



Let's Move

Take the Initiative to Make a Difference
For Your Body's Sake

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Urban Beat:
Hip-hop

An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

A Word About Let's Move

One. Two. Three. Bend at the Knee.

The national initiative to combat childhood obesity, Let's Move as it is known, was officially announced in February 2010. The Obama administration, lead by the first lady, businesses, medical leaders and non-profits have joined to educate about nutrition, to change unhealthy practices and to increase physical activity. Old attitudes will be examined and new policies will be put into place to transform proposals into action.

Four. Five. Six. Twist.

Activities in this guide encourage students to examine media coverage of the first lady's announcement, official responses and personal actions. From the youngest student to the oldest teacher, all are encouraged to find an hour a day to exercise and to improve on their breakfast habits. Print and broadcast students will produce their own coverage of Let's Move, and English students will study the style and techniques of two writers who explore current alternative fitness training.

Seven. Eight. Nine. You're Doing Just Fine.

A reminder to Post INSIDE program teachers: If you plan to use articles in this guide in the e-Replica format more than three months after their publication date, remember to bookmark them. The e-Replica activity in this guide utilizes the picture gallery feature.



Lessons: Comparison and contrast can be used for before-and-after evaluation, style analysis and media assessment.

News coverage provides the public with information to evaluate the decisions of officials, to educate about health and nutrition and to change behavior.

Level: Low to High

Subjects: Health, English, Journalism, Broadcast Journalism

NIE Online Guide

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Available Online

All Washington Post NIE guides may be downloaded at www.washpost.com/nie.

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Let's Move!

The Obama administration, lead by the first lady, medical leaders, businesses and non-profits have joined in a national initiative to combat childhood obesity. Activities in this guide encourage students to examine media coverage, official responses and personal actions.

Take a Healthy Initiative

"First lady Michelle Obama: 'Let's move' and work on childhood obesity problem" provides coverage of the announcement of the Let's Move initiative. After reading the Feb. 2010 article by Robin Givhan, discussion might include:

- What action did President Obama take to show his support of the initiative?
- In what ways is the Obama family an example of the goals of Let's Move?
- Givhan makes a point of relating the change of venue. Was this necessary or distracting from the coverage?
- What is a healthy-food desert? What actions will be taken to turn a healthy-food desert into a health oasis?
- What actions will be taken to realize the four pillars of the initiative?
- The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports is to change how it measures fit students. What do students suggest as ways to assess "health and well-being"?
- Why are some critical of the initiative?
- Has the first lady's vegetable garden been a successful endeavor?
- In addition to being a health issue, how is this a social justice issue?

Check Out Coverage

Give broadcast and print students two videos to view. On the White House Web site video of Michelle Obama's announcement of the Let's Move program is archived with a transcript: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-first-lady-event-surgeon-generals-report>. Show students one of the interviews that Mrs. Obama gave (see On the Web sidebar).

Discuss the news and main points the first lady makes about the initiative.

- Why is obesity a public health concern?
- What are reasons she says families don't always eat right?
- In addition to actions of the federal government, what do initiative partners in business, foundations and non-profits need to do?

After viewing the videos and discussing them, students are to prepare a news article or news package about the initiative. They are to interview a minimum of four individuals in your school community to localize the story.

After students have completed their projects, teachers may give them the *Post* article to evaluate Robin Givhan's coverage of the announcement.

On the Web

<http://letsmove.gov/>

Let's Move

Find shopping tips, recipes and resources needed for healthy choices, healthier schools, physical activity and access to affordable healthy food. Connects to blog, PSAs, facebook and YouTube.

www.letsmove.gov/kids/index.html

Kids' Collections

Activity books, games, videos and posters to download. Also, a magazine and student workbook for 7th and 8th grade students.

<http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/Health/michelle-obama-childhood-obesity-initiative/story?id=9781473>

ABC News: Michelle Obama: 'Let's Move'

Initiative Battles Childhood Obesity video of the first lady talking about her nationwide campaign

www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/linkset/2010/02/08/LI2010020801956.html

Archive: Michelle Obama leads the fight against childhood obesity

Links to *Post* coverage

www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/09/AR2010020900791.html

First lady Michelle Obama: 'Let's move' and work on childhood obesity problem

Slideshow, article and related *Post* stories

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- Did Givhan's cover the main points of the initiative?
- Who did she interview? What do her interviewees add to the coverage?
- Did she accurately and fairly present the initiative?

Exercise Daily

"Move to a Healthier Beat" encourages students to chart their current exercise and to devise a plan to meet the goal of one hour of exercise per day.

Read the Label

Actively involved in the Let's Move initiative, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration is taking action to improve food and beverage product labels. "You Can't Have Good Nutrition Without Good Information" provides an exercise in reviewing food and beverage labels and designing one with the information that consumers want.

Analyze the Writers

Give older students "Fighting to stay fit: Mixed martial arts students go head-to-head for good health" and "Urban Beat: Hip-hop classes foster fitness and community" to read. These are two of three articles featured in the special Fitness Issue of *WP Magazine*. Discuss the content of the two articles as providers of the options available to teenagers and adults to be more healthy and fit.

The handout "Keeping Fit: Two Views" provides activities for students to compare and contrast the writers' style and composition techniques. It also provides an activity to evaluate the content of information boxes with that of extended stories.

Get Cheesy

Poll students to see how many eat breakfast at fast food businesses: More than twice a week, once a week, one to three times a month, never. Which fast food places do they frequent? What do these students order?

