

Overview

[The Global Health Education and Learning Incubator at Harvard University](#) (GHELI) supports interdisciplinary education about world health through the production, curation, and dissemination of educational public goods. This exemplar work was a final project for “World Health: Challenges and Opportunities,” a General Education course at Harvard College taught by GHELI Faculty Director Sue J. Goldie. For this creative assessment designed with support from GHELI, students systematically analyze a societal health challenge they care about and create a “real world” product intended to influence policy or motivate change.

Abstract

A video letter addressed to a student’s mother explores the role of parents in their children’s diet, and the overall impact on nutrition.

Artist

Hayoung Ahn (2019)

Caption

Parents play a large role in shaping a child’s diet and relationship to food. Parents are often the ones providing food for their children and acting as role models for our attitudes and behaviors around eating. This video campaign, from the point of view of a college student troubled by their eating habits, implores parents to help their children make healthier choices around eating.

Artist Lens

I was inspired to choose obesity in the U.S. as my topic for a multimedia campaign video because I’ve noticed how shocking it can be for non-Americans to come to the U.S. and observe portion sizes from restaurants and households. I’m also interested in exploring people’s relationships with food as a part of their social interactions because I feel like eating is very much a social activity in American culture. I decided to make my target audience very specific in this video by framing it as a letter to the narrator’s mother and entitling it “Dear Mom.” After researching obesity in the U.S. and reading about responses from both the health sector and non-health sectors, I realized that parents are a huge stakeholder in the issue of obesity. Thus, I wanted to emphasize the point that habits are harder to break when they’re so deeply ingrained in one’s childhood and upbringing—so I hope to help make “clean eating” a viable plan for children to grow up with from early on in their lives. This is the call to action that I want to make in my video, because I didn’t see it so much in the existing responses to the health issue of obesity: parents should be aware of their children’s relationships with food, and it starts young. The goal of this video product is to inspire parents to change their feeding behaviors toward their children and to invest a greater amount of interest in their children’s nutrition health, so that they are ultimately more conscious about consumption. When parents see this emotionally-driven cry for help from their children, I hope that it will naturally push parents to think back to the habits that they helped build into their children’s lifestyles.

I filmed most of these scenes with a wide-angle lens on my camera to portray a first-person perspective, as if the camera was directly showing what the world looked like through my eyes (or the eyes of someone who was suffering from obesity and unhealthy eating compulsions). I wanted it to feel like a personal story, captivating the audience through raw emotions and confessions of vulnerability—which is also why I decided to film it like a YouTube “vlog” that takes the viewer through a day in my life (with appropriate timestamps). Interestingly enough, I realized that creating this video project led me to become more conscious about my personal eating habits as I began to film natural moments from my daily life. The main takeaway that I wanted to drive home is that healthy choices need to be made the easiest choices, and adults should do their best to provide this kind of environment for their children’s health, prosperity, and lifelong health status.

Media

Video



[Watch Obesity in the U.S.](#)