

Revolutionizing the evident effects of mystery meat

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

For the first time in history, the present generation of children has a shorter life expectancy than that of their parents. Without even analyzing the individual circumstances, an infant will be stamped a number on his/her head for simply living in these times.

After the home, a typical child will spend the most time at school. According to the November 2013 record of participation in the National School Food Program, 31.6 million lunches were served within the month. According to the Kids' Safe and Healthful Project, about half of a student's daily calorie intake comes from school. Many of the participating students come from low income families and for certain children, school is the only source of food.

The Institute of Medicine says, " Schools are at the heart of children's health and a national focal point for obesity." It is evident that the food provided in school is significant in our communities and that the execution of the program is imperative in the nation's health. If school is responsible for promoting healthy children and minds, then why is there ambiguity in the school food system? Why aren't we aware of the ingredients and what is being hidden? The vagueness of school food can be epitomized in the phrase " mystery meat"; however this comical phrase has become a serious issue. The obesity epidemic is the result of the lack of food education and corporate American minds. The reality is that the food given to our children is callously created by corporate businessmen and not chefs. Adolescence is a crucial part of life; it's when children emulate their role models, become easily influenced and learn to adapt to habits.

If we don't seize this opportunity to change this generation's lifestyle, we are risking an inevitable health tragedy. School provides an opportunity to teach children to make healthy decisions and so we need to make every effort to revolutionize the current circumstances through education and improvements. Before it gets to the tray and eaten by our children, the food offered goes through various processes that consumers aren't aware of. Not only should we be concerned about the chemicals and processes used in production, but we should be concerned about what is being served to begin with. One might think that the use of unsafe chemicals is to discreetly increase shelf life and taste in what at least appears to be healthy food.

However the program does not try to hide its avaricious motives by providing both low quality and unhealthy foods. Essentially, children lunches have become fast food that even the children don't always like. Schools need to start gathering ingredients from local distributors and cook directly in the kitchen, not in factories. Ideally, lunches shouldn't need to rely on advertisement but on substance. Instead of posting the nutrition, allergen information and ingredients, cafeterias participating in the lunch program post calendars with deceiving titles like "Golden Crispy Cheesy Mozzarella Sticks with Marinara Sauce and Fresh Braised Collards." Similarly to the food marketing in America, the lunch program attempts to blind the consumers with descriptive and sensory jargon to draw away from the necessary information.

According to an article by David Knowles, " 'Pink slime' slips back into school lunches in four more states" in the NY Daily News , controversy arose in

<https://assignbuster.com/revolutionizing-he-evident-effects-of-mystery-meat/>

2012 over ammonia treated ground beef otherwise known as, “pink slime” usage in fast food chains. The ground beef is made from leftover fat and meat from other cuts, spun to remove fat and exposed to hydroxide and ammonia to kill bacteria. A viral image of what appeared to be smooth pink ice cream spread across the news instigating fear and disgust among consumers. As a result, McDonald’s, Wendy’s and other popular fast food chains addressed the concern by halting their use. However, last year the National School Food program was contracted to purchase 111.

5 million pounds of the ground beef. People were shocked that the program reacted to the news in such a way; instead of refraining from it they purchased more of the several pennies per pound meat. If this issue is one of the few that have been publicized, what is left in the system for us to discover? What’s being offered at schools provides another issue for American students. At many schools, processed flavored milk is served once or twice a day. The sweetened milk available is created with an unnecessary amount of sugar, additives, preservatives and artificial colors and flavors. By doing this, children begin to perceive flavored milk as an acceptable and nutritious choice when it should only be seen as a treat.

The “Raise your Hand for Chocolate Milk!” campaign is one of the many examples of how corporations believe the only way for children to consume the proper nutrients is by adding unnecessary sugar. Although many claim that flavored milk is no harm, the facts remain. According to the Journal of the American Dietetic Association, the primary source of added sugars in the American diet and calorie source of the average teen is sugary drinks.

According to Severson in "A School Fight Over Chocolate Milk", 70% of the daily milk consumed in schools is flavored. By removing the milk in schools, we are providing a healthier environment for kids and reducing the costs for schools. Not only is flavored milk detrimental to health, but it is also more expensive for schools to purchase.

Although the school is reimbursed depending on the amount of milk consumed, activism in food through education can provide students with the information they need to make informed decisions while maintaining the schools' reimbursements. Not only should we be concerned about the food being served, but we should understand how important a foundation on food education is. The food schools offer should be the beginning of a healthy lifestyle and education should be the next step in preparing our students for life. A cooking class or a health program focused on nutrition can help every single student. The knowledge we gather in the classroom doesn't need to wait to be implemented.

Nobody will wait until they've chosen their profession to say, "What I learned in food education was absolutely useless" and nobody will say, "When am I ever going to need this?" because everybody needs it and everybody needs it now. What we learn now will be used today and for the rest of our lives. It'll start with an individual who takes the initiative to influence friends and family and it will keep spreading across the nation. Programs like "Learn your Fruits and Vegetables" inspire children to make the right decisions and teach them about how it can save their lives. If students are more involved with the process of cooking and are able to

recognize healthier foods, they are more likely to eat it. By improving food literacy, this revolution will increase the school's academic and athletic performance.

According to a study performed by "Feed Me", pupils involved performed better in English and science and decreased their authorized absences by 15% compared to those who didn't participate. Food education is the standard curriculum of the classroom and of our lives; there is no reason why it's placed after any other academic course. Revolution is possible. Anybody who reads this possesses the power to change his/her community. Nobody should assume the next person is doing it or that they are too small to stand. Tangible proof exists from your local community to your entire country.

PS 244 of Flushing, NY is a quintessential example of how change can happen. The elementary school is the first in the country to change to a completely vegetarian diet. According to the school's principal Robert Groff, the academic performance has been rising ever since the adaptation of the vegetarian menu and 90% of students are choosing the vegetarian lunch menu over bringing food from home. That isn't the only way we can revolutionize school food, there are numerous alternatives that all lead to healthy lifestyles. An example of a solution can be a slightly more costly food alternative that includes fresh fruits and vegetables.

Parents and families will be involved because they will be making the decision of whether or not they want to nourish their kids properly. With the aid of successful food education, children will know to choose the healthier option. Gradually they will begin to adapt to the lifestyle they learn about in

the classroom and one day all the students will make the right switch. By that point, corporations will know what kids want and tend to their desires while offering quality food. Another way we can provide healthy foods is by gathering parents to volunteer to cook and/or provide ingredients.

This program is implemented in small town schools and churches and it should be brought to the greater public. Just because a school is large, it doesn't mean a sense of community and care is lost. If anything, it should mean there are more enthusiastic families who want to create a greater good. The importance of this investment in time and/or money is not to be looked over. People need to realize that it's possible to make kids enjoy healthy foods and that the investment is worth it.

Food can't be manufactured like computers and phones; food processing and chemicals aren't advanced. Technology isn't horrible, but one day maybe it'll become advanced enough to turn us back to humans. Until that day, there's no harm in going back to the basics and caring about the next generation.