


Spring 5-2012

# “Make Your Move, Choose Your Food”: A Healthy Lifestyles Empowerment Campaign

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis documents the campaign “Make Your Move. Choose Your Food.” This healthy lifestyles empowerment campaign was one of six conducted in Bowling Green, Kentucky during February 2012 for the Public Relations Student Society of America’s (PRSSA) 2011-2012 Bateman Case Study Competition through the public relations capstone courses Journalism 454 and 456. The objective of this campaign was to encourage children, teenagers, parents, educators and community organizations to improve their individual health and the health of the community. My team, consisting of four public relations seniors and myself, created three overall objectives grounded in research, planned strategies specific to our target audiences’ needs, and implemented positive, educational and sustainable tactics to carry out the campaign. Upon completion, results were evaluated and the campaign was found to be successful. Conducting an extensive project from start-to-finish provided a unique insight into the role of a public relations practitioner. Working directly with local non-profit organizations and government institutions toward a common goal has enhanced my communications and public relations skills and mobilized my passion for social responsibility and community development as I begin my career.

Keywords: childhood obesity, healthy lifestyle, public relations campaign, Bowling Green High School, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts

Dedicated to my advisor and professor Vicki Bagwell.  
Your support and dedication to my education has allowed me  
to have an amazing college experience.  
Thank you.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This campaign was by no means an independent project. I was lucky enough to be part of the powerhouse team “Mario’s Angels”, consisting of my friends Hoang Nguyen, Kelly Pike, Stephanie Romano, Jane Wood. If my future coworkers are anything like this team, I’ll never have to work a day in my life.

I am particularly grateful to Vicki Bagwell, my advisor, professor and first reader. Thank you for investing yourself wholly in my education, and standing up for me in the face of many obstacles throughout the years. Also to my second reader Dr. Bernie Strenecky for his support and encouragement of my passion for community development.

A huge thanks to Bowling Green High School (BGHS) teacher Lisa Correa for being the greatest partner we could have asked for. I hope your “juice babies” are drinking more water these days! Thanks also to BGHS Principal Gary Fields, Secretary Cathy Rogers, Leah Ashwill of the Healthy Weight Kids’ Coalition, Mike Dowell and Steven Speakman of the Boy Scouts, Kappa Delta Sorority, Barren River Health Department’s Community Health Improvement Branch Director Diane Sprowl and Courtney Jones of D1 Sports Training for your contribution to our campaign. Your service helped us make a lasting impact on the lives of the youth in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

## VITA

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## PUBLICATIONS

1. Child, Michelle, and Michelle Day. "Kentucky Program Aims to Educate Future U.S. Nurses About Growing Hispanic Culture." *KBN Connection*. 29 (2011): 26-27. Print.

## FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Fields: Public Relations and French

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Abstract.....	ii
Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Vita.....	v
Chapters	
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Research.....	3
Secondary Research.....	3
Primary Research.....	6
3. Target Audiences.....	10
4. Campaign: Objectives, Strategies, Tactics and Evaluations.....	13
5. Challenges.....	26
6. Contributions.....	28
7. Reflections.....	30
Bibliography.....	31
Appendix Table of Contents.....	32

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The role of a public relations coordinator is quite ambiguous. It's purposefully broad scope and multiple functions make it a difficult position to explain. As a soon-to-be graduate in public relations, I have countless avenues of this career path to choose from.

As defined by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), "Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics." I chose public relations as my main field of study specifically for its broad yet useful skills. As a public relations student, I have acquired writing, marketing, advertising, public speaking, leadership and organizational experience. I have learned how to communicate with the media, businesses, and most importantly the public. With these capacities, one can work in nearly any area they choose whether it be a corporation, agency, small business, non-profit, even an entrepreneurial endeavor.

For public relations capstone courses Journalism 454 and 456 public relations students complete a campaign through participation in the Public Relations Student Society of America's (PRSSA) Bateman Case Study Competition. As the student



organization of PRSA, PRSSA offers professional development, networking opportunities and industry news to its student members. The Bateman is PRSSA's premier national case study competition for public relations students, and gives students an opportunity to apply classroom education and internship experiences to create and implement a full public relations campaign. Childhood obesity was the chosen topic for this year's Bateman Case Study Competition ("Public Relations Student Society of America").

Along with four additional public relations students in my class, I helped to execute a full public relations campaign to combat childhood obesity in the Bowling Green community entitled "Make Your Move. Choose Your Food." The following chapters will take you through each part of the process. In Appendix F.6 you will find the full campaign booklet sent to PRSSA on March 29, 2012.

