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Michelle Obama visit San Diego

**“LET’S MOVE”
First Lady’s Campaign to End Childhood Obesity**

The LET'S MOVE Initiative is Promoting Steps to Take to Lead Longer, Healthier and Happier Lives

Over the last four decades, First Ladies of the United States began to realize that their position was giving an opportunity to do something to help Americans lead better lives. Nancy Reagan instructed children to "Say no to drugs." Laura Bush supported education and early literacy. Hillary Clinton promoted a national health care reform. She along with Senators Ted Kennedy and Orrin Hatch, was behind the passage of the State Children's Health Insurance Program in 1997, a federal effort that provided state support for children whose parents could not provide them with health coverage. In 1997, Mrs. Clinton initiated and shepherded the Adoption and Safe Families Act, which she regarded as her greatest accomplishment as First Lady.

On 2010, President Barack Obama established the Task Force on Childhood Obesity to develop and implement an interagency plan that details a coordinated strategy, identifies key benchmarks, and outlines an action plan to end the problem of childhood obesity within a generation. Current First Lady, Michelle Obama, is on the front line of the Task Force against Childhood Obesity.

Obesity has become an issue all across the children in America. Being overweight can limit a child's physical activities and contribute to low self-esteem, but what's even more disturbing are the serious medical conditions and diseases that can develop as a result of being too heavy—like cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

Childhood obesity has reached epidemic levels in the United States, affecting more than 9 million children and teens. In the past 30 years, the rate of obese children has more than tripled. 7.3 percent of boys and 5.5 percent of girls are considered extremely obese. The alarming numbers are sparking parents, doctors and the government to step-up and do something about this rapidly increasing rate of overweight children.

On January the First Lady Michelle Obama, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, and U.S. Surgeon

General Regina Benjamin get together to announced their plans to help Americans lead healthier lives through better nutrition, regular physical activity, and by encouraging communities to support healthy choices.

The prosperous garden on the White House lawn was the Mrs. Obama platform to speak out about the country's childhood obesity problem, extol the benefits of eating fresh food, and teach children early to appreciate vegetables. Through the garden, she began a discussion with kids about proper nutrition and the role food plays in living a healthy life. Here the First lady Mrs. Michelle Obama began a national conversation about the health of America's children and the seeds for the Let's Move campaign began to germinate.



"The surge in obesity in this country is nothing short of a public health crisis that is threatening our children, our families, and our future," said First Lady Michelle Obama. "In

fact, the health consequences are so severe that medical experts have warned that our children could be on track to live shorter lives than their parents. The message released today is an incredibly important step in directing the Nation's attention to solving the obesity epidemic and we do not have a moment to waste." "Let's Move!"

On February, the Obama Administration released details of an over \$400 million Healthy Food Financing Initiative. These federal funds will support projects ranging from the construction or expansion of a grocery stores stocked with fresh produce in convenience stores in underserved urban and rural communities at nutritional risk across America. Residents of these communities, which are sometimes called "food deserts" and are often found in economically distressed areas, some with small stores that offer little or no fresh produce. Lack of healthy, affordable food options can lead to higher levels of obesity and other diet-related diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer.

"Encouraging people to choose fresh, nutritious food is important," said Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. "But to achieve that goal that kind of food must be available, and in far too many parts of our country -- both urban and rural communities -- that's not the case. This collaborative initiative is a creative way to help solve that problem, while at the same time working



The national campaign against childhood obesity, called “LET’S MOVE,” is a comprehensive and coordinated initiative to prevent childhood obesity.

The campaign have four pillars: healthy schools, access to affordable and healthy food, raising children’s physical activity levels, and empowering families to make healthy choices.

On April 15th. the First Lady Michelle Obama visit San Diego to join Robert K. Ross, MD, President & CEO of The California Endowment, in the announcement of The Building Healthy Communities Initiative as a part of her Let’s Move! Campaign. The event took place at the New Roots Community Farm in the City Heights neighborhood. Mid-City CAN and International Rescue Committee put in hundreds of staff hours to help make the event happen.

