

BOH Magazine



July 2013 | Volume 1 Issue 1

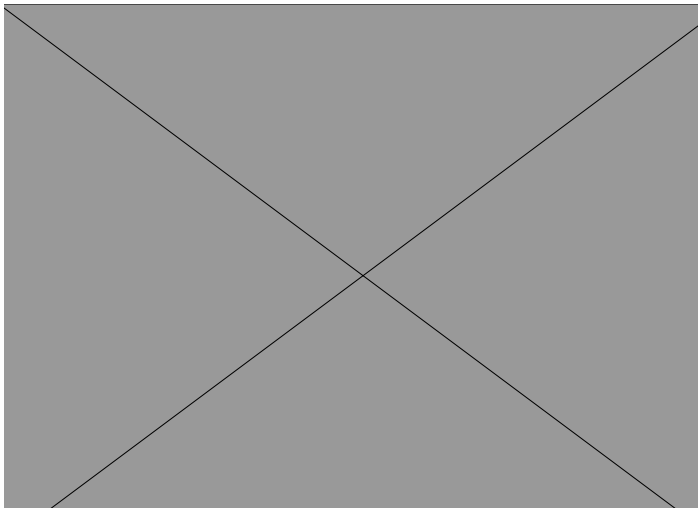
Health, Foods and Communities

Growing Opportunity Across America

Stressed Because they are Poor or Poor because they are stressed

Summer Recipe | Autism | International Reach

www.bloggersofhealth.com



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Bloggers of Health began with a vision, which is to help inspire people in communities from all nations learn more about their surroundings, their physical and mental health, and overall, their communities' health.

Physical health is the utmost precious thing we have; it encompasses lifestyle, food, exercise, environment, business, finance, beauty, and mental health. Without your body and your well-being you are – well – not you.

We as individuals sometimes have “life restrictions,” but this should not stop us from loving and living life, and continuing to jump hurdles to work toward our goals. I can tell you from my personal experience, having pain everyday is not fun, but I make the best of it and I continue to go forward,

move, work and make things happen. I've learned that it is the way I think and how I choose to see life that allows me to conquer my goals. I am a person in progress, and this is something we all are.

BOH Magazine was created with you in mind. Ultimately, my hope is that this online publication grows to become a print magazine one day. Why? Because I want people who aren't connected to social media to know about healthy living, too – I'm talking about our parents, grandparents, and even children outside of the United States who don't have access to social media (let alone the Internet).

Something I've learned thus far in life is that we must take care of ourselves in order to take care of others. We hope we can help you in that process through BOH Magazine. This issue is moved by our eclectic style, to show you how diverse health can be. I hope you enjoy our first issue. There will be many more to come.

Thank you to my team; without you, we could not be Bloggers Of Health. I appreciate all of you.

Smile (if you want), keep it healthy and just be.

Jes Sofia Valle

CEO and Founder

www.BloggersofHealth.com

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Autism Acceptance Month

BY ROBERT MORAN

April is officially Autism Awareness Month, but it should be renamed Autism Acceptance Month. By now most people are aware that autism exists; hardly a week goes by when there is no mention of autism in the media. It has become a part of the national lexicon. Yet, every April we are forced to participate in Autism Awareness Month as if we are all just hearing about it for the first time. For those of us who are autistic and for the parents of autistic children often the first time we heard the word autism is when a diagnosis was given. For me, that was nearly twenty years ago. Much has changed since then.

The word autism was relatively unknown in the mid-1990s. If my family and I told anyone I had autism, blank stares would usually follow except on the rare occasion someone had watched the movie "Rain Man". The person would often look at me in disbelief saying that I could not possibly be autistic. I still get that to this day, but it has nothing to do with being unaware of autism but more to do with not understanding it.

Awareness simply denotes that a person is conscious of the existence of something, it does not imply that they actually understand it, though. I am aware that the sun exists in the sky, but I don't pretend to understand how the sun works – I was never really very good at science. That being said, every April, many of us in the autism community groan or just roll our eyes every time we hear about Autism Awareness Month.

The word acceptance can provide some very strong reactions, especially regarding autism. Some people will just never accept its existence; others do accept it, but understand that a simple change in terminology requires an even bigger change in society's ableist mindset. You are,

after all, only valuable for what you can do and not who you are in this current day and age. And for those of us who are autistic, we understand that very well.

We don't just spend one month out of the year trying to understand neurotypical individuals, we spend every day trying to do that but we do it in an environment where there is no reciprocation except for maybe once a year.

Awareness simply denotes that a person is conscious of the existence of something, it does not imply that they actually understand it...

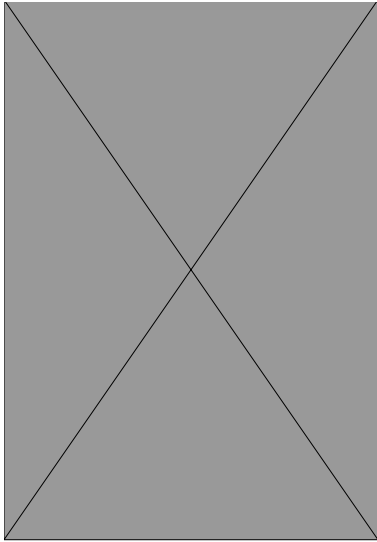
Even then its about becoming aware of autism, yet for twenty years I have wondered when people will begin understanding us. Similar to being expected to understand the neurotypical world, we are now demanding that the world understand us – we are not going away. Awareness is going away and

being replaced with understanding and acceptance. Perhaps, in time, the world will understand that blue is a depressing color.



Attention Deficit HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

By Melissa Springstead, MFT



ATTENTION DEFICIT- HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

(ADHD) is one of the most common psychiatric disorders that appears in childhood and continues through adulthood. Children and adults that experience this disorder have trouble staying focused, cannot sit still, act without thinking, make careless mistakes, difficulty with organization and rarely finish tasks, along with other symptoms.

If this disorder is untreated it can have negative long-term effects that include, but are not limited to, an inability to make friends and/or do well at school or work which can all lead to the development of emotional problems. Treatment is necessary and effective for those suffering from ADHD. The most widely used effective treatment for Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder is medication and behavior therapy.

Although there are other types of medications used, the most commonly used medications are psycho-stimulants which elevate mood, increase motor activity, alertness and the brain's metabolic activity, as well as reduce sleepiness. They also help increase attention, reduce impulsivity, decrease over-activity, decrease restlessness, increase compliance, reduce aggression, improve memory, social interaction and classroom behavior, and lastly, improve

basic cognitive attention functioning and motivation during academic and occupational tasks.

It is important to work closely with a health-care professional to make sure that the medication being taken is working and that dosages are appropriate. Not everyone has the same results with medication; some people experience better results from one medication and not another, while others need a different form such as an extended release, long lasting drugs or a combination of both. If this happens there are other types of medications that may be used to help treat ADHD.

While medication alone is effective treatment for ADHD, behavioral interventions have also been found to be effective. Evidence has shown that a multi-component psychosocial behavioral treatment approach in combination with medication is highly effective. The behavioral treatment focuses on the parent(s), school and individual. Concepts that are important for parents to learn include: psycho-education about ADHD, maintaining a reinforcement system, using appropriate forms of punishment, practicing ways of managing behaviors in public places, implementing a school-home report card and have ways of dealing with potential problems in the future.

School intervention is also beneficial in order to help a child or adolescent with ADHD. By working with mental health counseling in the school, children are able to consult with teachers which can help focus on implementation of behavioral management strategies as well as academic interventions.