## CHAPTER 2

### RESEARCH

#### **Secondary Research**

There is hardly a shortage of research and data on childhood obesity in the U.S. The purpose of our secondary research was not only to explore facts and statistics regarding childhood obesity, but also to determine the current attitudes and beliefs about childhood obesity both in Kentucky and nationally. Before conducting our own primary research, we familiarized ourselves with the causes, consequences, solutions and trends associated to childhood obesity and investigated the fundamental goals and strategies of established national and regional childhood obesity prevention campaigns and programs. Below are some secondary research highlights we noted that helped us to create a solid foundation for our campaign:

- Approximately 17 percent (or 12.5 million) of children and adolescents aged 2 to 19 years are obese. (Center for disease control and prevention)
- Around 23.5 million Americans – including 6.5 million children – currently live in food deserts - urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy and affordable food. (Let's Move! Campaign)

- Body weight is the result of genes, metabolism, behavior, environment, culture, and socioeconomic status. (Center for disease control and prevention)
- Overweight and obesity result from an energy imbalance. This involves eating too many calories and not getting enough physical activity. (Center for disease control and prevention)
- Overweight youth are more likely to become overweight or obese as adults. (Center for disease control and prevention)
- Children and adolescents who are obese are at greater risk for social and psychological problems such as stigmatization and poor self-esteem. (Center for disease control and prevention)
- In 2008, medical costs associated with obesity were estimated at \$147 billion. (Center for disease control and prevention)
- The American society has become characterized by environments that promote increased consumption of less healthy food and physical inactivity. Children 8 to 18 years of age spend an average of 7.5 hours a day using entertainment media, including TV, computers, video games, cell phones and movies. (Center for disease control and prevention)
- There are significant racial and ethnic disparities in obesity prevalence among children and adolescents. (Center for disease control and prevention)
- Kentucky has the third highest rate of childhood obesity in the U.S. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)

- When discussing childhood obesity, a campaign should be cautious with its rhetoric, as negative rhetoric can cause eating disorders. (Albers)
- Rural areas have a higher rate of obesity and physical inactivity than urban areas. (Cochran 63-69)
- Children who make their own food decisions are more likely to make healthy decisions for the rest of their lives ("Huffington Post")

The following are pre-existing national and regional childhood obesity campaigns and programs that served as models for our campaign:

- Healthier Kids Brighter Futures  
<http://healthierkidsbrighterfutures.org/>
- We Can!  
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/>
- All Children Deserve Healthy Food  
<http://foodcorps.org/>
- National Dairy Farmer's Fuel Up to Play 60  
<http://www.fueluptoplay60.com/>
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Childhood Obesity Program  
<http://rwjf.org/programareas/ChildhoodObesityFramingDoc.pdf>
- Shape Up America:  
<http://shapeup.org/>
- Just For Kids  
<http://www.just-for-kids.org/index.htm>
- Let's Move!  
<http://www.letsmove.gov/>
- President's Challenge  
<http://www.presidentschallenge.org/index.shtml>
- Alliance For A Healthier Generation  
<http://www.healthiergeneration.org/>

- Louisville's Mayors Healthy Hometown  
<http://www.louisvilleky.gov/HealthyHometown/>

- Healthy Weight Kid's Coalition  
<http://www.healthyweightkids.org/>

## **Primary Research**

After compiling our set of secondary research, we began to survey the Bowling Green community. The purpose of our primary research was to reveal the current knowledge of proper nutrition and exercise, motivation, and lifestyles of children age 7-18 in the Bowling Green area, as well as their parent's knowledge and current lifestyles. To do so, we created two surveys, one for children and one for parents. The children's survey (Appendix A.1) consisted of 11 questions designed to evaluate three different categories: current knowledge, motivation, and lifestyle. The parent's survey (Appendix A.2) consisted of 12 questions to evaluate parents' knowledge of healthy lifestyles.

We surveyed a total of 141 children (ages seven to 18) and 98 parents in the Bowling Green area. The results findings helped us to determine the needs of our target market and the content of our campaign messages. These surveys were distributed to students and parents of Lisa Correa's Bowling Green High School (BGHS) health class, local Girl Scouts troops, and local Boy Scout groups. This solid framework discovered the following results:

### **Child Survey Results- Knowledge**

- 75.7 percent of children said both exercise and diet are equally important in maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

- 38.6 percent of children believe the statement “I cannot control what my weight is” is completely false.

**Child Survey Results-Lifestyle**

- As determined by the survey, Table 2.1 represents the percentage of surveyed children who met, did not meet or exceeded the daily servings recommended by the USDA for each food category:

<b>Food Category</b>	<b>Percent who met the daily recommendations</b>	<b>Percent who did not meet or exceeded daily recommendations</b>
Dairy	62.10	37.90
Protein	58.70	41.30
Fruit	67.80	32.20
Vegetables	48.50	51.50
Grain	56.90	43.10

**Table 2.1 Percentage of Children who met, did not meet or exceeded USDA daily servings of each food category**

- Only 18.6 percent of respondents participate in 30 minutes or more of physical activity seven days a week.
- 37.4 percent of children surveyed felt they were actively taking steps toward living a healthy lifestyle.
- Of the 141 children surveyed, only 60.5 percent were at a healthy weight according to Body Mass Index (BMI). 19.4 percent were underweight, 13.7 percent were overweight and 6.5 percent were obese.

