

By Lindsay Marshall, News Editor

What do President Barack Obama and chef Jamie Oliver have in common? They are both pushing for a healthier America. With Oliver's new show "The Food Revolution," which airs March 26 on ABC, and Obama's plan to ban junk food from the nation's schools, eating healthily is quickly becoming a trend in society.

First Lady Michelle Obama is leading a campaign to end childhood obesity, and the Obama administration is considering banning all sugary and high-fat foods from schools in order to help the cause. While school nutrition directors are pleased with this proposal, many schools are upset with the thought of losing the money that vending machines provide. However, Hillsborough County's nutrition director, Mary Kate Harrison, said that it would be acceptable to keep the vending machines, but offer healthier choices instead of the candy, chips, and the other junk food that they currently contain.

Some regulations have already been set regarding vending machines. Neighboring counties like Hernando limit junk food snacking to after the bell has rung for school to end, and Pasco has already removed some unhealthy foods from the machines. According to "The Food Revolution," Huntington, West Virginia, is the unhealthiest city in America, and by changing the ways of Huntington, Oliver hopes to alter the habits of the rest of the country as well.

"I really take issue with a guy coming into town and telling us how we should conduct our lives," said Huntington radio show host Rod Willis after interviewing Oliver about his project.

The unhealthiness is quite apparent in this town, though, as Oliver watches in pain as six-year-olds cannot correctly identify vegetables and lunch ladies tell him that French fries are their form of vegetables.

Many students also believe in change for schools' food programs, especially vegetarian students. "I think Durant should offer more vegetarian alternatives," said senior Alexandria Bell. "Picking the meat out of the salads so you can eat it isn't fun. Plus, just because I'm vegetarian doesn't mean all I want to eat is lettuce. We need variety."

In addition to schools, Oliver wants to change the fast food industry so they will sell healthier

options, and to simply cause a "food revolution."

"Everyone can do better," Oliver said on the show's promo. "I'm here to inspire and show America that just a little effort can make a massive difference."

Oliver predicts that children today will not live as long as their parents unless they have a major change in their dietary habits. At an elementary school in Huntington, pizza is being served for breakfast; unless, of course, Oliver has his way.

In Hillsborough County, school nutrition directors claim that students are now eating healthier than ever before.

With shows like "The Biggest Loser," America has seen the adverse affects of eating mass amounts of unhealthy foods. Diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and increased risk of stroke are all consequences of unhealthy eating.

The obesity epidemic could be defeated if all the changes



Lindsay Marshall/PawPrint
In the cafeteria, senior Tasha Nicholson eats pizza, one of the healthier lunch options available on Durant's menu.

being implemented by the Obama administration are passed through the actions taken by school district nutrition directors help public schools become more health-food friendly, and the challenges faced by Oliver and his "Food Revolution" are overcome.

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