. *Know when media is appropriate and when it is not*: Sometimes too much public attention can be detrimental to your cause. Be sure the story is newsworthy and that it doesn't cast a negative light on the partnerships and relationships you are trying to nurture. Occasionally, you may need to take an adversarial role in order to push an issue and cause change. Bringing the media in to ask some difficult questions, or to get a comment made on record can be very powerful.

Case Study

Fast Food Survey
Anderson Union High School

The Public Health Institute released the *2002 California High School Fast Food Study* that shed light on the growing sale of fast food on high school campuses. In partnership with the Public Health Institute, the teens at Anderson Union High School invited some local reporters to their campus to see the food environment first hand.

The student advocates were trained on how to talk to the media, practiced interviewing each other, and critiqued taped mock interviews. A local health department media relations representative helped with guidance and developing the teens' speaking points.

The day of the media release was very exciting. Radio, television, and newspaper reporters from throughout the county came to campus for the press briefing. They then were offered a tour of the facilities and the opportunity to interview the student spokespeople. The student advocates did a great job of highlighting some of the positive things offered at the school, as well as identifying some areas that they would like to see improved.

As a result of this event, much more emphasis was placed on offering healthy food to students. A salad bar was introduced and low-fat yogurts were taste tested at a lunchtime event. The publicity of the survey highlighted the need to improve the food environment locally as well as at all California high schools.

Chapter 8
Capitalizing on Key Relationships

Relationships and relationship-building are the key components of success in creating change. Sometimes these relationships are traditional and other times you need to think beyond the cast of usual characters. There are a number of entities working to improve the lives of young people, and they can be potentially very powerful in the area of nutrition and physical activity. This chapter outlines ideas for:

- Identifying potential partners.
- Creating “win-win” situations.
- Identifying the benefits.

Identifying Potential Partners

The following list is an example of partnerships you might consider developing:

Youth Tobacco Control Advocates
Police Athletic Leagues
YMCA/YWCA
University or college students
Senior programs
Health Departments
Local businesses
Bicycle/Walkability coalitions
Service Clubs

Here is an example of a wonderful partnership between the nutrition and physical activity world and the tobacco education world. The end result was youth leadership development that benefited both programs and most importantly, the students.

Case Study

Healthy Teen Leadership Conference
Anderson Union High School

The purpose of the conference was to recruit teens to participate in the nutrition and physical activity advocacy project, and to provide them with leadership training in the area of nutrition, tobacco, and physical activity. *Food on the Run* and the local tobacco control program collaborated to sponsor a conference that would encourage teens to participate in each of the programs and train them in an efficient manner. The two groups shared several goals: recruit teens, teach them about a subject, train them to be advocates, and provide them with team building skills and media training. By collaborating on this project, the cost of the conference could be shared between the two groups thereby saving time and money. Because of the cost savings, the coordinators were able to hire a professional motivational speaker who specialized in working with teenagers.

The one-day conference schedule was broken into general sessions that the two groups would participate in together, and breakout sessions that focused on specific topic areas. Teens who were previously involved in the groups helped plan the conference. The teen coordinators designed the logo for the conference, approved the name of the conference, picked the colors for the T-shirts, planned “energizer” segments and skits, created posters to advertise the event, and recruited other teens to attend the conference by distributing fliers. They also contributed to the development of the schedule and special sessions.

The conference was held at a local college campus on a Saturday morning. Each teen that attended received a T-shirt, a free lunch, training, and a binder of information.

“I think the conference was a success because it was designed to be entertaining as well as educational. The tobacco coalition staged a teen debate that also included a discussion about nutrition. Using the teen coordinators also helped make the conference more interesting to the participants and helped recruit more teens. The teens attended because they were told they would have fun, meet people, and win prizes through raffles” said Karen Ratcliff, former *Food on the Run* Coordinator.

Partnerships within the existing framework of the school can also be very beneficial to your efforts.

Case study

School Health Fair Week
Francisco Bravo Medical Magnet High School

To utilize existing opportunities, health advocates tapped into this school's existing annual health fair and expanded the one-day event to a week of activities promoting nutrition and health. Student advocates manned booths during lunch with various nutrition information topics. Students also performed a swing-dance lesson during lunch to demonstrate a fun physical activity. One of the most important relationships developed was with California State University, Los Angeles (CSULA) students who gave presentations during the week on sports nutrition and various other topics. There were over 50 health agencies and organizations represented at the booths during the fair.