### **Child Survey Results- Motivation**

- 35.8 percent of survey respondents claimed when eating food they “sometimes” think about how it will impact their health.
- Taste (chosen by 76.1 percent of respondents) and parents (chosen by 42.9 percent) influence children’s eating habits the most.

### **Parent Survey Results- Knowledge**

- 85.7 percent of parents say both exercise and diet are equally important in maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
- When asked recommended consumption for each food category by the USDA, parents more often than not incorrectly selected the recommended number of protein and grains, but accurately chose the number of servings for milk/dairy, fruits and vegetables.

### **Parent Survey Results- Lifestyle**

- Before feeding their families, 38.8 percent of parents more often than not think about how it will impact their family’s health
- 53.1 percent families eat outside of the home once a week while 20.8 percent eat out three times a week.
- 98.9 percent of parents prefer home-cooked meals over take-out or fast food.
- When asked to rank the factors that influence making food choices, 40.2 percent parents ranked taste as most influential, followed by their child’s preference at 38.1 percent.
- 66.7 percent of parents take quantity and nutritional value of food into account equally when providing food for their families.

- 57.3 percent of parents are very comfortable discussing weight-related topics with their children.
- When asked to rank factors that most influence their children's weight, parents ranked diet and exercise most influential, and parent eating habits as second most influential.

### **Other Notable Parent Survey Results**

- Families that eat three times a week outside their home rank cost a very influential purchasing decision, whereas nutrition holds little influence over food choice. These families also ranked convenience as one of the top three influential factors, with taste, child's preference, and preparation time all being equally influential.
- 27.9 percent of parents considered genes as one the most influential factors on children's weight. There was a scattered correlation between the eating habits of parents and their children. Parents also felt as though exercise could alleviate these issues, but did not see diet as important.

With our campaign now grounded in secondary and primary research, we were ready to begin making objectives and planning the strategies and tactics we would carry out during the month of February.



## CHAPTER 3

### TARGET AUDIENCES

We defined the primary audience for this campaign as children between the ages of seven and 18 and the secondary audience being parents and guardians of children between the ages of seven and 18. In seeking target audiences within these two areas, the PRSSA Bateman Case Study Competition defined two national clients and we selected three local clients in Bowling Green, Kentucky. General Mills and United Way were the national clients, and Girls Scouts of Kentuckiana, Bowling Green High School and Boy Scouts were our local clients.

#### Rationale for Primary Audience

According to research done by the CDC obesity rates between children and adults have grown exponentially. In fact, in the past four decades, the rates have more than doubled among children between the ages of two and five, more than quadrupled among children ages six to 11 and have tripled among children between the ages of 12 and 18. If society would adapt to the notion of prevention before cure and start to view proper diet and exercise as a necessity versus an option, society as a whole would become much healthier.

### Rationale for Secondary Audience

Parents and guardians play a vital role in their children's diet because they buy and more often than not prepare the food eaten by their children and families. The role parents play in their children's lives, as far as proper eating and nutrition is concerned, is invaluable. Survey results from our team's child survey indicated that parents are the second most influential factor when it comes to their own eating habits. However, the majority of parents surveyed listed their own eating habits to have little influence on their children's eating habits relative to other things. This information indicates that parents do not recognize the affect they have on their children's diets and the role they play in their children's health as far as proper eating and nutrition is concerned. Encouraging and enabling parents to take steps toward leading a healthier lifestyle is a vital aspect to the battle against childhood obesity.

### Local Clients

#### **Girls Scouts of Kentuckiana, Caveland Ages 7-10**

The Caveland location of Girl Scouts of Kentuckiana serves 15 counties surrounding the Bowling Green area. There are three keys to the Girl Scouts of Kentuckiana's motto; discover (help girls discover their own abilities), connect (with peers and their community) and take action (make the world a better place). These three overriding goals made Girl Scouts an ideal client. The overall goals of this organization are very much in line with the mission of our campaign. They are also a local United Way affiliate, which helped us to serve the national client United Way chosen by PRSSA.

### **Bowling Green High School (BGHS)**

BGHS is one of the most demographically diverse high schools in Bowling Green, and our research results indicated that 22 percent of BGHS students surveyed were either overweight or obese. According to a 2011-2012 school profile released by BGHS, 34 percent of their students are minority students, 4.5 percent are limited English proficiency students and 44 percent of students receive either free or reduced lunch. Food insecurity and income levels play a factor in the obesity epidemic. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation released a report in 2010 stating that, “Nearly 15 percent of U.S. households experience food insecurity, which disproportionately impacts populations at highest risk for obesity, including low-income households and members of racial/ethnic minority groups.” This information combined with the percentage of students at BGHS receiving free or reduced lunches made them a supportive client in this campaign.

