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Local News

[Legislator Urges Communities to Pursue Safe Routes to School funds](#) (1/28/09)

California State Senator Patricia Wiggins (D-Santa Rosa) is encouraging cities and counties in the state's 2nd Senate District to apply for the next round of funding for the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program, according to the *Lake County News*. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), which administers SRTS, recently put out a call for communities to apply for funding grants. The grants are designed to provide students in grades K-12 with easier and healthier ways to safely travel to and from schools. "By creating a more hospitable environment for children to walk or ride to school," Wiggins said, "we are helping to promote exercise, which is a necessary component of the effort to reduce the incidence of obesity in our young people."

[Anti-Obesity Efforts Win Parsippany, Bridgewater Slots on 'Healthy Towns' list](#) (1/22/09)

Parsippany and Bridgewater were added today to an elite list of a six "Healthy Towns" across New Jersey, an honor bestowed on them towns for their efforts to prevent obesity and get residents in better physical and mental health. *NJ.com* reports that the two towns join Madison, Clifton, Woodbridge and Hamilton Township as top honorees in a five-year-old effort to get towns and cities across the state to help promote healthier lifestyles for their residents.

National News

[Recess Makes for Better Students](#) (1/26/09)

This Washington Post article reports on a study in the February issue of *Pediatrics* that documents the value of recess: Children who have it during the day behave better in class.

[Two Grocery Chains Label Products with Nutritional Information](#) (1/26/09)

The Baltimore Sun features an article highlighting the efforts of two grocery chains to help shoppers evaluate food choices. As part of Giant Foods's program, *Healthy Ideas*, a team of nutrition experts is using Food and Drug Administration nutrition guidelines and the Department of Agriculture food pyramid to identify items that could be labeled healthy. At Supervalu, the program is called *nutrition iQ* and will be rolled out over the next six months at 65 stores in the Mid-Atlantic. The chain worked with nutrition experts at the Joslin Clinic, an affiliate of Harvard Medical School, to evaluate food for the healthiest choices based on FDA criteria.

[Dear President Obama](#) (1/19/09)

The editor in chief of *Men's Fitness* magazine urges our new President to create real change by getting America back in shape. Among his suggested actions: Study the actions taken by cities across the nation to make it easier for citizens to get in shape.

[Unfit for Duty: America's Obesity Epidemic Even Hits National Security](#) (1/15/09)

Fast food and sedentary living have become a national security risk according to this article in *The Fayetteville Observer*. Nearly a third of all potential military recruits are rejected because of their weight. The head of Army recruiting, Maj. Gen. Tom Bostwick, says obesity is a "bigger challenge for us in the years ahead than any other problem that keeps young people from entering the military."

[A Coordinated Attack on Hunger, Obesity](#) (1/06/09)

"For a long time, we've looked at hunger and obesity separately," says Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa in a *Miami Herald* Article "It's not a zero-sum game." The statistics spell out the dilemma. The number of Americans on food stamps topped 31.5 million in September, an all-time high. Obesity, too, is at record levels: In 30 states, at least 25 percent of the population is dangerously overweight. Nationally, 31.9 percent of children are considered overweight or obese. Anti-hunger advocates say low-income people often choose higher-calorie snacks and fast food because it's cheaper and more readily available where they live than nutritious fruits and vegetables.

[Fast Food Near Schools Means Fatter Kids](#) (1/02/09)

According to a study to be published in the March issue of the *American Journal of Public Health*, students who attended schools located near a fast-food establishment were heavier than were other students of similar age, ethnicity and activity level, a *Reuters* news story reports.

Reports and Studies

[RWJF President and CEO Testimony Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions](#) (PDF)

Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, M.D., M.B.A., RWJF president and CEO, told the Senate panel that disease prevention and health promotion "must be a priority". "Right now, America's health care system is set up to focus on treating people once they already have a health problem," Lavizzo-Mourey testified. "We must shift that focus to preventing people from getting sick in the first place, investing in policies and programs that make it easier for all Americans to enjoy the benefits of good health." She urged Congress to increase stable funding and incentives for community-based programs and clinical preventive services.

