

No WEIGH, Come Out And Play!

"Exercise is one of the best ways in preventing the rapid growth of obesity in America"- Lee Haney. Childhood obesity is a serious threat to the health of the children of Hawaii. High cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes are not only adult diseases anymore. Today, an alarming number of children are being diagnosed with these conditions. A cousin of mine found out he had high cholesterol when he was 11 years old. At that time, he was 5'8" and weighed 200 pounds. Part of the problem is children eat more junk foods now than they did before. Another part is we spend less time playing outside and more time sitting in front of the TV or Xbox. HICORE (Hawaii Initiative for Childhood Obesity Research and Education) has come up with the slogan "Hawaii 5210 Let's Go" to remind people to eat five fruits and vegetables a day, have two hours or less of screen time a day, 1 hour or more of physical activity a day, and zero sugary drinks. Obesity is a factor in Hawaii and more awareness on physical health needs to be addressed.

It is difficult for kids in low income households to participate in organized sports due to lack of funds and equipment. I remember when my team used to practice baseball at Beretania Park; kids from that area would be sitting around with nothing more than towels to play with. One way to engage them would be to organize community groups that would go out to different parks every weekend and encourage the kids, in that area, to come out and play. We could play football, basketball, relay

races, and many more fun activities. Everyone would be welcome to join in, no fees or signing up would be required, and we would provide all the necessary equipment. It wouldn't matter what school you went to or what nationality you were, we could all play together. We would simply call our program "Come Out And Play" (COAP). We could obtain equipment through fundraising and asking for donations from health organizations such as HMSA, Kaiser Permanente, and the State Department of Health. They would likely donate because they want to keep Hawaii's keiki healthy too.

In conclusion, childhood obesity is a serious threat to the future of Hawaii. Currently about 27 percent of children in Hawaii are considered overweight or obese. If we continue to ignore this problem than fifty percent of children will likely be obese by the year 2020. Obese children grow up to be obese adults with many medical issues. Clarence T.C. Ching understood the value of being physically active. He participated in school sports by being a boxer at Saint Louis School. He would likely have supported this program because he came from a poor immigrant family; Clarence T.C. Ching never forgot about giving back to the community even after he became successful.