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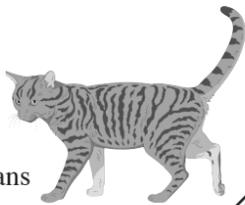
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How health hurts

by Emily Guiles

It is surprising how little many of us know or understand about the key attributes to eating and being healthy. When asked what would be considered unhealthy, the robotic response seems to be McDonald's, or any other kind of fast food. An alarming number of people fail to realize the total expanse of the health food issue. McDonald's is not the sole perpetrator in this crisis, and the prices of healthy products skyrocket. In a world where a can of DelMonte peach chunks is just a fancy name for a hunk of fruit that has been saturated in a vat of corn syrup, everyone has to be aware of what they are eating.

Although there has been a striding attempt to make the public more aware of the food choices they are making, there is not enough being done to solve the problem overall. Health food continues to suffer inflationary prices, as processed and packaged food prices are less costly. While this goes on, people wonder why those in poverty are associated with weight issues and why they cannot better their situation with their limited incomes and hungry families.

The problem does not start with fast food. The general population enables the fast food industry to intrude on our health with our need for speed. The American health food crisis stems from the harder attainability of healthy food. It is not only the customer who suffers from these growing prices. The Health Hutt, a locally-owned Grand Haven and Muskegon area health food store, is one of the resources for healthy food in the area, unless one decides to brave the poorly stocked shelves of the Meijer health food aisle. And as health food prices rise, places like the Health Hutt are forced to raise their prices, too, in order to maintain a profit.

Although Health Hutt's shortage of competition enables them to charge whatever they want to for the quality items that they sell, Brendan, the manager at the Grand Haven Health Hutt, was adamant that they "work hard to be competitive;" and, overall, the prices that they charge are as reasonable as possible due to the fact that they "only sell top value products." When asked if they believe themselves to be a monopoly where they are located, the answer was no, but they are in no hurry to receive some competition. Manager Brendan commented, "Grand Haven couldn't support it."

Overall, healthy eating benefits you in the long run, but best put by a person of interest, "It's inconvenient." Although this is true, the long-term benefits outweigh the short term issues. But there is an exception in the case of money. Those on a fixed income and/or on government assistance cannot afford to take risks when it comes to food for their families, which makes it increasingly difficult to experiment or convert to healthier foods when the cheap brands barely keep them alive.

In a case study, a single-income household with a young daughter who has food allergies that prevent her from eating many food staples, including milk, was

questioned about their food purchases and government assistance. Because of the milk allergy, the family must purchase special cheese from the local health food store after already purchasing regularly-priced cheese for the remainder of the family, including another young daughter and a son in middle school. The specialty cheese costs, on average, \$2 more than the cheese that can be bought at a regular store, with less product in each package. So, multiple packages must be purchased in order to receive the same amount as in a regular package of cheese, resulting in the family's paying nearly two times more for the specialty cheese. Luckily for this family, their local Health Hutt accepts food stamps. If the specialty health food were not needed, the family would save, on average, \$1800 per year, which could be a down payment on a car, or saved in case of emergency. When asked if she'd be more likely to buy healthier foods if they were closer to the prices of regular foods, the mother stated, "Yes, of course." And when asked whether or not she would be able to buy enough healthy food to support her family of five with the household income they have now, she answered with a clear, "No." There is no need for further explanation.

It is not only the parents who feel the full weight of these hard times. Teenage and adolescent dependents are also directly affected. A teenage dependent was interviewed and asked if she felt that she was in control of her eating and lifestyle habits, she answered, "No, I don't. I don't make dinner." Although dependents are still in control of how much food they consume in the household, they are not responsible for the content that they are given to deal with. Further questioning showed that, if given the chance, the interviewee would "definitely try" eating healthier if her circumstances were different and she had the means to do so.

