# Building Through Collaboration: Empowering Communities to Drive Change that Facilitates Healthy Eating and Active Living

**Jasmine J. Opusunju, DrPH, MSEd, CHES, CPH**
**Executive Director**
**CAN DO Houston**

**May 22, 2015**

# Objectives

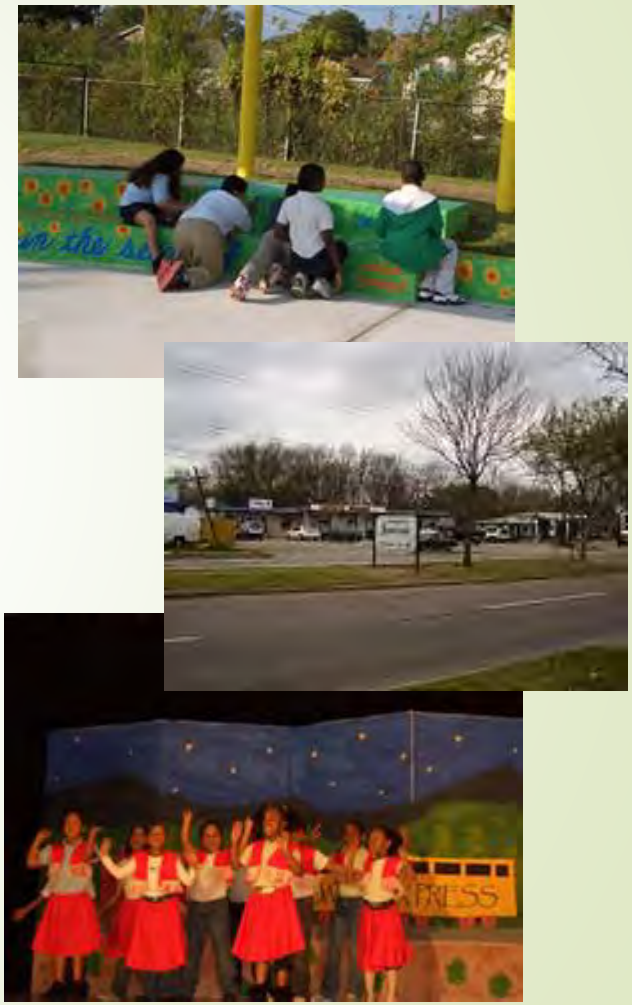
- To discuss existing literature on disparities related to childhood obesity
- To identify 4 strategies that facilitate sustainable changes to promote healthy eating and active living
- To describe the implementation of these strategies by CAN DO Houston to address childhood obesity in Houston/Harris County

# Mission

To prevent and diminish childhood obesity in Houston and surrounding communities through physical activity, nutrition, and healthy minds by enabling the broadest collaboration of individuals, institutions, and organizations.

# CAN DO Houston

- Holistic community-based approach to preventing and reducing childhood obesity
- Community-driven initiatives are delivered in schools, after-school, worksites, community centers, recreation parks, faith community, and home environments
- Physical activity, nutrition and healthy minds



# Why Does It Matter?

- Childhood obesity in the United States affects about 12.5 million children and adolescents, which is almost triple the prevalence since 1980 (CDC, 2012)

- Minority and low-income children disproportionately impacted (Kumanyika, 2008)
  - Hispanic boys and both Hispanic girls and African American girls have demonstrated the greatest increase in prevalence

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Overweight and Obesity: Data and Statistics. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/childhood.html.

Kumanyika S. Environmental influences on childhood obesity: ethnic and cultural influences in context. *Physiology & Behavior*. 2008;94:61-70.

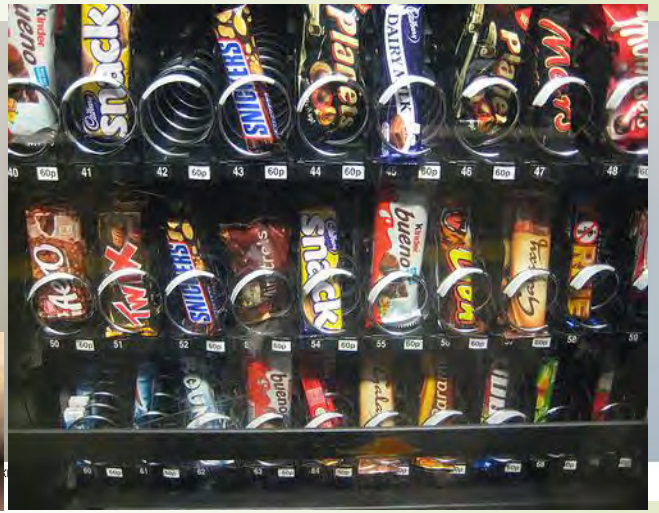
# Why Does It Matter?

