

**2012 Bateman Case Study Competition
Project Brief: Battling Childhood Obesity**

Childhood obesity has tripled in the past 30 years. Today, one in three children is obese.

This issue has become a significant public health problem in the United States. The primary causes are well-documented. According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), childhood obesity is the result of eating too many calories and/or not getting enough physical activity.

Many statistics help explain this trend:

- Approximately 17 percent (or 12.5 million) of children and adolescents aged 2 to 19 years are obese.¹
- Overweight youth are more likely to become overweight or obese as adults. ²
- Children and adolescents who are obese are at greater risk for social and psychological problems such as stigmatization and poor self-esteem. ³
- In 2009, only 18 percent of high school students had participated in at least 60 minutes per day of physical activity, and only 33 percent attended physical education class daily. ⁴
- 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. ⁵
- 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. ⁶
- In 2008, medical costs associated with obesity were estimated at \$147 billion.⁷

COMPETITION OBJECTIVE

The objective of the 2012 Bateman Case Study Competition is to encourage children, teenagers, parents, educators and community organizations to improve their individual health and the health of their community.

MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS ISSUE

- Children just learning about healthy lifestyles
- Overweight children and teens
- Parents of overweight children and teens
- Community agencies/organizations advocating for a healthy lifestyle
- Educators
- Medical professionals (doctors, nurses, dietitians, etc.)

¹ National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), National Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

² U.S. Centers for Disease Control

³ Ibid.

⁴ U.S. Centers for Disease Control Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2009

⁵ U.S. Centers for Disease Control

⁶ Let's Move! Campaign

⁷ U.S. Centers for Disease Control

THE “CLIENT”

The 2012 client-of-record for the Bateman competition is United Way Worldwide, and the 2012 sponsor of the competition is General Mills. Together, United Way Worldwide and General Mills seek to partner with PRSSA and participating young public relations professionals to encourage healthy lifestyles and engage local communities in fighting childhood obesity.

THE OPPORTUNITY

An issue of this magnitude and importance requires teams to address one of our profession’s most difficult challenges: understanding and effecting change in human behavior. Successful teams must creatively engage children, parents, health professionals and local leaders in their communities to encourage the adoption of healthy nutrition and exercise behaviors among individuals and youth, while building and strengthening community and public support. Campaign strategies should be grounded in research, and should look to leverage the interests and trends that motivate children and teens. Tactics should be fun, engaging and inspiring.

A successful campaign will involve:

- Research to define the extent of the problem and determine fact-based influences on unhealthy lifestyles in the targeted community, including analysis of potential disparities by race, gender or socioeconomic status.
- Detailed planning to identify objectives and primary audiences, generate understanding of why change is needed and influence targeted audiences to take action.
 - Including identification and engagement of community partners and collaborators (as research shows that holistic program development is particularly effective in producing results).
- Tactics that effectively promote and encourage the adoption of healthy attitudes and behaviors within a supportive culture working to address and reverse childhood obesity.
 - Including specific roles individuals, families, educators, medical professionals and/or community organizations can play in the introduction and adoption of long-term healthy eating and activity behaviors.
- Evaluation to determine the impact of the campaign on major stakeholders.

Many resources may be helpful, including: (links embedded)

- Your local community United Way
- <http://liveunited.org/healthykids>
- [CDC: Childhood Overweight and Obesity](#)
- [MyPlate](#)
- [Let's Move! Campaign](#)
 - [First Lady's Remarks about Let's Move!](#)
- [Using the Energy Gap to Address Obesity: A Commentary](#)
- General Mills’ [Champions for Healthy Kids](#) youth nutrition and fitness program
- [American Dietetic Association](#)
- [Position of the American Dietetic Association: Total Diet Approach to Communicating Food and Nutrition Information](#)
- [Benefits of Cereal](#)
- [Healthy Weight Commitment Foundation](#)

The judges for this competition understand that a short-term campaign will not and cannot completely resolve this vexing issue. However, they will assess each campaign's impact and the promise it may hold for advancing more sustained and positive outcomes. Campaigns also will be judged on:

- Effectiveness in inspiring change
- Incorporation of healthy nutrition and/or fitness components
- Creativity
- Ability to uniquely engage, interest and motivate youth

Your PRSSA Chapter can make an important contribution to reversing this national trend and inspire children, teenagers and parents in your community to adopt healthy lifestyles. Submit your Intent-To-Enter form now and become a part of this important and timely Bateman Competition!