



I got the idea for my final project after seeing a data visualization General Electric illustrated on childhood obesity. I was stunned to see the obesity rates state to state and observed that there is a clear problem in our country. I saw that middle-down south states have the highest population of overweight kids and that there are overweight children through much of the US. The concept of my project bloomed from this data and I began doing further research about kids and their eating habits. I read articles in the New York Times, checked out Jamie Oliver's campaign called Food Revolution, and learned about Michelle Obama's initiatives with her "Let's Move" campaign. I was startled by the information presented in articles and by what I read on foodfacts.com where I searched product by product to see health scores of snacks teens eat. In a New York Times I read that 17 percent of children and adolescents age 2 to 19 years old are obese and 26 million adults suffer from diabetes.

Over several weeks I talked to statisticians, dietitians, nutritionists, and read many articles about overweight kids written by key industry experts. During the initial phase of the project I examined global obesity stats and emailed nutrition experts at Simmons College and spoke to a nutritionist at the Bronx VA Hospital. The nutritionist I interviewed suggested two important books to read about healthy eating. The books included *The Omnivores Dilemma* by Michael Pollan. It explores food chains and the American way of eating while *Twinkie Deconstructed* by Steve Ettlinger focuses on artificial ingredients in common processed foods, where they come from and how they get on the grocery store shelf. To gain a better understanding of the US food culture I watched two well-done documentaries that were eye opening and inspired my project goals further. *King Corn* was about how subsidized crop drives our fast-food nation and *Super Size Me* showed the consequences from eating solely McDonald's. I then went ahead later to suggest the books and documentary on the foodglee.com blog which was a communication platform I created in hopes that teens would share their perspectives about recent news articles.



In my research I consulted the Center for Disease Control and specifically the Wonder website (wonder.cdc.gov) that contains public health data and lists current statistics on all diet related diseases in the US. Additionally, I explored nyc.gov's campaign "pour on the pounds" and their current 2011 campaign about calories and walking off sugar products like ice-tea. Their posters map the route around NY of how a person would have to walk to burn off the calories from the beverage. I thought the posters were clever in their execution. The images for "pour on the fat" had a "wow factor" and were attention grabbing—qualities I wanted to carry into my own poster designs and campaign direction. I also consulted various "what's in a...." product articles published by Wired Magazine. Wired is clever about how they present ingredient findings and what disgusting components make up a

FigNewmans cookie. Based on the information I gathered, I brainstormed a series of posters ideas including images to make analogies and I strived to formulate text that teens would relate to. For example, I showed five decks of cards to represent a meat portion size at a restaurant versus what a meat portion size should be in reality—



only one deck of cards or the size of a person's palm. I came up with about 15 concepts for posters around portion sizes, and highlighted unhealthy snacks and foods to avoid. I ended up executing nine posters for my final.

I started a website foodglee.com to accompany the series of posters that I created to educate teens about healthy choices and obesity in America. With the help of a QR code driving an audience to the site, I wanted to encourage kids to make small changes in their daily life and highlight healthy versus unhealthy choices.



I worked with teenagers and partnered with local New York public schools to hang my posters and surveyed the kids about healthy foods and nutrition. Specifically I chose to work with teens because they are at a critical juncture in their lives and I wanted to have a direct impact on them before they go off and make their own decisions without guidance from their parents. I surveyed and talked to the 9th grade students while they were eating lunch at the Legacy School on 14th st between 5th and 6th Ave. I sat in on a 9th grade math class and shared my project with the class and several teachers. I then accompanied the students to their cafeteria and approached all the tables to get feedback about my topic. Additionally, I interviewed an 11th grade student from the Eximius College Prep Academy and heard her thoughts about obesity, diabetes, and fitness in the USA. The school is in the Bronx, NY. It was fascinating to compare the 11th grader to a 6th grader who told me that their school doesn't talk about health and nutrition that much. (please view the videos on vimeo) In the nutrition video the student told me, "I rather cook because it's better and healthier than fast food restaurants." A 6th grade student mentioned: "They say that school food is not healthy. But now they are trying to change that because they don't give out vegetables. They give you hamburgers, sandwiches, but now they are trying to make it better. When they come home from school they are trying to encourage kids to eat healthy, thats what I saw. A lot of kids are obese and that's bad."

I reached out to a couple NY public schools and learned that directors are not responsive and not open to last minute curriculum changes at their schools. Luckily, my friend is a 9th grade math teacher at the Legacy school so with his support and efforts he got approval from the school's principle for me to survey (see page 9) and interact with the students.

