

First Lady Michelle Obama's "Childhood Obesity"

101st NAACP National Convention on July 12, 2010

<http://www.naacp.org/news/entry/video-speeches-from-the-101st-convention/>

MRS. OBAMA: Wow. Oh, my goodness. Thank you all. Thank you so, so much. Everyone, please, please, please take your seats.

Thank you so much. It is such a pleasure and it is an honor to be here today for the 101st NAACP Convention. Yes!

I want to start by thanking Chairman Roslyn Brock, beautiful woman, for that very kind introduction. And I mentioned to her, I said, her mother's hot. She's gorgeous. Good genes.

I also want to thank both her and your President and CEO Ben Jealous for their inspired leadership of this organization. Give them a round of applause.

I want to thank a few other people as well who are here. I want to thank Governor Nixon and the First Lady, Georgeanne Nixon, who are here. I want to thank Senator McCaskill, who was here, who's no longer here, but I wanted to say hello to her. Representatives Cleaver, Moore and Scott, who are here. And Mayor Funkhouser for all the outstanding work that all of you are doing for the people of this city and for this great state and for taking time to join us today. So let's give them all a round of applause.

And finally, I want to thank all of you. I want to thank you for a few things. First of all, thank you for being here today and thank you for the outstanding work that you've done in making this a great American institution. And also, I have to thank you for your prayers, for your support. I cannot tell you how much that means to me and my girls and my mom, and then my husband as well. Thank you all so, so much. It really keeps us going, and I am just thrilled to be here.

One hundred and one years ago, the NAACP was established in pursuit of a simple goal, and that was to spur this nation to live up to the founding ideals, to secure those blessings of liberty, to fulfill that promise of equality.

And since then, the work of this organization has been guided by a simple belief: that while we might not fully live out that promise or those blessings for ourselves, if we worked hard enough, and fought long enough, and believed strongly enough, that we could secure them for our children and for our grandchildren, and give them opportunities that we never dreamed of for ourselves.

So, for more than a century, the men and women of the NAACP have marched and protested. You have lobbied Presidents and fought unjust laws. You've stood up and sat in and risked life and limb so that African Americans could take their rightful places not just at lunch counters and on buses, but at universities and on battlefields - (applause) - and in hospitals and boardrooms; in Congress, the Supreme Court; and, yes, even the White House. Think about it - even the White House.

So I know that I stand here today, and I know that my husband stands where he is today, because of this organization - (applause) - and because of the struggles and the sacrifices of all those who came before us.

First Lady Michelle Obama's "Childhood Obesity"

101st NAACP National Convention on July 12, 2010

But I also know that their legacy isn't an entitlement to be taken for granted. And I know it is not simply a gift to be enjoyed. Instead, it is an obligation to be fulfilled.

And when so many of our children still attend crumbling schools, and a black child is still far more likely to go to prison than a white child, I think the founders of this organization would agree that our work is not yet done.

When African American communities are still hit harder than just about anywhere by this economic downturn, and so many families are just barely scraping by, I think the founders would tell us that now is not the time to rest on our laurels.

When stubborn inequalities still persist - in education and health, in income and wealth - I think those founders would urge us to increase our intensity, and to increase our discipline and our focus and keep fighting for a better future for our children and our grandchildren.

And that's why I really wanted to come here today - because I wanted to talk with you about an issue that I believe cries out for our attention - one that is of particular concern to me, not just as First Lady, but as a mother who believes that we owe it to our kids to prepare them for the challenges that we know lie ahead. And that issue is the epidemic of childhood obesity in America today.

Now, right now in America, one in three children is overweight or obese, putting them at greater risk of obesity-related conditions like diabetes and cancer, heart disease, asthma.

And we're already spending billions of dollars in this country a year to treat these conditions, and that number is only going to go up when these unhealthy children reach adulthood.

But it's important to be clear that this issue isn't about how our kids look. It's not about that. It's about how our kids feel. It's about their health and the health of our nation and the health of our economy.

And there's no doubt that this is a serious problem. It's one that is affecting every community across this country. But just like with so many other challenges that we face as a nation, the African American community is being hit even harder by this issue.

We are living today in a time where we're decades beyond slavery, we are decades beyond Jim Crow; when one of the greatest risks to our children's future is their own health.

African American children are significantly more likely to be obese than are white children. Nearly half of African American children will develop diabetes at some point in their lives. People, that's half of our children.

And if we don't do something to reverse this trend right now, our kids won't be in any shape to continue the work begun by the founders of this great organization. They won't be in any condition to confront all those challenges that we know still remain.