Despite these setbacks and unsettling stories, there has been an expanse in the realm of healthy eating. More and more individuals and families are aware of what they are eating. Grand Haven Health Hutt has even been faced with having to expand their store because of a growth in their customer base. It may be confusing to some why health food is still so expensive if more people are buying it. Can't the stores afford to cut down their prices? It's not so simple. The larger demand only calls for more product. To meet the demand, stores must buy in bulk. Buying more product displaces any profit that they would be set to make based on the growth in customers.

Getting more people to take part in healthy eating is only a small step in the right direction. There is still a tremendous amount of work to be done in the face of cheap processed foods, and poverty. In order to make a real dent in the issue, we need to go to the source. Make it the norm to grow and sell organic and healthy foods instead of the overly processed, barely edible bargain brands that we gorge on today. If healthy food is in demand, farmers will turn and follow the money. •

Pro-abortion advocates use deception to oppose abortion insurance opt-out Letter to the Editor

In an effort to oppose Michigan's recently passed legislation to opt the state out of elective abortion insurance coverage, abortion advocates have put forth a number of misleading statements about the legislation and the efforts which put the legislation before the Michigan legislature. Planned Parenthood even created a web site which plagiarizes large amounts of text from another pro-abortion organization.

On December 11, the Michigan House (62-47) and Senate (27-11) approved the citizen-initiated Abortion Insurance Opt-Out Act to prevent tax dollars and health insurance premiums from paying for abortion insurance after thousands of Michigan citizens collected more than 315,000 signatures.

Abortion advocates, including State Representative Colleen Lamonte, disparaged the legislation, claiming it wouldn't allow insurance to cover the treatment of miscarriages despite the text of the law clearly defining elective abortion and clearly says the treatment of a miscarriage is not an elective abortion.

State Senator Gretchen Whitmer falsely claimed that the signatures initiating the legislation were paid for. She provided no evidence for her claim because around 10,000 Michigan citizens voluntarily circulated petitions and no one was paid for signatures.

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan even created a web site entitled "Enough is Enough" to attack the legislation.

The web site had a variety of talking points against the legislation, information about contacting legislators,

a place to sign up to get involved and a section where women from Michigan can supposedly share their stories.

The "stories" section included four written stories along with videos of pro-abortion legislators testifying against the opt-out legislation. The four written stories are plagiarized nearly word for word from two separate NARAL Pro-Choice America (a national pro-abortion group) web sites.

Since the decade-old stories are copied and pasted nearly word for word, and no citation is given, it is notable that in two of the stories Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan decided to make some edits. They specifically edited out how far along the women were in their pregnancies.

NARAL's web site says that Vicki Stella was in her 32nd week of pregnancy when she discovered her child had fetal abnormalities. Planned Parenthood changed this to say Stella was "months into her pregnancy." NARAL's web site notes that "Gilda Restelli was nearly 30 weeks pregnant" while Planned Parenthood changed this to say Restelli was "well into her pregnancy."

As they tried to drum up sympathetic stories, abortion advocates also plagiarized the writings of another pro-abortion organization and deceptively edited those stories also.

Learn how you can protect life in Michigan. Visit Right to Life of Michigan at www.RTL.org or call the right to Life of Michigan State Central Office at (616) 532-2300.

Right to Life of Michigan

Fruitport VFW Auxiliary 3734 sponsored programs

(Submitted by the Fruitport VFW Auxiliary 3734)

Voice of Democracy: This year's theme is "Why veterans are important to our nation's history and future." This is a scholarship contest open to students in grades 9 through 12. It should be submitted as a typed essay as well as recorded on a standard cassette tape or CD and should be three to five minutes in length.

Patriots Pen: The theme is "Why I appreciate

America's veterans." This contest is open to students in grades six through eight. This is a typed essay, 200 to 400 words in length.

The deadline for these contests is November 1, 2014. The prizes are yet to be determined. For more information, please contact scholarship chairman Florence Smith at (231)737-7281. •