The important lessons learned from this activity were getting to know the key people at the high school and establishing a positive on-going relationship with them. This relationship with the principal, vice principal, cafeteria manager, advisory board member, health teacher, and others helped later on with policy work.

"Assigning student dietetic interns from CSULA to manage the activities of the student advocates provided great program sustainability," said the *Food on the Run* coordinator. "By tapping into an event that already exists, the *Food on the Run* program was able to offer a booth and additional activities to enhance the health fair (and gain campus support for policy change)."

Creating "Win-Win" Situations

Partnerships and relationships can be established within the community to drive policy change, as well.

Case study

Creating Healthier Vending Machine Choices
King City High School

Staff and student advocates contacted the vendor that supplied school vending machines regarding a list of available healthy food choices. The vendor provided, at cost, the taste samples of healthy options. A lunchtime taste test event was held, and the top student choices were reported to the vendor who then changed the vending machine offerings. To promote the new choices, specially marked packages of healthful food items in the vending machines were secretly marked and when students chose these items, they received a prize. Staff worked with local radio stations to provide the prizes.

"The vending machines provided healthy snacks on campus that the youth liked, so they bought the healthy choices. It was a win for the vendor, a win for the school, and a win for good health," said Valerie Scruggs, former *Food on the Run* coordinator.

Identifying the Benefits

Smart partnerships often require some planning on the question of "what's in it for me?" Often, small incentives or other minimal arrangements can be offered to enhance the partnerships and increase the level of support.

Case Study

Incentive Plan for Teachers

Central Valley Region, California Project LEAN

The *Food on the Run* coordinator in the Central Valley Region contacted individual high school teachers in three different school districts and offered them a free *Jump Start Teens* kit and $100 grant for institutionalizing *Jump Start Teens* in the classroom. The teachers were asked to evaluate the program and share the kit with their principals and food service directors in return for the mini grant. The coordinator offered training and materials to teachers and food service directors. The coordinator recognized that teachers were increasingly stressed by mandated teaching requirements, lack of time, and a shortage of funds for classroom "extras."

By developing a formal MOU between the high school and the program coordinator, there was an increase in the awareness of the potential uses for this resource and its value to the students.

"A few of the teacher contacts that we made were initiated through our network of partners. I feel that the coalitions we have been working with and developing over time are a very productive way to achieve our goals," said Patty Minami, former *Food on the Run* coordinator.

Chapter 9
Summary of the *Food on the Run* Experience

Food on the Run was an experiment. Never before had a California program tried to build a team of youth nutrition and physical activity advocates with the charge of improving the environment in their schools. It is inspiring to note that communities, schools, and youth stepped up to the challenge and built programs that addressed youth nutrition and physical activity behaviors before these issues were seen as major problems by the media and public health community. California Project LEAN learned several very important lessons through Food on the Run:

1. ***Youth do want healthy food and physical activity choices.*** Time and time again we heard that youth did want healthy options and that they expected their schools to provide them. The proliferation of unhealthy options signaled to youth that the adults around them did not value health and did not care enough about youth to provide healthy options.
2. ***Youth in partnership with their community can do tremendous policy work.*** Real change was made at *Food on the Run* schools. The nutrition and physical activity environment looked different after the work of *Food on the Run* advocates. It is important to note, though, that often adults were NOT supportive of the change for which the youth were advocating. Adults were often the voice that said "This can't be done." Youth had to spend a lot of time and energy to show that change was possible.
3. ***Adult voices need to support youth voices.*** Because of the resistance we observed from adults to simple youth requests like adding some healthier items in vending machines or adding a salad to the lunch menu, we learned that adult leaders need to secure the support of other adults who can echo the teen call for change. Some examples of powerful adult voices are local physicians and dentists, school board members, local health department staff, local businesses with an interest in healthy products, parent groups, and supportive school staff. Adults need to help youth challenge the notion that change is impossible. California Project LEAN developed a campaign to educate school board members on the importance of healthy nutrition policy for that very reason.
4. ***Move beyond education.*** *Food on the Run* shed light on the nutrition and physical activity problems within California school districts. It became alarmingly clear that children were being taught nutrition and physical activity lessons in the classroom that they could not practice when they stepped outside of the classroom. All the education in the world was not going to help teens eat better and be more active if teens were not presented with opportunities to practice what they had learned. Changes to the school environment were needed and youth advocates held the key to finding workable solutions.
5. ***Community and school partnerships are essential.*** Each school that participated in *Food on the Run* was required to have a community partner. Some partnered with local health departments; others with non-profit organizations, and universities. The partnerships contributed to the projects' success because schools did not need to solve the problems on their own. Changing youth nutrition and physical activity behaviors is a complicated matter and is better addressed when youth, community groups, and schools come together.