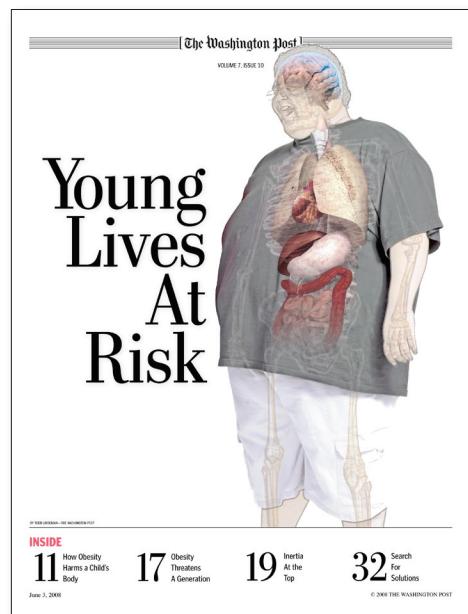
Read health columnist Jennifer LaRue Huget's "No, I don't want fries with that! Fast food's cheesy breakfasts."

- What is Huget's view of fast food breakfasts that contain cheese? What words reveal her attitude? ["joints," "what's wrong," "full of fat and sodium," "limited nutritional value"]
- What concession to people's choice of fast food breakfast muffins does she make?
- Why does she believe the muffins containing cheese are so appealing?
- What healthier options are there? [oatmeal, breakfast at home]
- What is her final argument against consuming a fast food breakfast?
- Is she persuasive?

Do Follow-up

What has happened since February 2010 when the childhood obesity initiative, known as Let's Move, was announced? Several approaches can be taken to locate the actions and responses of partners in the federal government, businesses and non-profits.

Give students "Follow the Action | Let's Move Initiative." In addition to conducting a Web search, students are directed to use several of the e-Replica features to retrieve the latest coverage of Let's Move and its partners. ■

Past Post Guides**Young Lives at Risk**

June 3, 2008

In May 2008, *The Washington Post* published a five-day series on childhood obesity, *Young Lives at Risk: Our Overweight Children*. Students, parents, the school and greater community need to address the issue of childhood obesity to create healthy citizens now and in the future.

This 37-page online INSIDE guide provides reprints of many of the *Post* articles, graphics and photographs. Activities, a close reading guide, insight into the creation of the poster/graphic, and resources are provided for use in health, mathematics, art, government, English and mathematics classes. Much of the material complements the current Let's Move initiative.

To download the guide at no cost, go to www.washpost.com/nie. Select Lesson Plans and select the June 3, 2008, guide.

Name _____

Date _____

Move to a Healthier Beat

First lady Michelle Obama is leading Let's Move, an initiative to combat childhood obesity. She wants all students to practice a healthy lifestyle and to develop good habits. This includes getting one hour of exercise each day. Do you think you can do it?

1. Name three benefits of exercising an hour a day.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. Why is it more healthy to exercise daily rather than three hours on one day?
3. How often do you now exercise Monday through Friday?
4. How do you find time to exercise on Saturday and Sunday?
5. Make a plan to exercise at least one hour per day. Will you exercise before school, at school and/or after school? In what ways will you vary your exercise? Think of ways the different forms of exercise will benefit your health.

	At What Time(s)	Activity	Benefit to You
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

Name _____

Date _____

You Can't Have Good Nutrition Without Good Information

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is actively involved in the Let's Move initiative. Its slogan, "You Can't Have Good Nutrition Without Good Information," summarizes the action that the FDA is taking to determine whether food product labels are providing accurate information. Labels that present false or misleading information violate the federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act.

According to Margaret Hamburg, M.D., Commissioner of Food and Drugs, the "FDA wants to ensure that statements made on food package labeling are truthful, meaningful, and useful in helping consumers make healthy food choices that contribute to healthy diets."

Labels as Sources of Information

Read the labels on five different types of food products that you consume in your home. Indicate how helpful the information that is included on each label is to you. What other information would you like to have?

Set up a chart with these columns on your own paper:

PRODUCT	BRAND	LABEL INFORMATION	HOW HELPFUL	OTHER INFORMATION
---------	-------	-------------------	-------------	-------------------

Front-of-Package Labels

The beverage industry is to put calorie information on the front of its products. Either at home or at a grocery store, find the calorie information for five different beverages. List the beverages, the calories per serving and the sugar content. Be sure to indicate the size of a serving. Set up your chart similar to this example:

PRODUCT	SERVING	CALORIES Per Serving	SUGAR
Coca-Cola	1 12-oz can	140	39 g

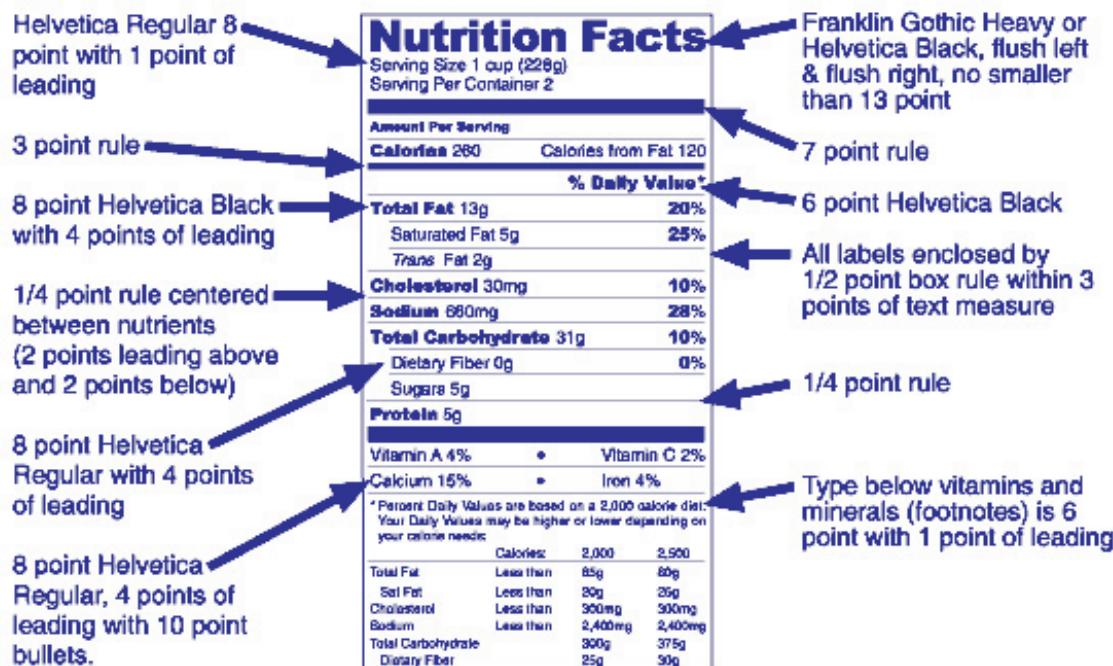
Design a Label

Design the label for a food or beverage product that provides the kind of information you would find helpful. Remember that FDA regulations require that you provide truthful information about your product. The following page provides current FDA guidelines for the Nutrition Facts label. Use the font size specifications when you design your label. You may vary layout and content in order to provide "information you would find helpful."

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Food and Drug Administration Food Labeling Guide

The illustrations below indicate examples of the graphics the FDA uses to display the Nutrition Facts label.



Nutrition Facts					
Amount Per Serving		% Daily Value*			
Total Fat	1.5g	2%	Total Carbohydrate	28g	9%
Saturated Fat	0.5g	3%	Dietary Fiber	2g	8%
Trans Fat	0.5g		Sugars	1g	
Cholesterol	0mg	0%	Protein	4g	
Sodium	280mg	12%			
Calories	140				
Calories from Fat	10				
Vitamin A	0%	• Vitamin C	0%	• Calcium	6%
Thiamin	15%	• Riboflavin	8%	• Niacin	10%
				• Iron	6%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:				Calories:	2,000 2,500
Total Fat		Less than	65g	80g	
Sat Fat		Less than	20g	25g	
Cholesterol		Less than	300mg	300mg	
Sodium		Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg	
Total Carbohydrate			300g	375g	
Dietary Fiber			25g	30g	
Calories per gram: Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4					

Name _____

Date _____

Keeping Fit: Two Views

In the Fitness Issue of *WP Magazine*, two writers take a look at ways Washingtonians are keeping fit in Columbia Heights. *Post* staff writer Holly E. Thomas visits the Academy for Body-Efficient Tactical Arts (Beta Academy) in the basement of Calvary Methodist Church to observe fighter training. Freelance writer Sarah Wildman engages in hip-hop classes at the Dance Institute of Washington.

Read “Fighting to stay fit: Mixed martial arts students go head-to-head for good health” and “Urban Beat: Blending cultures and movement, hip-hop classes foster fitness and community.”

1. Compare and contrast the approaches taken by Holly Thomas and Sarah Wildman. In your essay, you may wish to consider:
 - The ways in which observation and immersion influence their approaches
 - The impact of voice (first person vs. third person)
 - Handling of setting by both
 - The introduction of founders and instructors
 - Use of quotations
 - The inclusion of participants
 - Bringing the forms of exercise to life for readers
 - The endings of the stories
2. Compare and contrast the benefits and risks of fighter training and urban dancing as presented by the experts.
3. To what extent did you understand the benefits and risks from the stories? To what extent did the boxed information provide helpful information to evaluate the two forms of exercise? To what extent did quotations in the stories provide helpful information to compare and contrast and to evaluate the two forms of exercise?
4. To whom, if anyone, would you recommend one of the forms of exercise?

Name _____

Date _____



Follow the Action | *Let's Move! Initiative*

In February 2010 first lady Michelle Obama launched a national campaign against childhood obesity. President Obama, federal departments and agencies, medical organizations, businesses, non-profit groups and community leaders have pledged to take action to support the endeavor.

What have the Michelle Obama and these groups done since February to move American children toward a healthier future?

Do a Web Search



Visit the White House (www.whitehouse.gov) and Let's Move! (www.letsmove.gov) official Web sites to begin your search for answers. See where the first lady has visited and what groups around the country are doing.

Use The Post's e-Replica

Use the features of the e-Replica edition to get the most recent reporting of actions, reactions, decisions and results.

SEARCH. Use the Search feature to locate the partners referred to in *The Post* coverage of the national initiative to combat childhood obesity. These include:

American Academy of Pediatrics
Aramark
Chartwells School Dining Services
Healthy Food Financing Initiative
Department of Agriculture
Department of Education
Department of Health and Human Services
Department of the Interior
Food and Drug Administration
Kaiser Permanente
Partnership for a Healthier America
President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Sodexo
The White House
W. K. Kellogg Foundation

NEWS ALERT MONITOR. You can find out the latest information once-a-day, every other day or as-it-happens. Using the Monitor feature, you can arrange to have an alert sent to you by e-mail. When you set this up in My Services, you will indicate the Search Terms (Let's Move, Partners for a Healthier America, for example) and the frequency of e-mail notification.

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First lady Michelle Obama: ‘Let’s move’ and work on childhood obesity problem

By ROBIN GIVHAN
Washington Post Staff Writer

• Originally Published February 10, 2010

In front of a packed audience in the State Dining Room at the White House on Tuesday, first lady Michelle Obama rolled out her national initiative to combat childhood obesity with a show of force that included medical, business and government leaders, grassroots activists, celebrity public service announcements, cartoon characters as nutrition experts, as well as those most directly affected — the kids themselves.

Dubbed “Let’s Move,” the project also received a presidential nod of support, to be backed up with as much as \$1 billion a year in federal funds for 10 years. Earlier in the day, in the Oval Office, President Obama signed a formal memorandum establishing for the first time a national task force on childhood obesity — one that draws from the departments of the Interior, Health and Human Services, Agriculture and Education and is charged with turning the first lady’s ambitious list of proposals into action.