### **Boy Scouts Troop 79, Ages 11-15**

The Boy Scouts mission is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices during their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law. One aspect of this oath is to “keep myself physically strong.” Healthy eating and exercise are both necessary to building and maintaining a strong, sound body. Consequently, Boy Scouts were highly receptive to the benefits of our campaign message. Also, as with the Girl Scouts, this organization has as an overall goal coinciding directly with the goal of The PRSSA Bateman Competition.

## CHAPTER 4

### CAMPAIGN: OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, TACTICS AND EVALUATIONS

With the research complete and the clients found, we were ready to begin planning our campaign. We chose to call the campaign “Make Your Move. Choose Your Food.” to capture the two components of healthy living: exercise and nutrition, while simultaneously educating children on the power of choice. This slogan served as a theme throughout our events as we allowed children to make their own health decisions in each activity.

From our secondary research, primary research and the guidelines of the PRSSA Bateman Competition, we created three objectives for the “Make Your Move. Choose Your Food.” campaign. Following each objective were strategies and tactics to meet the objective. If these goals were met, the campaign would be considered a success. Following the guidelines of PRSSA, the campaign was executed solely in the month of February. During this time we hosted five events, distributed eight different educational pieces, and brought in three local health professionals to our three local clients. At the end of the campaign we distributed post-surveys to children and parents of each client to evaluate the effectiveness of our campaign.

Below are the objectives, strategies and tactics, along with their evaluations according to post-survey data. As you will see, our campaign was a success.

Refer to these three events in the following paragraphs:

*Event 1 – BGHS Class visits:* Taught four health classes at BGHS: During February, our team visited two health classes on two occasions to distribute materials and lead conversation on the impact of food on student’s health. (Photos: Appendix B Cover Page)

*Event 2 – Boy Scouts Merit Badge University Event:* Assisted Boy Scouts in receiving Personal Fitness Merit Badge by arranging speaker and physical assessments: We arranged for Community Health Improvement Branch Director Diane Sprowl to come and work with Boy Scouts at the Personal Fitness Badge workshop during the Merit Badge University Event. (Photos: Appendix D Cover Page)

*Event 3 – Girl Scouts “Healthy Living for Girls” Events:* Held two “Healthy Living for Girls” Badge Events with Kappa Delta Sorority: We hosted two events with the Girl Scouts with a goal to encourage young girls ages seven to 10-years-old to make positive choices about their health. At each of these events the girls traveled to five different learning stations to learn about various aspects of healthy living. (Photos: Appendix C Cover Page)

**Objective 1: Increase the number of children and parents that think about how their food choices impact their individual and/or family’s health by 10 percent.**

Strategy 1: To inform children on the impact food has on their individual health by hosting various community events that promote education and discussion about healthy lifestyle choices.

Rationale: Our research indicated that less than 40 percent of children actually thought about how food would impact them before eating. However, the absence of this first step precludes a path toward healthy living; therefore, our tactics helped children make the first step on their path to healthy living: education.

*Event 1 – BGHS Class visits:*

Tactic 1: Presented information on portion control and the negative effects of too much sugar in an engaging PowerPoint discussion and game.

Tactic 2: Gave a brief history lesson comparing the difference in serving sizes and caloric content of common fast food meals from 20 years ago and today. Students were then given the amount of exercise it would take to eliminate the excess calories from today's super-sized meals.

Tactic 3: Gave personal testimonials about a college student's struggles with healthy living and the benefits that can be achieved from changing to a healthier lifestyle.

*Event 2 – Boy Scouts Merit Badge University Event:*

Tactic 1: Sprowl led five activities:

- (1) Taste-testing healthy snacks such as nectarines and squash.
- (2) Performing a scavenger hunt to find healthy levels of fat, sodium, etc. on popular snack's food labels,

- (3) Playing an interactive “What Am I” game, describing important vitamins and minerals.
- (4) Writing personal pledges to abide by the USDA’s new nutrition guidelines via the “My Plate” model.
- (5) Juxtaposing popular drinks and juices with equal measurements of granulated sugar to demonstrate the drinks’ shockingly high sugar levels drinks.

Upon completion of the five activities and physical assessments, the Boy Scouts had 30 percent of their Personal Fitness Badge completed.

*Event 3 – Girl Scouts “Healthy Living for Girls” Events:*

Tactic 1: Healthy Snack Learning Station; this station allowed the Girl Scouts to create their own healthy snack and attempted to show them that healthy can be tasty.

