

Childhood Obesity in Monmouth

I. Problem and Target Audience:

The problem that our group is addressing with our media action planning team project assignment is childhood obesity in Monmouth, Illinois. Our target audiences for our messages will be students from K-8 years of school and the parents of those students.

A) As stated before, we will be focusing on the students from K-8 in Monmouth, Illinois and trying to decrease the overall rate of childhood obesity of children in Monmouth. We will need to try and change the eating habits of the students, and promote exercise and outdoor activities to the students.

B) We have two audiences for our Media Action Plan. The primary audience would be the students themselves and the other audience would be the parents of those students. These two audiences are very different from each other. Students are not as educated, will not have as much concern towards the topic, but will also be much easier to convince because. The students will also be much easier to reach because we can reach them at school whereas with the parents we will have to contact them at home and/or ask them to get out of their homes and travel to the school for a meeting. The more you ask of your audience, the harder it can be to really convince them. Also, some of the families might think that they do not have enough money to eat healthy, because of the common misconception that eating healthy is more expensive. Basically, while the students may not see the value in eating healthier and exercising like their parents might, they are the much easier audience to convince because of their young age and their accessibility.

II. Plan Goals:

Our main goal is one that we can actually track the progress exponentially. We took the total number of K-8 students in Monmouth, which is 1,953 students. We then took the national average of obese students from K-8 (17%) and used that to figure that approximately 332 K-8 students in Monmouth are obese. We would like to decrease that number by at least 25%, which would mean that 83 students would make the healthy jump and not be considered obese 6 months of the program.

One smaller goal would be to gain at least 50% attendance from the students at the off-site bi-

weekly programs we plan to hold, where the students will be able to engage with Monmouth College athletes in activities. We hope that this goal will be met by the second one in the six month of the program.

Another smaller goal, is to get at least 80% of the families to participate in the online testimonials where the students and parents will be asked to record the meals that they eat during the week and the amount of time they spend exercising during the week.

By reaching these smaller goals, we are more likely to end up succeeding with our final goal of decreasing childhood obesity in Monmouth, Illinois by at least 25%.

Our other goals are obviously to instill the importance of exercise and eating healthy into the minds of these students, so that they may make changes and continue to live healthy lives as they grow older.

III. Essential “Messages,” Information, and Actions:

A) The messages that we want our target audience to receive includes information on the benefits of eating healthier and exercising daily. This information could be put on our website, in fliers that we hand out, and through the voices and example of speakers that we have speak at the assemblies we will hold. We also want to show how eating healthier and exercising daily can help you become fit and benefit the students later in life.

B) The types of resources we will make available to the students is real life examples of how eating healthy and exercising can benefit them. We will have speakers who have made these goals a part of their lives. We will also supply the students and parents with many links to sites on eating healthy, and the dangers of not doing so, such as <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/foodnut/09317.html> and http://pediatrics.about.com/cs/nutrition/a/childhd_obesity.htm . We will also include tips on loosing weight for kids, like the information found at http://www.keepkidshealthy.com/nutrition/weight_loss_for_kids.html and <http://www.keepkidshealthy.com/welcome/treatmentGuides/weightmanagement.html> . Additionally, we will include access to sites like <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3061814> which can provide an outline of exercises that the students can engage in.

C) We would like the students and parents to react with concern and be motivated to make a change. We want the students to become aware of the food they are eating every day and to make it a point to try and exercise everyday. We also want the students to realize that if they do not stay active at their young ages, then they are 80% more likely to be inactive as adults. Also, we want the parents to realize that they have much of the responsibility and they need to

encourage their children to eat healthier and exercise more. The main reaction we want is to have the students eat healthier and exercise more often.

IV. Design of Media Strategies

A) Traditional Media: The traditional media that we will be using will include fliers that we hand out to students and send home to the parents which outline the goals we are asking of them. Also, there will be an initial kick-off assembly that will explain to the students the importance of getting fit and eating healthier. Also, we will have Monmouth College athletes there that will take the students through a fun obstacle course and play catch with them, as well as other small games. There will also be radio ads on the local radio station that will explain our group's purpose and explain the importance of eating right and give some facts that will persuade the parents to encourage their students to become involved. Also, every two weeks we will invited the students to the college where they will get to play with Monmouth College athletes, much like they did at the kick-off party and they will play a different activity every two weeks, and each week will give them new tips about eating better and exercising more. We will also get an article in the Courier about our group's initiative.

B) New/Interactive Media: There are many websites, as we stated before, that we will be directed the parents to. Also, we will be creating the online testimonials for the parents and students to fill out detailing their meals and exercising habits each week. Not only this, but we will have a Facebook group and could also get on the Monmouth College front page of the website. Also, on our groups on website we can highlight a student, or a few students each month and have video of them participating in some of our bi-weekly events and have their parents and them talk about their stories.

V. Problems and Limits:

The problems that our group might run into is that we can only present the information and the oppurtunities, but other than that we have no say in what the outcome or the reactions of the students or parents will be. Also, some students may have conditions which will not allow them to participate in exercises and we will have to find a way to make them feel involved as well. Also, some parents may not their kids to participate or have the time to take their kids to our events. We'll have to encourage students to carpool together. Also, some parents or students might think they do not have enough money to buy healthy food or to buy equipment for their kids to exercise with.