Chapter 10 Appendix

Helpful Websites

American Cancer Society	www.cancer.org
American Council on Exercise	www.acefitness.org
American Dietetic Association	www.eatright.org
American Heart Association	www.americanheart.org
American School Food Service Association	www.asfsa.org
California Adolescent Nutrition and Fitness Program	www.canfit.org
California Center for Public Health Advocacy	www.publichealthadvocacy.org
California Department of Education Nutrition Services Division	www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu
California Food Policy Advocates	www.cfpa.net
California Healthy Kids Resource Center	www.californiahealthykids.org
California Project LEAN, Food on the Run	www.CaliforniaProjectLEAN.org
California Safe Routes to School Initiative	www.dhs.ca.gov/routes2school
California School Boards Association	www.csba.org
Center for Science in the Public Interest	www.cspinet.org
Center for Weight and Health, UC Berkeley	www.cnr.berkeley.edu/cwh
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash
National Association for State Boards of Education	www.nasbe.org
Prevention Institute	www.preventioninstitute.org)
Strategic Alliance for Healthy Food and Activity Environments	www.eatbettermovemore.org
United States Department of Agriculture	www.fns.usda.gov/tn

SAMPLE Memorandum of Understanding

Food on the Run School Partnership Agreement

Participants

This is a Partnership between ___(High School)_____ and ___(Applicant Agency)

Purpose

The purpose of this Partnership is to establish and maintain an effective working relationship between the two parties and to lay the groundwork to implement California Project LEAN's *Food on the Run* program.

Goals

Create a high school youth advocacy model that motivates students to advocate for more healthy food and physical activity options in their school and surrounding community.

Advance policy and environmental changes that promote and increase the number of healthy food items and physical activity options on the school campus and in the surrounding community.

Motivate students to make healthier food selections and to become more physically active.

Commitments

The high school shall provide:

a. An on-site advisor to act as the contact person for California Project LEAN's *Food on the Run* program.

b. Access to a minimum of 10-20 students who will be trained as health advocates to promote healthy food choices and physical activity options.

c. Access to school staff to conduct an in-service/orientation on the *Food on the Run* program.

d. Assistance with efforts toward the integration of the *Food on the Run* program at the high school.

e. Support for school-based and/or community events that are agreed upon by both parties.

f. Support for policies that make healthier food and physical activity options more available for students.

g. Access to students and identified staff to assist in the evaluation of the *Food on the Run* program (e.g. pre/post surveys and key informant surveys).

The _____ (Applicant Agency) shall provide:

a. A part-time staff person to provide assistance and technical support to the school in order to promote healthy food and physical activity options at the school and in the surrounding community.

b. An in-service/orientation for staff, parents, and other partners on the *Food on the Run* program, as requested.

c. Training which utilizes the State-developed *Jump Start Teens* resource kit with a mutually agreed upon group of students. The training will prepare students to serve as health advocates.

d. Lead coordination on *Food on the Run* activities to promote healthy food choices and increased physical activity.

e. The groundwork for policy change within the participating high school and its surrounding community that supports healthy food choices and increased physical activity options.

Term
The term of the Partnership shall commence if the Applicant Agency is chosen by California Project LEAN as a *Food on the Run* site. The Partnership shall be in effect from March 1999 to June 2000.

Signatures
The responsibilities have been agreed to by the following authorized signatories:

Name (Print)_____ (High School)

Title:_____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (Print):_____ (Applicant Agency)

Title:_____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Nutrition, Physical Activity and Academic Achievement

Improved nutritional status has a positive and direct impact on academic achievement. When children's basic nutritional and fitness needs are met, they have the cognitive energy to learn and achieve. Schools continue to be a core place for students to learn and practice healthy eating habits[1].

