

RESEARCH WRAPUP

A HEALTH CRISIS IS SWEEPING ACROSS AMERICA, FROM big cities like New York and Seattle to small towns like Attleboro, Mass., and Marshall, Minn., and it is largely due to poor lifestyle habits and inactivity. The YMCA's Activate America® program, which is currently targeting 64 cities, towns, regions and states, including the ones mentioned above, was created to directly



Activating America, One City at a Time

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address this problem by proactively working toward improving the health and wellness of each area's residents.

One of the newcomers to this nationwide program is the city and surrounding areas of Asheville, N.C. (For a complete list of participants, visit www.ymca.net/activateamerica and click on the Pioneering Healthier Communities link.) In November 2008, Asheville held a series of meetings to jumpstart its efforts to "Activate Asheville." A wide-ranging group of local organizations, including the YMCA of Western North Carolina (WNC), the University of North Carolina at Asheville, two county school districts and a number of local business owners, joined forces to encourage people "to get moving and live healthier" and, as a long-range goal, make "Asheville and the surrounding area the healthiest communities in North Carolina."

Asheville's approach focuses on creating more livable, walkable communities, fighting childhood obesity, promoting workplace physical activity and connecting community design to a healthy, sustainable economy (visit www.activateasheville.org for more details).

According to Kristen Weaver, the Director of Wellness Advancement for the YMCA of WNC, the organization is in a unique position to impact the health of youth in various areas of the city. "As the largest childcare provider in WNC, we have ample opportunity to educate children on the importance of physical activity. We can also work on creating an environment for children to succeed."


Asheville's business community is also focused on creating such an environment. According to Weaver, the idea is to start small, but in ways that can make a real difference. Updating stairwells with new paint and artwork, adding bike racks outside businesses and encouraging walking meetings are a few of the ideas that can have an immediate impact.

The next step in this process will be the implementation of the ideas that came from those initial meetings. *ACE FitnessMatters* will be revisiting this program periodically to assess how effectively it is able to improve the health of the region's nearly 400,000 residents. 

THOSE \$1 VALUE MENUS CAN BE TEMPTING, ESPECIALLY WHEN MONEY IS TIGHT.

But while an occasional fast-food meal won't derail an otherwise healthy diet, not all fast-food items are created equal. The Cancer Project, a non-profit group dedicated to cancer prevention and survival through nutrition education and research, recently listed the top five "most unhealthful" fast-food value items.

- Jack in the Box Junior Bacon Cheeseburger (400 calories; 23 g fat; 860 mg sodium)
- Taco Bell Cheesy Double Beef Burrito (450 calories; 20 g fat; 1,620 mg sodium)
- Burger King Breakfast Sausage Biscuit (420 calories; 27 g fat; 1,090 mg sodium)
- McDonald's McDouble (390 calories; 19 g fat; 920 mg sodium)
- Wendy's Junior Bacon Cheeseburger (310 calories; 16 g fat; 670 mg sodium)

The Cancer Project recommends choosing slightly healthier alternatives, such as the BK Veggie or a Taco Bell bean burrito, both of which are inexpensive, low-fat and low-cholesterol. 

Source: The Cancer Project www.cancerproject.org

**(Low) Value
Meals**

