

February 14, 2010

Dear Editor,

John Kass' column in Sunday's paper is really working out the issue of childhood obesity. If we are going to fight obesity, we have to do it naturally; it must be a way of life. Fat people are not the only unhealthy people; President Clinton looks very healthy but recently had a heart procedure. We can not attack fat people because then we would be missing the real health issue. This fight is not just for kids; it's for families. Kids cannot do it alone; parents are in charge of their children. If we are going to fix the problem, we also have to change our kids' way of life. Parents set expectations and make the ponies run: remove the snow, cut the grass, and rake the leaves.

I live in the city of Chicago and I understand and experience food deserts, which makes it difficult to access fresh and healthy food. Has the First Family made the connection between this fight against childhood obesity and the fight to create jobs now underway in Congress and throughout the country?

So, even though the First Lady is on target in advocating for healthier school lunches, and John Kass advocates for "running those ponies" by getting kids to move more, especially in school gym classes and recesses, we need to do more. Perhaps the First Lady should also fight to end the disparities in job opportunities in poor communities, so that people will have a fighting chance. Sometimes a family's eating habits and daily activities directly result from their socio-economic status in life. Many families confront the challenge of not, "how am I going feed my family better," but "how will I feed my family at all?" Often, the issue is about what parents can afford. When you can only feed your family fried chicken with fries and white bread from the local chicken shack, what is a family to do, because you can get 100 wings, bread and fries for \$40.00, and the family is able to eat. Until we put people to work in all areas, exposing people to a better way of life, and improving their economic situation, the message of eliminating food deserts only speaks to those that can afford to hear it.

Sincerely,

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cc: John Kass