On the website users can find information that will make their jaw drop in surprise. They may be shocked by the facts I present regarding healthcare and food in the United States. All the additives, toxins, and preservatives astonished me. The information presented on the website was as a result of extensive research I completed.



Branding the posters was an enormous challenge. Coming up with a name that was sticky and catchy for teens was not easy because so many names are already taken. Originally I thought of Foodtopia (like utopia, but I didn't kids would easily make the connection), Highfivehealth, or Hi5Health, but in the end when I checked to see if these names were available the domains were already taken. I was especially disappointed that I could not use Hi5Health because I thought that would be attention grabbing for teens and I imagined a logo with a hand, but someone else already use it for their company. I brainstormed a list of about a hundred names and reached out to a branding agency, Arnold Worldwide, to seek the opinions of Art Directors there who work on strictly food accounts including Tyson Foods, OceanSpray, and McDonald's. Ironically I used to help out with the print production for McDonald's so doing this project now is work I am more proud to be a part of because it is helping people make healthy choices. I even called the head of the McDonald's campaign to seek her advice. The art directors at Arnold gave me this list of suggested brand names for my project:

Fooducater LunchTutor FoodTutor Smarteatingclub eatsmart LunchWell*	Lunchblog schoollunchsux* nomorebadlunches LunchLessons* feedmebetter lookforwardtolunch
---	---

*The bolded names are what they thought would work best.

In the end I came up with the campaign name while brainstorming with friends. I suggested that teens like the TV show Glee so combined it so it's foodglee.com The name also plays on eating healthy and being happy and I tried to provoke the happy/friendly feeling with the typography. I created pages of logo variations with type and color. Some people have told me that the letters "ee" at the end even look as if they are smiling.





The color palette I selected while keeping in mind my teenage audience. I think using the black with bold tones makes the message strong and it is readable from down the hallway or from one end of the cafeteria to the other end.

In order to come up with the overall feel and look of the campaign I researched other projects and brands geared towards high schoolers. I looked at an award winning campaign by Arnold Worldwide called Digits with the tag line “Figure this. Imagine that.” It was playful and the logo lettering incorporated elements of science and technology because the initiative was all about getting boys and girls involved and excited about math and science. I examined the marketing created and how I could incorporate similar elements into my project. I also explored the teen Nick (Nickelodeon) website to check out the style and feel. Lastly, I looked at Justin Bieber’s website and collateral for inspiration because he has a massive teen following of dedicated fans.



After much consideration with the brand’s identity I printed the 18 by 24 inch posters on the Parson’s campus using the i802-Plotter 1. It was much more affordable using the university’s printers rather than going to FedEx Print or another local shop. I was happy with the color and quality results on the HP large scale printer.

On the first visit to the school, I surveyed 25 students at lunch and examined the results from the 9th graders. I conclude that most teens are not aware about obesity and what is happening in our country. When asked: “Did you know that by 2022 it is projected that 80% of adult males will be obese in the US? How do you feel about that?” the majority of students responded they were shocked and planed to move to another country. Although there is humor in their answer, it was clear the teens were avoiding the major issue and did not want to address the problem head on.



Another survey question I asked the students was true or false: “Applesauce is harmful if you get too much of it”. The majority of the students responded false and remarked that it was a stupid question. In reality, applesauce can have a lot of sugar and added sugar, so the correct response is true.

While visiting the school I observed academic work the students completed that related to my research. In the hallway I noticed scatter plots and graphs students created with the number of hours of TV watched versus the number of hours they slept. There was also a project on weekly pizza consumption and how much money the kids in the class spent weekly on pizza. Many of them ate it several times a week.

The vending machine was filled with Doritos, Kettlecorn, and Trix bars, yet ironically the machine’s exterior was decorated with grapes, apples, and bananas. Interestingly enough the machine has a calorie check displayed when the item is selected. The calories display next to the price before a purchase. In the future I would like to offer the kids alternatives to snacks the vending machine now offers. I would need to reach out to the school district and purpose alternatives and question the current selection thoroughly.

I went back to the Legacy School a few days later to hang posters and educated the teens about making healthy food choices. On a third visit I handed out bookmarks and asked the kids what they ate for lunch. One student had a plate of potato chips and a carton of milk for her entire lunch. Other students ate meatballs and salad doused in French dressing. A table of six students had Trix sugar tongue tattoos for their meal. It is clear that the students need more nutritional awareness and to be presented with the facts on what is healthy. Talking with the students made me realize there is a strong need for my work and to drive effort around healthy choices. I was happy when the principle approached me in the hallway to request that I donate the posters I



designed. She wants to hang them up around the building year-round for the students to see. I'm excited about this opportunity and the support the school is showing for my project.