At its core, the initiative has four pillars: more nutrition information, increased physical activity, easier access to healthy foods and, ultimately, personal responsibility. It has bipartisan support, as demonstrated by the presence of two mayors, one a Republican from Hernando, Miss. (population 10,000) and the other a Democrat from Somerville, Mass. (population 77,478). Hernando’s Chip Johnson described how he established a soccer league in his town by leasing a parcel of land from a local resident for \$1 a year. And Somerville’s Joseph



FROM WHITE HOUSE WEB SITE VIDEO

Deal Middle School sixth grader Tammy Nguyen introduces first lady Michelle Obama at the kick off of the Let’s Move project. Nguyen was one the Bancroft Elementary students who planted, harvested, cooked and ate vegetables in the White House garden.

Curtatone noted that his job as mayor is not to legis

late diets but to create an “atmosphere and opportunity for good health.”

Obama’s national campaign purposefully and adamantly steers clear of defining itself as in favor of foodie proselytizing and against French fries, burgers and cookies. This is neither the canonization of slow cooking nor a war on fast food.

“This isn’t about trying to turn the clock back to when we were kids or preparing five-course meals from scratch every night. No one has time for that,” the first lady said in her remarks. “And it’s not about being 100 percent perfect, 100 percent of the time. Lord knows I’m not. There’s a place for cookies and ice

cream, burgers and fries — that’s part of the fun of childhood.”

Obama also quickly swatted away criticism that her campaign is one driven by vanity, social pressures or misperceptions about weight, beauty and fitness. “This isn’t about inches and pounds or how our kids look,” she said. “It’s about how our kids feel and how they feel about themselves.”

‘Not about politics’

It took more than an hour for the many bells and whistles in Obama’s initiative to be even cursorily detailed and for her five guests — each symbolic — to be duly recognized and allowed a few

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BY MARVIN JOSEPH — YHE WASHINGTON POST

After they harvested vegetables, White House Associate Chef Sam Kass leads students from Bancroft Elementary School back to the White House kitchen. There, students received a cooking lesson.

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words. In some ways, the unveiling was a race against the clock, with more than a few references made to the looming blizzard and the possibility of folks getting stranded on clogged city streets. The State Dining Room, with its portrait of Lincoln, as a backdrop was grander and more official than the we're-all-in-this-together nature of the event. But then, the venue had been changed from THEARC — the arts and recreation center in Southeast — because of the weather.

Substituting for the warmth and informality of that Ward 8 setting were

about a dozen students in "Let's Move" T-shirts who sat with the first lady. Among them were members of the 2009 championship pee-wee football team, the Watkins Hornets. They served as a tableau vivant of silent motivation. "This isn't about politics," the first lady said. "I don't want our kids to live diminished lives because we failed to step up today. I don't want them looking back decades from now and asking us, 'Why didn't you help us when you had a chance? Why didn't you put us first when it mattered most?'"

Obama's initiative challenges the Food and Drug Administration to work with food and beverage producers, who have

announced their support of Obama's proposals, to improve package labeling. Ingredients would be more prominent and easier to understand, and deciphering calorie counts per serving would not require higher math.

Schoolhouse nutrition would be addressed by pushing for the reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act, and the administration is requesting \$10 billion over 10 years to improve school meals. As part of the initiative, companies such as Sodexo, Chartwells School Dining Services and Aramark, which supply food to schools, have agreed

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BY MARVIN JOSEPH — YHE WASHINGTON POST

The First Lady Michelle Obama hosted a White House Garden Harvest Party with children from Bancroft Elementary School. These students helped the first lady plant a vegetable garden in April and were invited back in October to harvest vegetables.

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to cut salt and fat content, and offer more whole grains and more fresh fruits.

Wake-up call

The 2011 budget includes something called the Healthy Food Financing Initiative. It would invest \$400 million to help bring grocery stores into areas dubbed “food deserts” — or, more accurately, healthy-food deserts. It would also offer incentives for convenience stores to carry more nutritious food options. The goal is to eliminate these

produce-free wastelands throughout the country within seven years.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has agreed to work with doctors and health-care providers to ensure that body mass index measurements are standard aspects of medical care and that children whose BMI is high are given a “prescription” for lowering it. That change recalls the empathetic anecdote the first lady often tells of receiving a wake-up call from her daughters’ pediatrician, who alerted her to what could be the beginning of a troubling pattern of weight gain. It’s a story she

told again Tuesday: “It wasn’t that long ago that I was a working mom, struggling to balance meetings and deadlines with soccer and ballet. And there were some nights when everyone was tired and hungry, and we just went to the drive-thru because it was quick and cheap, or went with one of the less-healthy microwave options, because it was easy,” she said. “And one day, my pediatrician pulled me aside and told me, ‘You might want to think about doing things a little bit differently.’ ”

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And the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports will be revamped so that it no longer focuses on how many sit-ups and push-ups a child can do — or how long they can hang, batlike, from a high bar. Instead of focusing on athleticism or stupid human tricks, it will address health and well-being.

The vast list of proposals also includes a new foundation: Partnership for a Healthier America. Its members include some of the largest organizations engaged in health care and, specifically, obesity issues, such as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Kaiser Permanente and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

There will also be sports clinics, community projects such as bike paths and playgrounds, a new Web site and public service announcements. Singer Nelly Furtado was pictured in a video extolling the virtues of healthy eating — using motherhood as her credentials. And Mo'Nique, the actress, comedienne and talk-show host, was featured in another PSA proclaiming both her own and BET's support of the first lady's efforts. Mo'Nique spent years using her weight as part of her comedy shtick. She hyped her own plus-size figure and often described skinny women as "evil." The first lady has apparently inspired a detente of sorts.

