



# Arrive



*“When it comes to our children’s health and well-being, we should be ambitious.”*

The  
HEALTH &  
WELLNESS  
Issue

# LET’S MOVE!

BY FIRST LADY  
MICHELLE  
OBAMA



# FORWARD MOTION



Let's give our children the happy, healthy futures they deserve. That's what keeps me moving every single day

*by  
First Lady Michelle Obama*



**I**t wasn't that long ago that here in America, our children led reasonably healthy lives. They walked to school, had recess every day and gym class several times a week, and spent afternoons playing for hours outside. Home-cooked meals were the norm, fast food was a special treat, and snacking between meals was against the rules.



In 2009, the first lady hosted children from two area elementary schools after their harvest of vegetables from the garden on the South Lawn of the White House. In March, it was announced that Obama would write a book about the garden.

But today, for many children, all that has changed. The foods they're eating aren't always giving them the nutrients and energy they need. They're spending more time sitting inside with a television or a computer rather than playing outside with a kickball or a frisbee. Gym is being cut at schools, portion sizes have grown, and the drive-thru finds its way to the kitchen table more and more.

And all of these little, daily habits might not sound like much on their own, but they're adding up to some pretty startling trends in our country. Childhood obesity rates in the United States have tripled in three decades. Today, almost one in three of our kids is overweight or obese. More and more, they're getting adult diseases like diabetes or high cholesterol before they even lose all of their baby teeth.

As a mother—and as an American—I was concerned. So last year, we decided to do something about it. We started a nationwide initiative called Let's Move!, and we set out to achieve one big goal: to end the epidemic of childhood obesity in a generation.

That may sound ambitious—and it is—but when it comes to our children's health and well-being, I think we should be ambitious. We don't want to just take half-steps here. We want to solve this problem. We want our children to reach adulthood at a healthy weight. We want them to fulfill their dreams, to live a full life, and to take this country to heights that we can't even imagine right now. But we also know that to achieve all that, we've got to get moving.

That's why we've worked with schools to expand the Healthier U.S. Schools program, which rewards schools that serve nutritious school meals and ensure that their students are physically active during the day. We've started a Chefs Move to Schools program, putting professional chefs and local schools together to develop healthier menus. We've worked with Congress to pass the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, which will get healthier food to millions of schoolchildren. And we've partnered with businesses like Wal-Mart, nonprofits like the Fruit and Vegetable Alliance, and everyone from Drew Brees to Rachael Ray to Elmo to provide parents with better information, kids with good role models, and families with healthier food options in their communities.

But I may be most excited by what's happening from the ground up, in communities and neighborhoods all over this country. In just a few short months last year, more than 470 mayors and local officials signed up to be a part of Let's Move! Cities and Towns, a program that

encourages municipal leaders to create long-term plans to tackle childhood obesity in their communities. From Portland, Ore., to Portland, Maine, and Lander, Wyo., to New York City, each of these communities is driven by leaders who are determined to tackle this issue in ways that work for their families.

Take Philadelphia, where leaders recognized that many of their neighborhoods were "food deserts"—areas without any kind of grocery store or place that sold healthy food. So, in response, they've started an effort called the Healthy Corner Store Initiative, which has recruited nearly 500 corner stores that pledge to sell fresh vegetables, healthier meats and low-fat dairy products. Additionally, they've opened four new farmers markets in low-income neighborhoods and they're working to put healthier drinks into their vending machines.

In New Haven, Conn., elementary schools are putting salad bars in their lunchrooms. Neighborhoods are cutting ribbons on new playgrounds. And young entrepreneurs are starting a company to bring healthy snacks to inner-city neighborhoods.

In Clifton, N.J., they've started weeklong camps to help teens get active and teach younger kids how to prepare healthy snacks.

In Millis, Mass., parents have volunteered to clean up their local park so that children have clear, safe spaces to run around and play once school gets out in the afternoon.

Efforts like these are happening in every corner of the country. So while I know that this is a serious issue, and a significant challenge, I also know that there's no shortage of folks willing to help.

And I hope that in the coming months, even more folks will step up. I hope that more cities and towns will find creative ways to help our kids stay active, from renovating old playgrounds to organizing after-school programs. I hope that more schools will work to provide nutritious food for their students and teach them healthy habits. I hope that more faith leaders will encourage healthy lifestyles in their congregations and more business leaders will ask themselves what they can do to help, whether that means sponsoring a local children's sports league or aligning with a local nutrition program or food bank.

There are so many ways that we can all get involved here, and if each of us does our part, then I know we can give all our children the happy, healthy futures they deserve. And that's what keeps me moving every single day. 🍃

# Let's Move!

Small changes in the way your kids eat and how they spend their free time can make a big difference for their health. Here are a few ideas to test out with your family—and you can find even more at [letsmove.gov](http://letsmove.gov).

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

\* **For birthdays**, give your kids a ball, a kite, or a jump rope—anything that encourages movement.

\* **Take the whole family** to swim at your community pool or for walks around the neighborhood or hikes on local trails.

\* **Sign the whole family** up and try to earn a President's Active Lifestyle Award at [presidentschallenge.org](http://presidentschallenge.org).

\* **Try dancing**, jumping jacks or running in place during TV commercials (you might want to double-fasten your pictures to the walls first!).

\* **Encourage your kids** to join a sports team at their school. They won't just get in shape; they'll learn lessons about discipline and teamwork that they can carry with them for life.

\* **Skip the elevator**, take the stairs. Skip the bus or car, and walk with your child whenever possible. And if you want, skip the walk—and instead, skip!

## HEALTHY EATING

\* **Get creative** and mix veggies into dishes—chopped peppers in rice, cucumbers on sandwiches, tomatoes in sauces.