Tactic 2: Food Plate Learning Station; this station used laminated USDA food plates made by the team and paper food cutouts to teach the girls healthy versus unhealthy eating habits. The girls matched the correct foods and serving sizes to corresponding food categories on their plates with the individual help of our team and Kappa Delta volunteers. . (Appendix C.2)

Tactic 3: Food Plate Bingo Learning Station; this station girls played “Food Plate Bingo” reinforcing the serving sizes for each food group. (Appendix C.3)

Tactic 4: Healthy Living Activity Book Learning Station: at this station, the girls compiled, colored and completed their own activity books filled with healthy snack suggestions and serving-size/food category worksheets. (Appendix C.4)

Strategy 2: Inform parents of the impact food has on their family’s health.

Rationale: Our research revealed that 46.8 percent of surveyed families in the Bowling Green area eat outside of the home two or more times per week, yet less than 40 percent of parents actually thought of the impact of food on their family's health before choosing what to eat. Moreover, around 50 percent of parents did not feel completely comfortable discussing weight-related issues with their children. By informing parents of healthy eating while encouraging dialogue between parents and children, our tactics served as a vehicle to enact household change.

*Event 1 – BGHS Class visits:*

Tactic 1: Created a take-home bulletin to encourage conversation between BGHS parents and children: We created and sent home four “Healthy Living” bulletins to the parents of 43 students enrolled in BGHS health classes at the end of each week in February. The bulletins included healthy living tips, health and obesity-related statistics, “quick & healthy” recipes, and discussed the short- and long-term consequence of poor health decisions. (Appendix B.1)

*Event 1 – BGHS Class visits, Event 2- Boy Scouts Merit Badge University Event:*

Tactic 2: Distributed Smart Bites Local Restaurant Guide: Each BGHS health class student and parents of Girl Scouts who attended the “Healthy Living for Girls” events received a Smart Bites Local Restaurant Guide (provided by the Kentucky's Healthy Weight Kids Coalition) to keep and share with their parents. The guide provided parents a comprehensive list of the most-healthy and least-healthy food choices at nearly all local and chain restaurants in the Bowling Green area. (Appendix F.5)



Evaluation 1: It's no secret that it's difficult to keep a child's attention; however, our fun campaign tactics kept the children engaged while learning. Children were asked to rank the top two factors that most influenced them when choosing what foods to eat. Before our campaign nutrition was far from the top two, ranking number five; however, after our campaign nutrition jumped to the second most influential factor. Additionally, after our campaign 90 percent of children said they sometimes, more often than not, or always thought about how their food would impact their health before eating. The number of students who choosing the "always" category increased by 12.6 percent.

Just how healthy living requires both diet and exercise, this first objective was twofold: parents and children. Parents are often busy with report cards, soccer practice, and their jobs, which is why our team made sure our bulletins and handouts provided some utilitarian value to parents, ensuring that parents would actually use them. Which were reflected in our results: Parents were asked to rate factors that influenced them when choosing which foods to feed their families. Before our campaign nutrition's average rating placed it as the fourth most influential factor out of six; however, after our campaign nutrition jumped to the second most influential factor. Moreover, now 71.4 percent of parents more often than not think about how food will impact their family's health; a 32.6 percent increase from our pre-campaign results. Additionally, 66.7 percent of parents at least somewhat agree that they felt better educated on healthy lifestyles after reading the "Healthy Lifestyles" bulletin. Not only were parents more often than not correctly able to identify the number of USDA recommended servings in each food

category after our campaign, but 50 percent of parents considered health and exercise as important to a child's education that math and science!

**Objective 2: Increase the number of children who believe they can control their own weight by 10 percent.**

Strategy 1: To encourage children to eat a more balanced diet according to the USDA recommended serving sizes.

Rationale: Our research discovered that in all five food plate categories anywhere from 30 to 50 percent of children did not meet (or exceed) the USDA recommended number of servings. Additionally, the Huffington Post found that children's eating behaviors could be influenced with point-of-purchase tactics, which prompted our poster in the cafeteria

*Event 1 – BGHS Class visits:*

Tactic 1: Created a food journal for BGHS students: BGHS students were given a food journal containing information on the proper diet and exercise requirements for healthy living as well as suggestions for both exercise and healthy eating. The students recorded their weekly food and exercise habits for a three-week period. These recordings were analyzed and discussed each week with Lisa Correa, health and physical education teacher, as well as with our team during our classroom visits. (Appendix B.2)

Tactic 2: Led visual illustration activity at BGHS: At each event at BGHS our team members used an engaging illustration activity to help students visualize the food they intake each day. Team leaders asked volunteers to tell the class everything they consumed in one day (as taken from their food journals) and sketched the items inside an outline of a human body. After the student volunteers recited their daily intake the entire

class participated in categorizing the ingested food into the appropriate food group. Then each of the analyzed student outlines was compared, and the class would decide on the student with the most balanced diet. (Photos: Appendix B Cover Page)

Tactic 3: Created February BGHS Cafeteria Food Chart: Our team analyzed the BGHS food calendar for the month of February and placed each menu item under the corresponding food category. The poster was hung in the cafeteria line to help remind students of the nutritional value of their daily lunch choices. (Photos: Appendix B Cover Page)

*Event 2 – Boy Scouts Merit Badge University Event:*

Tactic 1: Sprowl led the boy scouts on a scavenger hunt to find healthy levels of fat, sodium, etc. on popular snack's food labels. The scouts realized the unhealthy aspects of several everyday foods by finding the information on their own.