Google analytics is on the website I made so I will continue to track users and examine the patterns of their visits. It was fascinating to see what locations and networks were accessing my site. I had visitors from the East to West coast and as of December 19, 2011 close to a hundred unique visitors. Users were from Canada and Israel because I posted the link on my facebook page to get out the word. I also posted a link on Youthdesign.org's facebook page where there are about 200 teens following the non-profit focused on design for inner city kids. Nearly 30 visits were from a school in Flushing NY. I coincidentally ran into a 6th grade class in Whole Foods in Union Square from the The Metropolitan Expeditionary Learning School, "A School for a Sustainable City". The teacher allowed me to share the project with her class on a whim. As a result of having contact with the kids I felt that this project truly did make an impact and it made the work I did more real and meaningful.

In the future I would like to hand out activity postcards showing kids ways to stay active. I would also like to illustrate good choices and alternatives in a visual postcard the kids can take home and show their families. In the meantime, I am waiting to hear back from Michelle Obama as I wrote her a letter a couple weeks ago seeking her support for foodglee.com. In the letter I asked if she could mention my project on her Facebook page or letsmove.gov page. I am patiently awaiting a response and I am hopeful.



Bibliography

Ettlinger, Steve. *Twinkie, Deconstructed: My Journey to Discover How the Ingredients Found in Processed Foods Are Grown, Mined (yes, Mined), and Manipulated into What America Eats*. New York, NY: Plume, 2008. Print.

Pollan, Michael. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: the Search for a Perfect Meal in a Fast-food World*. London: Bloomsbury, 2007. Print.

American Dietetics Association www.eatright.org

Academy for Eating Disorders <http://www.aedweb.org/>

CDC Wonder, data and reports on public health <http://wonder.cdc.gov/>

Dole 5 a day <http://www.dole.com/DoleHTMLSuperKids>

Food Facts, nutritional information on healthy eating www.foodfacts.com

Food and Nutrition Information Center www.nal.usda.gov

GE.com data visualization for TEDMED <http://visualization.geblogs.com/visualization/tedmed/>

Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution <http://www.jamieoliver.com/us/foundation/jamies-food-revolution/home>

Michelle Obama's campaign Let's Move! www.letsmove.gov

National Eating Disorders Association www.nationaleatingdisorders.org

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Heart www.nhlbi.nih.gov

USDA Dietary Guidelines <http://www.MyPyramid.gov>

King Corn 2007 Documentary. Director Aaron Woolf.

Super Size Me 2004 Documentary. Director Morgan Spurlock.



I am creating a website and a series of posters to educate teens about healthy choices and obesity in America. Over the next week I will be making a website and series of posters that will hang at your school. Please complete this survey to help me with my research. Thank you! - Marisa Glick

MFA Candidate, Design and Technology
Parsons the New School for Design

Your Name: _____

Your Email: _____

What are you most addicted to? (circle answer)

- Coffee
- Carrots
- Jogging
- M&M's
- Oreos
- Gummy Bears

How often do you exercise?

- every day
- a couple times a week
- less than once a week
- almost never
- never

True or False: (write T/F)

Applesauce is harmful if you get too much of it _____

Currently obesity in the US costs \$10,273,973 per hour.
By 2030 obesity is predicted to cost \$15,753,425 per hour. _____

Obesity is preventable _____

Globally, obesity related illnesses count for as many deaths
in young and middle aged adults as HIV/AIDS. _____

Diet related diseases are two of the top 5 causes of premature
death globally _____

One third United States adults are obese _____

17% of children and teens are obese _____

26 million adults suffer from diabetes _____

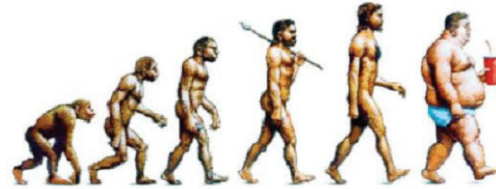
YES OR NO: (write Y/N)

"Eating healthy food is important to me" _____

"I usually try to eat balanced, healthy meals" _____

"I would eat more healthy foods if they weren't so expensive" _____

"I would eat a healthier diet if my mom/dad
would prepare it for me." _____



Short Questions:

Are you worried about our evolution?
What's your reaction to this picture?

What is the healthiest and least healthy
thing you've eaten today or yesterday?

Did you know that by 2022 it is projected
that 80% of adult males will be obese in
the US? How do you feel about that?

THANK YOU!!