First Lady Michelle Obama's "Childhood Obesity"

101st NAACP National Convention on July 12, 2010

So we need to take this issue seriously, as seriously as improving under-achieving schools, as seriously as eliminating youth violence or stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS or any of the other issues that we know are devastating our communities.

But in order to address this challenge, we also need to be honest with ourselves about how we got here, because we know that it wasn't always like this for our kids and our communities.

The way we live today is very different from even when I was growing up. And I like to tell my kids I'm not that old. They don't agree.

Many of you probably grew up like I did - in a community that wasn't rich, not even middle class, but where people knew their neighbors, and they looked out for each other's kids.

In these kind of strong African American communities, we went to neighborhood schools around the corner. So many of us had to walk to and from school every day, rain or shine. I know you've told that story. And in Chicago, where I was raised, we did it in the dead of winter. No shoes on our feet - it was hard, but we walked!

And in school, we had recess twice a day and gym class twice a week, like it or not. And then when we got home in the afternoon, after school or in the summer, there was no way we'd be allowed to lie around the house watching TV. First of all, there wasn't that many channels.

Our parents made us get up and play outside. Had to get up, get out, didn't have to - just couldn't be inside. And we would spend hours riding bikes, playing softball, freeze tag, jumping double-dutch. Kids nowadays don't even know how to jump double-dutch! (Laughter and applause.)

We were constantly on the move, only stopping to eat or what? When the streetlights came on, right?

And eating was a totally different experience back then. In my house, we rarely ate out - rarely. Even when both parents worked outside of the home, most families in my neighborhood sat down at the table together as a family for a meal. And in my house, Marian Robinson's house, we ate what we were served. (Laughter and applause.) My mother never cared whether me or my brother liked what was on our plates. We either ate what was there or we didn't eat. It was as simple as that.

We never ate anything fancy, but the portion sizes were reasonable and there were rarely seconds - maybe for your father, but not for you. And there was always a vegetable on the plate.

And many of our grandparents tended their own gardens or they relied on, as my father told me, "The Vegetable Man" who brought fresh produce. That was how people got by back then - they had fresh fruits and vegetables in their own backyards, and in jars in their cellar during the winter. And that wasn't just being thrifty - that was healthy too, little did we know.

And unless it was Sunday, or somebody's birthday, there was no expectation of dessert after our meals. And we didn't dream of asking for soda or pop. That was for special occasions.

First Lady Michelle Obama's "Childhood Obesity"

101st NAACP National Convention on July 12, 2010

Now, if you were lucky, you might get a quarter or two to take to the corner store and get some penny candy. But you did not eat it all at once because you never knew when you'd see another piece of candy. So you saved it in that little brown bag under your bed. (Laughter and applause.) That bag would be all worn out and sweaty. You'd hold on to that bag, take out a half a piece of candy every other day.

Back then, without any expert advice and without spending too much money, we managed to lead pretty healthy lives. But things are a little different today, and many kids these days aren't so fortunate.

So many kids can't attend neighborhood schools or don't, so instead of walking to school, they ride in a car or they're in a bus. And in too many schools, recess and gym class have been slashed because of budget cuts. Fears about safety mean that those afternoons outside have been replaced by afternoons inside with TV, video games, the Internet.

In fact, studies have found that African American children spend an average of nearly six hours a day watching TV - and that every extra hour of TV they watch is associated with the consumption of an additional 167 calories.

For many folks, those nutritious family meals are a thing of the past, because a lot of people today are living in communities without a single grocery store, so they have to take two, three buses, a taxi, walk for miles just to buy a head of lettuce for a salad or to get some fresh fruit for their kids.

Most folks don't grow their own food the way many of our parents and grandparents did. A lot of folks also just don't have the time to cook at home on a regular basis. So instead, they wind up grabbing fast food or something from the corner store or the mini-mart - places that have few, if any, healthy options.

And we've seen how kids in our communities regularly stop by these stores on their way to school - buying themselves sodas and pop and chips for breakfast. And we've seen how they come right back to those same stores after school to buy their afternoon snack of candy and sugary drinks.

According to one study, on average, a trip to the corner store, a child will walk out of that store with more than 350 calories worth of food and beverage - this is on average. So if they're going two and three times a day, that can really add up.

And taken together, all of these things have made for a perfect storm of bad habits and unhealthy choices - a lifestyle that's dooming too many of our children to a lifetime of poor health and undermining our best efforts to build them a better future.