Research shows that healthy, well-nourished children are more prepared to learn, more likely to attend school and class, and able to take advantage of educational opportunities. Studies demonstrate:

- Undernourishment impacts the behavior of children, their school performance, and their ability to concentrate and perform complex tasks.[2]
- Inadequate nutrition during childhood can have lasting effects and compromise cognitive development and school performance.[2]
- Children's' brain function is diminished by short-term or periodic hunger or malnutrition caused by missing or skipping meals.[3]
- Iron deficiency is one of the most prevalent nutritional problems of children in the United States. Iron deficiency can increase fatigue, shorten attention span, decrease work capacity, reduce resistance to infection and impair intellectual performance. Consequently, anemic children tend to do poorly on vocabulary, reading and other tests. [4]

School Breakfast

Research shows a direct relationship between a nutritious breakfast and educational achievement.

- Students who ate a school breakfast had a general increase in math grades and reading scores, increased attention, reduced nurse visits and improved behaviors.[5,6]
- Children who begin their school day without breakfast pay less attention in the late morning, have a negative attitude toward schoolwork, and attain less in class.[7]
- Participation in the School Breakfast Program was associated with greater improvements on standardized test scores and lower rates of tardiness and absenteeism.[8]

Physical Activity

Studies suggest a connection between physical activity and increased levels of alertness, mental function and learning. Research indicates that:

- Schools that offer intense physical activity programs see positive effects on academic achievement, including increased concentration; improved mathematics, reading, and writing test scores; and reduced disruptive behavior, even when time for physical education classes reduces the time for academics. [9,10]
- Providing more opportunity for physical activity (by reducing class time) leads to increased test scores. In one program, a reduction of 240 minutes per week in class time for academics to enable increased physical activity led to higher mathematics scores.[11,12,13]
- Higher achievement was associated with higher levels of fitness for fifth-, seventh- and ninth-graders. [14]
- The relationship between academic achievement and fitness was greater in mathematics than in reading, particularly at higher fitness levels. [14]

For more information contact:
California Project LEAN
www.californiaprojectlean.org

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Appendix D FACT SHEET: Creative Financing & Fun Fundraising Alternatives to Selling Candy and Junk Food

CREATIVE FINANCING & FUN FUNDRAISING

ALTERNATIVES TO SELLING CANDY AND JUNK FOOD

Things to Do

- art show
- auction
- auction (teacher does something for kids)
- bike-a-thons
- bowling night/bowl-a-thon
- carnivals (Halloween, Easter)
- car wash (pre-sell tickets as gifts)
- craft sales
- dances (kids, family, father/daughter, Sadie Hawkins)
- family/glamour portraits
- festivals
- fun runs
- gift wrapping
- golf tournament
- hoop-a-thon
- jump-rope-a-thons
- magic show
- penny wars (pennies-1 point, nickels-5, dimes-10, quarters-25, team w/most points wins)
- raffle (movie passes, theme bags, teachers do a silly activity)
- read-a-thons
- recycling cans/bottles/paper
- rent-a-teen helper (rake leaves, water gardens, mow lawns, wash dog)
- science fairs
- singing telegrams
- skate night/skate-a-thon
- spelling bee
- talent shows
- tennis/horseshoe competition
- treasure or scavenger hunt
- walk-a-thons
- workshops/classes

Things that Involve the Community

- auction
- conference
- craft sales
- festivals
- garage sale
- golf tournament
- recycling drive (cans/bottles/paper)
- rent-a-teen helper
- tennis/horseshoe pitching competition
- treasure hunt/scavenger hunt

Resource Ideas (not endorsements)

www.neatitems.com
www.efundraising.com
www.itsmyartwork.com
www.fundraisingbeads.com
www.nudayfundraising.com
www.123fundraising.com
www.qsp.com
www.westernfund.com
www.currentfun.com
www.dulcoprinting.com
www.fund-raising.com
www.fundraisingdepot.com
www.stretchablebookcovers.com
www.common-threads.com
www.partnersforkids.com
www.fundraisingbatteries.com
www.nutritionandkids.net
www.brickstonegraphics.com
www.y-ties.com
www.kidsgardening.com
www.ripplerileythomas.com