- Neighborhood features associated with increased levels of physical activity (Rahman, Cushing, & Jackson, 2011)
- Preventing and reversing obesity presents an opportunity to make a major impact on reducing health disparities
- This may be the 1st generation to live sicker and die younger than their parents

Rahman T, Cushing RA, Jackson, RJ. Contributions of built environment to childhood obesity. *Mount Sinai Journal of Medicine*. 2011;78(1):49-57.

# Easier Said than Done…

# Environments that support poor diet



# Previous solution: Only individual responsibility

Achieve physical activity recommendations/ Meet dietary guidelines

Community Barriers

# Better solution: Individual in healthier environment

Active Living/ Healthy Eating

Community Design Approach

Community Barriers

# Strategy #1: Connecting the Dots

# CAN DO Houston Neighborhoods

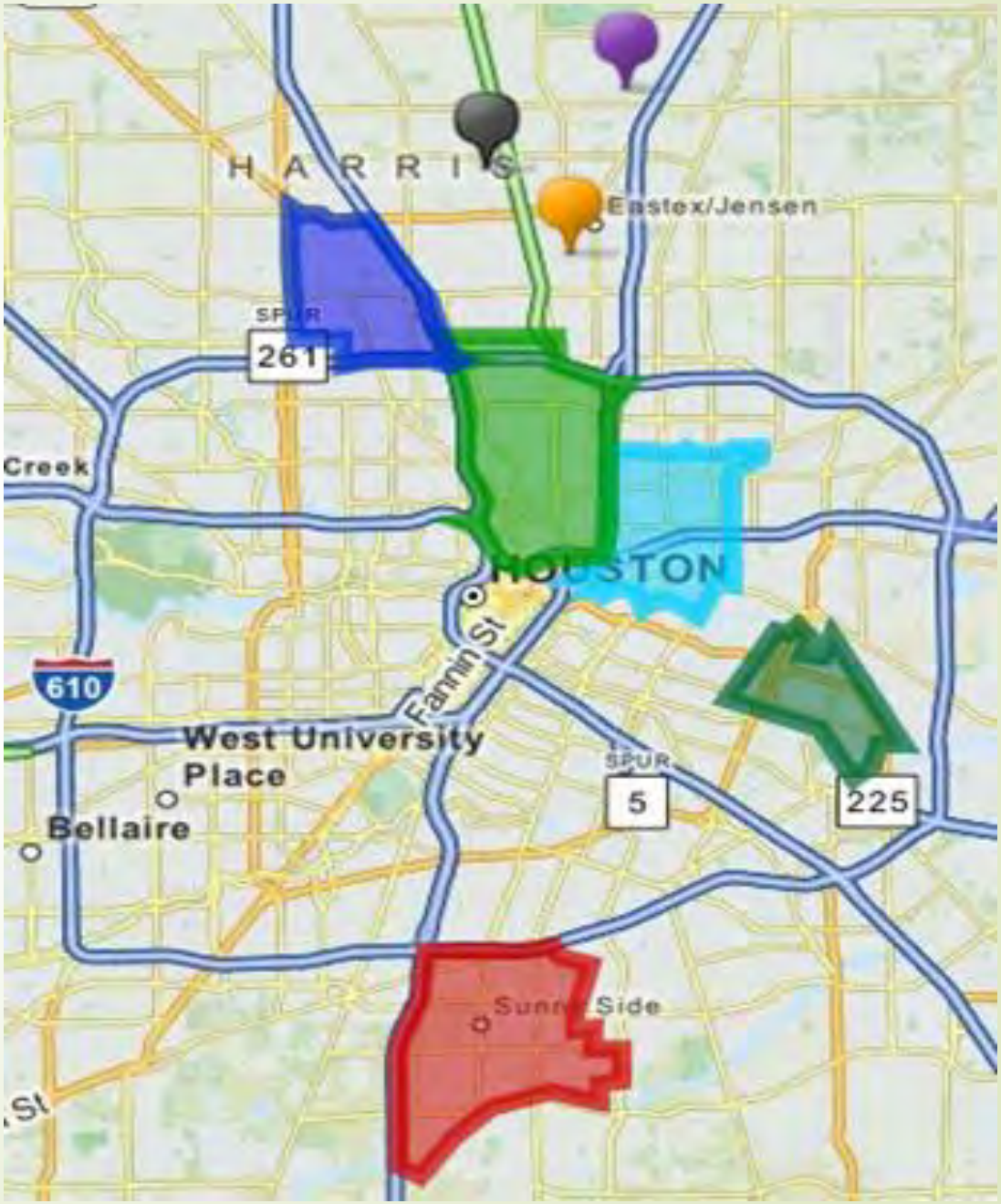
**Magnolia Park**

**Sunnyside**

**Northside**

**Fifth Ward**

**Independence Heights**



# QUESTION:

What would it take to make it easier for you to engage in healthy eating and active living?

# CAN DO Houston is About Mobilizing & Coordinating Existing Resources

- Urban Farmer
- Healthy Living Matters/HCPHES
- Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Texas
- Coca Cola Minute Maid Foods
- Collaborative for Children
- Houston Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics
- Rice University Kinder Institute for Urban Research
- City of Houston Health & Human Services
- City of Houston Parks & Recreation
- Houston Independent School District
- Houston Food Bank
- East End Collaborative
- Steps 2 Sweat
- Go Healthy Houston Task Force
- Food Everywhere Coalition
- Urban Harvest
- UT School of Public Health
- Children at Risk
- American Heart Association
- Houston Police Department
