

Your childhood?

Childhood obesity in the Hawaiian Islands is an epidemic! Through hard work and perseverance it can be resolved. Literally, obesity has been labeled as disease, and can lead to multiple chronic illnesses such as diabetes, depression, and even cancer. As early as the 1980's scientists began seeing increases in the obesity rate of our country and today the rate continues in that direction. Forty years ago our country had a mere 5% rate of childhood obesity. In 2008 childhood obesity tripled to 15%. Although these numbers are nationwide, they are widely reflected on Hawaii. Clarence T.C. Ching had a vision. He wanted to help the sick and aged. He would not have wanted this.

We should be working hard to cure childhood obesity. Not only is it hurting our wallets, but it's also hurting our health. Obesity can kill! Diabetes is in direct relation with childhood obesity and rates have doubled statewide in the past decade! Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in the U.S. at an astounding 567,628 deaths per year. With regards to our wallets, obesity is increasing tax dollars! Nationwide we are spending 150 billion dollars per year on obesity related diseases.

Recently the government has begun to take action against childhood obesity, led by our first lady, Michelle Obama. She has started up an organization that is targeting parents and schools. The initiative is working towards improving school lunches and informing parents on how to keep a healthy environment in homes. This has the potential to work because we need to stop this problem at the source. We need to get the parents to get their kids involved in sports and activities.

The above solution may be too dependent on the responsibility of parents and the individual kids. We need to establish a program that kids can join and enjoy. We want to create good memories associated with being healthy. This program will include free parks

and recreation sporting activities targeting mainly the younger children because one in three children in Hawaii passing through kindergarten are obese. The program will introduce fun fitness games such as freeze tag and then as the kids get older gradually work towards soccer and other sports. Programs like this have the potential to work because younger kids will get hooked on sports by making them fun so that they will want to continue participating through their childhood keeping them healthy.

Clarence T.C. Ching set the stage for the rest of the state. When he was a child he was sickly but over the years he grew up and through hard work became a champion boxer in high school.

“The rise of childhood obesity places the health of an entire generation at risk”
-Tom Vilsack. Hawaii, we need to get our act together before it's too late. Everyone should fight to keep the kids of this state active because all children deserve a healthy start to their lives.