A case study presentation of a social marketing project that contributes to a childhood obesity campaign is described here. It also includes a discussion of some of the barriers faced in implementing social marketing activity and how these might be overcome in future. The workshop also invited participants to discuss their own barriers to social marketing and how these might be overcome.

To answer the growing incidence of overweight and obesity among children and to meet the target of halting the year-on-year rise in obesity among children under 11 by 2010, Brighton & Hove City Primary Care Trust (PCT) commissioned a Childhood Obesity campaign targeting 8–11 year olds to take place between September and December 2005. A partnership was formed between Brilliant Futures Ltd and the Priory Partnership, a PR and media company, in July 2005. Therefore tight timeliness were a significant barrier to be overcome.

The three objectives of Brighton and Hove City PCT were to

1. Raise debate.
2. Motivate behavior change.
3. Make recommendations for policy change.

Specific objectives identified by Brilliant Futures and Priory Partnership were:

- To directly involve 900+ children in practical healthy living activities to change their attitudes and habits regarding healthy living and provide them with the tools and
knowledge to encourage lifelong participation in physical activities and consumption of healthy food and drink.

- To change the behavior of an additional 2000+ children across Brighton and Hove, achieving physical activity of one hour per day and increased sampling of healthy food and drink.

- To increase awareness among parents of the causes of obesity in children and introduce simple and easy advice and tools to help counter the causes, targeted to their specific needs. To encourage debate and conversation among parents in the city to build a positive community attitude to reducing obesity in children and help drive policy development.

Scoping/Insight

- A thorough literature review was conducted to find evidence of successful/unsuccessful strategies previously employed to combat this issue.

- The campaign was launched with an event – “Your Say” – allowing 90+ children from schools across the city to voice their ideas and suggestions for activities to promote healthy eating among their peers.

- Brilliant Futures’ previous research with groups of children/teachers from workshops and activities was used to inform choice of intervention.

- Questionnaires were completed prior to activity in each school to measure level of existing knowledge, motivation, and attitude to healthy eating.

- Focus groups with children and teacher questionnaires were used to gauge levels of knowledge and changes in behavior as a result of the interventions that then informed future interventions.

- Given the tight timescale, Brilliant Futures’ previously successful Fuel 4 Fun™ roadshows were used that had been evaluated positively by pupils, parents, and teachers.

The Intervention

The approach aimed to build on the existing successful activities taking place across the city, using a cross-sector integrated approach that could be delivered and measured within the tight timelines of the project. The campaign’s aim was to reach different audiences of children, parents, educators, and health professionals throughout the city. A partnership approach was adopted using a variety of interventions.
An overall campaign theme was generated to be adapted to the six different target audiences:

1. Primary audience: 8–11-year-old children and 4–7-year-old children.
2. Secondary audience: Parents and teachers and members of the school community.
3. Tertiary audience: Community groups targeting above groups.
5. Media—local and national.
6. General public and influencers of Brighton and Hove.

Face-to-face interventions directly promoted healthy lifestyles to over 5,000 primary school children. These included:

- Eight one-day workshops with 558 children were carried out in primary schools in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas and in schools with more than 20% Free School Meals.

- These workshops used the successful Brilliant Futures’ Fuel 4 Fun™ model that have been piloted across the city ensure a successful intervention in the tight time schedule. A series of fun and practical activities encouraged children to make healthy lifestyle choices. They were encouraged to find fun ways to get active and to taste and learn to make tasty snacks, then to communicate healthy living messages to their peers and families in fun, motivating ways. Parents attended a presentation and “great taste test” at the end of the day to receive motivating advice from children on how to have fun while being active and eat good food and to taste the snacks prepared by the children.

- After the workshop, children received a Fuel for Fun™ recipe book to continue making the food and drinks from the workshop and additional tasty, healthy meals, snacks, and drinks at home.

In addition, teacher support was critical. Teachers were provided with an information pack before the workshops to gauge childrens’ existing knowledge and pre-empt the activity to prepare children for the day. A pack was given after the workshops with ideas for further activities they could continue with the children, building on the learnings from the day. Children were particularly encouraged to lead a Fun Healthy Living assembly for the rest of the school to cascade their learnings and motivate them to choose healthy habits.

Community events

In addition to face-to-face interventions in schools, children and their parents attended various community events in the city during half term. At a Half Term
Food n Fun Day children and their parents were able to make and try healthy recipes, receive free recipe books, play football with Brighton & Hove Albion and could buy fresh fruit and vegetables at low prices from a local fresh food cooperative.