See, we can build our kids the best schools on earth, but if they don't have the basic nutrition they need to concentrate, they're still going to have a challenge learning. And we can create the best jobs in the world - we must - but that won't mean that folks will have the energy and the stamina to actually do those jobs.

First Lady Michelle Obama's "Childhood Obesity"

101st NAACP National Convention on July 12, 2010

We can offer people the best health care money can buy, but if they're still leading unhealthy lives, then we'll still just be treating those diseases and conditions once they've developed rather than keeping people from getting sick in the first place.

See, and the thing is, is that none of us wants that kind of future for our kids or for our country.

And surely the men and women of the NAACP haven't spent a century organizing and advocating and working day and night only to raise the first generation in history that might be on track to live shorter lives than their parents.

And that's why I've made improving the quality of our children's health one of my top priorities.

As many of you may know, my efforts began with the planting of a garden on the South Lawn of the White House. But it's important to understand that this garden symbolizes so much more than just watching beautiful things grow. It's become a way to spark a broader conversation about the health and well-being not just of our kids but of our communities.

And in an effort to elevate that conversation nationally, we launched "Let's Move." It's a nationwide campaign to rally this country around a single, ambitious goal, and that is to solve childhood obesity in a generation so that children born today reach adulthood at a healthy weight.

And through this initiative, we are bringing together governors and mayors, businesses and community groups, educators, parents, athletes, health professionals, you name it, because it is going to take all of us, working together, to help our kids lead healthier lives right from the beginning.

"Let's Move," the campaign, has four components.

The first, we're working to give parents the information they need to make healthy decisions for their families.

For example, we're working with the FDA and the food industry to provide better labeling, something simple, so folks don't have to spend hours squinting at labels, trying to figure out whether the food they're buying is healthy or not.

Our new health care legislation requires chain restaurants to post the calories in the food they serve so that parents have the information they need to make healthy choices for their kids in restaurants.

And we're working with doctors and pediatricians to ensure that they routinely screen our children for obesity. And I can personally attest to the value of these screenings based on my own personal experiences, because it wasn't that long ago when the Obamas weren't exactly eating as healthy as we should have been. And it was our daughters' pediatrician who actually pulled us aside and suggested that I think about making some changes to our family's diet. And it made a world of differences.

First Lady Michelle Obama's "Childhood Obesity"

101st NAACP National Convention on July 12, 2010

But we also know that giving better information to parents is not enough, because with 31 million American children participating in federal school meal programs, many of our kids are consuming as many as half their daily calories at school.

That's why the second part of "Let's Move" is to get healthier food into our schools.

And we're working to reauthorize our child nutrition legislation that will make significant new investments to revamp our school meals and improve the food that we offer in those school vending machines, so that we're serving our kids less sugar, salt and fat, and more vegetables, fruits and whole grains.

This is bipartisan legislation and it is critically important for the health and success of our children, and we are hoping that Congress will act swiftly to get this passed.

But we also know that healthy eating is only half the battle. Experts recommend at least 60 minutes a day of activity. That's at least the bare minimum, and many of our kids aren't even close.

So the third part of "Let's Move" is to help our kids get moving, to find new ways for them to get and stay active and fit. And we're working to get more kids participating in daily physical education classes and to get more schools offering recess for their students.

We've set a goal of increasing the number of kids who walk or ride their bikes to school by 50 percent in the next five years.

And we've recruited professional athletes - they've been fantastic - from different sports leagues to inspire our kids to get up off that couch and to get moving.

But we know that even if we offer the most nutritious school meals, and we give kids every opportunity to be fit, and we give parents the information they need to prepare healthy food for their families, all that won't mean much if our families still live in communities where that healthy food simply isn't available in the first place.

And that brings me to the fourth and final component of the campaign, and that is to ensure that all families have access to fresh, affordable food in their communities where they live.

And one of the most shocking statistics for me in all of this is that right now, 23.5 million Americans, including 6.5 million children, live in what we call "food deserts" - areas without a single supermarket. This is particularly serious in African American communities where folks wind up buying their groceries at places like gas stations and bodegas and corner stores where they often pay higher prices for lower-quality food.

But the good news is that we know that this trend is reversible, because when healthier options are available in our community, we know that folks will actually take advantage of those options.

First Lady Michelle Obama's "Childhood Obesity"

101st NAACP National Convention on July 12, 2010

One study found that African Americans ate 32 percent more fruits and vegetables for each additional supermarket in their community. So we know the kind of difference that we can make with some changes. We know that when we provide the right incentives - things like grants and tax credits, and help securing permits and zoning - businesses are willing to invest and lay down roots in our communities.

