



Editor **Dina Sciortino**: Heard some news you want us to check out? Let me know: [Dina.Sciortino@patch.com](mailto:Dina.Sciortino@patch.com)

**eliminating racism empowering women**  
**ywca**  
 White Plains 914.949.6227 [CLICK HERE](#)

**Looking for adventure for your teen this summer?**

# WhitePlainsPatch 41°

[Get the Patch Newsletter](#)

[BUSINESS](#), [GOVERNMENT](#), [SCHOOLS](#), [SPORTS](#), [THE NEIGHBORHOOD FILES](#), [VOLUNTEERS IN THE NEWS](#)

## White Plains Fights Childhood Obesity

Several community members turned out to participate in a forum on childhood obesity, and the devastating consequences that come with it.

By **T.J. Raphael** March 14, 2011

Recommend You recommend **White Plains Fights Childhood Obesity**. [Undo](#) · [Admin Page](#) · [Insights](#) · [Error](#)

There are an estimated **400,000** premature deaths each year due to complications from obesity, according to the New York Medical College in Valhalla. This is why White Plains is gearing up to fight childhood obesity, and help families make healthy lifestyle choices.

“This could be the first generation of kids to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents,” said Dr. Karen Seligman, head of preventive cardiology and assistant professor of pediatrics of New York Medical College.

To rein in the growing problem, and to promote healthy living—the [White Plains Youth Bureau](#), the [Westchester Food Bank](#), [White Plains Public Schools](#), the New York Medical College and the [Stop & Shop](#) on Westchester Avenue, held a summit Thursday at the grocery store on detrimental effects and possible solutions to childhood obesity.

Seligman told those at the forum that childhood obesity has increased from five to 17 percent in the past 30 years. The doctor said complications from obesity can have life-altering effects.

“There’s been also a steep rise in many associated diseases, starting with type 2 diabetes, which is the type of diabetes you’re supposed to get in adulthood—now we see it a lot in children,” she said.

Seligman has also seen a rise in overweight children who are now suffering from high blood pressure, abnormal cholesterol and liver disease that alcoholics normally suffer from.

“All of these [statistics] are very alarming,” Seligman said. “These are all evidence of the scope of the problem.”

Preventing obesity starts with a healthy lifestyle—eating right and staying active. Limiting “screen time” in front of the computer or television and foster active play time and engagement in sports, coupled with a diet free of trans fats.

“[Eat] less solid fats, less added sugars, less sodium, more whole grains—make half your grains whole, they say,” Seligman said. “The reason is the refined grains really just have all the carbs and the sugar and the whole grains have the nutrients and the fiber that actually can protect from some of the effects of these other things.”

[Acting Mayor Thomas Roach](#) also spoke on the importance of children receiving a proper diet filled with healthy meals and loads of nutrition.

“Childhood obesity is a major concern in this country—both the health of children, their health as adults and for the costs that will be associated,” said Roach. “People talk about health care costs in this country, sick people obviously cost you more than healthy people. I recall as a child my mother, when we got home from school, we had about five minutes to get changed, have a snack and then it was out of the house—“Ill call you at dinner time.” That method doesn’t seem to be the same anymore, kids are more sedentary.”

The White Plains Youth Bureau offers several activities to engage youngsters physically, as well as a community garden that teaches kids and community members about locally grown produce and healthy foods.



[View full size](#)

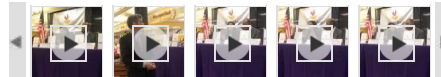
[Embed](#)