Children and their parents took part in various Food n Fun activities before a Brighton and Hove Albion football game at Withdean Stadium. The events used a multiagency approach. Partners included the EB4U health for all team, Active for Life, a local leisure centre, (Stanley Deason Leisure Centre), a neighborhood food co-op (Whitehawk Food Co-op.), and the Albion football club to ensure residents were made aware of and enticed to sample the long-term activities available.

**Food n fun passport and challenge**

A small 16-page booklet was created to help drive forward the three-week Food n Fun Challenge. The intention was to create a fun and child-friendly booklet, based on a passport, with lots of tips and fun activities, and a tear-out diary section for children to fill in food and fun activities for each day. These focused on trying a new and healthy food or drink and doing one hour of fun activity every day. There was also the offer of a Super Snack Pack Prize for every child who submitted his or her diary and the chance to win a jackpot prize of a bike, scooter, or £10 sports voucher.

The intention was to build into the booklet incentives and fun activity ideas for families to have energetic fun together, coupled with vouchers to further inspire such activity and healthy food and drink offers. The passport contained details of the Food n Fun website address (www.foodnfun.org.uk). This linked children to the Brighton and Hove Active for Life web page containing details of how to get active in Brighton and Hove and information on the Food n Fun events taking place across the city.

A total of 8,000 passports were produced, 3,000 of which were distributed via co-op stores. The other 5,000 were directly distributed through direct school intervention work outlined in other parts of this report, including school assemblies, one-day workshops in schools, and several community activity days.

The 2,000 prize packs were made up to include an apple, two Geo bars, one Brighton Bears ticket for the December 20 match and a carton of fruit juice, packaged either in co-op goody bags (500) or sandwich bags with fun stickers holding them together. Leftover prizes were used at the Food n Fun Christmas Party and distributed to schools for their Christmas parties so that they were not wasted.
Media and public relations
Media and PR activities were designed to encourage children’s participation in the campaign, promote debate across the city, give ideas to parents, and promote positive health messages. A news release was issued for all key events within the campaign. Also, the mayor of Brighton & Hove and local sports celebrities from Brighton Bears and Brighton & Hove Albion FC, as well as local members of the public, were involved to help enhance the news value of the stories.

Business partnership activity
Marketing activities were created to attract business engagement and support for the campaign. Positive public relations opportunities and community activities were created and proposed to companies, fitting in with their corporate social responsibility objectives. Opportunities chiefly focused around requests for prizes, incentives, and support for the Food n Fun Christmas Party.

Businesses were identified and targeted through Internet research and use of Priory Partnership’s contacts. Over 50 telephone sales calls were made plus a further 40 e-mails sent offering bespoke packages and proposals created in e-mail/paper and verbal form.

Target businesses included potential sponsors to provide cash, prizes, and in-kind support:

- Neilson Active Holidays.
- David Lloyd.
- LA Fitness.
- Co-op.
- Budgens.
- Alias Hotel Seattle.
- The De Vere Grand.

Partners offering discounts and incentives included 40 outdoor activity and fun attractions and leisure centres and clubs, such as public swimming pools and clubs (football, hockey gymnastics, dance, roller discos, outdoor pursuits, etc).

Partners offering celebrity support were Brighton & Hove Albion FC and there Brighton Bears.

Results and Evaluation
Evaluation of the Fuel for Fun™ workshops was undertaken at the end of the campaign using several different methods of analysis. Qualitative and quantitative
data were collected, analysed, and reported on based on a framework of key questions. These were designed to assess

- Process – what happened, who was reached, and what methods were effective?
- Impact – what changes were observed in terms of food knowledge, behavior and awareness.

To answer these key questions, three methods were used to collect data for evaluation from a range of sources:

1. Children completed Taste Test questionnaires at the end of their day’s workshop.
2. Teachers were sent an evaluation pack with questionnaires to complete prior to and after the workshops and assemblies.
3. Several weeks after the workshops, focus groups were carried out with small groups of children.

The campaign was successful in directly communicating to over 5,000 children across Brighton & Hove (Table 1). In addition, hundreds of parents and siblings attended the taste tests at the end of the day, with over 100 guests at some schools.

The workshops had a positive impact on behavior. Feedback from teachers demonstrated that the workshops had a positive impact and led to an increase in healthy food consumption and an increase in physical activity levels. In response to the question *Did the workshop encourage children to make healthy choices?* evaluation forms showed a high mean score of 4.7 out of 5. This was further substantiated by teacher comments:

*The food workshop was very hands on & encouraged a number of children to try food they had not tried before.* (Year 6 teacher, St. Nicholas)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>TABLE 1</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Reach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total reached through workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total reached through interactive assemblies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total reached through additional passport distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total reached through community activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Children</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Children learned so much from different activities. They will, I’m sure, be more adventurous in their eating/exercise habits. (Teacher, Hangleton)

Children are telling me of activities they do now such as swimming/football/running that they didn’t before. (Year 4 teacher, Mile Oak)

In addition, in focus groups children gave many examples of new activities they are doing and foods they have tried/continue to consume at home.