Tactic 2: Wrote personal pledges to abide by the USDA's new nutrition guidelines via the "My Plate" model. These were taken home with the boys and we encourage them to share the pledge with their parents to create a sustainable commitment to the information they learned at the workshop.

Tactic 3: Juxtaposed popular drinks and juices with equal measurements of granulated sugar to demonstrate the drinks' shockingly high sugar levels drinks. This demonstration was a shocking realization for all of us.

*Event 3 – Girl Scouts "Healthy Living for Girls" Events:*

Tactic 1: Healthy Snack Learning Station; this station allowed the Girl Scouts to create their own healthy snack and attempted to show them that healthy can be tasty.

Tactic 2: Food Plate Learning Station; this station used laminated USDA food plates made by the team and paper food cutouts to teach the girls healthy versus unhealthy eating habits. The girls matched the correct foods and serving sizes to corresponding food categories on their plates with the individual help of our team and Kappa Delta volunteers. (Appendix C.3)

Tactic 3: Food Plate Bingo Learning Station; this station girls played “Food Plate Bingo” reinforcing the serving sizes for each food group. (Appendix C.2)

Strategy 2: To encourage children that it’s never too late to start a healthy living regime.

Rationale: Research from Sodexo Education found that it is important for children to make health-related decisions because the independence of allowing them to make their own choices promotes healthy eating habits when the child grows into adulthood.

Therefore, empowering a child, regardless of their age, will impact their health for the rest of their life.

*Event 1 - BGHS Class Visits, Event 3 Girl Scouts “Healthy Living for Girls” Events:*

Tactic 1: Healthy Lifestyle Pledge: At both Girl Scout events and the classroom events at BGHS students were given the option to make a pledge to improve on making healthy decisions. Students composed the pledge themselves after team members explained ideas and the concept of choosing attainable goals. (Appendix B.3, Photos: Appendix C Cover Page)

Tactic 2: Personal testimonies: At each of the BGHS events, team members gave personal testimonies as to how hard it was to make the transition to college and making

healthy choices on their own. Team members also highlighted how easy it was to make simple lifestyle changes to improve their overall health.

Tactic 3: Lecture on Living a Healthy Lifestyle: Leah Ashwill, who serves on the board of the Healthy Weight Kids Coalition, spoke to the Girl Scouts at the Feb. 19 event about steps an individual can take to start leading a healthy lifestyle today. Her lecture educated the Girl Scouts on food groups, serving size, proper diet, and exercise.

Evaluation 2: The message of our entire “Make your move. Choose your food.” campaign was centered on empowering children and their parents to maintain a healthy weight by making healthy lifestyle changes. In order to inspire behavior change, we first had to inform children that they are in full control of their weight through various presentations and hands-on activities. Our campaign resulted in a 15.1 percent increase in the number of children who believed they could control their weight; when asked the validity of the statement “I cannot control what my weight is” at the end of the “campaign, 53.7 percent of children believed this statement was completely false.

During our campaign, we collected a total of 50 pledges from children age seven to 18 who committed to making at least one healthy lifestyle change. Originally, 32.4 percent of the sample felt neutral to disagreement when asked if they were actively taking steps to live a healthy lifestyle; at the end of the campaign, only 19.5 percent shared this sentiment, meaning that at the end of the campaign 80.5 percent of the sample felt as though they were actively taking steps to live a healthy lifestyle.

**Objective 3: To increase the number of children who exercise (30 minutes or more) at least three times weekly by 5 percent.**

Strategy 1: To encourage children ages seven to 18 to exercise on a more frequent basis.

Rationale: WKU's Department of Kinesiology discovered that over 50 percent of middle school students in Bowling Green played video games or watched television for one to two hours a day which results showed was associated with higher BMIs in some children. Therefore, our tactics attempted to convert this medium associated with inactivity, into a channel for exercise.

*Event 1 – BGHS Class Visits:*

Tactic 1: Presentation on variety of exercise options for calorie burn: At both BGHS health classes, team members presented a PowerPoint explaining the different kinds of non-traditional options for exercise and the amount of calories burned to show that exercise is not only found in the gym, but that it can be fun and varied.