\* **Use smaller plates** for your kids, and don't make the clean-plate club a mandatory membership. Being full is just fine, too.

\* **Don't forget:** Five fruits or vegetables a day. Fresh, frozen or canned—they all count.

\* **Swap out** butter with olive oil, white bread for whole-wheat, and sugary drinks for water, 100 percent juice or low-fat milk.

\* **Test out** a new rule for your kitchen: Cookies require permission, apples and carrot sticks don't.

Last year, Obama hosted an event at the White House to kick off the South Lawn Series, promoting physical activity for area children in support of Let's Move!

## SPREADING THE WORD

The first lady's message of fitness and nutrition has many advocates who are helping to change the conversation about healthy living in the United States



### Dan Barber

Owner of Blue Hill and Blue Hill at Stone Barns, and an articulate proponent of the sustainable, farm-to-table movement. The only chef who is a member of the President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition.



### Drew Brees

Co-chair of the President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition. He's the 2009 Super Bowl MVP-winning quarterback for the New Orleans Saints. Established the Brees Dream Foundation to advance cancer research and care for cancer patients, and rebuild schools, parks, playgrounds and athletic fields.



### Cristeta Comerford

White House Executive Chef. The first woman to hold the post, and also the first of Filipino descent. She is known for healthy preparations and locally sourced food, and cooks from the White House garden.



### Dominique Dawes

Co-chair of the President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition. An Olympic gymnast in the U.S. Olympic Committee Hall of Fame, and the first female, African-American gymnast to win an individual medal. Now a spokeswoman for causes to build young women's self-esteem, and a co-host on Yahoo! News Weekend Edition, focusing on health, fitness and wellness.



### Jamie Oliver

A self-taught sensation originally known as "The Naked Chef." Now he's campaigning for freshly cooked, unprocessed foods in schools through a program called "The Food Revolution."



### Michael Pollan

Putting food policy front and center through his articles, speeches and four thought-provoking *New York Times* best-sellers, including *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*.



### Alice Waters

Owner of Chez Panisse restaurant in Berkeley, Calif., and matriarch of the organic, local-seasonal movement. Now championing The Edible Schoolyard, a project that puts gardens in schools.

# RAISED RIGHT

The first lady shows how healthy living starts with farm-fresh food

A bunch of third-graders recently stood at a stainless-steel table, reaching their little hands up to big mixing bowls to combine flour and butter and to stir together apples with cinnamon and sugar. They were making apple crisp inside the gleaming kitchen of Blue Hill at Stone Barns in Pocantico Hills, N.Y. Pastry chef Alex Grunert was a patient teacher, showing the children how to stir and mix but also teaching them that, during the winter, it's more appropriate to use apples than berries in your cooking.

If you turned your gaze out the windows behind the students, you would see the courtyard where, last autumn, first lady Michelle Obama stood in front of a gaggle of reporters, wearing a floral print dress and greeting the spouses of heads of state from around the world. The first lady had invited them to tour Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture and to dine at its top-rated restaurant, Blue Hill at Stone Barns, because the Stone Barns mission dovetails with her Let's Move! initiative. Since this 80-acre working farm, education center and restaurant opened in 2004, each has helped hundreds of thousands of visitors—many of them schoolchildren—understand where food comes from.

"This is a place where people can see sustainable farming in action, a place where they can touch, taste and ask questions," says Jill Isenbarger, executive director. "Our goal is to ensure that when visitors leave Stone Barns they understand why sustainable farming is important and feel inspired to make changes in how they eat—for their own health and for the health of our environment."

Stone Barns has been a farm since the 1930s, when the Rockefellers, who owned

the land, built a dairy barn on the property. When Peggy Rockefeller died in 1996, her husband, David, decided to turn the property into a nonprofit center dedicated to sustainable agriculture, a cause his wife had embraced throughout her life. Today, the farm raises 200 varieties of vegetables in its 6.5 acres of cultivated fields and its 22,000-square-foot all-season greenhouse. It raises chickens, turkeys, geese, sheep and pigs on the 23 acres of pasture and 40 acres of woodland, rotating the locations of the livestock to take advantage of a natural cycle that keeps the pastures healthy and gives the animals the space and nutrition they need. Blue Hill at Stone Barns—where chef and owner Dan Barber helped propel the farm-to-table movement into the mainstream—buys its food from the farm and composts its scraps to return to the soil.

Adults can learn all about these practices on the farm's weekly Insider's Tour, led by Stone Barns staff and volunteers. But there also are other ways for visitors to connect with the land and the food that's grown there: cooking classes, lectures, backyard beekeeping, hands-on farm chores and monthly Meet the Farmer events. Many of these events are family friendly, too.

After a recent farm tour, Isenbarger overheard a couple of students talking about lunch. One little girl offered another a bite of her ham sandwich.

"What is ham?" wondered one.

"Dead pigs," her friend replied without hesitation. "And they smell much better as bacon, too," she added.

Funny? Sure. And even a little graphic. But, Isenbarger says, "I couldn't have been more thrilled to see that these 5-year-olds were already starting to make the connection between the pigs they had seen roaming in the woods and the food they eat, including the ham in their sandwiches."

And as for that apple crisp? The kids loved it, and they seemed to understand that eating locally means enjoying apples while they are in season. But they are still kids, after all. When a Blue Hill chef asked who would like another scoop of ice cream, every single hand shot up in the air. —Liz Johnson



In September, Obama visited the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture in Pocantico Hills, N.Y., where she met with local children and Blue Hill at Stone Barns' chef/owner, Dan Barber (to her right).