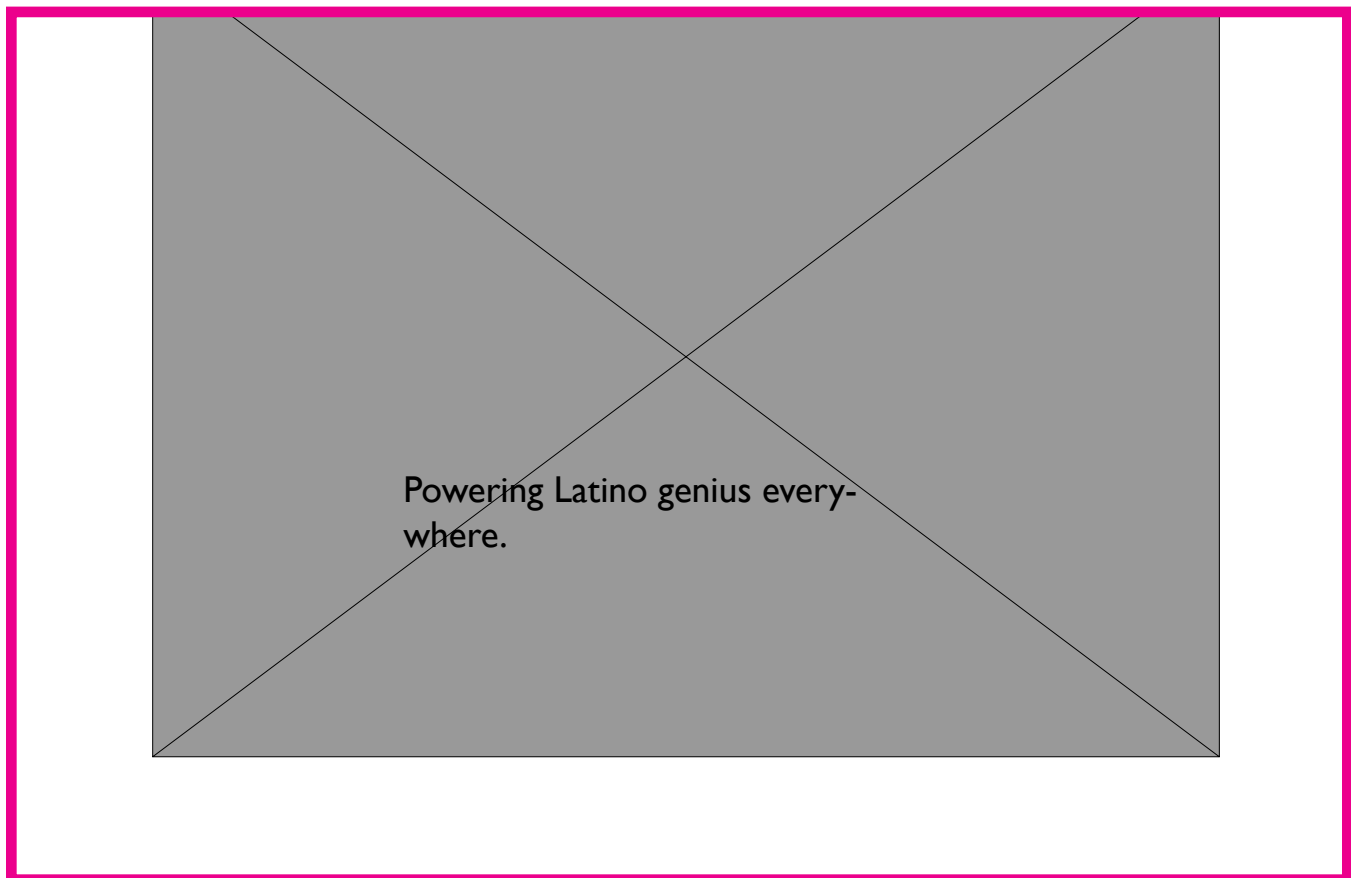
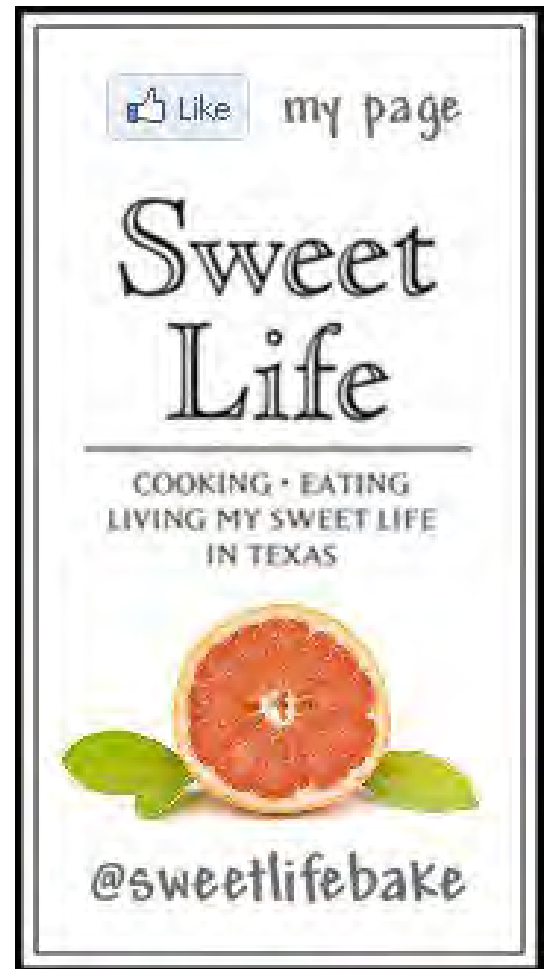
An example of a behavioral management strategy is the school-home report card where the child is rewarded at home for good behavior at school. Breaking long term assignments into smaller steps is an example of an academic

intervention. Other school based interventions include non-verbal cues to redirect the student, preferential seating, and support or training to teachers about ADHD.

References

Edwards, J. H. (2002). Evidence-based treatment for child adhd: "real-world" practice implications. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 24(2), 126-139.

National Resource Center on ADHD, (NRC). Retrieved February 22, 2013, from <http://www.help4adhd.org/index.cfm>.





Health *for the* Soul

by Mina Lee

“Add a stone blessed with a prayer to a mound and your intentions merge with those who have left stones before you.”*

The first time I came across a prayer rock formation was on a hike in Yosemite Valley. A friend of mine referred to it as “prayer rocks” and told me it was a tradition where one would thank the North, West, East, South, mother nature in its essence... and then find a rock, say a prayer, and stack it on top of the highest rock in the formation. This intrigued, excited, and inspired me all at the same time. It intrigued me in a way where I wanted to know more about where the tradition came from and how it came to be. It excited me because I’m all about making wishes and sending that energy out into the universe. It inspired me because like the Holstee Manifesto says it best, “Life is about the people you meet, and the things you create with them.” This was a collaboration of people who had enough belief to put their inner most desires into a rock and combined it with other people’s hopes and dreams. It’s a beautiful thing.

Stones are stacked as prayers in Buddhist and Korean cultures.

On hiking trails, stacked stones, or cairns, usually have a pointed rock within them that point to the trail direction.



** Daily OM – Prayer Stone Stacks.

<http://www.dailyom.com/articles/2012/31865.html>
January 24, 2012.

Fitness for Busy Professionals

By Dr. Helen Troncoso

RENEW. REFOCUS. REINVENT.

Let's face it, not everyone has a few hours everyday to spend at the gym. To top it off, our obesity epidemic continues to rise despite the increasing number of gyms available each year. Lucky for you, fitness doesn't only happen at the gym. Here are three tips to get healthy and fit for even the busiest professional.

Thirty Minutes To A New You

Anytime you can do less work, and still get great results is a deal in my book. A 2012 study published in the American Journal of Physiology found that thirty minutes of daily exercise is just as effective for losing weight as sixty minutes. Get in there, and get it done! If you can read a magazine, text or play on Facebook while exercising, all you're doing is wasting your precious time. Look for exercise plans that combine interval training, strength training, core exercises and stretching. Don't forget to mix it up so your body doesn't get used to a particular routine. If you're strength training, change your routine every two weeks. Like to run? Add in some cross-training and circuits to see a boost in your running time and performance. The best thing you can do is to be consistent, and emphasize quality over quantity.

Schedule your success

In a perfect world we would have all the time in the day to exercise. Then reality hits and you need to get the kids out the door, and fix yourself so you're not doing your makeup while driving, once again. Schedule the time to workout. Lay out your clothes the night before. As a matter of fact, sleep in your gym clothes if it will help strike one more excuse why you can't workout. You don't need to plan a routine that's overly complicated, but you also don't want to "wing it" either. Go for something in-between. Write out short-term and long-term goals so you know if you're progressing or not. Use technology to help keep you on track and in shape. Apps like MyFitnessPal, GymPact, Nexercise and Nike Training Club are just some of the great tools you can use to save time and automate your schedule..

Never neglect nutrition

Here's the thing, you can never, ever out train a bad diet. Eating well is often the difference between success and failure. Especially if you have one of those super busy days where you absolutely can't do a quick workout. Think about it, this is the only body you're going to have, so why not treat it well? Feed it food that will help you power through any boardroom meeting, and especially while you're catching up on those late night emails. A general rule of thumb is to skip the nonfat, low fat, too many ingredients you can't even pronounce trap. Feed your body real food. Planning and prepping meals for you and your entire family is healthier, will save you money and give you more time to spend on yourself.



If you don't take care of your health, it will eventually catch up to you and you won't be around to take care of that family you sacrifice so much for. Change your perspective on exercise, and find inspiration and motivation from everything around you. It will help to keep you on track especially when your mind is screaming at you all the reasons why you

can't do this. Matter of fact, stop thinking about all the things you can't do, and make a true commitment to living a healthier and happier life today.

