

TEEN BLOGGERS TACKLE OBESITY AND THE DANGERS OF THE AMERICAN DIET

[YORK, PA] Teenagers are extremely concerned about America's relationship to food. In a national student writing contest hosted by StageofLife.com, a blogging and writing resource, high school students were asked, "Do we have an obligation to take better care of ourselves by making changes in the way we eat and/or buy and consume food?"

Teens from all 50 states visited the writing contest page and dozens participated by submitting an essay. As a whole, the teen bloggers passionately spoke out on a variety of ills tied to the 21st century food industry. Topics ranged from customer observations by a student working at a fast food chicken restaurant to insights that lower-income families often don't have the education, incentive or money to eat healthy.

"Lower socioeconomic groups aren't looking to spend a ton of money at Whole Foods when they can easily go to the nearest fast-food restaurant and pick up the same amount for a lot less," wrote one teen blogger.

Could there be some hope?

StageofLife.com's education and curriculum consultant, Rebecca Thiels, M. Ed., an honors Language Arts teacher at Red Lion Area Senior High School, thinks so,

"Popular TV shows like NBC's 'Biggest Loser' pull in millions of viewers, and books like Michael Pollan's Food Rules fly off the shelves. Even independent film documentaries like 'Food, Inc.' and 'Super Size Me' now push the conversation of America's unhealthy relationship with food into the mainstream consciousness."

Unfortunately, the truth is that obesity in America is nearing an epidemic, and young people are caught in the crossfire. According to the Journal of the American Medical Association, 32% of US children are overweight and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation states the nation is now in danger of raising the first generation of American children who will live sicker and die younger than their parents' generation.

In an effort to fight these trends, StageofLife.com and LearntoBeHealthy.org, a York, PA based non-profit with a mission to combat childhood and teen obesity, are collaborating on a lesson plan teachers can use to encourage teenagers to write about their relationship to food while providing options on healthy alternatives. Stage of Life will be releasing the lesson plan on its education resources and writing lesson plan page.

But lesson plans from teachers aren't the only tools being used to help spread the word on the problem. High school senior, Audrey Keathley from Milton Academy in New York, NY was the StageofLife.com winner for the recent food essay blog contest and she felt a personal responsibility to share her viewpoint,

"I entered the StageofLife.com writing contest because I had something to say about this topic...I encourage more students to try putting their writing out there, because chances are somebody, somewhere is going to want to hear what you have to say."

That's StageofLife.com's hope. That students will continue to share their voice and weigh in on real topics that concern them, their community and the world at large.

The August 2010 StageofLife.com student writing contest tackles the subject of improving education. The writing prompt asks teens, "What suggestion(s) do you have to make a positive change at your school or with the educational system as a whole?"

It's a big question, but the blog entries have already begun to appear. Teen writers must submit their essays through the site by August 31. Rules, details and the submission button can be found at StageofLife.com. Winners receive a gift certificate from Shutterfly.com, SWAG from StageofLife.com, and Featured Writer status on the website as well.

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About Stage of Life™: StageofLife.com is a free, grassroots project hosting blogs, information and resources for teens, Gen Y, Gen X, and Baby Boomer generations. Its specialized content includes [lesson plan ideas for Language Arts teachers](#), monthly [writing contests for high school students](#) and [college students](#) as well as baby story writing contests. In its *My Life Rewards*® program, site visitors have access to a wide collection of direct merchant partnerships, sponsors and coupon offers giving [money saving discounts](#) as StageofLife.com helps provide "Rewards for Life's Journey®."

If you'd like more information about StageofLife.com or an interview with CEO/Founder, Eric Thiags, please us the [Contact Us](#) form on the website or call 717-650-0699.