*Event 2 – Boy Scouts Merit Badge University Event:*

Tactic 2: Led workshop at the Boy Scouts University: This event was open to Boy Scouts who desired to complete multiple merit badge requirements in one day. Our team led a workshop that began the requirements for the Personal Fitness Badge, an extended process that takes 12 weeks to finish. This event included Community Health Improvement Branch Director Diane Sprowl who focused on making healthy food choices, and volunteers from our partner Kappa Delta sorority who assisted in the personal fitness aspect of the event. (Appendix D.1) Boy scouts were taught the correct form of pushups, sit-ups, sit-and-reach, and jumping jacks. Then Kappa Delta volunteers and team members administered the test that would qualify the Boy Scouts for the

Personal Fitness badge while explaining the importance of daily physical activity.

(Appendix D.2)

*Event 3 – Girl Scouts “Healthy Living for Girls” Events, Event 1 BGHS Class Visits:*

Tactic 3: Healthy Lifestyle pledges: At both Girl Scout events and the classroom events at BGHS students were given the option to make a pledge to improve on making healthy decisions. Students composed the pledge themselves after team members presented ideas and the concept of choosing attainable goals. Many students opted to pledge to add more exercise into their weekly or daily routines. (Appendix B.3, Photos: Appendix C)

Rationale: The local research done by WKU’s Department of Kinesiology found that over half of Bowling Green middle school students did not have access to physical education, while our primary research found that only 18.6 percent of our sample participate in 30 minutes or more of physical activity seven days a week. This lack of physical activity demonstrated a missing half of the necessary components to live a healthy lifestyle and merited our tactics.

Strategy 2: Change children’s perception of exercise.

*Event 1 – BGHS Class Visits:*

Tactic 1: Food Journal exercise options: Journals that were distributed to Lisa Correa’s health classes at BGHS had lists of various exercise options to encourage students to try a variety of styles of exercise. (Appendix B.2)

Tactic 2: Changing perceptions of exercise with D1 Sports at BGHS: Many students believe that exercise is limited to in-gym workout routines, our team wanted to redefine exercise for students by educating that a myriad of different activities qualify as exercise.

Courtney Jones, D1 fitness instructor, led dynamic stretches at two P.E. classes at BGHS showing that fluid movements that can be performed at home can be more beneficial than standard gym workouts. (Photos: Appendix B Cover Sheet)

*Event 3 – Girl Scouts “Healthy Living for Girls” Events*

Tactic 3: Making exercise fun: One technique our team used was to educate our audience on how fun exercise could be. At the “Healthy Lifestyles for Girls” (Appendix C.1) event hosted by Kappa Delta, Girl Scouts exercised using the Nintendo Wii™ game console, and playing the interactive dance game, Just Dance. Showing girls that exercise comes in many forms and can be fun! (Photos: Appendix C Cover Page)

Evaluation 3: In order to lead a healthy lifestyle, children and parents alike must incorporate exercise into their daily regime. After reiterating this message several times during our campaign, we asked children how many times a week should you participate in thirty minutes or more of physical activity daily; 97.5 percent of children selected three times a week or more, resulting in an incredible increase of 78.9 percent. In our post event surveys, 97.6 percent of children believe that both exercise and diet are equally important in maintaining a healthy lifestyle, an increase of 21.9 percent from our original findings. Prior to our event, three Boy Scouts had met nearly all the requirements of the 12-week program, but lacked the nutrition and fitness test components necessary to earn the Personal Fitness merit badge. After our workshop at the Merit Badge event, these three boy scouts met all the badge requirements and earned a Personal Fitness Badge from their troop leader.



## CHAPTER 5

### CHALLENGES

The strict guidelines set forth by PRSSA created several challenges when attempting to create the “Make Your Move. Choose Your Food.” Campaign.

Integrating the PRSSA Bateman Case Study Competition with the public relations senior capstone courses Journalism 454 and 456 posed two major challenges: timing and intra-school competition.

PRSSA stated that all campaign tactics must be executed between February 1 and February 29, 2012. Although we began to research the campaign in September, Western Kentucky University’s five-week winter break in January caused a large halt in the campaign schedule. Because most members of our team are not from the Bowling Green area, it was impractical to continue working on the campaign during the holiday. In just one week upon returning to school, we had to reorganize and rectify any plans that may have changed.

The next challenge we faced was intra-school competition. Because all public relations seniors must take the capstone course in order to graduate, we had six PRSSA Bateman teams targeting the same audiences, at the same time, in the same community.

We had to be conscientious when choosing clients so as not to steal a community organization from another group. This put us at a slight disadvantage compared to other PRSSA Bateman teams who may have been the only team in their community.

The next challenge was with the national client United Way. When PRSSA revealed United Way as the national client they noted that each team was to contact their local United Way chapter to make specific arrangements. Again, having six teams in the same community, this posed a problem. We contacted United Way of Southern Kentucky as one entity, and they politely declined our offer explaining that childhood obesity was not a primary issue they chose to address this year, and they simply did not have the manpower to accommodate us. Worried this would hinder our chances in the competition, we did the next best move and chose, the Girl Scouts of Kentuckiana, a local United-Way affiliate, as a client.