Disclaimer: Always consult with your medical doctor before starting any rigorous workout, especially if you have a pre-existing condition. Start off slow and build from there to help avoid burnout and injury.

Source:

M. Rosenkilde, P. L. Auerbach, M. H. Reichkender, T. Ploug, B. M. Stallknecht, A. Sjodin. Body fat loss and compensatory mechanisms in response to different doses of aerobic exercise - a randomized controlled trial in overweight sedentary males. *AJP: Regulatory, Integrative and Comparative Physiology*, 2012

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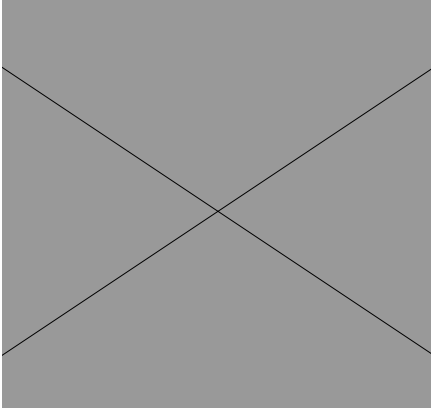
Dr. Helen Troncoso is a Doctor of Physical Therapy, health expert and founder of Reinventing You, LLC where she helps busy people get healthy and fit. For more health and wellness tips, visit her website at: www.helentroncoso.com

3 Simple Ways

to Eat for Wellness

by Christy Wilson, RD

IN OUR WORLD OF FAST COMPUTERS, fast acting medications and fast food, eating well has less to do with speed and more to do with taking time to be mindful about you're choosing to eat. Although health claims like "fat free", "low calorie" and "sugar free" may seem like a short cut to choosing healthy foods at the grocery store, foods that come without labels that make the best foundation for a healthy diet.

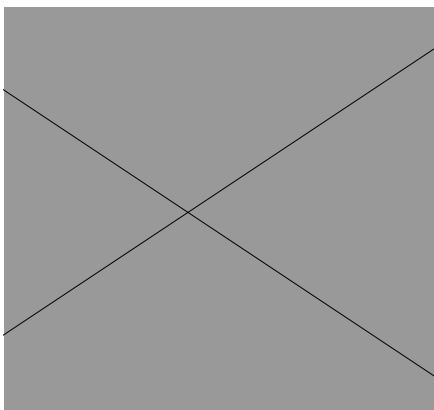


1. PLANT OVER ANIMAL. One of the simplest ways to eat a healthy balance of foods is to take a divide-and-conquer approach with your plate. The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans came with a model of a plate (ChooseMyPlate.gov) divided into four sections (plus an outlying section for dairy). The most important message is filling half the plate with fruits and vegetables compared with less than a quarter of the plate with meats or other animal protein. With less meat, your meal is guaranteed to have more heart healthy fiber, less cholesterol (plants don't have any) and saturated fat (found mostly in meats). High-meat diets (especially processed meats like lunch meats and hot dogs) are associated with higher rates of cancer and heart disease.



2. LIMIT LIQUID CALORIES. At 140 calories or more per serving, sodas, juices, sweetened teas and coffee drinks deliver pure liquid sugar that isn't as filling as solid food. Are sugar-free alternatives better? Not according to recent studies that link some artificial sweeteners (like NutraSweet) to weight gain. The heightened sweetness of sugar substitutes can pacify a sweet tooth without squashing the temptation to eat foods like cake, cookies and pie. Cut your sugar craving by drinking mostly water and add slices of orange or lemon for added flavor.

DID YOU KNOW:
140 calories per serving of sweetened drinks deliver pure liquid sugar.

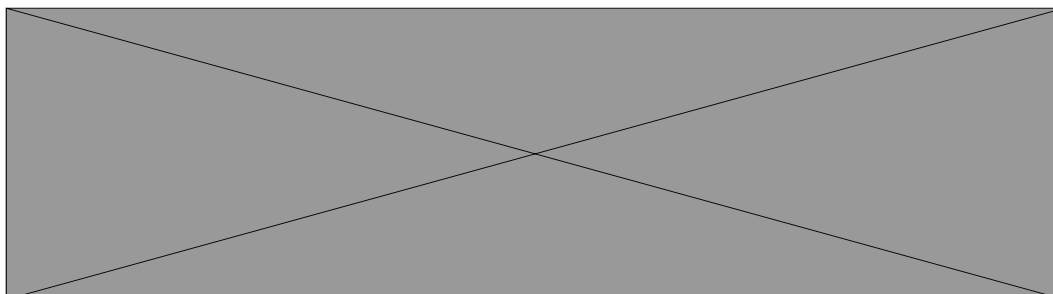


3. GO WITH WHOLE GRAINS. Eating whole grains like wheat, bran, oats and barley are excellent ways to boost your fiber intake that can keep you feeling full longer and reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke and cancer. When shopping for foods like bread, tortillas, pasta and cereal, make sure the first ingredient on the label reads “whole grain.” Anything else indicates you’re getting a refined, processed version of the grain. Whole grains like oatmeal, whole-wheat pastas and brown rice are also a naturally a good source of B-vitamins, magnesium and vitamin E. ■

Christy Wilson is a Registered Dietitian, a freelance health writer and speaker. Check out her web site and blog, www.christywilsonnutrition.com and follow her healthy eating tips on Twitter @christyschomp. She currently resides in Tucson, AZ with her husband and two young children.

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La Familia Summers

By Sweet Life

GROWING UP EVERY SUMMER, the ladies of our small town headed to the local shrimp factory to earn a bit of extra money. Our next door neighbor and my mamá would strap their rubber boots, grab their packed lunch and head out for the day. Their mornings began at 4 A.M. sorting, picking and filling orders from the endless summer bounty the shrimpers hauled in only hours earlier.

Us kids waited patiently outside to catch a glimpse of them heading home at around 7 P.M. They laughed and chatted as they walked, never giving the impression they had just pulled a 15-hour shift. My mamá would quickly jump into the shower, wash of the day and head into the kitchen to make dinner.

Not once did she ever complain, lose her patience with us or ever give the slightest indication that she was exhausted from the day. She worked the entire summer and the next 5 summers, never missing a day and ever year thought ahead to stock her freezer with shrimp for the Lenten season. These days, when she craves shrimp, she picks up her phone and calls her children. You see—the bounty of the sea has become a pivotal part of our lives. Her summers at the shrimp factory taught us that nothing is done without hard work, la familia always comes first, and to always prepare for the future.

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— MENUS —



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Roasted Shrimp Grapefruit Salad with Cumin Cilantro Dressing

16 medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
2 tbsp. olive oil
¼ tsp. freshly ground pepper
½ tsp. salt
4 cups spinach
1 grapefruit
½ cup shredded red cabbage
½ cup shredded green cabbage
1 cup shredded carrots
1 cup pecans

Heat a large skillet over medium high heat. Add olive oil. Season shrimp with salt and pepper. Add shrimp to pan; cook 3 minutes, stirring frequently, until cooked through; set aside. Cut the peel from the grapefruit using a sharp knife. Cut out segments. Line 2 salad plates with spinach, red cabbage, green cabbage, carrots. Arrange the shrimp, grapefruit and pecans on top of the spinach.

5 Tips to Get Kids to *Drink More Water*

by Growing Up Blackxican

We all know the importance of staying hydrated and the benefits of drinking water, but explaining this to a child can be tricky. My kids are in preschool and associate water with bath time, pools and the ocean unless I say, “Drink water”. Getting them to drink water has been difficult, but I know it’s partly my fault.

I’ve never been much of a water drinker. I tend to be picky; if it’s not ice cold, I can’t drink it and get sick to my stomach. Even while pregnant with my kids, drinking a liter of water a day was a chore. Then I realized that drinking water was aiding my morning sickness. It was a hard battle, but I knew the benefits of drinking water during my pregnancy.

Now that my children are very active, running around and playing, I battle with them to drink water. It’s difficult not because they drink too much soda (they don’t), but because I never made water a priority. They’d much rather have juice, which is just as bad.

I’m working hard to change their habits about water, and have recently discovered what works and what doesn’t.

Here are five tips to get your kids to drink more water:

- 1. LET THEM CHOOSE THEIR CUP.** Having my kids pick their own favorite cup made a world of difference. They wanted to drink out the cup much more than they cared what was in it.
- 2. USE REUSABLE ICE CUBES IN FUN SHAPES.** There are various freezable ice cube shapes and colors available in stores. I’ve found them at local well-known retailers in the \$1 section. The kids go wild for whatever is in their water, and the playful ice cubes encourage them to drink more water.
- 3. USE CRAZY STRAWS.** My kids recently fell in love with color-changing straws. The colder the water, the faster their straws change colors before their eyes.
- 4. ADD IN NATURAL FLAVOR.** Chop up fruits and have them drop the pieces into their water. You can also turn drinking water into a game by having kids close their eyes to try to guess the flavor of the fruit.
- 5. ALWAYS END ON A POSITIVE NOTE.** Promote some fun competition by challenging kids to a race of who can drink water the fastest. Be sure to end the game off by saying something positive about the water they just drank.