National conversation

There had been weeks of drum rolls and teases, informal remarks, prepared speeches, meetings and briefing books

leading to this day. Still, some nutrition advocates don't believe the first lady has gone far enough. The Center for Science in the Public Interest issued a statement arguing that Obama should use her bully pulpit to remove all junk food from schools and to get all advertisements for junk food out of children's programming. Others want her to tackle government farm subsidies that can make chips and soda cheaper than healthier alternatives.

Obama got involved in this national conversation modestly enough in March 2009 when she and a group of fifth-graders from the District's Bancroft Elementary broke ground on an organic garden. The vegetable patch, situated on the sloping South Lawn with the White House rising up in the distance, was the first significant vegetable garden since Eleanor Roosevelt's Victory Garden during World War II.

The garden was something that good-food advocates had lobbied in support of for years. And the first lady's patch of produce, with its lettuces and tubers, received widespread attention — both here and abroad — from those interested in sustainable farming, eating locally and supporting a small, agrarian economy. But Obama kept her focus simple. She has used the garden as a way of talking about getting fresh vegetables into kids' diets and making children more cognizant of their own food choices.

One of the students who helped plant the garden, Tammy Nguyen, 11, who is now in the sixth grade, introduced the first lady Tuesday. But she did so only after explaining how the lessons of

the garden — and the importance of a colorful plate — have stayed with her. "We picked the peas right off the vine and put almost as many in our mouth as in the bowl," she said. "My friends and I pledge to keep that color on the plate — and I don't mean M&Ms."

Since then, the conversation about healthy food has gone more mainstream and gotten more complex and more diverse. The first lady has linked it to health-care reform, noting that obesity-related diseases put a \$147 billion drain on our economy. Obesity affects national security, disqualifying individuals from serving in the military.

And as Will Allen, perhaps this country's most famous urban farmer and a recipient of a MacArthur Foundation "genius grant," noted in his remarks, "It's a social justice issue. Every child in this country, every person in this country, should have access to good food."

The first lady has decided to take up that fight and to make it her signature issue while in the White House. One in three children in this country is either overweight or obese, Obama said Tuesday. If that trend continues, this generation of children will not live as long as their parents. Obama has said she would like her fight against obesity to be her legacy as first lady. But it will be impossible to measure success — at least by her standards — until long after she's left the White House. Because her goal, she said, is to see that "children who are born today will reach adulthood at a healthy weight." ■

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eat, drink & be healthy



JENNIFER
LARUE HUGET

No, I don't want fries with that! Fast food's cheesy breakfasts

• Originally Published
Local Living April 29, 2010

Since when did American cheese become a breakfast staple?

Nothing I have ever made for breakfast at home has included American cheese. But a quick survey of breakfast options at various fast-food joints shows that those cheese slices are among the most common ingredients. And, despite recent reports that fast-food breakfast sales have slid as the economy has slumped, there are now more of those meals on the market than ever.

Cheese has always been part of the iconic Egg McMuffin at McDonald's. Now it's in Burger King's version of the McMuffin, the Breakfast Muffin Sandwich. It's in the Dunkin' Donuts breakfast muffin and on the breakfast sandwiches that Subway introduced nationwide in early April.

Ads for Kraft American cheese make eating the peculiar little squares seem practically a patriotic duty. But a single slice adds 60 calories, 4.5 grams of fat (2.5 of them saturated) and 250 milligrams of sodium. (On the plus side, that

slice provides 20 percent of the daily value for calcium.)

I don't mean to pick on cheese alone. But its ubiquity strikes me as emblematic of what's wrong with fast-food breakfast sandwiches in general. With a few exceptions (Subway offers such ingredients as egg-white omelets, "light wheat" English muffins, green peppers and tomatoes), they are full of fat and sodium and offer limited nutritional value. (See the accompanying chart.) They all contain protein, in the form of eggs and sausage patties, and maybe a dab of fiber if the muffin's whole wheat. That's about it, though.

As a big believer in personal responsibility and in free-market economics, I support people's freedom to enjoy whatever foods they like and, when it comes to foods with less-than-optimal nutritional profiles, to enjoy them in moderation. Heck, I even blogged favorably a few weeks ago about KFC's Double Down sandwich (you know, the one with two pieces of fried chicken in place of a bun).

But as David Kessler wrote in his book *The End of Overeating*, the fast-food industry has stacked the deck by

aggressively researching and using combinations of ingredients that they know humans are hard-wired to desire. Not content to control our minds at lunch and dinner, the industry increasingly offers at breakfast time that same fat-salt-sugar combination that makes a Whopper or Big Mac so irresistible. (Taco Bell, which reportedly is working on a breakfast menu, has already won the race to engage people in fast-food consumption round-the-clock; if its Fourthmeal concept weren't so scary, it would be funny.)

It should be noted that some fast-food places, including McDonald's and Starbucks, have introduced more-healthful breakfast options such as oatmeal.

But as Kessler says, "It's not just the food." The problem with fast-food breakfast, he says, is "the way it changes our eating behavior. It takes down the boundaries of when and where we eat and how we eat."

People in other cultures (Kessler cites the French) typically eat breakfast at home, at the table, even with their families. "That creates

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certain boundaries and protects them" from many poor food choices, he says. But fast-food breakfast sandwiches have promoted eating on the fly, often in the car, something the French would never do, Kessler says.

You can make a case that eating anything for breakfast is better than skipping your morning meal. And I'm sure I'll hear from folks reminding me that nobody's holding a gun to my head, making me eat a McMuffin.

But here's what really bothers me: Too many Americans have given over lunch and dinner to the fast-food industry. Breakfast — whether a bowl of Cheerios and milk with a piece of fruit or a home-cooked omelet filled with fresh vegetables — was a last bastion of home-based cooking and eating. Are we really in a hurry to surrender that meal, too? ■

A nutrition wake-up call

DUNKIN' DONUTS

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans say an average 2,000-calorie daily diet should include fewer than 65 grams of fat (fewer than 20 grams of them saturated fat) and fewer than 2,300 milligrams of sodium.

