

The resurrection of home economics

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Adolescents today are left to find their way through the labyrinth that is nutrition. Being forced to observe the tastiest items in front of their eyes, while being told they lead to diabetes and obesity, or having to choose between what is the most efficient versus the most healthy, is the challenge we imply on kids old enough to barely understand the fundamentals of math.

Why not help them? Making home economics/cooking at home classes available for our youth, gives them the opportunity to develop better health habits in the comfort of their own classrooms. As a country, obesity in young people has skyrocketed dramatically, starting from what we feed our children at home. When left to make their own decisions nutritionally, kids are influenced by the countless hours of brainwashing television convincing them to eat the most vibrant cereal, or stickers on packages implying that a delicious meal is only a cup of hot water and three minutes away. We leave our kids defenseless to the wealth driven hypnosis of the food industry by buying them. It is time for us to take accountability and take action.

However, it is understandable.

As a working guardian with a full time job or obligations, it becomes more difficult to carve out thirty to forty minutes in an evening to prepare a three course meal. With the fast pace life that many americans live today, children are more often left to become more and more independent as time goes on, leaving them with meals to make and little information to help them make them. Traces of unhealthy eating can be found stemming throughout the life of an adolescent, starting with their own school. In 2000, a study done in California showed 71% of high schools in California sold fast food during lunch time, including Taco Bell and Domino's pizza. These statistics

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intertwine with the documentary *Fed Up* (2014), directed by Stephanie Soechtig, which claims a majority schools across the country pair with fast food chains to serve fast food during student's lunches. Rather than worrying about the nutrition of the food served, schools often take more priority in the quantity, efficiency and money they can save by serving microwave to plate foods.

This causes students to ingest more sugars and fats during their school time, instead of being encouraged to choose healthier options or pack their own lunch. With the fast paced, jampacked mornings that most students encounter before starting their day at school, many become more likely to purchase the unhealthy foods served at lunchtime, because there is little to no time to pack their own lunch. In a survey taken of 87 students going to Natomas Charter School, 51% reported that they did not make their own meals because of time constraints, while another 42% put the blame on convenience. These teenagers are taught that home cooked meals take more time with a higher complexity than popping a hot pocket in the microwave and clicking the two minute button. Although this may be true, many are not given the tools to learn recipes that can be not only nutritious, but quick and delicious.

Healthy eating can start at a moderate scale, meaning cutting down on the number of chips packed in a lunch or replacing a juice bottle with a water bottle. Making larger adjustments to their diets would take the help of others, because of the constant bombardment of junk foods as well as “efficient” meals. This is where the home economics classes come in. The home economics class would be an amazing opportunity for students to take <https://assignbuster.com/the-resurrection-of-home-economics/>

a course that provides them with healthier eating options as well as hands on recipes. Instead of using nutrition textbooks and reading articles on the dangers of sugar, why not make the process a little more entertaining with classes on how to prepare a healthier pasta dish for dinner or a delicious sandwich for lunch? Speaking from experience, students are drawn to the idea of free food and snacks, which can be used as an advantage when planning the class.

Start the course with a food lover, who has the ability to teach teenagers the delicious side of healthy eating. The goal is to destroy the myth that healthy food takes the sacrifice of time and palatable options. Whether this becomes a unit in the health classes already installed in the curriculum today, or a new class all together, addressing the steps to health eating through sufficient meals is a topic that is needed to slowly but surely bring disease and obesity to a simmer throughout the country. What would this class take to become a reality? What would we need? At many schools across the country, the cafeteria, as well as other classes such as chemistry, have already been provided with the equipment needed to make a basic meal. However, if the course is to become a curriculum in itself, there is a need for other supplies, such as foods, hotplates, or any other items necessary to carry out the recipes used.

In science classes today, students are often required to make a deposit at the beginning of the class that gears towards the lessons and equipment needed for in class lab projects. Why not implement this concept into the home economics classroom? For twenty dollars at the beginning of the year, a student can pay for the foods brought to the classroom and equipments

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used to make the meals. Although this may not cover every penny needed for supplies, it has the ability to make up a huge chunk of the money needed to run the class throughout the year. Working with the school district in each area, has the potential to cover the rest of the money needed. The appeal to students can be massive. Any elective, or curriculum involving working with and eating food will perk the ears of any teenager, guaranteed.

The food made in the class being delicious and nutritious, only adds to the number of students who would be willing to partake. Making this class available to high schools across the nation would lead to students gaining knowledge on the food they eat and their own bodies. With this, teenagers suddenly become young adults, parents and maybe even teachers, who carry an understanding of the values of nutrients and how to implement them into day to day life for themselves and their children, family or students. Home Economics has the potential to teach students hundreds of useful things to look for in their diets. In a survey taken at Natomas Charter School, out of the 87 students questioned, 77% admitted they either did not recall or did not learn about the recommended daily sugar intake in their previous health classes. The ignorance towards the effects of diets on their health and well being continues its trend, as the only 30% of students admitted they felt completely confident in their body image.

This course could not only help prevent diseases, such as type 2 diabetes and obesity down the line, it has the potential to build self esteem and body image, which is essential to the worry-free life of a teenage student. As is explored in the documentary Fed Up (2014), eating healthy foods intertwines with the way people look at themselves and their bodies. The healthier you

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eat, translates to your self esteem, helping it become stronger and even flourish. The food industry has done a terrifyingly thorough job of making sure sugars and diet destroying elements of food are completely covered with a “ ready in five minutes,” or “ 50% less fat” sticker, however, it is way past time to fight back. Installing Home Economics into curriculum, and teaching students the importance of diets and how to make efficient food with nutritional value, is the least we can do to give our children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews the tools to live a longer, healthier lifestyle. The potential to influence the lives of teenagers across the country, and cut down on disease, obesity and low self esteem is in the palm of our hands, starting with things as simple as a class in high schools.

Take the initiative, and help the children of our country live healthier lives through fun and exciting classes. Let us pester the education system until they bring Home Economics to a high school near you. Students are required to get an education, why not use it to make their lives longer and more fulfilled?