



SAN DIEGO COUNTY  
**CHILDHOOD  
OBESITY  
INITIATIVE**

Working Together to Shape a Healthy Future

[www.OurCommunityOurKids.org](http://www.OurCommunityOurKids.org)



## IN THE NEWS

The San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative (Initiative) actively seeks newsletter content from its partners including resources, events, news, legislative updates, and funding opportunities related to childhood obesity prevention and reduction. Individuals and organizations may submit content for inclusion in the newsletter to the editor by [e-mail](#) or phone at 858.609.7964.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Upcoming Meetings
- Domain Partner Highlight
- Domain Update
- Resources
- Legislative Update
- Announcements
- Events/Conferences
- Grants
- Farmers' Market Corner
- Local News
- National News

Unless otherwise noted, all San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative meetings are held at Community Health Improvement Partners (CHIP), located at 9370 Chesapeake Drive, Suite 220; San Diego, CA 92123.

### **Domain 1: Government**

TBA (see [calendar](#))

### **Domain 2: Healthcare**

Tuesday, January 3, 1 - 2:30 p.m.

CHIP Office

### **Domain 3: Schools and After-school**

Tuesday, January 17, 2012, 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

CHIP Office

### **Domain 4: Early Childhood**

Tuesday, January 24, 10 - 11:30 a.m.

YMCA Childcare Resource Service, 4th Floor Executive Conference Room

3333 Camino Del Rio South, San Diego, CA 92108

### **Domain 5: Community**

TBA (see [calendar](#))

### **Domain 6: Media**

Tuesday, February 7, 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

CHIP Office

### **Domain 7: Business**

TBA (see [calendar](#))

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## DOMAIN PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

### Community Domain

Rachel Lebowitz  
Digital Storytelling & Community Outreach Director  
Outside the Lens™



When Rachel Lebowitz was in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, her teacher asked her and her classmates what they wanted to be when they grew up. That evening, Rachel went home and took a picture of her TV screen as anchors read the news.

Rachel Lebowitz is a natural story teller, so it's no surprise that she is the Digital Storytelling & Community Outreach Director for Outside the Lens™ (OTL). Outside the Lens™ (OTL) is a San Diego-based youth media literacy program that engages students (K-12) to tell their unique personal stories through a variety of digital media forms. OTL is dedicated to engaging, educating and empowering these youth to tell the story of their community, and effect positive change. Since January 2001, OTL has delivered its innovative and adaptable curriculum to more than 10,000 children in a variety of educational settings including weekly classes within county schools, after-school programs, summer sessions and workshops. It places special emphasis on empowering populations of youth who are at-risk or marginalized in some way.

Since youth engagement is among of Rachel's passions, she excited to begin working at OTL, and even more so when OTL Director Elisa Thomson approached her about leading several groups to work on one of the Initiative's signature projects, Youth Engagement & Action for Health (YEAH!). Rachel wasn't shocked when Elisa approached her with this assignment, but she had never done any advocacy before.

"I like that the advocacy piece is such a huge portion of the project. With other OTL projects, getting the advocacy is a plus, but having it be a cornerstone of the work is a challenge that I'm excited to take on," Rachel said as she described her experiences leading YEAH! projects. Rachel is currently leading 4 YEAH! projects; a group of City Heights Somali young women, one at The Bishop's School in La Jolla, one at San Ysidro High School, and her youngest group: 6<sup>th</sup> graders from High Tech Middle School.

Her High Tech Middle School group is advocating for a field at their school so that the students have more space on campus to be physically active. This past week, they presented their project idea to City of Chula Vista Councilmember Steve Casteneda, a long-time advocate for obesity prevention work. He proposed having the students present at a City Council meeting after the New Year and then forming an action plan to keep the ball rolling. The students were very excited and are looking forward to continuing the advocacy process.

Rachel's favorite thing about working with youth across all OTL projects is the "exhibition", where kids get to show the work they did. She sees a camera as a voice, as a vehicle of self-expression. YEAH! takes it one step further, to give these kids a chance to make a change.

"Rachel started leading YEAH! groups in August, and she has been an excellent partner and youth advocate ever since. She has led four groups so far, and she is great at getting the youth motivated and excited to make positive nutrition and physical activity changes in their neighborhoods. We love having her on board!" said COI Manager Melanie Cohn, who oversees the YEAH! program.