So it's worth considering whether you should get such a big head start in these categories in the day's first meal.

	Calories	Fat	Saturated fat	Sodium
Subway Sausage, Egg & Cheese Sandwich	290	18 g	7 g	710 mg
McDonald's Egg McMuffin	300	12 g	5 g	820 mg
Dunkin' Donuts Ham, Egg & Cheese on English Muffin	360	15 g	6 g	1,140 mg
Burger King Breakfast Muffin Sandwich	400	26 g	9 g	900 mg

SOURCES: Subway, McDonald's, Dunkin' Donuts, Burger King

THE WASHINGTON POST

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Fighting to stay fit

Mixed martial arts students go head-to-head for good health

BY HOLLY E. THOMAS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
SEAN McCORMACK

• Originally Published May 2, 2010

In the basement of Calvary Methodist Church in Columbia Heights, kicks and punches strike shinguards and headgear, sending muffled booms echoing off the yellow walls. It's Monday night, just after 9, and a mixed martial arts fighter training class is under way.

The class is among the offerings at the Academy for Body-Efficient Tactical Arts — Beta Academy for short — a multidisciplinary martial arts school founded in 2008 by former professional fighter and gold medalist Nakapan Phungehorn. His fighter training program combines two main disciplines: Muay Thai, or Thai boxing, and Brazilian jiu-jitsu. Anyone older than 16 can sign up for the classes, but Phungehorn must approve if a student wants to move into fighter training after at least six months of study.

Phungehorn, who began studying martial arts when he was 10 and in 2001 won the gold medal for Muay Thai at the World Amateur Martial Arts Championships, fought professionally through his late 20s. Now, nearing 30 and nursing five herniated discs in his back, he teaches full time and hopes to dispel the notion that all fighters are "knuckleheads."

While the aggression inherent in fighter training may be a turnoff to



Instructor Melanie Metropolit-Phungehorn engages Rudy Telles in a Muay Thai sparring match at the Academy for Body-Efficient Tactical Arts (Beta) in Washington.

some, the students in this cavernous, padded space bear little resemblance to the steely-eyed brutes who beat their opponents to a pulp on Spike TV. Tonight's trainees seem reserved. They have desk jobs, girlfriends and have never been in a street fight. For some, this is their preferred form of exercise, a stress reliever, a chance to throw a few

punches and still be friends when the 60 minutes are up.

"I'd say less than 10 percent of my students are the ones who are serious about fighting," Phungehorn says. "You get a lot of people who think they want to do it, and then they realize this is a lot of work. It's a real sacrifice."

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Those who embrace the martial arts lifestyle compete in regional matches. But all share a common goal: to push themselves physically and mentally.

"It's a sport, not fighting in the street," Phungephorn says. "It's almost like a chess match. It's about being able to expose the weaknesses in your opponent. It's not two ruffians trying to knock each other out."

A small group of students begins jumping rope and doing push-ups in three-minute intervals. Dressed in shorts and T-shirts, they look like average gym-goers, except for their black shinguards and bare feet. The students drop to the mat for push-ups, which three perform on their fists. Then it's back to jumping rope. Then back to push-ups.

The District's David Klock, 24, a music teacher, has joined the group for his first time sparring. He began Muay Thai training at Beta Academy in August because work left no outlet for physical activity. Seven months later, Phungephorn asked him to join the fighter training class.

"It's a really supportive environment, which made the transition to combat sports from traditional sports a lot easier," Klock says. Now, he trains six to seven hours each week. "Some of these guys have been doing it so long," he says. "And I just want to see if I can do it, not necessarily beat them, but hold my own."

Doing push-ups in energetic bursts next to Klock is Ryan Hill, 25, of College Park, a telecom company account clerk who has been studying mixed martial arts since 2004. Tall and lanky with impossibly long legs, Hill was encouraged to pursue martial arts by his parents. "They thought I'd do it as a workout or as a form of self-defense, just in case," says Hill, who still hasn't told his mother he fights competitively.

But Hill now views fighter training as somewhat of a calling: "I can't play basketball. I can't play baseball. Fighting is my gift, and I enjoy doing it."

The two are joined on the mat by Rudy Telles, a Census Bureau statistician and an apprentice instructor. Telles, 25, played tennis at New York University until an injury sidelined him; he joined the university's Brazilian jiu-jitsu club and was hooked. He picked up Muay Thai in graduate school and a year later began competing. He won two amateur bouts but realized he had to make a choice between fighting and, well, everything else. "You almost have to treat it as a job," he says. "There are just so many

ways you can get hurt if you haven't trained."

Telles trains about 10 hours a week and competes occasionally in Brazilian jiu-jitsu matches. "People don't understand why ... I choose to get beaten up as a hobby," he says. "My parents don't like it. They don't see why I don't just play tennis. But I've actually gotten hurt worse playing tennis than I have doing jiu-jitsu or Muay Thai."

Soon, six fighters in shinguards, mouthguards and boxing gloves are gathered at one end of the gym. They pair off and practice punching

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FIGHTER TRAINING

Fitness experts weigh in. Interviews by Holly E. Thomas



ORTHOPEDIST

Marc Rankin

*Orthopedic surgeon,
sports medicine specialist*

[MMAFT] is not all brute force; equally important is technique. ... Injuries usually occur when there are breaks in those techniques. ... These include concussions, fractures, ligament injuries and tendon ruptures. The more common injuries I see occur in the upper extremities and knees. ... Wearing proper protective wear can lessen the chance of sustaining a concussion.



DIETITIAN

Jim White

*Registered dietitian
and personal trainer*

An MMA fighter needs ... a balanced diet of protein sources such as meat, fish, eggs and milk. Round this out with fruits, vegetables and whole grains. They need to be properly hydrated ... at least 64 ounces of water daily and an additional 16 ounces one hour before exercise, four to eight ounces every 15 minutes during exercise, and 16 ounces after exercise.