Share

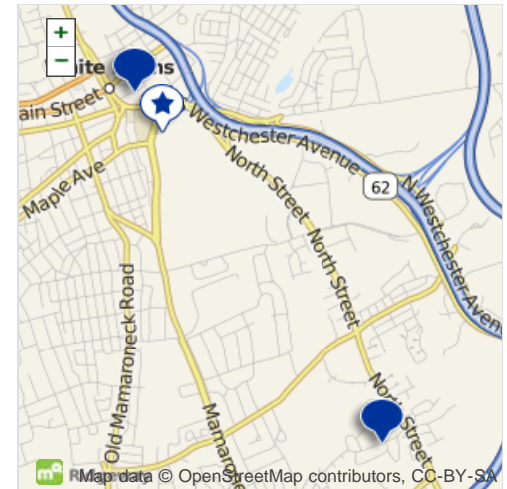
PHOTOS (5)  
PHOTOS



VIDEOS (15)  
VIDEOS



[Add your photos & videos](#)



"This problem of diabetes is growing rapidly in communities of color," said Frank Williams, the youth bureau's executive director, who served as chairman of the forum. "It's time to act to save our youth and encourage a healthy lifestyle."

Brenda Madera, a registered nurse and the health service coordinator for the White Plains City School District, spoke about how the district is intervening to help children eat healthier.

"All of our vending machines, there's no soda, there's no sugary drinks. [We have] low fat milk, whole grains—we've done a lot of things," Madera said. "We have more to do, yes."

Madera said the district is working on getting children more active through recess and gym time, as well as less conventional approaches like Dance Dance Revolution and Wii Fit games. Additionally, the district is trying to educate children on healthy eating habits and the importance of whole grains and fruits and vegetables.

Executive Director of the Food Bank of Westchester Christina Rohatynsky spoke about the efforts of getting healthy and nutritious meals to the neediest families who struggle to afford healthy food.

"One of the programs that we are most proud of and that we've been doing for 10 years now is called Project Green Thumb," she said. "We actually purchase locally grown produce [for local families]. We bring that in and do three vegetables and two fruits, bag it up with enough product for a family of four for two or three days [and] produce a nutrition flyer that talks about the nutrition of the product and some simple recipes."

Rohatynskyj said that about 1,200 families receive these produce bags every week with recipes for preparing healthy meals in both English and Spanish. The director said that when produce items are given out line volume has increased with people lining up hours in advance.

"We realize this is a very important issue," Rohatynskyj said.

Vice President of Consumer Affairs of Stop & Shop Andrea Astrachan also spoke at the forum to give audience members a sense of what retailers and producers are doing to help eliminate childhood obesity.

"We finally realized as a supermarket company we have an issue, we sell food and we feel that we have a responsibility to help the community make healthy choices," Astrachan said. "We label all the truly healthy foods throughout our store, based on the FDA and USDA 'My Pyramid,' we have a 'Healthy Ideas' symbol. As you shop our store only foods that are truly healthy are designated with the 'Healthy Ideas' symbol and I raise that today because as moms shop with their kids I encourage them to look for that symbol and pick something out and stick that in their shopping basket."

Astrachan also said that Stop & Shop has taken on this effort by instituting candy free check out lanes that are instead stocked with pretzels, low fat yogurt, 100 percent juice drinks and low fat items. The supermarket has also started store tours with groups like Girl Scouts of America to educate youngsters about healthy foods. Stop & Shop also has interactive games on their web site for children to further educate parents and kids about nutrition, health and good eating habits. View their Passport To Nutrition kids site [here](#).

Nicole Stansbury, the YWCA's Youth and Community Services Director, was among the audience members that shared how to improve the health and wellness of children.

"We've been very deliberate in changing our menu so this year we have a three day a week vegetable—carrot sticks, celery and ranch dressing," Stansbury said. "In conjunction with that we have fitness three days a week and we have swimming."

The kids in the YWCA after school program also engage in soccer, take cooking classes with a professional chef to teach healthy habits and a parent participation program designed to educate moms and dads as well.

"Our goal this year is really to increase our parent participation so that if we know the school is feeding them healthy food during the day, we can do our part in the afternoon [and] now we can work with our parents to ensure they have a good dinner then we feel we're doing our part in helping with [eliminating] obesity," Stansbury said.