Do you have any tips to make drinking water a priority with kids?

YOGA HEALS

By Jill Weiss, UpRisingYoga.org

The reason why yoga heals me goes beyond the hundreds of listed benefits from so many websites, magazines, etc. I simply know that when I practice yoga I feel better than when I do not practice yoga.

Yoga heals my outlook, provides clarity and more energy to live my life. I teach several yoga classes each week, in addition to running a small business, which means I might not be able to practice as often as I need to. When I cannot get to class, the difference in my energy level and attitude is palpable. I basically take yoga three to five times a week or I feel sluggish and drained.

When I started going to yoga in 2000, I was in desperate need of healing. I remember being very thin with bruises; by this time in my life, I had fallen off three two-story buildings, been through several car accidents and I was basically detoxing from a rugged and miserable life.

I tried a Bikram Yoga class and thought it was the hardest thing I ever did, but I felt a jolt to my system. Afterward my skin felt alive and fresh air never felt better, but I hated the yoga, the heat, the mat, the smell, the people, and the sweat. Looking back, I realize I was ruled by my negative thoughts, yet despite all of the resistance, I kept going back to class and I noticed things starting to heal.

After practicing for several months, my body was healing with this yoga, but my mental state was the most significant change of all. All my mental conditions—body image distortion, depression, addiction, PTSD and isolating behaviors—were going away. I realized that if I could keep up with this yoga practice, I could imagine living a better life.

I went to teacher training in 2006 to learn more about how yoga was healing my body, and emerged from it a yoga teacher!

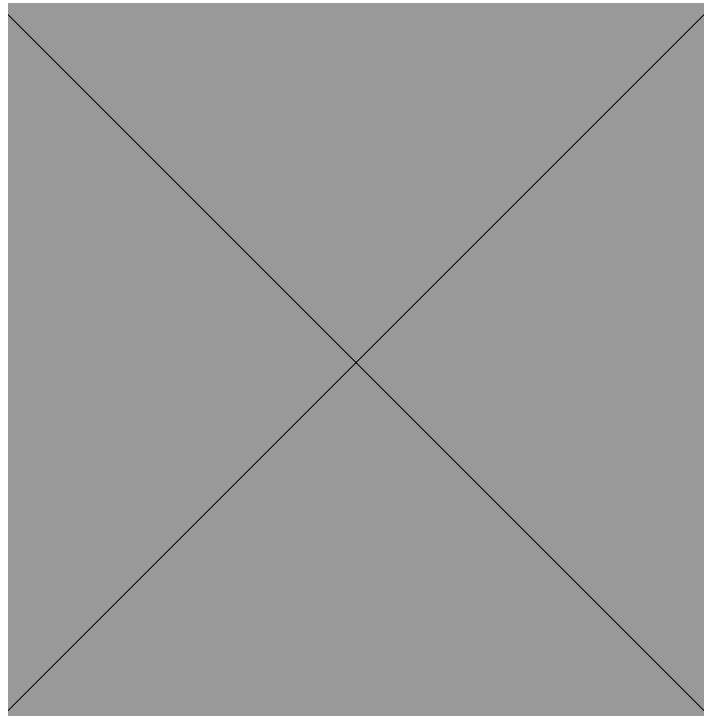
I say to my students that we come to yoga for ourselves and end up helping others. Just by being on their mat in a

room, they are contributing to the inspiration of strangers—it's phenomenal, really.

After working in the yoga community for 12 years, I wanted to offer yoga to people who would not normally make their way into a yoga studio. So in 2011, I started UpRising Yoga. We bring yoga to juvenile detention facilities (the same that I was in), group homes, mental health facilities and schools. My passion is to give the healing I received back to others.

The journey of UpRising Yoga has been incredible. I have been fortunate enough to meet the most loving and generous people, volunteers, donors and, of course, incredible yoga teachers. For me, it's the kids we work with that I am most grateful for; they remind me of where I started, and they fill me with hope for the future.

For more information, visit www.uprisingyoga.org.



How My Latino and Local Food Worlds Finally Crossed Paths:

SALUD DE PALOMA

By Alexandra M. Landeros

Although I had grown up in Los Angeles and knew about farmers markets, I thought of them as exotic, urban destinations. Living in the suburbs of the San Gabriel Valley, my parents shopped for their groceries at Vons, Ralph's or Costco. So when I moved to Austin, Texas in 1998, I shopped for my groceries at H-E-B (the largest Texan chain grocery store).

In 2010, I went to my first farmers market in Austin. It wasn't like the farmers markets of Los Angeles—loud, colorful, chaotic and featuring every language from all over the world. It was laid back with old-timey folky music... and largely Caucasian. Aside from one farmer from Costa Rica, I did not see many Latinos at the farmers markets here in Austin, and the few I did see were over the summer during the food stamp incentive program. So where were my fellow Latinos?

With so many chronic diseases—diabetes, heart disease, cancer—running rampant in our Latino communities across the United States, people are starting to realize that we need to take action. Here in Austin, non-profit organizations are activating educational programs and farmers markets in “food deserts,” which are areas with little or no access to large grocery stores that offer fresh and affordable food needed to maintain a healthy diet.

I work part-time with an advocacy organization for small farmers (Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance), so to make the other half of my living, I also work with a variety of Latino community organizations primarily focusing on health. One of these is the Latino HealthCare Forum, with which I am working in low-income communities in Austin to promote healthy lifestyles and environments.

Another one of my projects is Salud de Paloma, co-founded by Rosa Ríos Valdez, an accomplished entrepreneur and director of the nonprofit Business and Community Lenders of Texas, which has been working for over two decades to assist small businesses owned by women, minorities, and veterans. Ríos Valdez decided to start her own company—an extra virgin olive oil brand as a way to promote healthy nutrition in the Latino

community. Her own mother, who she calls her “paloma” (dove), died of complications from diabetes.

True 100% Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO) is extremely high in antioxidants and contains organic compounds known as phenols. Studies have shown that it improves cardiac health, helps lower blood pressure, protects against diabetes and certain types of common cancers, eases symptoms of ulcers and gastritis, lowers gallstone formation, and lowers the concentration of “bad” cholesterol in the blood.

The National Council of La Raza recently published “The Food Environment and Latino's Access to Healthy Foods” as part of their 2010 Profiles of Latino Health. Findings show that Hispanic families are less likely than non-Hispanic White families to live in neighborhoods where healthy food is available and sold at affordable prices. Salud de Paloma, created with a blend of local Texas olives and California olives, is offering their extra virgin olive oil at nearly half the cost of comparable oils.

My hope is that Salud de Paloma is not only a pioneer in creating and marketing healthy foods for the Latino Community, but also one of many more to come. For more information, visit www.SaludDePaloma.com. If you want to join me in the conversation about how to make fresh, healthy, local food more accessible to everyone in the Latino community, check out my Facebook group “Latinos for Local Farms and Food.”

COMMUNITY HEALTH



FIRST LADY MICHELLE OBAMA JOINS STUDENTS FOR A “LET’S MOVE!” SALAD BARS TO SCHOOLS LAUNCH EVENT AT RIVERSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN MIAMI, FLA., NOV. 22, 2010. (OFFICIAL WHITE HOUSE PHOTO BY CHUCK KENNEDY)

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A youngster enjoys a crisp apple for lunch at the Puerto Rican Association for Human Development's Mi Escuelita summer food program site in Perth Amboy, New Jersey. More than 75 kids enjoy physical activities such as soccer and basketball followed by a free healthy lunch each day during summer thanks to the USDA Summer Food Service Program.

Growing Opportunity *Across America*

By Lisa Pino, *USDA Deputy Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights*

THE HEALTH OF OUR RURAL COMMUNITIES IS SHAPED BY MANY FACTORS.

The Obama administration and USDA have made historic investments in America's rural communities, helping create jobs today while building a thriving economy for the long term. This work shapes community health around the country, but with an emphasis in Rural America because of its role in the economic strength and security of our nation. While we have achieved great things in the last four years, there is still much to achieve.

It's imperative that USDA delivers all of our programs equitably to all Americans. As Deputy Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, my job is to help ensure that our employees are treated fairly, and that members of the public receive quality USDA program delivery. Prior to this role, I served as the first Latina Deputy Administrator of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. On a daily basis, I work with Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's team to be sure that USDA provides first-class service to all of our customers, and that we are a model employer.

