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Michelle Obama brings health campaign here

BY KEITH DARCE, UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER
THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 2010 AT 6:13 A.M.

SAN DIEGO — First Lady Michelle Obama will bring her campaign to end childhood obesity to San Diego on Thursday afternoon when she visits a community farm that immigrants created last summer.

Increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables is a major theme of Obama's "Let's Move!" initiative, which was launched February.

Nutrition experts said fresh produce is particularly needed in poor neighborhoods, where residents often rely on fast-food restaurants and convenience stores because the areas lack full-scale grocery stores and farmers markets.

In San Diego County, an estimated 12 percent of children between ages 12 and 17 are obese, according to public-health researchers.

Obama's stop in the City Heights neighborhood comes at the close of her first solo international trip, a journey that took her to earthquake-ravaged Haiti on Tuesday and then Mexico City on Wednesday.

About 1:30 p.m. Thursday, the first lady will tour the New Roots Community Farm, a 2.2-acre strip of city-owned land with 89 plots that are tended by members of local Somali, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Mexican and Guatemalan enclaves.



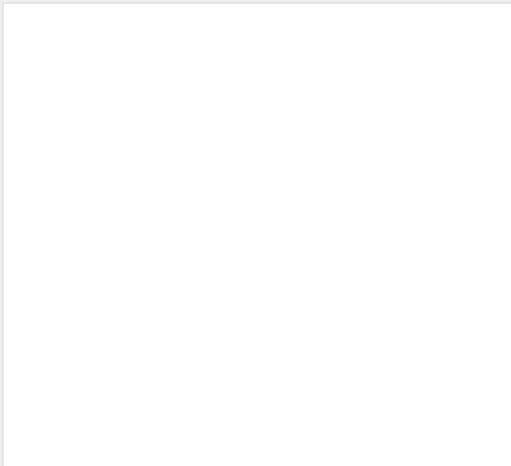
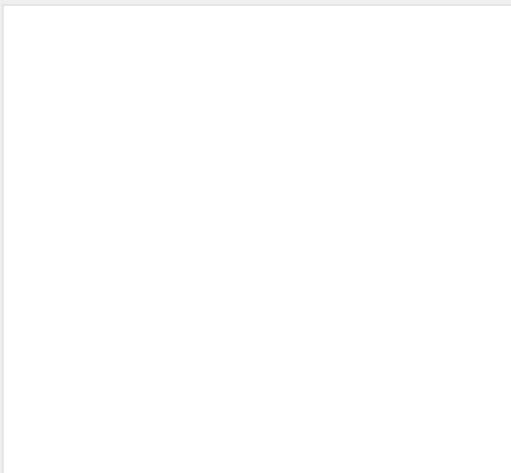
First lady Michelle Obama waves to students at the Siete de Enero school in a low income neighborhood of Mexico City, Wednesday, April 14, 2010. (AP Photo/Dario Lopez-Mills)

WHERE ARE THEY?

[See a map of local farmers markets and community gardens.](#)

Keith Darce and Jen Steeley report live on Michelle Obama's visit to San Diego

AccessSanDiego RT @BalboaPark RT @jensteeley: Veterans job fair Saturday at Balboa Park's Veterans Museum: <http://sduvc.org/jobfair...> 14 hours ago



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sponsored event
1st Annual San Diego Oyster Fest
Saturday, Jun 19, 11:00 am
Embarcadero Marina Park North, San Diego

The farmers receive support from the International Rescue Committee, a refugee assistance organization with an office in City Heights.

Their efforts likely will resonate with Obama, who planted her own vegetable patch on the South Lawn of the [White House](#) in spring 2009.

While community gardens might seem like small efforts, health advocates said they can play an important role in addressing the problems driving the nation's childhood obesity epidemic.

"Those little plots of land are not just places where fruits and vegetables grow. They are islands of dialogue," said Dr. Chris Searles, a family physician and psychiatrist with the UCSD Medical Center and co-chairman of the San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative.

The gardens trigger discussions about food supplies, economic development and environmental sustainability, he said. They also provide a glimpse of the food chain beyond store shelves.

"For some kids, this is their first chance to see what it's like to watch a tomato grow before it becomes ketchup," Searles said.

Statistics suggest that the first lady's goal of eliminating childhood obesity within a generation won't be reached easily.

Obesity rates among youngsters and adults in the United States have skyrocketed during the past decade.

In 1994, 11.3 percent of children ages 6 to 11 and 10.5 percent of those 12 to 19 were obese. By 2008, those figures had risen to 19.6 for the younger kids and 18.1 for the older ones.

The surge triggered escalating rates of [diabetes](#), [high blood pressure](#) and other health problems among youngsters. Traditionally, these conditions had affected mostly adults.