Here are some healthy food alternative from Stop & Shop:

### **Breakfast Items**

- Fat free or low fat yogurt, the drinkable version makes it easy
- A toasted whole grain waffle, you can take that with you on the go
- Breakfast cereal bars, look for the ones with eight grams of fat or less of sugar, and two or more grams of fiber per serving
- Try a whole wheat wrap or pita bread with low fat cream cheese or peanut butter
- A whole grain mini-bagel with light cream cheese
- A piece of fruit

### **Snack Items**

- A few slices of low fat turkey or chicken breast
- Fun shaped waffle pretzel squares, baked chips, bread sticks, low-fat crackers and popcorn
- String cheese

- Apple sauce and fruit
- Veggies with low fat salad dressing

**Like us on Facebook ([facebook.com/WhitePlainsPatch](http://facebook.com/WhitePlainsPatch)) and follow us on Twitter ([twitter.com/WhitPlainsPatch](http://twitter.com/WhitPlainsPatch))**

What do you think of this epidemic? How do you keep your kids healthy? [Tell us in the comments.](#)

Interested in a follow-up to this article?



Email



Share on Facebook



Share on Twitter



Start Following



Print



SEE NEXT IN BUSINESS

[Photos: City Celebrates St. Patrick's Day](#)



## COMMENTS (3)

annamarie

9:25am on Monday, March 14, 2011

**A European filmmaker has been reversing weight problems in NON diabetics with a Diabetes diet. It has been giving people who have a hard time losing weight a normal body weight fast**

It is now used in 10 countries. ALL weight issues are caused by Food chemicals and he shows how to reverse it

SEE HERE <http://spirithappy.wordpress.com/new-type-2-diabetes-diet-cure>

[Log in to reply](#)

Andre Toorenburg

3:51pm on Monday, March 14, 2011

G'Day

Research has shown that there are 3 things that we as parents can do to help overcome childhood obesity 1/ change the kids diet 2/ get them off the couch and way from the TV/computer and 3/ exercise. Changing the kids diet and getting them off the couch. Hey we can help with that.

How about being able to say to your kids "Who wants some chocolate?" Is there such a thing as healthy, natural chocolate? YES, unbelievable but true. My partner Pamela Vinten has written an eBook called 'Chocolate Recipe Guilt Free' which has plenty of info and over 70 original recipes using our healthy chocolate. [www.chocolaterecipeguiltfree.com](http://www.chocolaterecipeguiltfree.com) Here is a very simple and easy recipe to make that the kids will love and come back for more every time. The ingredients are available from any good health food store or online.

Ingredients

½ cup coconut oil

½ cup cacao powder

¼ cup agave

Method

Melt coconut oil (if solid) in a basin over very warm water. Combine with cacao powder and agave and mix well. Taste and adjust the sweetness if necessary. Place in pantry ready for use. If solid when ready to use place in a basin over very warm water till runny

Get some bananas and cut them in half. Place an ice-cream stick or toothpick in the end and put in freezer overnight. Dip the frozen banana in the runny chocolate sauce and wait till the chocolate sets hard. They are yummy, healthy and the kids will love them and be back for more.

Enjoy

Team Chocolate

Andre & Pam

[Log in to reply](#)



Dina Sciortino

4:51pm on Monday, March 14, 2011

This is wonderful! Thanks Annemarie, Andre and Pam for taking the time to give us these great resources.

LEAVE A COMMENT



## Advertise

Advertise on Patch and reach potential customers in your backyard and beyond. [Click here for more information.](#)

## Volunteer

If you want to help local causes, or your cause needs local help, your next click should be right here.

## Contribute

- + [Send us news tips](#)
- + [Put an event on the calendar](#)
- + [Announce something to everyone](#)

[Newsletters](#) [Widgets](#) [About Us](#) [Jobs](#) [Terms of Use](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Patch.org](#) [PatchU](#) [Advertise](#) [Patch Blog](#)

[How can we improve Patch?](#)

Copyright © 2011 Patch. All Rights Reserved.