Secretary Vilsack's first and foremost priority is to ensure

that all Americans get equitable service from USDA. Every day, nearly 100,000 USDA staff support farmers, carry out conservation efforts, ensure that everyone has access to healthy, affordable food, and much more. These efforts touch the lives of all Americans, and there's too much at stake for anyone to be left out.

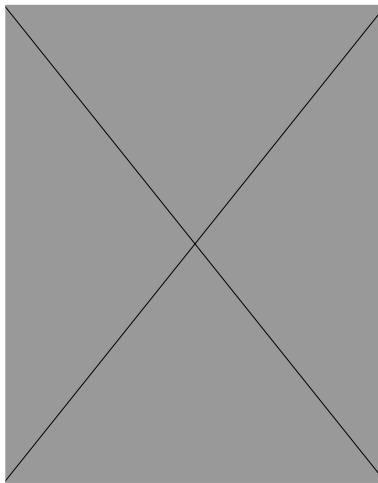
Since 2009, USDA has reached historic settlements to provide justice to producers who faced discrimination by USDA in past decades. We have taken steps to address outstanding civil rights complaints against the Department, while ensuring that we minimize such claims in the future. We have taken new, proactive measures to better serve all Americans, especially through our work to increase outreach to underserved and poverty-stricken areas of the country.

These efforts build on USDA's vision for a new rural economy that lifts up communities, provides more jobs and grows the middle class. At USDA, we have identified four key priorities where we are working to lay the groundwork for a new rural economy.

First, we must continue to strengthen our agriculture sector, which supports one in twelve U.S. jobs. In the past four years the United States has achieved agricultural exports totaling more than \$478 billion, the highest four-year total in U.S. history. There are currently more than 2.2 million farms in the United States, and the 2007 Census of Agriculture found growing racial and ethnic diversity among U.S. farm operators and a significant increase in the number of women farm operators. We will continue working to provide new markets and new opportunity for all producers.

Second, we must continue to identify and strengthen local marketing opportunities. USDA has already helped increase the number of farmers markets by 67 percent over 2008 levels, and helped create more than 200 regional food hubs. By expanding local and regional markets, we can help farmers and ranchers across the United States gain access to even more diverse income opportunities. This includes greater access for small-scale producers who are looking to take advantage of larger markets.

**Every day, nearly 100,000
USDA staff support
farmers, carry out
conservation efforts, ensure
that everyone has access to
healthy, affordable food,
and much more.**



Third, we can work together to build up conservation efforts and outdoor recreation. Outdoor recreation alone is a tremendous job creator in our small towns, and USDA has joined folks from across the nation in encouraging more Americans to get outdoors.

Fourth, we can continue to strengthen the biobased economy. Our investments in the future of advanced biofuels production have helped to reduce our dependence on foreign oil and create more jobs. Meanwhile, USDA has helped make tremendous breakthroughs in supporting manufactured products from plant and wood materials – with 3,000 companies presently producing more than 25,000 biobased products.

We will also keep a focus on community health. For example, USDA Rural Development programs are important for small towns and rural communities, particularly when it comes to ensuring quality health care for rural residents. Rural Development's Community Facilities Program has helped an estimated 30 million rural Americans address essential challenges in health care, education, public service and public safety since 2009 by financing projects through loans, grants, or loan guarantees. Among nearly 8,000 community facilities projects that we've carried out since 2009, more than 1,000 were to help rural communities improve a public health facility.

We have also helped communities overcome geographic barriers to high-quality medical service. Distance learning and telemedicine technology allows isolated rural hospitals and schools to utilize expertise that is located in other areas of the country. Here at USDA, we've invested in more than 1,500 telemedicine and 3,500 distance learning efforts since 2009, improving the availability of quality health care and educational tools in rural America.

USDA provides access to information to help families make healthy choices at mealtimes. ChooseMyPlate.gov is the place to go for science-based nutritional advice, including tips on how to make smart choices from every food group, find a balance between food and physical activity, and stay within your daily calorie needs. ChooseMyPlate.gov offers personalized eating plans at the

new SuperTracker and interactive tools to help you plan and assess your food choices.

Our nutrition assistance programs alone, from the National School Lunch Program to The Emergency Feeding Assistance Program, help feed millions of Americans across the country - whether in rural, urban, or suburban areas.

We have also carried out record efforts to protect the land and water. Nearly 80 percent of all fresh water crosses private land before reaching homes and businesses. USDA's planning with private landowners helps improve the quality of the water that enters our rivers, streams, and lakes, and ultimately flows through our faucets.

Secretary Vilsack has stated that USDA is an "Every Way, Every Day" Department as USDA touches the lives of

every American, as well as people across the globe. When President Abraham Lincoln founded the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1862, he called it "The People's Department." Although most Americans no longer live on farms as they did 150 years ago, USDA's work still benefits people around the nation "Every Way, Every Day". We promote a sustainable, safe, abundant, and nutritious food supply. We revitalize rural communities by expanding economic opportunities.

With the vast array of programs and services USDA manages, we are staying true to President Lincoln's vision of serving all people. At USDA's Office of Civil Rights, we will continue our efforts to ensure that the Department provides the best possible service to every customer.



Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan (center, white jacket) buys produce at the Baltimore farmers market in Baltimore, MD., on July 8, 2012. The mid-Atlantic region saw double-digit growth in its listings in the National Farmers Market Directory. Maryland added 76 new market listings alone. USDA Photo by Lance Cheung.

STRESSED

because they are poor

or are they poor

because they are stressed?

By Brandale D. Randolp

THERE ARE TWO SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT ON THE LINK BETWEEN POVERTY AND CHRONIC STRESS.

While both have are based on elements of research based facts, neither on there are conducive towards efforts to reducing the effects of poverty on our society. To some the debate about whether chronic stress causes poverty or poverty causes chronic stress is as rhetorical as the one about the chicken and the egg. However, just as Neil deGrasse Tyson infamously laid waste to that debate by stating that the egg came first but it was laid by something that was not a chicken, I will attempt to do so to this debate.

On one hand, if one believes that poverty causes stress, they may also inversely believe that not being poor will end the stress, then the solution will be aimed at the poverty, not the stress. Thus, is one believes that poverty is simply financially related, the efforts may be geared towards making those in poverty richer.

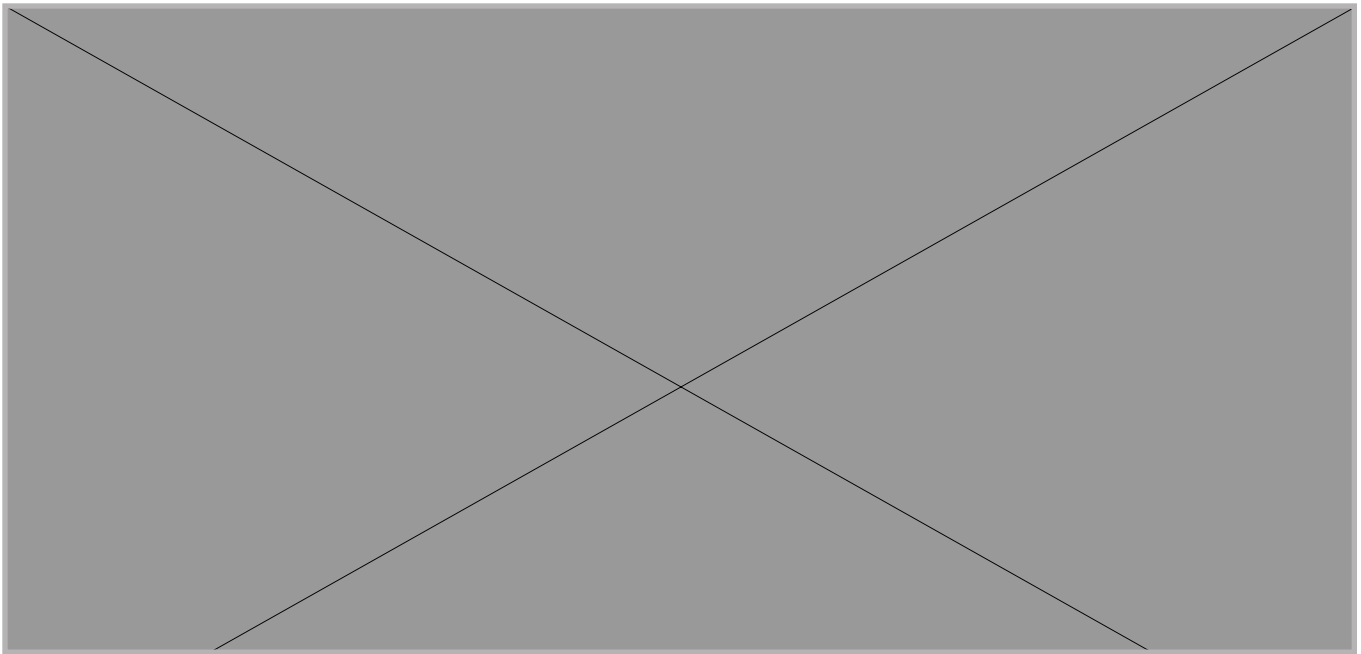
If one believes that poverty is simply a mindset they may be aimed at changing the way that the people whom are in poverty think about the stress they are under. Both fail because the focus is primarily on the individual and not their environment or the set of circumstances that may surround them. The logical flaw is exposed in the asking of one single question,

if one were to rid a person of their 'poverty' but leave them in the same environment would that alleviate the stress?