Things You Can Sell

- air fresheners
- balloon bouquets
- bath accessories
- batteries, flashlights
- books, calendars
- Brick/stone/tile memorials
- bumper stickers
- buttons, pins
- candles
- Christmas ornaments
- Christmas trees
- coffee cups/mugs
- cookbooks
- coupon books
- crafts
- customized stickers
- elephant rides
- emergency kits for cars
- first aid kits
- flowers, bulbs, poinsettias
- foot warmers
- football seats
- garage sale
- giant coloring books
- gift baskets
- gift certificates
- gift items
- gift wrap, boxes, and bags
- greeting cards
- hats and jewelry
- holiday wreaths
- house decorations
- hugging booth
- key chains
- license plates or holders w/school logo
- magazine subscriptions
- megaphones
- mistletoe
- monograms
- music, videos, CDs
- newspaper space, ads
- pet treats/toys/accessories
- plants
- pocket calendars
- raffle donations
- rent a special parking space
- scarves
- school art drawings
- school frisbees
- school spirit gear
- scratch-off cards
- sell/rent wishes
- souvenir cups
- spirit/seasonal flags
- stadium pillows
- stationary
- student directories
- stuffed animals
- T-shirts, sweatshirts
- Tupperware
- Valentine flowers
- yearbook covers
- yearbook graffiti

Healthy Food Items

- fruit smoothies
- fruit & nut baskets
- frozen banana
- lunch box auctions
- trail mix

Activities that Support Academics

- read-a-thon
- science fair
- spelling bee

Things that Promote the School

- bumper stickers & decals
- calendars
- cookbooks made by school (parents, teachers, kids)
- school logo air fresheners
- scratchoff cards
- T-shirt/sweatshirt sales

Ideas excerpted from Shasta County Public Health Department, California Project LEAN.

03/06

Appendix E Policy Brief: Food Advertising and Marketing to Children and Youth: Do They Influence Unhealthy Food Purchases?

PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE

California's Obesity Crisis: Focus on Solutions

What Schools Can Do

March 2006

Policy Brief

Food Advertising and Marketing to Children and Youth:

Do They Influence Unhealthy Food Purchases?

California youth, like their peers across the country, continue to face a nutrition and physical activity crisis. Today's youth generally fail to meet the dietary guidelines for Americans that recommend children two years and older eat a diet consisting of nutrient dense foods. This includes eating foods that are low in fat, sugar and sodium, eating a variety of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and consuming fat-free or low-fat milk or milk products. The *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* also recommend that children two years and older be physically active at least one hour each day on most, but preferably all days of the week. However, a California study found that only two percent of teenagers met all five diet and activity recommendations.[1] Among children in grades five, seven, and nine who were tested with California's mandated physical fitness test in 2004, 73 percent failed to meet the state's minimum fitness standards and more than one-quarter were overweight.[2]

Schools play a significant role in providing food to children and in shaping children's acquisition of lifetime dietary habits. In a 2003 study of California high schools, more than 70 percent of the responding districts reported selling pizza, chips, cookies, and soda a la carte (sold outside the federal reimbursable meal program). In comparison, there was only one healthy item (fruit) that was sold a la carte by over 70 percent of the responding districts.[3]

Food marketing aimed at children and youth now reaches young people almost everywhere they are throughout the day from television to in-school and in-store marketing, to kids clubs, magazines, the Internet, and toy products. The most prevalent forms of marketing to children are television and in-school marketing.[4]

Why are Children and Youth Targeted with Food Marketing?

Marketers recognize that children and youth are a major market force because of their spending power, purchasing influence, and future as adult consumers. The estimates of spending by children and youth are between $25 and $140 billion a year.[5] Children and youth also influence another $500 billion of family and other spending per year.[5]

Businesses see schools as an opportunity to make direct sales, and to cultivate brand awareness and loyalty. School-based marketing also adds credibility to marketing activities by associating the company's name and product with trusted schools or teachers.[6]

Advertising in Schools Has Become Big Business

Commercial activities in schools have become increasingly common over the past decade. Such activities come in the form of:

1. *Product sales,* such as soft drinks, fast food and snack items sold out of vending machines, student stores, food carts, and snack bars, as well as exclusive soft drink and branded food contracts. This also includes fundraising activities.
2. *Direct advertising,* such as food and beverage ads placed around campus on buses, scoreboards, billboards, posters, banners, and on book covers. Also common are advertisements on the public announcement system or on classroom television broadcasts.
3. *Indirect advertising,* such as corporate sponsored educational programs, sports sponsorships, and incentive programs using contests, coupons and products.[7,8]
4. *Market research,* including student surveys or panels, product pilot or taste tests that expose students to a company's product.