And many grocers are finding that when they set up shop in high-need areas, they can actually make a decent profit. They're learning that they can do well by doing good.

So as part of "Let's Move," we've proposed a Healthy Food Financing Initiative - a \$400 million a year fund that we'll use to attract hundreds of millions of more dollars from the private and non-profit sectors to bring grocery stores and other healthy food retailers to underserved areas across the country.

And our goal is ambitious - we want to eliminate food deserts in this country within seven years, and create jobs and revitalize neighborhoods along the way.

So, I know these goals are ambitious, and there are many, many more. And as First Lady, I am going to do everything that I can to ensure that we meet them.

But I also know that at the end of the day, government can only do so much.

I have spoken to so many experts about this issue, and not a single one of them said that the solution is to have government tell people what to do. It's not going to work. Instead, this is about families taking responsibility and making manageable changes that fit with their budgets and their needs and their tastes. That's the only way it's going to work.

It's about making those little changes that can really add up - simple things like taking the stairs instead of the elevator, walking instead of riding in a car or bus, even something as simple as turning on the radio and dancing with your children in the middle of your living room for hours. That will work up a sweat.

How about replacing all of that soda and those sugary drinks with water? Kids won't like it at first, trust me. But they'll grow to like it. Or deciding that they don't get dessert with every meal. As I tell my kids, dessert is not a right. Or they don't get it every day.

Or just being more thoughtful about how we prepare our food - baking instead of frying. I know. Don't shoot me. And cutting back on those portion sizes.

Look, no one wants to give up Sunday meal. No one wants to say goodbye to mac and cheese and fried chicken and mashed potatoes - oh, I'm getting hungry - (laughter) - forever. No one wants to do that. Not even the Obamas, trust me.

But chefs across the country are showing us that with a few simple changes and substitutions, we can find healthy, creative solutions that work for our families and our communities.

First Lady Michelle Obama's "Childhood Obesity"

101st NAACP National Convention on July 12, 2010

And that's why I am excited about our new "Let's Cook" video series, which we're launching on our "Let's Move" website at letsmove.gov.

This is a great series featuring Sam Kass, who a lot of people think is cute - I don't know if that helps. But this series features some of the country's top chefs, who will be demonstrating how folks can prepare simple, affordable, nutritious meals for their families.

The first guest chef is a guy by the name of Marvin Woods, who's known for his cuisine based in North Africa, the Caribbean, South America, the Low Country. He's demonstrating how to prepare a week of healthy and tasty dinners for a family of four on a tight budget. And he provides recipes, shopping lists, so that folks can do it all themselves at home.

And finally, it's one thing we can think about, is working to make sure that our kids get a healthy start from the beginning, by promoting breastfeeding in our communities. One thing we do know is that babies that are breastfed are less likely to be obese as children, but 40 percent of African American babies are never breastfed at all, not even during the first weeks of their lives.

And we know this isn't possible or practical for some moms, but we've got a WIC program that's providing new support to low-income moms who want to try so that they get the support they need.

And under the new health care legislation, businesses will now have to accommodate mothers who want to continue breastfeeding once they get back to work. Now, the men, you may not understand how important that is. But trust me, it's important to have a place to go.

But let's be clear, this isn't just about changing what our kids are eating and the lifestyles they're leading - it's also about changing our own habits as well. Because believe it or not, if you're obese, there's a 40 percent chance that your kids will be obese as well. And if you both you and the child's other parent are obese, that number jumps to 80 percent.

And this is more than just genetics at work. The fact is, we all know we are our children's first and best teachers and role models. We teach them healthy habits not just by what we say but by how we live. Shoot, I can't tell Malia and Sasha to eat their vegetables if I'm sitting around eating French fries - trust me, they will not let that happen. And I can't tell them to go run around outside if I'm spending all my free time on the couch watching TV.

And this isn't just about the example that we set as individuals and as families, but about the lifestyle we're promoting in our communities as well.

It's about the example we set in our schools. It's about schools like the Kelly Edwards Elementary School in Williston, South Carolina. It's a Bronze Award winner in our USDA Healthier U.S. School Challenge. This is a school where students have planted their own garden so that they can taste all kinds of fresh vegetables, they can stay active because they've got their own dance team.

And it's about establishing strong community partnerships that involve folks from every sector and every background.