I liked all of it, but I liked the tasting the foods cos then I know what things I likes more healthy things, than like chocolate and crisps and biscuits and instead of just watching telly, I go out and do more sports. (St. Nicholas)

And I’ve started eating fruit. What new fruit? Like dried apricots which I only started when you came in. (Hangleton 1)

What I was going to say was, when I, cos I’ve done loads of things new now, I’ve started doing netball cos I thought I might enjoy it, so I started doing it and then I just got into it, so I carried on doing it every Saturday. (Hangleton 1)

Yeah, I’ve been running. Normally, I just like walk around the playground, but after that healthy day I just started running. (St. Nicholas)

When I have packed lunches my mum’s started putting in low fat cheese cos she usually put in fatty cheese and she started putting in apples and bananas and stuff like that, not stuff with loads of sugar in. (Goldstone 2)

Results of the Big Taste Test at the end of the day demonstrated that the workshop was successful in encouraging children to try a range of new foods. Many foods that the children tried had not been consumed before (Figure 1).
There were also encouraging numbers of children who said they would eat the snack again. In all cases, more children than not said that they would try the food again. The snack with the highest score was Fruit Kebab. Fully 78.9% of the children said that they would eat this again; a great, fun way of getting children to eat fruit (Figure 2). This finding can be supported by two comments from the children’s focus groups after the workshops.

Oh yeah, on my birthday I had like, these, like the traffic light sticks. (Interview 4)

I had tuna wraps for lunch today. (Hangleton 3).

**Food n fun passport and challenge results**

Although the passports were received very positively by children and many teachers assured the team that they would use them and push them forward, there were a disappointing number of passport challenges returned (Table 2). It was

---

**Figure 2**

Number of Children Who Would Eat the Food Again

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Snacks</th>
<th>No. of children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuna</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cous Cous</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Light</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruity Flip</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit Kebab</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoothie</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>No. of Schools</th>
<th>No. of Entries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No direct contact – individual entries</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food n fun assembly and launch</td>
<td>5 (out of 11)</td>
<td>45 (out of 3,125)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel for fun workshop</td>
<td>7 (out of 8)</td>
<td>59 (out of 5,58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>111 (out of 8,000)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**SMQ | Volume XIV | No. 1 | Spring 2008**
also disappointing that despite several negotiations with potential partners, time constraints made it difficult to secure any vouchers, offers, or free trials for activities in the city and food vouchers to include in the passport.

Table 2 shows a significantly lower number of passports returned than the target of 2,000, a figure based on distribution and promotion through co-op stores. One explanation for the low figure of individual entries could be the lack of presence of passports and promotion in co-op stores and media directing children and parents to pick up the passports. During the campaign Brilliant Futures was concerned about this and made additional visits to 15 schools to give free assemblies and directly hand out the passports. Table 2 above shows that children from all schools except one who took part in the Fuel for Fun days returned passports, demonstrating that the challenge needed to be clearly introduced prior to being given the passport.

Focus groups revealed that many workshop participants started the challenge but did not complete it or return the passport:

I did it and mine got lost. (Goldstone 1)
Yes, I did it for a bit and then I was ill one day so I couldn’t do it. (Hangleton 1)

Although there was no formal evaluation method within the campaign to reveal reasons for low number of entries, discussion has revealed two potential reasons:

1. The jackpot prize (a bicycle provided by co-op) was not revealed until after production of the passports. Therefore it could not be added as the big incentive in the passport, although this prize was promoted in all direct interventions with children and their parents.
2. The offers and opportunities secured time to meet the tight production deadline were perhaps not large enough incentives to be included in the passport.

Discussion on other possible reasons for the low number of entries generated the following questions:

- Would more media publicity have helped bring more parents into the project and would their influence have helped children to take the challenge through the full three weeks?
- Were the passports unappealing to children – too text heavy, with too little space for drawing and interactive involvement?
- Should the passports been piloted with children before launch?
Should children and their parents have been involved in developing such an incentive scheme?

Would the passports have had more appeal if there were more incentives and prizes within them?

Is three weeks too long to expect children to participate in a project without regular adult interventions and support – would one week have worked better?

Would the passports have worked better with high profile supermarket store promotion? (This would require more investment in many thousands of copies.)

Active for life website

Another function of the passport was to drive children to the Active for Life young people web page to provide information and continued support for long-term opportunities to increase physical activity.

The Active For Life website statistics (Table 3) indicate that there was a substantial increase in numbers accessing the page as the campaign progressed. This suggests that the children were using their passports to find new ideas and ways to keep healthy and potentially raising awareness of activities across the city.