Rachel is from Syracuse, New York and attended school at Northwestern University in Chicago, where she majored in Journalism. During her college career, Rachel had a lot of exciting opportunities to do one of the things she loves most: reporting. She has reported for a local network in Syracuse, and in Chicago, worked as a producer's assistant for ABC. She studied abroad in Jerusalem through this position, where she continued her journalism for ABC's Jerusalem bureau. Rachel fondly recalls frantically writing notes from interviews on napkins which ended up airing on ABC the next morning.

As if Rachel wasn't already dedicated to her community, the activities she does in her down time give her a chance to be even more engaged in empowering people around her. She is involved with the Young Adult Division at the Jewish Community Federation, and teaches Hebrew to 3<sup>rd</sup> graders in La Jolla. Rachel lives downtown with her boyfriend; in her "spare" spare time, she plays softball, volleyball, and spends time in her neighborhood.



## DOMAIN UPDATE

### Early Childhood Domain

The Early Childhood domain is as full of energy as the population of small children it serves. The role of this lively partnership is to engage the early childhood community to provide a support system for families to encourage adoption and implementation of effective wellness policies to promote healthy nutrition and physical activity for children and their families.

The Farm-to-Preschool project in San Diego County continues to be a success for this domain. Farm-to-Preschool represents an ongoing effort to promote

healthy, fresh food access and improve preschoolers' eating habits. The Initiative and its partners (Occidental College Urban & Environmental Policy Institute, YMCA Childcare Resource Service and North County Community Services) established these efforts locally in Fall 2009. Since that time, the program has expanded in some capacity to all seven North County Community Services childcare sites, according to NCCS Director, Stan Miller.

With so many successes to showcase, this partnership has worked to host workshops for other preschool providers and parents to show them how the program works. The domain worked together to create a DVD that preschool directors and agencies can use to learn about the program model. In January 2012, NCCS will host a parent workshop at its Oak Hill childcare center in Escondido. As with previous parent workshops, this event will feature lessons on how to save money when shopping for fresh ingredients at the grocery store; how to incorporate fresh produce into family meals; a visit to the preschool garden and even cooking demonstrations from the chefs on staff!

Other agencies are catching on, too. Neighborhood House Association has also received guidance from Occidental College, and is piloting a Farm to Preschool program this year. Kristine Smith, Director of Nutrition Services, is working with her team to roll out the program to all 25 NHA sites by next year.

What is next for the Early Childhood domain? Our domain partners are always working together to develop and expand and enhance early childcare programming. For more information on this domain and its activities, please contact [Erica Salcuni](#).

## RESOURCES



### Physical Activity & Nutrition

#### **211 San Diego: Nutrition, Healthy Weight, Physical Activity, and Diabetes Resource**

The San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative, Rady Children's Hospital San Diego, The American Academy of Pediatrics, San Diego Diabetes Coalition, Champions for Change/Network for a Healthy California, and Community Health Improvement Partners have joined with 211 San Diego, a 24/7 multilingual phone service and searchable online health and human service database, to create a comprehensive obesity and diabetes information and referral database. This resource provides San Diego County residents, healthcare providers and social services agencies a FREE "one stop shop" for programs and services in nutrition, healthy weight, physical activity, and diabetes. These free resources can be accessed via phone by dialing "2-1-1" or clicking on the green apple icon above.

#### **A Roadmap for Healthier General Plans**

This toolkit from PHLP allows the reader and understanding of the roles of community health partners within the context of a community general plan. Additionally, it provides advocacy strategies to promoting the healthier policies within the general plan. [More...](#)

#### **Digital Food Marketing to Children and Adolescents: Problematic Practices and Policy Interventions**

This report by PHLP and NPLAN discusses the changes in food and beverage marketing through digital and social media. The report elucidates methods that the food industry uses to target children and provides strategies to counteract and safeguard children. [More...](#)

#### **Sodium Resolution**

Earlier in 2011, the American Public Health Association (APHA) called upon the Food and Drug administration to regulate the use of high-sodium ingredients in processed foods. The average American consumes over twice the recommended sodium intake per day, and the medical community has long recognized the link between high sodium intake and raised blood pressure. The APHA hopes to reduce sodium intake by seventy five percent and is recommending that the current intake should be around 1500 milligrams per day. [More...](#)

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

As 2011 comes to an end and we set our sights toward the New Year, there is one large piece of legislation that will be up for revision: The 2012 Farm Bill. The Farm Bill is a piece of national legislation that determines the ways in which food is grown, including costs, quality, and access to food. This legislation is considered an omnibus bill because of its wide range of programs, and is renewed every five years creating a comprehensive funding plan for the national food system. The Farm Bill is set to be renewed in 2012 for another five years, sparking debate over fifteen major agricultural issue areas covered in the bill including subsidies, nutrition programs, research and development, and grants for local and organic farming.