CARDIOLOGIST

Alfred Bove

Cardiologist and emeritus professor

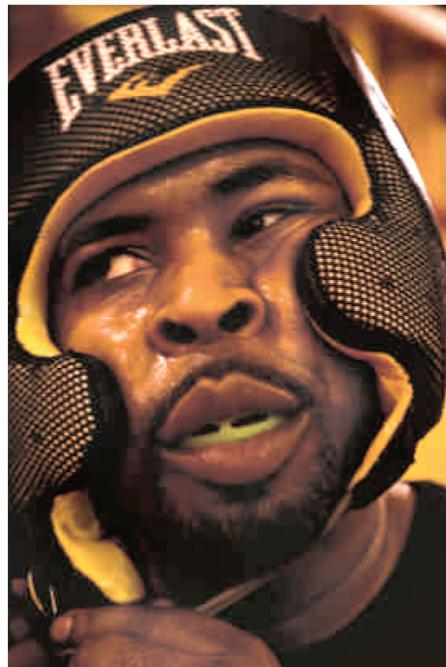
Mixed martial arts training is a coordination exercise: You think they're fighting, but they're actually dancing. The training is a series of carefully coordinated maneuvers that take discipline to learn, and lots of people do this and never end up hurting each other. It's another good aerobic and isometric exercise.

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and blocking, each lightly tapping his partner with gloved fists. While tonight's session is strictly men, two female students in the program train with the group. One is Phunghorn's wife and fellow instructor, Melanie Metropolit-Phunghorn, a longtime student of Muay Thai, observing this night from the sidelines.

Slowly, the pairs begin to spar more aggressively, occasionally knotting up in twisted, sweaty tangles until Phunghorn breaks them up. Klock, the music teacher, takes his first turn in the ring.



Brian Murray secures head gear before a session.

He seems assured, never taking his eyes off his opponent, until suddenly, a well-aimed glove catches him on the chin, and his head snaps back. "You all right? You all right?" Phunghorn calls. Klock nods and keeps circling.

The class ends just after 10 p.m. as the students exchange handshakes and claps on the shoulder. Workday tension is left behind, alongside the headgear and gloves.

Holly E. Thomas writes for the Magazine. She can be reached at thomash@washpost.com.

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Urban Beat

*Blending culture and movement,
hip-hop classes foster fitness
and community*

BY SARAH WILDMAN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
SEAN McCORMACK

• Originally Published May 2, 2010

It's five minutes to 7 on a wet March night, and, as I peek into classrooms while walking down the hall at the Dance Institute of Washington in Columbia Heights, I see several classes taking place at once. Girls in black leotards and pink tights hit plié after plié in Studio 1; adults in Lycra reach up to relevé on toes, then gracefully extend arms over head in Studio 2.

I'm going to the room at the end of the upstairs hall. There, a woman with a pile of twists pulled into a bun stretches her leg out on the bar; she wears sweats, an old baggy Baltimore Law School T-shirt and colorful sneakers. Two teachers walk in, LaTasha Barnes, a fitness trainer and former competitive track star; and Junious "House" Brickhouse, dressed in a purple hoodie, shiny white sneakers and a purple baseball cap, brim up. He's the founder of Urban Artistry, the five-year-old urban dance company in residence since January at the Dance Institute that offers classes for everyone from company members to people, like me, off the street. He offers a hand to me, clearly the newbie, and introduces himself.

As more dancers trickle in, they greet each other as old friends and banter with Barnes while she connects her iPod to the sound system. "Hi!" the stretching woman says to me, extending a hand. "Welcome! The great thing about this class is that you can drop in. It's not like other dance classes, where if you miss the beginning of the choreography, you're just lost." Brickhouse slips out; he's not teaching this class. Suddenly the room jumps with sound — gone is the classical music from down the hall — and up comes a deep bass, up comes hip-hop.

Urban dance borrows from African, Latin, martial arts and American social dances; the movements were perfected on streets from New York to Paris. It continues to grow and evolve, and recent television shows have sparked more interest. "I think that *Dancing With the Stars*, MTV's *America's Best Dance Crew* — I think all those things help to popularize dance as an art form," said Fabian Barnes, founder of the Dance Institute of Washington. Hip-hop in particular, he said, has been an entry point for people who had not been part of the dance community, especially men.

I have always danced — in every city I've lived in, from Washington to Paris to Vienna. But, after giving birth to my daughter more than a year ago, I've been mostly on a yoga mat and in the gym. I thought I'd kept in good shape — I even took dance classes into the seventh month of pregnancy — but I've never taken a hip-hop class, and my cardio fitness ... well, let's say it has suffered. This spring, I wanted something to kick-start my energy again; even more, I wanted to find community and a creative release separate from my work. For that, I needed to get back in a dance studio.

The dancers in Barnes's hip-hop class that first night are all women — I mentally pin them in their 20s and early 30s — except for one boy, age 11, who blows us away when he dances. Barnes, 29, stands in front of the mirrors and runs through a basic series of movements: a jump, a body wave, a neck isolation, a hip isolation, a shimmy, a march. I and the five other dancers imitate. It's hard, but it's doable, and it speeds up immediately. Within five minutes, my lungs are screaming because we're dancing so fast. And this is just the warm-up.

The music is J Dilla and Flying Lotus. Movements reminiscent

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of late 1980s and early '90s music videos emerge in a wave around the room. Everyone except me is in baggy pants, old-school high tops or rainbow-colored hip-hop sneakers. I'm in old gym shoes, and I covet the footwear around me.