One study estimated that obesity-related health problems cost \$147 billion in 2008.

While adolescent obesity has leveled off in the past two years, medical and social ills caused by being seriously overweight will fester for years to come as the affected youngsters age and their ailments multiply.

What makes the first lady's initiative stand out from previous efforts is its direct tie to the power of federal policy, some observers said.

When Obama launched her campaign during a White House event on Feb. 9, she was flanked by [President Barack Obama](#), Health and Human Services Secretary [Kathleen Sebelius](#), Agriculture Secretary [Tom Vilsack](#) and two other members of the Cabinet.



coryboll RT @BalboaPark: RT @jensteeley: Veterans job fair Saturday at Balboa Park's Veterans Museum: <http://sduvc.org/jobfair...>
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jensteeley One of these movies has a military theme, so I guess it's fair to pass along. Plus they are free. And outdoors. <http://su.pr/3a9QuT>
16 hours ago



BalboaPark RT @jensteeley: Veterans job fair Saturday at Balboa Park's Veterans Museum: <http://sduvc.org/jobfair...>
17 hours ago



jensteeley Veterans job fair Saturday at Balboa Park's Veterans Museum: <http://sduvc.org/jobfair...>
17 hours ago



KeithDarcy Annual medical costs for the average #cancer patient receiving #chemotherapy is \$111,000. <http://ow.ly/1Ta7k>
21 hours ago



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PHOTO BY HOWARD LIPIN - UNION-TRIBUNE

First Lady Michelle Obama will visit New Roots Community Farm in Chollas View later today, Thursday April 15, 2010.



PHOTO BY HOWARD LIPIN - UNION-TRIBUNE

Sound technician Bill Knight installs audio cable at New Roots Community Farm in Chollas View where First Lady Michelle Obama will visit later today, Thursday April 15, 2010.

CHILDHOOD OBESITY RATES

(shown in percentages)

San Diego County:

Ages 12-17

2003 — 13.9



Rock 'n' Roll Marathon

Sunday, Jun 6, 7:00 am
Balboa Park, San Diego



Avenue Q

Tuesday, Jul 6, 7:00 pm
San Diego Civic Theatre, San Diego

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The president has included \$345 million in his latest budget proposal for tax credits, loans and grants to establish grocery stores and fresh food markets in underserved communities. Last week, a pair of lawmakers from New York announced legislation that would increase annual federal funding for healthy-food programs to \$1 billion.

These efforts aren't happening in a policy vacuum. They are closely tied to the Obama administration's broader push to change the nation's health system and lower the long-term cost of medical care.

Last month, the U.S. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) awarded a \$16 million grant to local health and educational officials to promote nutritious eating and physical activity over the next two years.

Some of the money will be used to increase the number of community and school gardens, develop a food-distribution center for local farmers and expand a fresh-produce voucher program for the poor to five neighborhood farmers markets, said Cheryl Moder, director of the county childhood obesity initiative.

*Keith Darcé: (619) 293-1020;
keith.darce@uniontrib.com*

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2005 — 11.2

2007 — 12.1

California:

Ages 12-17

2003 — 12.4

2005 — 14.2

2007 — 13.3

United States:

Ages 6-11

1970 — 4.2

1974 — 4.0

1980 — 6.5

1994 — 11.3

2002 — 15.8

2006 — 17.0

2008 — 19.6

Ages 12-19

1970 — 4.6

1974 — 6.1

1980 — 5.0

1994 — 10.5

2002 — 16.0

2006 — 17.6

2008 — 18.1

Sources: California Health Interview Survey; National Center for Health Statistics

ONLINE RESOURCES

- ▶ [Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" campaign](#)
- ▶ [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- ▶ [San Diego Childhood Obesity Initiative](#)
- ▶ [San Diego Roots Sustainable Food Project](#)
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 eirashalini 04/15/2010 10:21 PM

Meal plans can help you eat a balanced diabetes diet, keeping your blood sugar under control. use this free meal planner <http://bit.ly/cMc1i8>

Like Reply

 Sandy 04/15/2010 07:58 PM

 RidersOfThePurpleSage liked this

Just sent this reply to KDee, but I'll repost it here.

Why the he!! is it the government's job to teach children the difference between a tomato and a bottle of ketchup? Isn't that what parents are for? If a woman isn't capable of teaching her child to recognize fruits and vegetables - DONT GET PREGNANT!!! I don't want to be responsible for your kid.