The 2012 Farm Bill was slated to be reviewed by the Joint Set Committee on Deficit Reduction, colloquially known as the Supercommittee, in closed-door negotiations. The Supercommittee was tasked with reducing the federal deficit by 1.2 trillion dollars after the debt-ceiling crisis of 2011, cutting spending to major programs like the Farm Bill. The parameters of the bill would have been decided by the group of twelve bipartisan Congressmen and women, without the opportunity for public input or debate.

Toward the end of November 2011, it was determined that the Supercommittee could not reach a comprehensive conclusion about the cuts to all programs under consideration, prompting the automatic cuts of 1.2 trillion dollars by 2013 to both defense and non-defense spending. In the coming year, the Farm Bill will go through the regular process of approving and voting on discretionary funding, with the opportunity for input provided for all Congressional members and the public. The Initiative will provide updates on the progress of this legislation as it unfolds. For more information, please contact [Melanie Cohn](#), Manager of the Initiative.

## EVENTS/CONFERENCES

### **11th Annual New Partners for Smart Growth: Building Safe, Healthy and Livable Communities**

February 2-4, 2012

San Diego, CA

The New Partners conference will focus on tackling the current environmental, economic and social challenges through smart growth solutions that support strong economies, reduce dependence on foreign oil, assure healthy populations, and foster more equitable development. This conference will have over 100 sessions and 400 speakers spanning over a dozen topic trends. Registration deadline is January 13, 2012. [More...](#)

### **Accelerating the Movement: SNAP-Ed to NEOP**

March 5-6, 2012

Sacramento, CA

The Network for a Healthy California Statewide Conference will focus on the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 that directed the USDA to develop new regulations to transform SNAP-Ed into a Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention grant program. All network partners and organization involved with obesity prevention are encouraged to attend. Free registration for the conference begins December 2012. [More...](#)

### **Regional Garden Education Center Classes**

Spring 2011 through Spring 2012

Locations throughout San Diego County

Take free gardening classes at your local Regional Garden Education Center. A complete listing of classes is available on the [Healthy Works Calendar](#). You can sign up directly with the following Regional Garden Education Centers:

#### [Olivewood Gardens and Learning Center](#) (National City)

2525 N Ave, National City 91950

Contact: Michelle Cox, (858) 204-6949

#### [Solana Center](#) (Encinitas)

137 N El Camino Real, Encinitas 92024

Contact: Elizabeth, (760) 436-7986 ex 225

#### [International Rescue Committee](#) (City Heights)

5348 University Ave, San Diego 92105

Contact: Anchi Mei, (619) 641-7510

#### [San Diego Youth Services](#) (Spring Valley)

3845 Spring Dr, Spring Valley 91977

Contact Steven Jellá, (619) 221-8600 x229

[Wild Willow Farm and Education Center](#) (South San Diego)

2550 Sunset Ave, San Diego 92154

Contact: Erynn Pierce, (619) 540-2431

For more information, contact [JuliAnna Arnett](#).

## GRANTS

### **William T. Grant Foundation Investigator Initiated Grants**

**Deadline for Letter of Intent:** January 5, 2012

The William T. Grant Foundation is offering multiple grants for non-profit institutions working to improve the everyday environments of youth. Grant awardees should design high-quality research projects that investigate how social settings can be improved to benefit youth development.

<http://www.healthinschools.org/News-Room/Grant-Alerts/Investigator-Initiated-Grants.aspx>

### **Building Community Innovation Awards**

**Deadline for Applications:** January 12, 2012

ARAMARK Building Community is offering three \$20,000 grants to community centers that demonstrate an effective way to increase efficiency in innovative programming targeted toward underserved populations. Ideal candidates will demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of local underserved populations, support services, innovative program components, and strong community partnerships. <http://www.healthinschools.org/News-Room/Grant-Alerts/Innovation-Awards.aspx>

### **Grants for Sports Programs: LA84**

**Deadline for Applications:** February 24, 2012

This grant is intended for the development of sports programs for underserved communities targeting ethnic minorities, girls, and physically challenged children. Non-profits and tax-exempt organizations may apply. [More...](#)



## GARDENING CORNER

### **Farm-to-Table Breakfast in San Diego County**

*(article contributed by Amy Carstensen, Executive Director, Olivewood Gardens & Learning Center)*

What could be better than gathering around communal tables to talk about farms and food on a misty fall morning? As chickens scratched the ground nearby, 40 "farm-foodies" met on October 21 at Olivewood

Gardens and Learning Center in National City, some 10 minutes south of the city of San Diego. The occasion: Talking to Nourish director Kirk Bergstrom, screening Nourish film shorts, and discussing the state of American food.