- METRO
- University of Houston Texas Obesity Research Center
- Gateway to Care
- M.D. Anderson Cancer Center
- Latin Specialties
- Small Places, LLC
- Legacy Community Health Services
- P.U.S.H. to W.I.N.
- Recipe for Success
- And others……

# Strategy #2: Community Engagement

- Healthy Lifestyle Program
- Health In Action
- Food Fairs
- Supporting and assisting with existing priorities/needs

# Healthy Lifestyle Program

- Locations
  - Near Northside, Sunnyside, Fifth Ward
- Impact/Benefit
  - Nutrition Education
  - Physical Activity Education
  - Food Demonstrations
  - Cooking Tips
  - Time Management Tips
  - Creating Demand

# The Healthy Lifestyle Program

# Health In Action

- Locations
  - Northeast Houston
- Impact/Benefit
  - Nutrition Education
  - Physical Activity Education
  - Food Demonstrations
  - Cooking Tips
  - Child Focused

# Health In Action

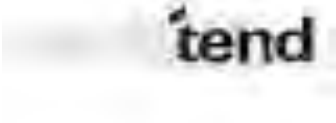
# Food Fairs

- Locations
  - Independence Heights, Fifth Ward
- Impact/Benefit
  - Food access
  - Creating demand

# Bruce Elementary

# IHCAC

# Coalition Building




WAR ON DRUGS

# Strategy #3: Environmental Change

- Community & School Gardens
- "Briscoe-CAN DO" Walking School Bus
- Mobile Produce Unit
  - Food Fairs
- Healthy Corner Stores

# Community & School Gardens

- Locations
  - Near Northside, Sunnyside, Magnolia Park, Fifth Ward, Independence Heights
- Impact/Benefit
  - Food access
  - Restoring community
  - Facilitating behavior
  - Creating demand
  - Academic performance

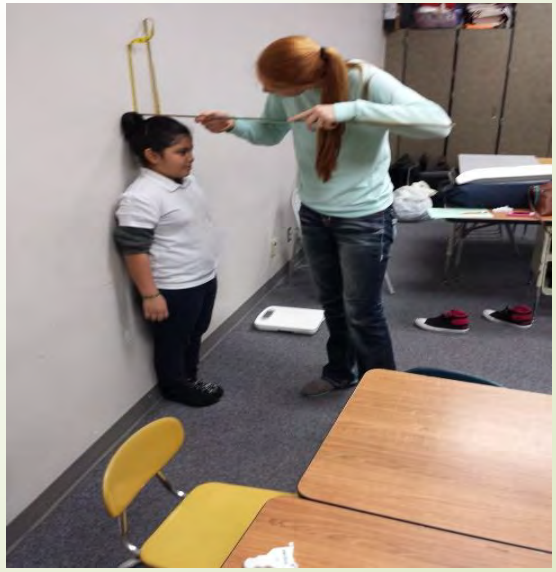
# School-Based Garden Program at Berry Elementary

# School -Based Garden Program at Betsy Ross Elementary

- Location
  - Magnolia Park
- Impact/Benefit
  - Physical Activity Access
  - Creating demand
  - Safe Space for After School Activities
  - Healthy Snacks