In a 2000 study of California high schools, nearly 72 percent of responding districts allowed advertising for fast food and beverages on high school campuses, while only 13 percent prohibited such advertising.[9] In a follow-up survey in 2003, the most common fast food or beverage advertisement on high school campuses were advertisements on vending machines (48%), scoreboards or signs (31%), and posters (23%).[3] A 2006 California study found that 60 percent of the posters and signage for food and beverage products on responding high school campuses promote foods high in sugar, sodium and fat.[10] Additionally, 65 percent of vending machine ads and 71 percent of logos displayed on equipment were for soda and other sweetened beverages.[10]

Many companies engage cash-strapped schools by offering marketing dollars as a way for schools to bridge budgets gaps. Of all product sales in schools, exclusive soft-drink contracts are the fastest growing ventures.[7] In exchange for financial compensation, schools or school districts sign exclusive beverage contracts with soft drink companies that allow advertising through product donations, scoreboards and marquees, signage, clothing, and school supplies. The more beverages sold, the higher the commissions for the district and soft drink company.[11] Such agreements promote soft drink consumption by students.

Marketers believe brand preference begins before purchase behavior does.[12] These practices are significant because a study of primary school children found that exposure to advertising influenced which foods children claimed to like; and another study showed that labeling and signage on a vending machine had an effect on what was bought by secondary school students.[13]

Marketing in Schools

Movement Against Advertising in Schools

The National Association of State Boards of Education developed a policy on school/business relationships that states "selling or providing access to a captive audience in the classroom for commercial purposes is exploitation and a violation of public trust."

Some school districts have agreed and moved to protect students from commercial influences. For example in 1999, the San Francisco Unified School District's Board of Education passed the "Commercial-Free Schools Act" which set limits on in-school advertising. The act forbids teachers from using curriculum that includes unnecessary brand name advertising, forbids the district from entering into a district-wide exclusive soft drink or snack food contract, and requires the Board of Education to approve all long-term corporate sponsorships.

The vast majority of all advertising on school campuses—posters, vending ads, events, come from soda, fast food, and junk food companies.[10]

Promising Policy Directions

The growing epidemic of childhood obesity highlights the role that food and beverage advertising plays in influencing youth eating behaviors. While not all commercial communications with youth are inappropriate, some feel youth are a vulnerable group that should be protected from commercial influences which may adversely impact their health. The following are recommended strategies for moderating commercial influences at schools:

1. ***Eliminate the marketing and advertising of unhealthy foods and beverages at school.***
   - New local wellness policies should include promotional activities that encourage students to consume fruits and vegetables, low-fat and non-fat milk, and water.
2. ***Eliminate commercial influences that promote unhealthy foods and beverages in district curriculum, classroom materials and on campus.***
   - Review resources provided by outside sources, including curriculum and Channel One broadcasts used in the classroom, to ensure they do not promote unhealthy foods and beverages.
   - Prohibit any district curriculum from including identifiable brand names in the content of the curriculum.
   - Restrict teachers from using identifiable brand names in their instruction unless absolutely necessary to teaching the lesson.
3. ***Include consumer education as part of the curriculum.***
   - Adopt school-based curricula that teach youth media literacy skills which teach them to be informed consumers of the media.
4. ***Set guidelines for business partnerships that restrict marketing and advertising of unhealthy foods and beverages.***
   - Encourage partnerships with business that do not include product advertising to students.
   - For school staff with the responsibility of entering into business partnerships, conduct trainings on the perils of marketing unhealthy foods on campus.

Captive Kids: Selling Obesity at Schools is a resource to help stop the marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages on school campuses. Visit www.CaliforniaProjectLEAN.org.

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