Maybe, for a select few, but for many, no, the stress would simply return in another form. Therefore, the environment must also change. On the other hand, if one believes that stress causes poverty, they may also believe that the reduction of stress would help reduce the effects of poverty on the individual. Therefore the primary focus becomes on the stress and not on the individual themselves.

But that leads to other questions how is this stress being defined? Is this stress internal? It could be, it researched and proven that people who live in poverty often suffer from lower feelings of self-worth and personal value, which often then leads to self-destructive behavior. Or is it external? People who live in poverty are more prone to violent crime, food insecurity, homelessness and other health issues.

As in the other situation, the flaw lies in a single question, if you were to change the environment and alleviate many of the stress placed on people in poverty would this help alleviate their poverty? In



most cases, if changing one's environment does not always lead to changing that person themselves. In this case the stressful environment may be altered but the poverty may remain. Therefore, the individual in poverty must change in accordance with his environment.

So let's go back to the original question does stress cause poverty or does poverty cause stress? The answer is simply that while poverty and stress do go hand in hand, the origin of stress and poverty lie, outside of each other and not within.

Stress is based on our personal perception of our environment and experiences. Two people can endure the same experience; however one may see the experience as a life or death scenario, while the other may not feel that the experience is any threat at all to their existence. Thus, the stress felt by both individuals will be different. While it may have some influence, personal income does not dictate we view our experiences. It may increase the possibility for more positive experiences but there is not guarantee that a richer person will interpret a stressful environment any different from a poorer person. Part of the answer, is understanding that it is our personal experiences that give us the lens from which we view life.

The other part of the answer is in understanding that poverty exists based on greed, not income or a mindset. Poverty exists because in a world of limited valuable financial resources, poverty occurs because

one set of humans, have placed a lesser value on the labor, resources and culture of another set of humans. This is done out of greed and simply for maximized profit. In much the same way that the greatest Kings used slave labor, our wealthiest corporations pay minimum wages. Poverty is based on this, not on stress. Stress does not create poverty, greed does. Therefore long as there is greed, there will be poverty. The remaining part of the answer lies in understanding that the solution to poverty is never within the effects of poverty but outside it among environments where the effects of poverty do not exist.

So in combining the two, the answer to the question of whether poverty causes stress or is stress causes poverty, lies in its own 'mutant chicken', greed. Because greed was the culturally accepted solution to the stress that some humans had in the desire to be valued above other groups of humans, poverty was created and because of the existence of institution that further that poverty, the greedy are shielded from the stress that poverty causes.

While the Rand Institution blogs, the scene by the top of Me & My Broken Negatives. The 75th they were established. She is a dating. Open to serve the world for the greedy. "The Giant Sinkhole Called Poverty" due Spring 2013. He also co-founder and executive director of Project: Poverty, a non-profit organization that seeks permanent solutions to the effects of poverty on our society. He is a guest lecturer and public speaker on issues related to poverty. For booking information more info go to <https://about.me/brandaledrandolph> or at brandale.randolph@projectpovertyonline.org.



Lisa Pino at the Boys & Girls Club of East L.A.

New USDA Rules for School Snacks Could Help Children Reclaim Their Childhoods

By Elisa Batista, MomsRising.org

LIKE MANY FAMILIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY, mine struggles with obesity and related illnesses such as Type II diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. The situation has been so dire that both my grandmother and aunt had died relatively young due to heart attacks.

Sadly, our family is not alone. It is estimated that one-third of all children in the United States are obese or at risk of obesity, putting them at higher risk of developing chronic diseases and complications later in life, according to the U.S. Surgeon General. It is such an issue in the Latino community that in a survey by the University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, 44 percent of Latino parents listed obesity, over lack of exercise (38 percent) and drug abuse (38 percent), as the biggest health concern facing children.

The subject of obesity shouldn't be taboo. We need to talk about its causes and what we can do as a society to address it because it is killing us. An example of a way to take action is regulating easy access to cheap junk food at schools. This is a vital step that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has taken as it collects comments from the public on new standards for snack foods in schools.

As a mom who fights every day to ensure that my two children fill up on healthy food, this is welcomed relief. Access to healthy food in schools make a world of difference in the lives of children. A study by the research and policy group, Bridging the Gap, found that overweight or obese 5th-grade students who live in states with school restrictions on the sale of unhealthy snacks and beverages are less likely to remain overweight or obese by the 8th grade compared to their peers in states without these laws.

This makes sense – children spend a significant part of their day in school. In fact, children consume 35 percent to 50 percent of their total daily calories in school, according to a study by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. It is hard to police what our children are eating while they are away from parental oversight in school. Not having to worry about them filling up on chips and soda is a huge help to parents everywhere.

With this regulation of junk foods in vending machines and a la carte lines in schools, families across the country can now rest assured that children will have access to nutritious foods at school.

SURVIVING THE ROLLERCOASTER RIDE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

By Jose Huitron, Hub 81

The path toward self-sustainment and individual freedom is one of many ups and downs. The role of perspective can't be overstated. Our vision is our victory. What we see increasingly becomes our reality. For this reason, I often find myself encouraging others through a simple phrase that has stuck with me for as long as I can remember:

“A positive attitude is a powerful force.”

I'm not familiar with the original author, but the words stand strong and provide a framework for maintaining a solid focus in business and the volatile journey of entrepreneurship. A positive attitude is a catalyst for the prolific.

The mind is one of life's many blessings. How we use it and what we focus on is the gateway to our reality. We are the constructs of our mental state.

Learning how to filter through the plethora of noise found in today's society is a valuable skill. The entrepreneurial journey is full of peaks of possibility and valleys of diversion. How we navigate this journey is a lesson in mental, physical, and spiritual dexterity.

All things are possible when we put our mind in the right place – a place of hope, possibility, opportunity, and impact.



LEVEL PLAYING FIELD INSTITUTE



LEVEL PLAYING FIELD INSTITUTE (LPFI) is nonprofit organization committed to eliminating the barriers faced by underrepresented people of color in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and fostering their untapped talent for the advancement of our nation.

One of the ways in which LPFI fosters this talent is via our Summer Math and Science Honors (SMASH) education program. SMASH is a FREE three-year STEM program for low income, high-achieving, high school students of color. The highlight of this three-year program occurs every summer when our scholars reside on a college campus for five-weeks and immerse themselves in rigorous, project-based courses ranging from Biology to Calculus to Computer Science.

Following the success of our programs at UC Berkeley and Stanford, the SMASH program has been serving high school students from the Los Angeles area through our UCLA and USC SMASH programs for the last two years. Here are some facts about our Los Angeles program:

- 90% of our scholars qualify for Free/Reduced lunch, signifying that they come from low/mid income backgrounds
- 80% of So Cal scholars will be part of the first generation in the families to attend college!
- Los Angeles County now provides us with more SMASH scholars than any other COUNTY in California! (100 scholars)
- The city of Los Angeles provides us with more SMASH scholars than any other CITY in California! (48 scholars)
- About 65% of our So Cal scholars are Chicano/Latino
- Almost 30% of our So Cal scholars are African American

We'd love to build a wider and more diverse community of supporters in the Los Angeles area in order to create a stable support network for these future scientists, entrepreneurs and programmers. If you'd like to learn more about SMASH, please consider coming on a tour on one of the following dates/times:

- Tuesday, July 16th @ USC from 10:30am-12:30pm
- Wednesday, July 17th @ USC from 10:15am-12:30pm
- Thursday, July 18th @ UCLA from 10:00am-12:00pm
- Friday, July 19th @ UCLA from 11:00am-1:00pm

Click on <http://bit.ly/13XmVy7> to sign up for your tour today!



SMASH

Frustration

By Alicia Escobedo

RENEW. REFOCUS. REINVENT.

Frustration is always a sign you are not on the right path, and typically involves the discussion of money.