The last challenge we faced was with the Girl Scouts of Kentuckiana. As previously mentioned, the PRSSA Bateman guidelines stated that all campaigns had to take place in February. The month of February is also Girl Scouts' national cookie month, and scheduling an event during this time posed a challenge. At our first event, attendance was lower than expected. However, due to the individualized attention we were able to give to each attendee, and the overall success of the event, Girl Scouts requested our team hold the event again in February for another troop, and we did.

In the end we were able to overcome each of these challenges and put forth a strong, effective campaign.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONTRIBUTIONS

Because this was a group project, it is necessary to outline my specific contributions to the campaign.

#### **Personal Contributions**

I contributed a full list of personal secondary research (which was then compared and condensed into a shorter, stronger list comprised of all group members' research.) I was the main contact for Bowling Green High School and the Boy Scouts. As such I organized the four BGHS class visits and Boy Scout's Merit Badge University Event. I wrote the final versions of the executive summary and the objective 1 section of the campaign, and helped with objectives two and three. I designed the campaign booklet (Appendix F.6) apart from the pawn figure and created the BGHS pledge (Appendix B.3) and the Girl Scouts Activity book (Appendix C.4)

#### **Other Members' Contributions:**

Jane Wood contributed to the secondary research, created the food/activity journals and PowerPoint presentations for BGHS, wrote the challenges and opportunities section of the booklet and organized the appendices. She was the contact D1 Sports Training, Leah Ashwill of the Healthy Weight Kid's Coalition, and Diane Sprowl of the Barren River Health Department.

Hoang Nguyen contributed to the secondary research, created the survey instruments, wrote the situation analysis, research and conclusion sections of the booklet and created the USDA Food Plate and Bingo Food Plate game.

Stephanie Romano contributed to the secondary research, created the four Healthy Living Bulletins for BGHS parents and students and wrote the target audience section of the booklet.

Kelly Pike contributed to the secondary research, contacted Kappa Delta and Girl Scouts, and organized the Healthy Living for Girls Event. She created Healthy Living for Girls flyer, wrote objectives 2 and 3 in campaign booklet and placed all type into designed booklet.

### **Group Contributions**

Together we entered and analyzed all pre and post data together to write the primary research results and post evaluations. We attended all events as a group, and helped each other in whatever was needed at the time. The workload was shared as evenly as possible, playing on the strengths of each individual.

## CHAPTER 7

### REFLECTIONS

It is wonderful to see a full year's project come to a close. The long nights in Mass Media, the hectic days of running to and from Bowling Green High School, and the countless hours spent inputting survey data have finally come to an end. As I reflect on this project, I do not consider the possibility of placing in the top three of the Bateman competition, or even the effectiveness of our campaign. Instead I consider the eight months I spent working closely with Mario, Caitlin, Stephanie and Jane. We all have very different specialty areas and very different career aspirations, yet we managed to work seamlessly together. I learned my role in a group: I am a strong organizer, networker, and proficient designer. I could focus everyone's attention when necessary, but also learned when to have fun. I was fortunate to work with extremely talented students and I can't wait to see what we all become upon graduation. I am proud of the work we did and the connections we made within the community. As a self-proclaimed "health nut," our campaign message came second nature to me. One difficulty I found was reaching the high school students on a level in which they would respond. By the end of February, I felt my teaching skills had enhanced, even though I still have plenty of room for improvement. In conclusion, I am extremely proud of our campaign and teamwork. I know how to begin improving my weaknesses and confident in my campaign skills.

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## APPENDIX

### **A. Campaign Surveys**

A.1 Child Pre- Survey with Results.....	1
A.2 Parent Pre- Surveys with Results .....	9
A.3 Child Post- Surveys with Results.....	17
A.4 Parents Post- Surveys with Results .....	26

### **B. Collateral Material used at BGHS**

B.1 Healthy Living Bulletins.....	35
B.2 Food Activity Journals.....	42
B.3 Student Pledges.....	44

### **C. Collateral Material used for Girl Scouts**

C.1 Healthy Living for Girls Event Flyer.....	45
C.2 USDA “My Plate” used with Girl Scouts & BGHS.....	46
C.3 USDA “My Plate” Bingo Games.....	47

C.4 Healthy Living for Girls Activity Booklet.....48



**D. Collateral Material used for Boy Scouts**

D.1 Diane Sprowl’s Presentation Outline.....51

D.2 Boy Scouts’ “Physical Activity” Badge Requirements.....53

**E. Campaign Coverage**

E.1 Screenshots of Tweets and

Re□Tweets.....54

E.2 College Heights Herald Coverage.....58

**F. Miscellaneous**

F.1 Thank You Letters.....59

F.2 Feedback Letter from BGHS.....64

F.3 Calendar (Time Line).....65

F.4 Budget.....68

F.5 Smart Bites! Booklet.....69

F.6 Bateman Campaign Booklet.....70