San Diego County's Healthy Works<sup>SM</sup> hosted the breakfast as part of its Nourish Day, a local warm-up to National Food Day on October 24. Healthy Works<sup>SM</sup> is a component of the County of San Diego's "Live Well, San Diego! Building Better Health" initiative, a 10-year strategic vision for improving health and wellness and combating the toll of chronic diseases, including obesity. The SD County Childhood Obesity Initiative and its partners collaborate to contribute to this vision in a variety of ways, including school and community garden education and programming.

Everyone at the Nourish breakfast at Olivewood had a connection to food in one way or another: farmers and growers, chefs and restaurant owners, produce distributors, students and professors, nutritionists, farmers' market operators, food advocates and policy-makers. Additionally, a number of local nonprofit agencies, shared in the day as well.

Part of the day's discussion centered on expanding support to organic farmers and suppliers. While most people probably see palm trees and wide beaches when they picture San Diego, this large county has a substantial agricultural sector and is home to more than 6,500 farms – more than any other county in the United States. This county also boasts the greatest number of organic growers in the state and nation, with 374 farms growing more than 175 crops. To support these growers and farms, guests discussed the importance of dining and sourcing food ingredients from providers who practice and/or support local and sustainable farming.

Later, the participants exchanged stories and shared cherished memories of food and cooking. Chef Flor Franco, a volunteer who teaches cooking classes to schoolchildren who visit Olivewood, recalled growing up on a farm in Veracruz, Mexico. Being at events like this at Olivewood, she says, reminds her of those days, when abundant, fresh, whole foods fed nourishing family traditions built around home-cooked meals. "When I come and cook at Olivewood," she said, "I go back to my childhood."

After breakfast, participants toured the historic 6.85-acre property and learned about Olivewood's on-site gardening classes, weekly tours, weekend family days, and weekday field trips, where schoolchildren participate in hands-on, inquiry-based workshops in cooking, sustainable agriculture, water conservation, recycling and composting.

Olivewood's Amy Carstensen hopes that the Nourish Breakfast becomes an annual tradition.

"Our desire is that that this will be a seed for future collaboration. There was such an energy and buzz as people shared ideas for working together to support San Diego agriculture and strengthen the local food system. Everyone met new folks who were equally passionate about celebrating healthy, sustainable, local food. And what's true elsewhere is doubly true in this movement, doubly true today: When you break bread together, you build community."

Olivewood Gardens provides environmental education workshops, nutrition classes and cooking demonstrations to visitors who range from students and families from underserved communities, to health and wellness professionals exploring the connections between diet and disease, to home gardeners and cooks who want to learn more about the burgeoning back-to-farm-to-table movement. For more information on Olivewood Gardens & Learning Center, please contact [Amy Carstensen](#).

## LOCAL NEWS

[Program Opens Two Los Angeles Schools After Hours for Community Exercise](#)

[Another Way to Fight Obesity: City Planning](#)

[Fewer San Diego Students Obese](#)

[Bringing Healthy Choices to the Corner Store](#)

[MOVE San Diego Launches Alliance to Endorse Local Smart Growth Projects](#)

## NATIONAL NEWS

[Where Children Discover Their Inner Child](#)

[Congress Blocks New Rules on School Lunches](#)

[A Mother's Food Choice can Shape Baby's Palate, Research Shows](#)

[Fast Food's Dirty Little Secret: It's the Middle Class Buying Burgers](#)

[Progress from Portland on Improving Healthy Behaviors](#)

[Schools' Soda Bans Don't Stop Sugary-drink Consumption, Study Says](#)

[The Y Makes Commitment to Advance First Lady's Efforts to keep Kids Healthy](#)

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The San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative (Initiative) is a public/private partnership whose mission is to reduce and prevent childhood obesity in San Diego County by creating healthy environments for all children and families through advocacy, education, policy development, and environmental change. The Initiative oversees implementation of the San Diego County Childhood Obesity Action Plan, a comprehensive plan to end childhood obesity in San Diego County. The purpose of the Initiative is to create, support and mobilize partnerships among multiple domains; provide leadership and vision; and coordinate countywide efforts to prevent and reduce childhood obesity. The Initiative has established active workgroups in multiple domains, i.e. community sectors, including Government, Healthcare, Schools & After-school, Early Childhood, Community, Media, and Business to act as a forum for the development, replication, and leverage of best practices and resources.

### San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative

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