# "Briscoe-CAN DO" Bus

# CAN DO Bus – Briscoe Elementary



- Location
  - Magnolia Park
- Impact/Benefit
  - Access to physical activity and existing resources
  - Creating demand

# "Briscoe-CAN DO" **Walking** School Bus

# Mobile Produce Unit

- Locations
  - Fifth Ward
- Impact/Benefit
  - Food access
  - Creating demand

# The Fifth Ward Mobile Produce Unit

# Healthy Corner Store Network

- Implementation
  - Sunnyside & Pasadena (6 stores)
  - Low prices
  - Weekly delivery
  - Marketing
  - Cooking demonstrations & sampling
- Partnership
  - HCPHES & HLM
  - HDHHS
  - Urban Farmer & Food Everywhere Coalition
  - Urban Harvest
  - Planted: Houston
  - Houston Food Bank

# Houston and Pasadena Healthy Corner Store Networks!

# Houston and Pasadena Healthy Corner Store Networks!

# Healthy Corner Store Networks:

# Samples and Food Demos!

Did you spend $5.00 or more
n healthy items? Ask for your
ustomer card and earn a free
ealthy item on future visits!!

- Locations
  - Magnolia Park
  - Independence Heights (beginning Summer 2015)

- Impact/Benefit
  - Physical Activity Access (4d/wk)
  - Creating demand
  - All ages
  - Food Demonstrations
  - Nutrition Education
  - Maximizing existing resources