Business partnership activity

The total value of in-kind support provided by businesses was over £3,000. The following businesses provided support:

- Alias Hotel Seattle – a free family meal as a prize for the Food n Fun party.
- Co-op – contents for 2,000 “Snack Pack Prizes” for children participating in the campaign and a star prize of a bicycle (valued at £2,000) plus support and space in all Brighton & Hove stores for Food n Fun passports to be picked up by members of the public.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MAIN YOUNG PEOPLE PAGE (<a href="http://www.foodnfun.org.uk">www.foodnfun.org.uk</a>)</th>
<th>RECIPE BOOK</th>
<th>FOOD N FUN PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
David Lloyd fitness center – a Food n Fun Christmas Party, including an appealing venue and fun activities.

Argus Newspaper – Santa and his elves for the Christmas Party.

Brighton Bears Basketball team – 100 children’s tickets for the December 20 match to distribute to children participating in the campaign plus the coach and Honey Bears to meet children and participate in Christmas Party.

Brighton & Hove Albion FC – a star player to the campaign launch event to speak to children and participate in photographs.

Summary of Results

The campaign was successful in directly communicating and motivating healthy living messages to over 5,000 children across Brighton & Hove. In addition, hundreds of parents and siblings attended the taste tests at the end of the day workshops, with over 100 guests at some schools.

Evaluation from teachers demonstrated that the workshops had a positive impact and led to an increase in healthy food consumption and an increase in physical activity levels: e.g., “Children are telling me of activities they do now such as swimming/football/running that they didn’t before” (Year 4 Teacher, Mile Oak).

In focus groups children gave many examples of new activities they are doing and foods they have tried/continue to consume at home: “I likes more healthy things, than like chocolate and crisps and biscuits and instead of just watching telly, I go out and do more sports” (St. Nicholas).

Results of the Big Taste Test at the end of the day demonstrated that the workshop was successful in encouraging children to try a range of new foods. Many foods that the children tried had not been consumed before.

In response to the question to teachers Did the workshop increase the children’s knowledge of healthy food, exercise and healthy activities? evaluation forms showed a high mean score of 4.6 of 5.

Limitations

However, tight time schedule, competition from other campaigns, and targets indicate barriers to a more successful program (Table 4).

Follow-up

This campaign led to further work within Brighton and Hove, where parents, volunteers, and teachers attended Food n Fun training to learn the tools, techniques, and practices to run their own Fuel 4 Fun activities in schools to
ensure sustainability of the interventions. In addition, Brilliant Futures is currently working on a pilot childhood obesity project in Southwark and all learnings from the Food n Fun project have been instrumental in scoping and developing the activity.

Sharing Information
A full evaluation report was produced giving full details of all activities, key learnings including what went wrong and suggestions for improvements for further activity to enable others working in this area to benefit from the campaign. To download a copy of the report, visit www.brilliantfutures.org.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 4</th>
<th>Barriers and How They Might be Overcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BARRIER</strong></td>
<td><strong>POSSIBLE SOLUTION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timescale: Briefed in July with the start of the campaign in September allowed little time for primary research and testing and for securing business partnerships.</td>
<td>Timescale: With tight timescales, use existing research sources and test them with your own audience to check robust findings. At primary research stage, secure follow-up dates/contact with audience to pre-test your intervention. Always test printed material with your target audience – ensure enough time in project to do this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition: From various “internal” campaigns – Get active, Fit for Football etc., meant media attention and childrens’ attention being pulled in many directions before we even considered external competition.</td>
<td>Competition: Hold a stakeholder event at the start of the campaign to bring all together and agree on common vision, aims, objectives for the campaign. Share insight/research and design the intervention to achieve buy-in and reduce competition of varying messages to the target audience and maximise the budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targets: Short – term results were needed – required short – term intervention. However Brilliant Futures believed follow-up work needed to ensure longer term change.</td>
<td>Targets: With stakeholder engagement, generate partnerships to secure additional funding/timing for further work with the audience/longer term results.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About the Author

Sarah Cork is managing director of Brilliant Futures, a social enterprise providing social marketing training, consultancy, and practical interventions, which she founded in 2003. Having worked in the commercial and charity marketing sector for over 10 years, she now enjoys using this knowledge and experience of the commercial world and practical experience within the health and education sector to help other organisations use marketing tools and techniques to promote positive behavioral change. Sarah combines her practical activities with a part-time post as senior lecturer in marketing at University of Brighton.

Acknowledgments

This project was managed by Martina Pickin, Public Health Specialist, Brighton and Hove City PCT. E-mail: Martina.pickin@bhcpcn.nhs.uk