Like Reply

 KDee 04/15/2010 09:08 PM [in reply to Sandy](#)

Glad that you saved me the time of looking up my comment and your response. What is the point of our educational system if not to teach kids how to read, write, do math, learn history and science, and to keep healthy? All of those things benefit society as a whole. We pay for any deficits in their education. It

doesn't matter if the schools or their parent fail them. Watch the Jamie Oliver show - he is a Brit and his show is not government financed. It is sad to watch 350 lb people get angry because they are told that they are feeding the kids bad food.

These six year old children cannot identify a tomato or a potato. They do know what fries and ketchup are. The point is that the school systems feed garbage to children and hold to a ridiculous notion of healthy food. This is not isolated to West Virginia, it is a problem in San Diego. Are nachos a good food choice for a school lunch?

As for your abdication of responsibility for the kids of others, I feel sorry for you. I grew up in the 50's and lived in NYC. I couldn't get away with much. If my parents didn't catch me misbehaving, the neighbors, family, and family friends did. They didn't hesitate to tell you to behave, or to tell you parents about your misdeed. We have lost that in our society - people who care beyond their own narrow view. When that kid who you don't care about grows up and joins the military, I'm sure even though you didn't care about him or her, they will still give their lives for you.

As for telling others to not get PREGNANT and be good educated parents - good luck. You get what you pay for.

Like Reply



MRBDMN 04/15/2010 09:42 PM in reply to KDee

if you only knew.

I grew up in queens NY in the 70's and can vouch for the neighbors keeping an eye on me. I had the misfortune of the the double wammy the neighbor swatting me, then in my ignorance (thinking my mom would get mad at them) getting beat by my parents when I told on them (today that would be a lawyer dream case of assault), Money spent on teaching how to be a parent is well spent!

Like Reply



KDee 04/15/2010 10:02 PM in reply to MRBDMN

I do know some of what you are talking about. I grew up in Brooklyn. I never had a neighbor go so far as to hit me or my siblings. But, I went to Catholic school. If a nun hit you, you never told, because your parents would give you even more.

I think that they should teach child development in high school. My first exposure to childhood development was in college, and that is only because my degree is in psychology. They should be teaching nutrition and health, too.

You are so right. Understanding what it means to be a parent might discourage young teens from getting involved too soon. If they mess up, at least they will know what to expect.

According to "Sandy", everyone has to sink or swim based on their accidental birth to uneducated or educated parents.

Like Reply



eric41 04/15/2010 06:36 PM



mary007 and 3 more liked this

Since the cowards running this site deleted my last post, I'll simply repost it. Censorship from a newspaper is "extremely" disturbing. Shame on the person moderating this website. Just more reasons not to buy the liberal union tribune, as if we needed more reasons.

This story exemplifies what the Obamas do best, which is waste our tax payer money on frivolous and asinine programs. Michelle Obama is unelected and unaccountable. She has no right to any staff, nor to any tax payer funded budget. I'd say the same of any of our president's spouses regardless of which stupid political party they represent. My point is that it is not Michelle's prerogative to tell me what to feed my children. She is not even a nutritionist so her opinion isn't even qualified.

Michelle, please tell your son-of-a-communist husband to turn on the TV tonight and watch the tea party tax revolt rallies across the country because you Obama's clearly aren't getting the message about government waste. No worries though, we'll remind you come November.

Like Reply



KDee 04/15/2010 10:20 PM [in reply to eric41](#)

I have had approximately 90% of my comments relegated to the moderator today and they disappeared into the ozone. And I am a flaming liberal. You know what: It is not always about you. I'm thinking a software glitch or a sub for the usual moderator. You're probably right that your comment had them quaking in their boots and they just could not print it. I mean we are talking about the end of civilization as we know it. Notice I don't believe that you teachable.

Michelle Obama is not the first, nor do I think the last first lady to get a staff. It is pretty recent for first ladies to have staff, maybe the last 70 years or so. Are you keeping up? Laura Bush (this is public information) had 25 staffers, Michelle Obama has 24.

Mrs. Obama is not telling you what to feed your kids, she is offering suggestion on what types of food to eat and how to grow them when possible. When Laura Bush was running around the world telling everyone to read and what books to read were you complaining?

You obviously don't know what a communist is, so maybe Mrs. Bush's literacy campaign didn't reach your town.



eric41 04/16/2010 09:39 AM [in reply to KDee](#)

Listen KDee,
I DO know what a communist is. Barack's father was a devout and well known communist. Don't you even know who Obama is? Don't you even know his tragic family story? Exactly what DO you know about him other than "hope and change"? His mother was a marxist and his first daddy was a foreign communist. His second daddy was a muslim. Those are facts, so get with the program because it sounds like you are yet another uninformed Obama supporter who wouldn't know what socialism is even when its being clearly played out right in front of you.

