

Michelle Obama announces funding to fight childhood obesity

February 5 2015, by Verena Dobnik



First lady Michelle Obama visits students making smoothies with fresh fruits and vegetables while on a tour of the West Side High School on Thursday, Feb. 5, 2015, in New York. The first lady visited the school on Manhattan's Upper West Side on Thursday to announce a \$500 million donation from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation funding the fight against childhood obesity. (AP Photo/Andrew Burton, Pool)

(AP)—First lady Michelle Obama visited a school on Manhattan's Upper West Side on Thursday to announce a \$500 million donation funding the

fight against childhood obesity.

As she watched cooks prepare smoothies at the Edward A. Reynolds West Side High School and visited a room of students taking a spin class, Obama noted that it was the fifth anniversary of the federal Let's Move effort.

"Together, we started a national conversation on this issue and we're seeing changes at every level from individual schools to families to the halls of Congress," she said, adding that average obesity rates have stopped rising, or even dropped among the youngest children.

The money announced Thursday comes from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The initiative encourages educators and families to serve healthier food and to organize more exercise. The foundation also donated \$500 million in 2007 toward improving children's eating and life habits.

Obama said she chose to visit the Manhattan high school because it already is serving healthier meals under the leadership of Principal Jean Mctavish, who teaches some of the early morning spin classes.

"What's going on here?" the first lady asked several cooks, smiling as she examined their ingredients lineup on a counter.

They were preparing to whip up smoothies using ingredients including carrot juice, coconut water, fresh pineapple, strawberries, blueberries, kale and walnuts.



First lady Michelle Obama, center, visits students during a spin class while on a tour of the West Side High School on Thursday, Feb. 5, 2015, in New York. The first lady visited the school on Manhattan's Upper West Side on Thursday to announce a \$500 million donation from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation funding the fight against childhood obesity. (AP Photo/Andrew Burton, Pool)

"That's pretty special," she said.

Minutes later, she strolled into the spin room, filled with students already pumping the bicycle pedals.

"You guys like spinning?" she asked.

The answer was nonverbal: They all started spinning faster as she clapped rhythmically and danced briefly to the music.

"That's great!" she said.

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