“The Building Healthy Communities initiative is based on a simple idea – that healthy children come from healthy environments,” said First Lady Michelle Obama. “If a family lives in a neighborhood with a grocery store nearby, they’re more likely to put fresh fruits and vegetables on the table. If there’s a safe, inviting park down the street, parents are more likely to let their kids play there after school or on weekends. And if our environment is clean and pollution-free, children are less likely to get sick and more likely to spend time outside. The Building Healthy Communities initiative is all about giving people the tools they need to make healthy choices for themselves and their families.”

The New Roots Community Farm garden was chosen for

to strengthen the economy of low-income communities through business development and job creation.”

By mid-February the First Lady Michelle Obama announced her ambitious national goal of solving the challenge of childhood obesity and unveiled a nationwide campaign – Let’s Move – to help achieve it. Let’s Move will engage every sector impacting the health of children to achieve the national goal, and will provide schools, families and communities simple tools to help kids be more active, eat better, and get healthy.

The first lady made the stop on her return trip from Mexico City in support of her “LET’S MOVE” campaign to end childhood obesity within a generation.



The First Lady Michelle Obama greets the crowd in San Diego

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Mrs. Obama to speak in San Diego, and she called it: "A model for building healthy communities across the nation and around the world" as she walked through the garden, and she stopped often to enjoy the scents emerging from this roadside garden.

Three years ago, the New Roots Community Farm was a 2.3-acre vacant lot at 54th Street and Chollas Avenue in the City Heights neighborhood, now has become an abundant source of nutritious food for more than 80 immigrant and refugee farmers and their families. Some of the fresh produce can be sold at the City Height's Farmers market.

The City Height's Farmers market plan was to serve a diverse population of a community with more than 30 different languages spoken. This market has become more than a place to purchase fresh produce and foods. It is the first Farmers Market providing advice and help to families who qualify for food and community assistance programs. This Farmers market in City Height's has been a culmination of a vision and hard work from over 20 local organizations under the leadership of the Network for a Healthy California-San Diego Nutrition Network, Mid-City Community Advocacy Network, and with the contributions and support from Supervisor Ron Roberts for the market to succeed.

The New Roots Community Farm garden provides an opportunity for community members to connect and interact between community members who were strangers when this was only a dirt weedy plot. It is a place where they can share their time; develop friendships and bridge cultural differences. They also share many health and therapeutic benefits of growing their own foods as well, which is especially rewarding to strengthen the bonds of seniors with children.

Mrs. Obama said the San Diego farm shows that "farmers coming from different corners of the globe recognized a common problem here in America" -- the lack of fresh produce in people's diets and the



health problems that causes. "It is just phenomenal initiative" She told this to more than 300 guests after her tour. "Refugees speaking different languages raised funds for the farm and then worked side by side, sharing two hoses at first. Since then they have started swapping recipes and losing weight", Mrs. Obama added.

"I know everyone couldn't be here... but I know that you'll send back my excitement, my gratitude and just ensure them that we're supporting the work that that they are doing. It is a model for the nation, for the world." Said the First Lady.

We are excited to see the First Family being such a good example that local and organic food is possible and we congratulate everyone who worked toward this goal. Together we have raised awareness of the value of people growing healthy local foods accessible to all.

Let's Move! Campaign is a growing success!

"Every one of us has an important role to play in the prevention and control of obesity. Mothers, fathers, teachers, business executives, child care professionals, clinicians, politicians, and government and community leaders—we must all commit to changes that promote the health and wellness of our families and communities. As a nation, we must create neighborhood communities that are focused on healthy nutrition and regular physical activity, where the healthiest choices are accessible for all citizens."

Said Regina M. Benjamin, M.D., M.B.A., U.S Surgeon General.

Photo 1. The First Lady Michelle Obama greets the crowd during a visit to the New Roots Community Farm in San Diego City Heights.

Photo.2- A group of young gardeners at the New Roots Community Farm in San Diego.

Photo.3 - First Lady Michelle Obama with Zara Marselian, CEO, La Maestra Community Health Center. La Maestra serves the community through its five health centers providing medical, dental and social services including job training, transportation and its Micro-credit program for women.

Photo 4- Robert K. Ross, MD, President & CEO of The California Endowment, announcing The Building Healthy Communities Initiative as a part of her Let's Move! Campaign.

Photo 5- The First Lady Michelle Obama Talking about LET'S MOVE! Campaign, at the left Ruben Abazari. Photo: AP Associate Press/Lenny Ignelzi.