*"Let's Move"*

# *Let's Move* in Magnolia Park

CAN DO Houston on Channel 39 Newsfix

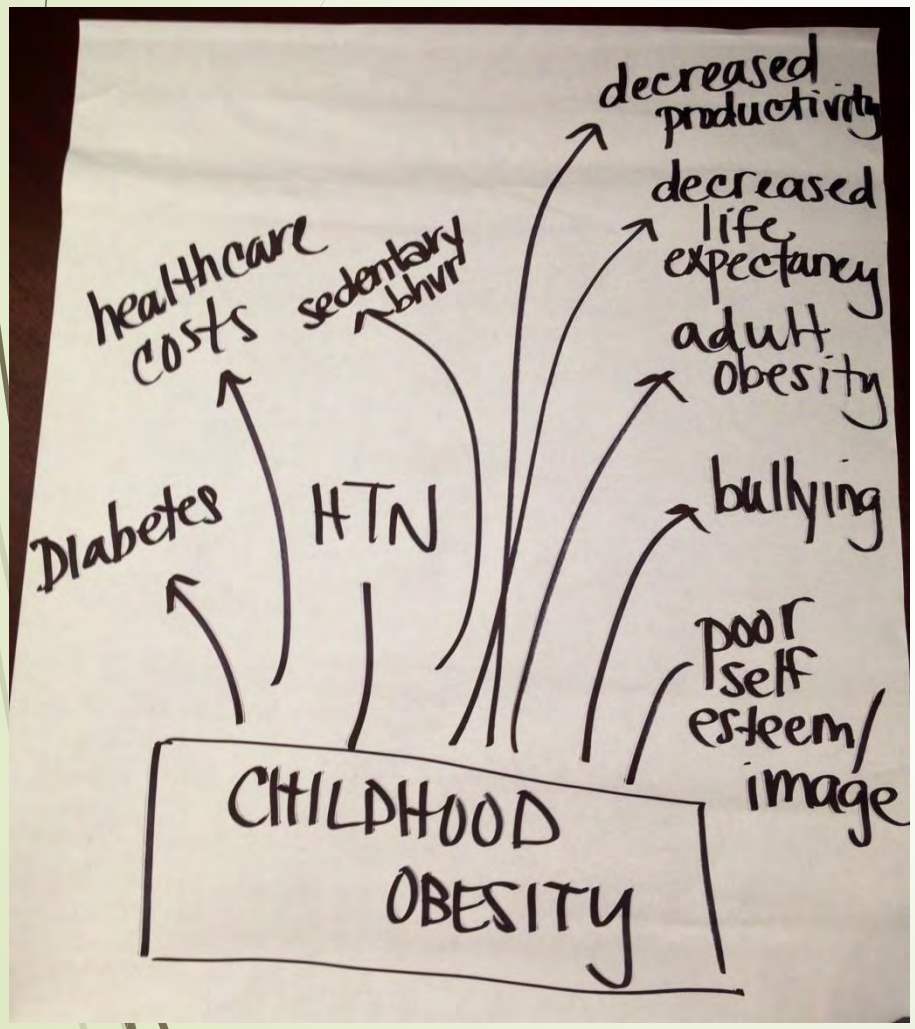
# Strategy #4: Policy Change

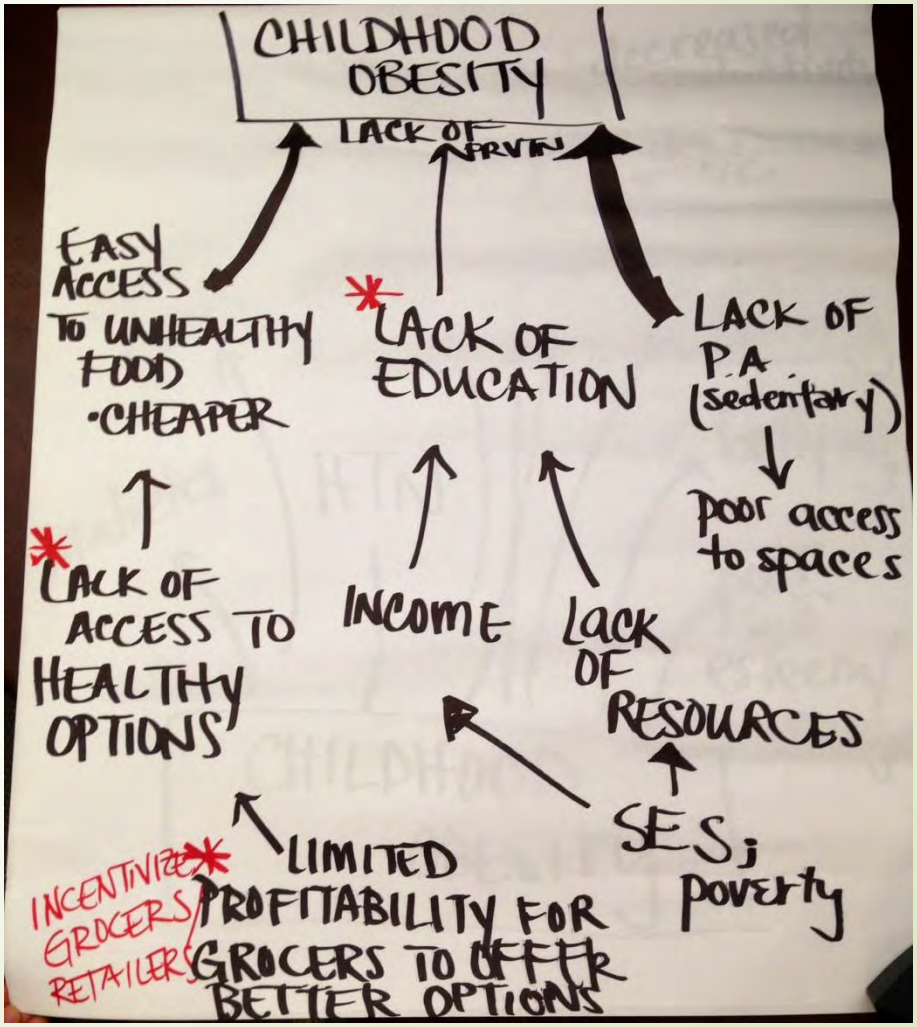
- Leadership & Advocacy Training

# Leadership and Advocacy Training

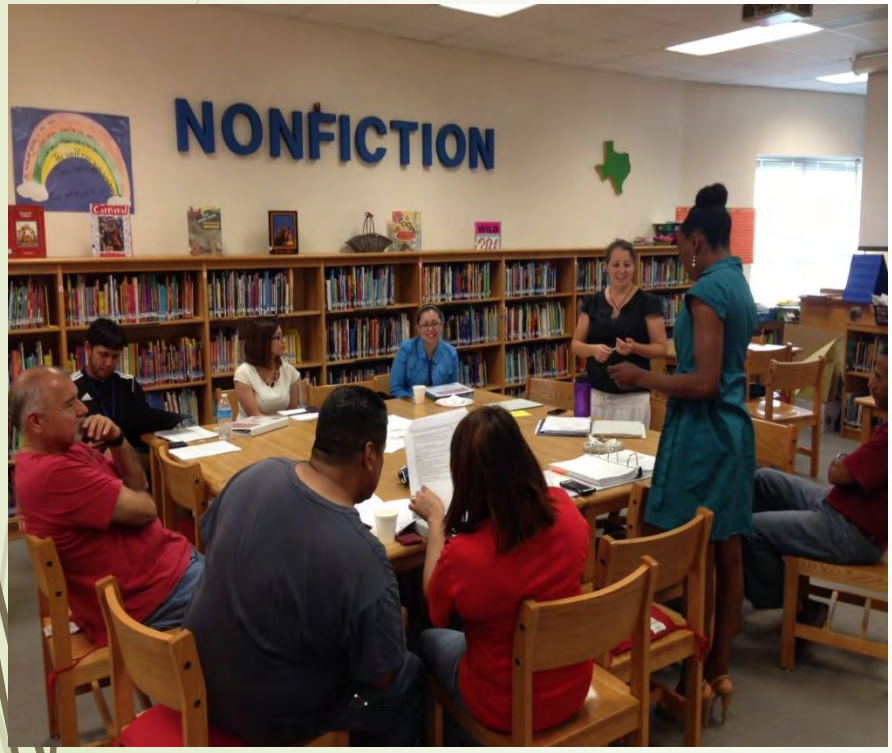
- 8-module curriculum
- Weekly sessions for 2 hours
- Community generated class project
- Key focus areas: community organizing, public speaking, media advocacy, research & the policy making process, partnerships/collaborations

# Leadership and Advocacy



# Leadership and Advocacy

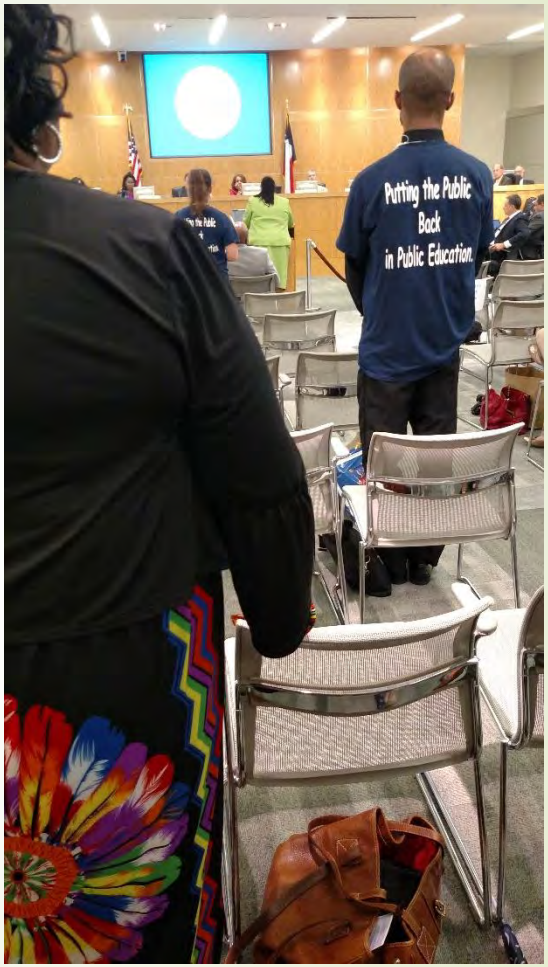


# The Opportunity of Policy

- Focus on the conditions in the communities in which these disparities exist to ensure equal opportunities for healthy lifestyles
- Many environmental factors determine if the healthy choice is the easy choice
- Local public officials are in the best position to address childhood obesity through policy

# Leadership & Advocacy Training

- Locations
  - Sunnyside
  - Fifth Ward
  - Near Northside
  - Northeast Houston
  - Pasadena
- Impact/Benefit
  - Increased civic engagement
  - Increased demand for equity
  - Building community
  - Improved leadership



# Conclusion

- Community engagement is critical
  - Meet people where they are (i.e. programming)
- Environmental and policy changes facilitate the opportunity for behavior change
  - This must be informed by the people that are impacted
- Both built environment and individual-level factors are necessary for greater and more sustainable impact
- Focused, multidisciplinary, and collaborative efforts are necessary

# References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Overweight and Obesity: Data and Statistics.

Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/childhood.html.

Kumanyika S. Environmental influences on childhood obesity: ethnic and cultural influences in context. *Physiology & Behavior*. 2008;94:61-70.

Rahman T, Cushing RA, Jackson, RJ. Contributions of built environment to childhood obesity. *Mount Sinai Journal of Medicine*. 2011;78(1):49-57.

# Contact Information

Jasmine Opusunju, DrPH, MSEd, CHES, CPH
Executive Director
jasmine@candohouston.org
www.candohouston.org