I make eye contact with the stretching woman who had spoken to me, Carlendra Frank. "I'm so out of shape!" I mouth. She shakes her head. "No! You're doing great! You look awesome." It may be an exaggeration, but I'm definitely moving well. I feel invigorated. I'm drenched in sweat; I'm rolling my hips; I'm weaving my arms; I'm one of those awesome guys dancing on the street while a crowd claps to the boom box.

"My movement is more old school mixed with some isolations and popping fundamentals," Barnes says later, meaning a kind of funk move where muscles literally "pop" and contract, almost like a snap. "A lot of what we do is based on how muscles move."

In class, 40 more minutes fly by. "Get some water," Barnes shouts. A fresh-faced woman in a white tank stops me during our two-minute break. "I'm Maren," she says, grinning, "I'm in the company, too." She nods, indicating Frank. "You're new, aren't

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URBAN DANCE

Fitness experts weigh in. Interviews by Holly E. Thomas

**THE ORTHOPEDIST****Marc Rankin**Orthopedic surgeon,
sports medicine specialist**THE DIETITIAN****Jim White**Registered dietitian
and personal trainer**THE CARDIOLOGIST****Alfred Bove**Cardiologist and emeritus
professor

[Dance] improves muscle tone, flexibility and reflexes. This type of workout, however, places you at increased risk for ... overuse injuries. I recommend a pre-conditioning program several weeks in advance ... to get the body acclimated. Before beginning the session, focus on a good 15- to 20-minute stretching routine.

Pre-workout nutrition is important, especially since these are short intense classes. ... I would recommend a light snack at least 45 minutes before a class, such as a piece of fruit, yogurt, small bowl of cereal with skim milk, or a light protein shake. [And do the same] about 30 minutes after a class or rehearsal.

Urban dance is a combined aerobic and isometric activity, so it's a good whole-body exercise. It won't get you into the same level of conditioning as marathon training, but it is a higher level of intensity, and that can improve your overall peak capacity. There's a bit of risk because of the high-impact aspect for ankles and knees.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

»Urban Artistry offers weeknight urban dance classes at \$10 per session and free hip-hop sessions on Sundays from 3 to 6 p.m. at the Dance Institute of Washington, 3400 14th Street NW.



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you?" she asks. "Welcome."

I've always reveled in the emotional and physical release of dancing: the deep muscle burn, the sweat, the joy. And I've always hated the cliquey-ness of dance crowds, the familiar mean-girl swagger from some of the class regulars. At least on this first visit, there's none of the latter. It appears that Urban Artistry has found a way to mix dance, fitness and true community. By the time class wraps, I feel as if I've discovered the Shangri-La of dance classes.

Brickhouse later says the company focuses on the counterculture styles of urban dance and on creating a diverse community of people to share the experience. "When I first started off, it was me and my operations director and a few other people [and] kids hanging out with different groups and different communities. And I wanted to do for them what my mentors did for me," he says, meaning teaching about the history of dance and the foundations of these movements, an education he picked up in his spare time during a decade spent in the U.S. military.

Now there are 42 members of the company, ranging in age from 6 to 43. "We all recognize the different cultural contributions whether we're white, black, Asian or Hispanic," he says.

"So people come through, they are not always dancers," Brickhouse continues. "Sometimes people just like to groove. That's cool, too ... just as long you are willing to learn and be open." ■

Sarah Wildman is a freelance writer in Washington. She can be reached at wpmagazine@washpost.com.



BY SEAN MCMORMICK

At the Dance Institute of Washington, colorful sneakers and comfortable clothes abound..

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Academic Content Standards

This lesson addresses academic content standards of Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia.

Maryland

Biology: Describe what happens to food in plants and animals:

- Contributes to growth
- Supports repair
- Provides energy
- Is stored for future use
- Is eliminated

Expectation 3.1 (Grade 4)

Biology: Cite evidence from research and observations that organisms that eat plants or animals break down what they have consumed (food) to produce the materials and energy they need to survive or store for later use. Expectation 3.1 (Grade 7)

English Language Arts: Students will compose in a variety of modes by developing content, employing specific forms, and selecting language appropriate for a particular audience and purpose (Grade 4, Standard 4.0 Writing)

Virginia

Health: The student will explain that health habits impact personal growth and development. Key concepts/skills include

- a) food and beverage choices based on nutritional content;
- b) the benefits of physical activity and personal fitness;
- c) safe and harmful behaviors;
- d) positive interaction with family, peers, and other individuals. (3.1, Grade 3)

Health: The student will demonstrate responsibility for developing personal health habits and practicing behaviors that promote an active, healthy lifestyle. Key concepts/skills include

- b) the connection between nutritional guidelines and weight management;
- d) the importance of exercise and recreation;
- e) the effects of personal health habits on cardiovascular fitness;
- f) the importance of developing and maintaining a positive self-image. (5.2, Grade 5)

English: The student will develop expository and informational writings.

- b) Consider audience and purpose when planning for writing. (12.7, Writing)

The Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum Content Standards can be found online at <http://mdk12.org/assessments/vsc/index.html>.

Washington, D.C.

Science, Life Science: Humans have a variety of mechanisms to stay healthy. As a basis for understanding this concept,

- Explain that eating a variety of healthy foods and getting enough exercise and rest help people stay healthy.
 - Recognize that food provides energy as well as materials for growth, maintenance, and repair of body parts.
 - Recognize that vitamins and minerals are substances required by the body in small amounts to synthesize essential substances and carry out essential processes.
 - Describe how, as a person matures, the amounts of food and exercise need by the body change.
- (3.7, Grade 3)

Reading/English Language Arts:

Produce functional texts that

- address audience needs;
- state purpose and context; and
- adopt a customary format (Expository Writing, 9.W-E.2)

Standards of Learning currently in effect for Virginia Public Schools can be found online at www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Superintendent/Sols/home.shtml.

Learning Standards for DCPS are found online at www.k12.dc.us/dcps/Standards/standardsHome.htm.