The Obama's are typical elitist liberals who don't mind to spend tax payer money on delicious \$100 per pound wagyu beef to serve to their political supporters at one of their extravagant white house cocktail parties. Once again, this exemplifies what the Obama's do best, waste other people's money. Btw, how'd that trillion dollar stimulus work out for you?



KDee 04/16/2010 11:22 PM [in reply to eric41](#)

I like the 8.9% rate that we enjoying for our TARP investment last fall. Is that what you are talking about? .

The Bushes were into the Wagyu beef. The Obamas are much more into arugula.



approvalfalling 04/15/2010 04:37 PM

Let us see the results (if any) in 3 years, or will it be forgotten by then if not successful?



sandiegovoice 04/15/2010 02:13 PM

Sandy liked this

Just wondering if there were any reports of people being healed by touching the hem of her skirt?

Newsflash: The more the government does for the people the less the people will do for themselves. The greatest country in the world did not get that way by having the government doing everything for it's people.

Like Reply

 eric41 04/15/2010 01:33 PM

 sandiegovoice liked this

Comment removed.

 sandiegovoice 04/15/2010 06:01 PM [in reply to eric41](#)

 mary007 and 1 more liked this

Great comment Eric - made me laugh while I was agreeing with you! LOL!

Like Reply

 drums7890 04/15/2010 04:48 PM [in reply to eric41](#)

Wow someone's got some rage issues.....

Like Reply

 amyamyamy1 04/15/2010 03:18 PM [in reply to eric41](#)

The first lady always has a pet project...

Like Reply

 NoMoreGrapeKoolAid 04/15/2010 01:26 PM

 mary007 and 2 more liked this

thanks to Barry Hussien the Socialist, NONE of us will have any money left to feed our Children so in that respect, history will show her campaign will be amazingly effective! Unless you count Food Stamps but that will also run out of funding once Barry Hussein kills Capitalism completely!

Like Reply

 theyanexpress 04/15/2010 12:49 PM

I wonder when the day will come when Govt. orders these farms to provide,say %15 of what they grow to the homeless and un-employed? Nah,that'll never happen.

Like Reply

 RushTheJunkieLimbaugh 04/15/2010 03:16 PM [in reply to theyanexpress](#)

i believe this is a "community garden". which is when people sign up for a plot and grow veggies for themselves. in other words it is not for profit. and each individual only gets a small plot.

Like Reply

 OxnardFarmer 04/15/2010 01:35 PM [in reply to theyanexpress](#)

And why should a for profit farm give 15% of their crops to the homeless and un-employed? Most farms actually do give quite a bit to food banks. My salesman just cuffed over 1,000 cases of celery 60,000 lbs.

to the California Association of Food Banks. If you have an e-mail address I'd be more than happy to send you the invoice.

Most farms give much more than the average liberal to charities, most just don't brag about it.

Like Reply

 BOSTillStinks 04/15/2010 12:41 PM

Comment removed.

 ShutupShuttinup 04/15/2010 01:50 PM [in reply to BOSTillStinks](#)

Checking out your family pedigree chart...oh! that's you [StillStinks] at the bottom tier dragging those knuckles...

Like Reply

 ECMOM 04/15/2010 11:51 AM

 sunney and 8 more liked this

Besides the fast food industry & lazy parenting contributing to the overweight population. We also need to consider the growth hormone in meat, designed to get more meat but is also transferred to the consumer. Therefore producing larger/fatter people. I agree more fruits and veggies are a big part of the answer along with activity.

I applaud Mrs. Obama for an effort to bring awareness to the issue, as if we didn't already notice that kids are getting fatter. She has to do "something"? both of the First lady Bush's cause was literacy and Nancy Regan was "just say no to drugs" So each First lady must have a cause to support and this is a good one.

Like Reply

 approvalfalling 04/15/2010 11:36 AM

When Palin left Alaska her approval rating was 77 or 78 percent. What will Obama's rating be??

Like Reply

 TheMan_II 04/15/2010 12:43 PM [in reply to approvalfalling](#)

 october liked this

Now her approval rating is \$12,000,000. Playing ya'll all the way to the bank.

Maybe if Palin would've served out her whole term, it would've been a lot lower...sort of like her chances of being president. After all, she's a celebrity.

Like Reply

 sunney 04/15/2010 11:47 AM [in reply to approvalfalling](#)

 evilsaltine and 3 more liked this

Higher than Bush's Im sure.

Like Reply

 AnotherRant 04/15/2010 12:30 PM [in reply to sunney](#)

 Sandy and 1 more liked this

Doubt it

Like Reply



sunney 04/15/2010 01:10 PM in reply to AnotherRant

Gobama92130 liked this

Bush's approval rating when he left was half what Obama's is now. Not even close.

Like Reply

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