First Lady Michelle Obama's "Childhood Obesity"

101st NAACP National Convention on July 12, 2010

There's a Fresh Food Financing Initiative in Pennsylvania - it's a great example. This initiative is a collaboration between business, non-profit and government that's funded more than 80 supermarket projects, bringing nutritious food to hundreds of thousands of people in underserved communities.

These are just a couple of the thousands of programs and projects that are making a difference in communities across the country already.

More on the 'Let's Move' Program:

- [Michelle Obama introduces "Let's Move!" initiative](#)
- [First Lady Michelle Obama Answers Your Questions on Let's Move](#)

So if there's anybody here, after all this talking I've done, who feels a little overwhelmed by this challenge - because it can be overwhelming - if there is anyone here who might even already be losing hope thinking about how hard it will be to get going, or giving up, I just want you to take a look around at all the things that are already being accomplished, because I want folks to learn from each other and to be inspired by each other, because that's what we've always done.

That is exactly what happened here in this city half a century ago. See, because back in 1958, folks right here in Kansas City saw what folks down in Montgomery had achieved with their bus boycott. So they were inspired by all those men and women who walked miles - walked miles home each day on aching feet because they knew there was a principle at stake.

So folks here organized their own boycott of department stores that refused to serve African Americans. Handbills publicizing their meetings stated, and this is a quote: "They stopped riding in Montgomery, so let's stop buying in Kansas City."

A local music teacher even composed a song that became the anthem for their efforts. It was entitled "Let's take the walk that counts."

And then, as you know, a few years later, in April of 1964, folks turned out in droves to pass a public accommodations law mandating that all residents, regardless of their skin color, be served in restaurants, hotels and other public places. Even folks who were too sick to walk showed up to vote.

One organizer recalled that they used wheelchairs to get people to the polls and even brought one man in on a stretcher. So think about that - being carried to the ballot box on a stretcher. Those folks didn't do all that just for themselves. They did it because they wanted something better for their children and for their grandchildren. That's why they did it.

And in the end, that's what has driven this organization since its founding.

It is why Daisy Bates endured hate mail and death threats to guide those nine young men and women who would walk through those schoolhouse doors in Little Rock.

First Lady Michelle Obama's "Childhood Obesity"

101st NAACP National Convention on July 12, 2010

It is why Thurgood Marshall fought so hard to ensure that children like Linda Brown, and children like my daughters and your sons and daughters, would never again know the cruel inequality of separate but equal.

It is why so many men and women - legends and icons and ordinary folks - have faced down their doubts, their cynicism and their fears, and they've taken that walk that counts.

So we owe it to all those who've come before us to ensure that all those who come after us - our children and our grandchildren - that they have the strength and the energy and the enduring good health that they need to continue and complete that journey.

So I'm asking you, NAACP, will you move with me? Let's move! I'm going to need you, NAACP. This is not an endeavor that I can do by myself. We cannot change the health of our community alone. I'm going to need each and every single one of you to work together for this campaign for our children's future. If we do this together, we can change the way our children think about their health forever.

So I want to thank you all in advance, again, for your prayers and your thoughts and your support. The struggle continues.

Thank you all. God bless you, God bless this organization, and God bless America. Thank you all so much.

First Lady Michelle Obama’s “Childhood Obesity”

101st NAACP National Convention on July 12, 2010

<http://www.naacp.org/news/entry/video-speeches-from-the-101st-convention/>

1. Identify one example of ethos?

2. Identify one example of pathos?

3. Identify one example of logos?

4. Physical education class should be required for all students grades K-12 because ...

5. Physical education class should not be required for all students grades K-12 because ...

Health Survey – Circle the answer that applies most to you.

- | | | | |
|--|----|-----|-----------|
| 1. Do you sleep at least 8 hours a night? | NO | YES | SOMETIMES |
| 2. Do you eat breakfast every morning? | NO | YES | SOMETIMES |
| 3. Do you workout 2-3 times a week or more? | NO | YES | SOMETIMES |
| 4. Do you spend quality time with your family? | NO | YES | SOMETIMES |
| 5. Are you under a high amount of stress? | NO | YES | SOMETIMES |
| 6. Do you ever take vacations? | NO | YES | SOMETIMES |
| 7. Do you visit the doctor often for sickness? | NO | YES | SOMETIMES |
| 8. Do you weigh yourself at least once a week? | NO | YES | SOMETIMES |
| 9. Do you drink water daily? | NO | YES | SOMETIMES |
| 10. Do you drink caffeine daily? | NO | YES | SOMETIMES |