Last year was not a good year for me; it was full of doubt, stress and financial worries. The year started off with tragedy at work, issues with my neighbors, the threat of layoffs, and my daughter possibly having to undergo heart surgery. No one knew what I was going through; during this time, I held my emotions in, which stressed myself out even more, snapping back at others with frustration. Life seeks to test us, and it's always when we least expect it.

“We never plan for the unplanned.”

To be successful, there are three pillars in life: beliefs, health and finances. Little did I realize that my pillars were beginning to fall down. I wasn't stupid; I could see the writing on the wall, major layoffs were coming – I had to be ready.

I felt good though, as I had a financial planner, “just in case.” A financial planner's advice is like car insurance; you may never appreciate them until a disaster or stressful situation arises, but when it does, you are very glad you had them. I went through the “what ifs” with my financial planner, and she gave me a sense of calm.

Then the worst finally came: layoffs. It was a shocking reality for my husband that we had just lost 75 percent of our household salary. I was actually sort of happy and no longer stressed or frustrated anymore, as I knew where my finances stood. No more working long hours, or having to play the game – I began to feel thankful for what was in front of me, and it opened my eyes to a transition. I asked God to help guide me to a new job, or an entrepreneurial opportunity.

I explored the job market – and let's face it – the economy sucked. Jobs descriptions didn't match skill sets, nor did companies pay what they once did years ago. Unfortunately, most jobs today are only good for 10 years. And most jobs are far from my area, typically located up north, or in the eastern United States. The mass emails I received were for jobs with insurance companies.

About five months went by since the layoff, and my husband was getting worried and frustrated. He thought I would be able to find a job right away, save the extra severance cash I was given, and put it toward a down payment for another house – wrong. My severance package had to be used to pay the household bills by this point.

I went to a job fair, and looked for something that had meaningful projects, but I didn't know what to expect. I saw plenty of insurance companies, and laughed with a peer saying, “I am staying away from those companies!” After turning the corner, a very nice man with a big smile said, “Hi.” The company was Transamerica, whom I had worked for years ago as a contractor.

I gave the representative my time and to my surprise, Transamerica, a leading financial advising firm, had formed a marketing division. This recruiter was from their Newport Beach office, and the division was trying to educate the middle class with “free” financial education and reviews. It sounded too good to be true, so I investigated the division, and went to their informational sessions, and found their efforts to be true. In the old days, financial planning was – and still is – very expensive. I paid for a financial review from an independent financial advisor, which costs me \$1000. After that, I only used her when necessary.

So my short-and-long term plans were implemented, but on the shelf – not managed, and not well diversified. But when you can get a company to setup your financial goals and dreams for short-and-long term needs for free, you have got to love it. The other great perk of working with a large company, is that they “manage” the accounts automatically, unlike my independent advisor.

When my new Transamerica financial advisor showed me what my prior financial planner had not done, I was devastated. In short, I am on a road to financial recovery, and my frustration has gone away. I have a new revised financial plan in the works, and am 99 percent certain that I have found a company I can work for as an entrepreneur.

Life can be good.

* For further information on Career Opportunities in helping the middle class, please contact me at Alicia.B.Escobedo1@icloud.com

INTERNATIONAL REACH



Orphanage In Guatemala

By Jes Sofia Valle

WHILE ON MY TRIP TO GUATEMALA, I had the urge to help someone other than myself. I felt that I should be doing more than just spa-hopping, so with just one day left on my rental car, I put my mind to what exactly I wanted to accomplish.

Really, it was instinctual – I wanted to give to kids. Anyone that knows me already can vouch for how much I love kids, so I went to a few big-wig companies to ask for help. After a few weeks of waiting some companies said no, but others said yes.

I sat down in one of two Starbucks locations in Guatemala, and talked to my friend on Skype who could help me find

an orphanage to help now that I had support. When I was done with my conversation, a man approached me and in English (mind you, was conversing in English on Skype, in a part of the world where all you hear is Spanish), and he said, “I was eavesdropping and overheard you wanted to help an orphanage.”

I said, “Yes!” and he introduced himself as Mike and said he was a director of a team in Guatemala who works with local orphanages -- talk about sent from heaven!

“We provide food for them,” Mike shared, and from I was completely amazed and inspired by the get-go.

He told me about his organization, Orphaned Resources International, and through the conversation, I was able to link him to various sources of mine.

And I told him I was interested in helping an orphanage dedicated to babies and toddlers and he gave me three choices to choose from. I ultimately chose Hogar de Ninos, Amor de Patricia.

I ran to Wal-Mart, which had already agreed to help in my quest, and a representative from Huggies also happened to be there, too. I asked them for diapers, and was able to fill my car with Huggies, milk, baby formula, toys and bottles. They gave me so much for the kiddos, in addition to what I purchased myself that I ended up with so much more than what I expected to end up with.

After about an hour drive, I was shocked to find that the orphanage was right next door to my uncle's home. When I went inside, my heart was filled with so much emotion; I wanted to adopt all of them! I wanted to take them home and work my butt off to give them a life outside those orphanage walls. But I knew that I could not give them all the lives they deserve all by myself, which is why I'm asking you and other big brands to help Guatemalan orphanages with a donation to help the orphanage hire on a teacher and a psychologist.

It only cost \$600 a month to bring a teacher and psychologist into the orphanage! If we all join together to make this simple, yet necessary change in these children's lives we can turn this initiative into a reality.

Donate to El Amor De Patricia and you'll help the same orphanage that touched my heart and moved me to bring forth positive change.

Enjoy the pics!...





Stopping Female Genital Mutilation *One Nation at a Time*

By Robin Eschler

WOMEN ARE RECOGNIZED AS LEADERS FOR CHANGE WORLDWIDE. This is evidenced through the work being done to end extreme poverty and the associated issues of clean water, light, sanitation, education, jobs and more. It's women who are leading change in their communities— I know this from the 80 some odd interviews I conducted on my show, *Socially Conscious Investing*, with social entrepreneurs and NGOs working around the world.

The African tribe of Maasai have embraced the a new tradition in the name of health and education, which the community hopes they can pass on to other tribes throughout Africa. Specifically, the transition began with female circumcision, also known as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

This practice is an ancient custom that is not limited by religion. However, a significant global concern over this ancient “rite of passage” is its ability to kill. More often than not, female genital mutilation involves crude instruments

and is performed by individuals who are not medically skilled to perform such a procedure.

If a young girl entering puberty survives the pain and physical assault at the time of the procedure, there is always the risk of post-FGM infection and scarring that can later be responsible for dramatically increasing complications in child birth.

Women from the Maasai tribe have been marginalized by men for generations and were one of the oldest tribes still practicing FGM today. Fortunately, Maasai elders are finally recognizing that an educated woman has more value to their community than an uneducated one, which is huge progress and speaks volumes for the trust and respect that Africa Schools of Kenya (ASK) has built.

The tribe has instituted its own non-FGM rite of passage, and Africa Schools of Kenya and the Maasai people are helping to spread the health and medical disadvantages and risks of female circumcision. In fact, surrounding tribes are



coming forward and expressing interest in establishing their own alternative rite of passage, which is indicative of how education can move a society toward stronger health.

In order to accomplish its goal, however, the campaign needs support to subsidize young girls' alternative rite of passage for five years. This is the time needed to help educate young women about leadership and life skills. These women can then expand and keep the ARP program growing sustainably as a nation throughout Kenya. From there, other African nations, and possibly the world, can see how female genital mutilation can truly be stopped.