[Neighborhood Environments: Disparities in Access to Healthy Foods in the U.S.](#)

People who live in low-income communities in the U.S. are less likely to have easy access to supermarkets carrying a wide variety of fresh produce and other healthy food, an analysis of 54 studies published in *the American Journal of Preventive Medicine* confirms. However, residents of these neighborhoods generally have plenty of unhealthy fast-food restaurants to choose from, Dr. Nicole I. Larson of the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis and her colleagues found. "The research I reviewed suggests there is a need for new policies and other local actions to address the problem of poor access to healthy foods in many lower income, rural, and minority communities," said Larson.

[Outdoor Recreation Participation Report, 2008](#)

The *2008 Outdoor Recreation Participation Report* is based on an online survey of more than 60,000 Americans ages six and older and covers 114 different outdoor activities, making it the largest survey of its type examining participation in sports and outdoor activities. The report provides important insights into trends in participation in outdoor recreation among all Americans, with focused looks at youth, diversity, and gender. The insights detailed in the report are critical to nationwide efforts to understand and reverse the ongoing decrease in physical activity rates among youth and the growing disconnect between youth and the outdoors.

Tools You Can Use

[Mayors' Guide to Fighting Childhood Obesity](#)

The *Mayors' Guide to Fighting Childhood Obesity* provides suggested action steps that mayors and other local government leaders can take to address the childhood obesity epidemic in their communities in three areas: the community food environment; the physical environment; and the school and out-of-school environment.

Funding Resources

[Funding Sources for Healthy Food Retail](#)

This Web site is a clearinghouse for funding opportunities related to developing food retail outlets. Funding sources, which are categorized by eligibility, source and type of assistance for easy searching, include several available to local governments.

[Fiskars' Project Orange Thumb](#)

Gardens and/or gardening projects geared toward community involvement, neighborhood beautification, sustainable agriculture, and/or horticultural education are eligible. Community garden groups, as well as schools, youth groups, community centers, camps, clubs, and treatment facilities are all encouraged to apply. Only group applications will be considered. Single individuals are not eligible for a Project Orange Thumb grant.

Deadline: February 17, 2009

[Communities Creating Healthy Environments](#)

Communities Creating Healthy Environments is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that aims to prevent childhood obesity by increasing access to healthy foods and safe places to play in communities of color. The program is designed to advance RWJF's efforts to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015 by supporting diverse, community-based organizations and federally chartered tribal nations in the development and implementation of effective, culturally competent policy initiatives that address childhood obesity at the local level.

Deadline: February 26, 2009 (Brief Proposals)

[Jenny's Heroes Community Grant Program](#)

Talk show host and philanthropist Jenny Jones has announced that she will donate an additional \$1 million to continue her community grant program. Jenny's Heroes provides grants of up to \$25,000 each to fund projects that promise long-term community benefits.

Deadline: Open

[William T. Grant Foundation](#)

The William T. Grant Foundation is now accepting Letters of Inquiry for its field-initiated major grants program. The foundation's current research interests include understanding how social settings such as families, schools, peer groups, and organizations work; how these social settings affect youth; and how such settings can be improved. The foundation's interests also focus on when, how, and under what conditions research evidence is used in policy and practice that affect youth, and how the use of such evidence can be improved.

Deadline: April 1, 2009

[Bikes Belong Offers Funding for Bicycle Advocacy and Facilities](#)

U.S. nonprofits and public agencies working to put "more people on bicycles more often" will be awarded grants of up to \$10,000 for facilities and advocacy projects.

Deadline: Quarterly

Upcoming Conferences

Save the Date: Leadership for Healthy Communities' 2009 Childhood Obesity Prevention Summit, May 7-8, in Washington, DC

Leadership for Healthy Communities, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is hosting a childhood obesity prevention summit on May 7-8, 2009, in Washington, DC. Keynote speakers include RWJF Foundation President and CEO Risa Lavizzo-Mouche. Policy makers from the federal, state, and local levels of government will be

participating. More information about the summit will be available on the Leadership for Healthy Communities Web site (www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org).

[Weight of the Nation](#)

On **July 27-29, 2009**, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity will host its inaugural conference on obesity prevention and control, *Weight of the Nation*, at the Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C. *Weight of the Nation* is designed to provide a forum to highlight progress in the prevention and control of obesity through policy and environmental strategies and is framed around four intervention settings: community, medical care, school and workplace. Plenary and concurrent sessions will focus on strategies implemented in these settings that have led to policy and environmental changes which may improve population-level health.

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