Visit <http://www.igg.me/at/StopFGM> to contribute and establish your own legacy for positive change in the world.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

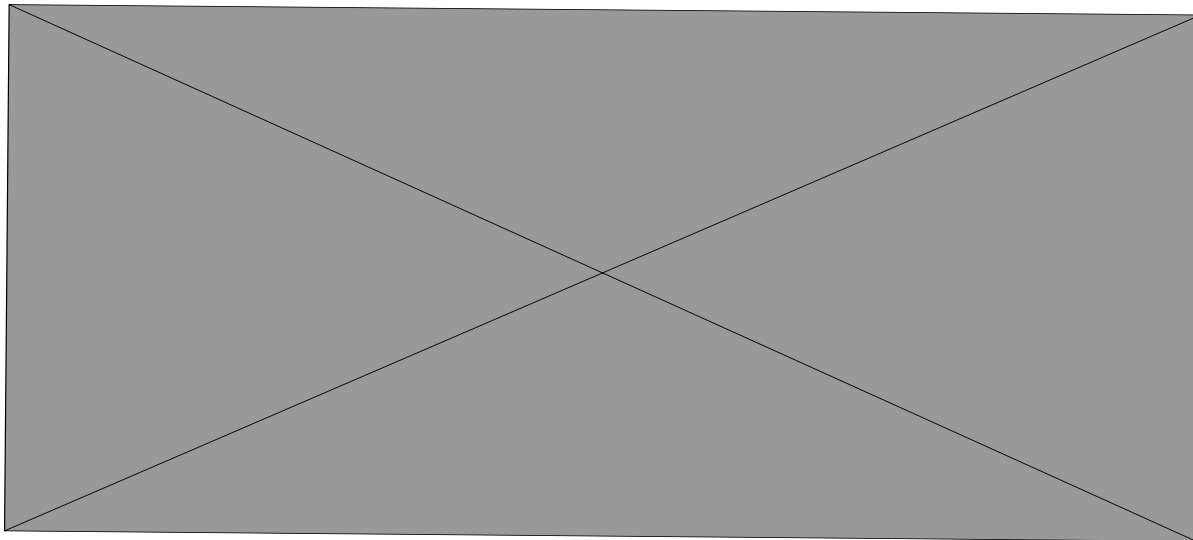
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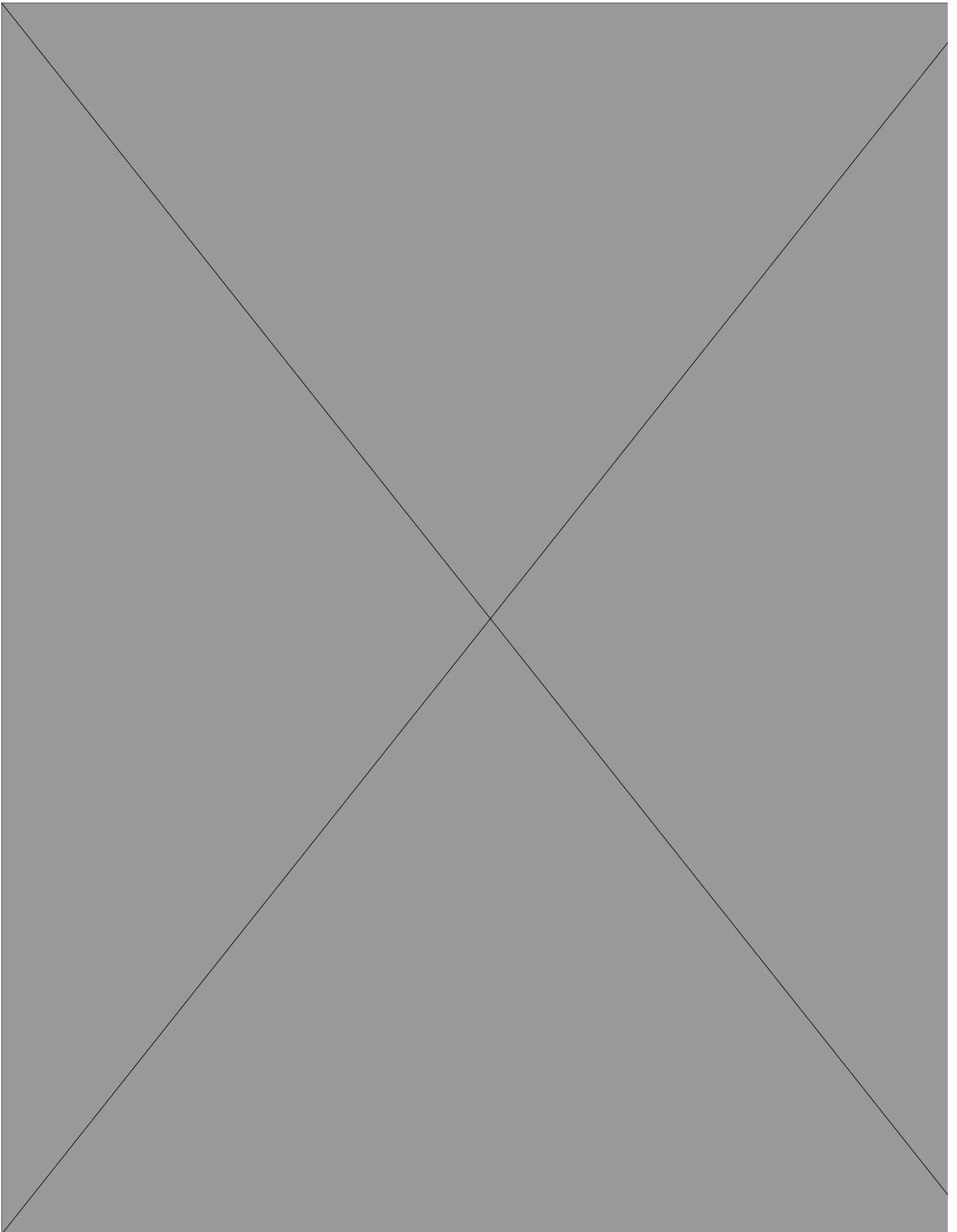
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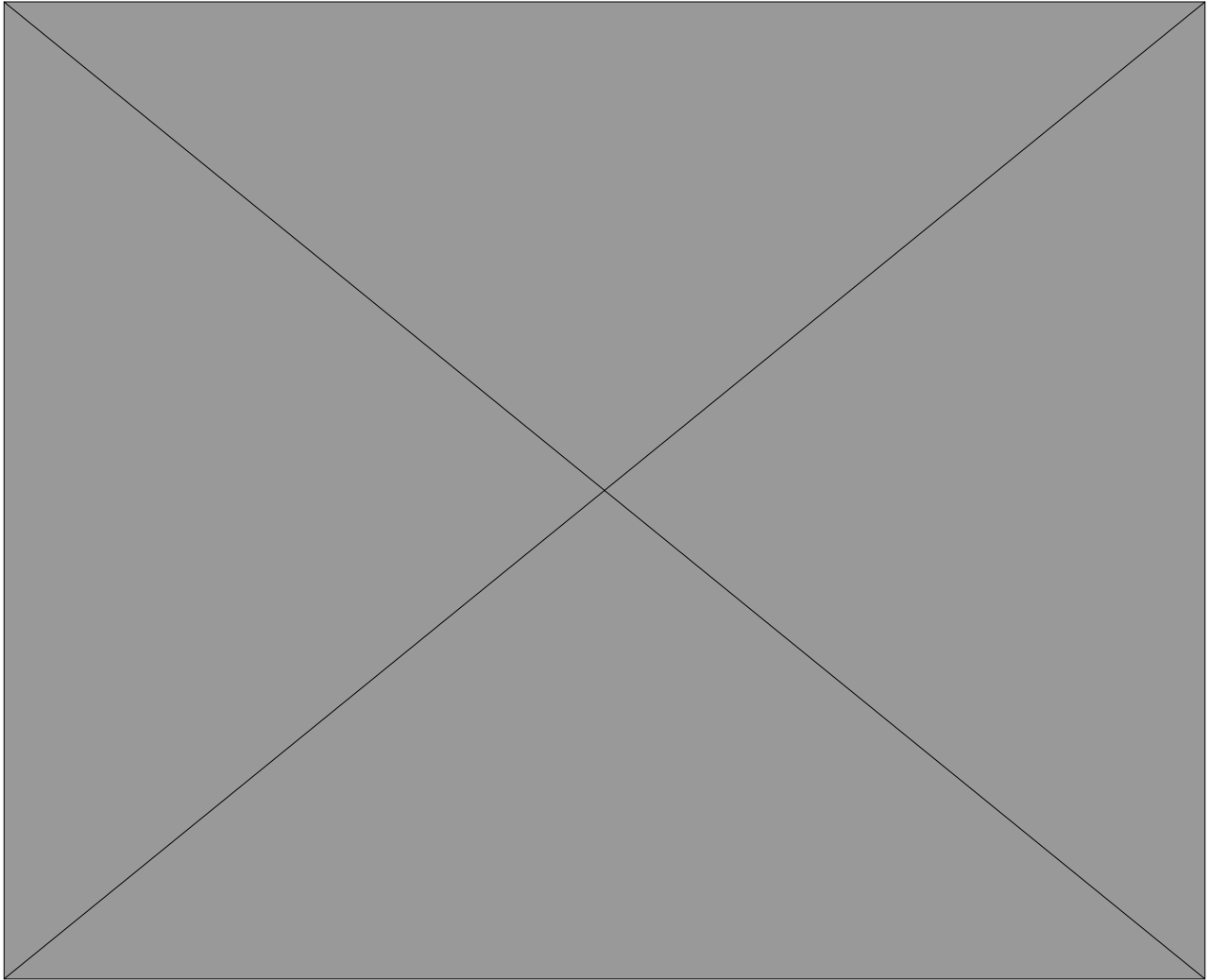
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