

Teens speak out about life, love and living in a Supersize world. It's all about choices ...

...Fast Food High School at Alisal

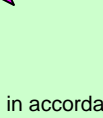


Robbie Cunningham
 Jasmin Diaz
 Diego Quintero
 Karina Hernández
 John Ramírez, Jr
 Erika Navarro
 Eric Ochoa
 Marisol Vega
 Ariana Lopez
 Daisy Vasquez
 Luis Bigham
 Judith Ramírez
 Jackie Vaca
 Carolina Civetta
 Dalila Lopez
 Kari Kaney

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I know you heard what I went through a few years ago with those diet drugs and all...

...before you became a peer counselor

That was pretty messed up - and way scary!



That seems like such a long time ago. Now I'm just concentrating on raising my baby.

Still, it's amazing, how you worked things out...

The group meets. They're planning to improve school food, one way or another.

Griselda approaches. She's working at Alisal these days, but these students remember her troubles with body image at Soledad High School. They recall the disastrous ephedrine experiment that landed her in the hospital with a heart attack at 16.

Are they better informed? Will they make wiser choices? Vamos a ver...

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Erika is talking to the principal about school food...

We have some ideas about improving...



He responds...

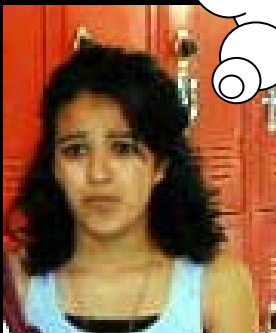
Sure, we want students to be healthy! So, come to the next meeting...

!!@**! He's not listening! Well, if they want us to be healthy, why don't they just give us better food?



Erika gives up for now, and goes to class. She's not happy, though...

I'm sure the reason I can't eat at school is that the food isn't fresh- like the salads they sell to teachers. How's a meeting going to change that?



Moments later, the principal overhears Eric on a rant...

That thing- good salads for teachers - it's so *elitist*! It shows me they don't think we're good enough to eat fresh food!



"*elitist*" - huh! I'm surprised he even knows that word - and dang! He does have a point there...



The two of them join their friends- still talking about school food, as usual...

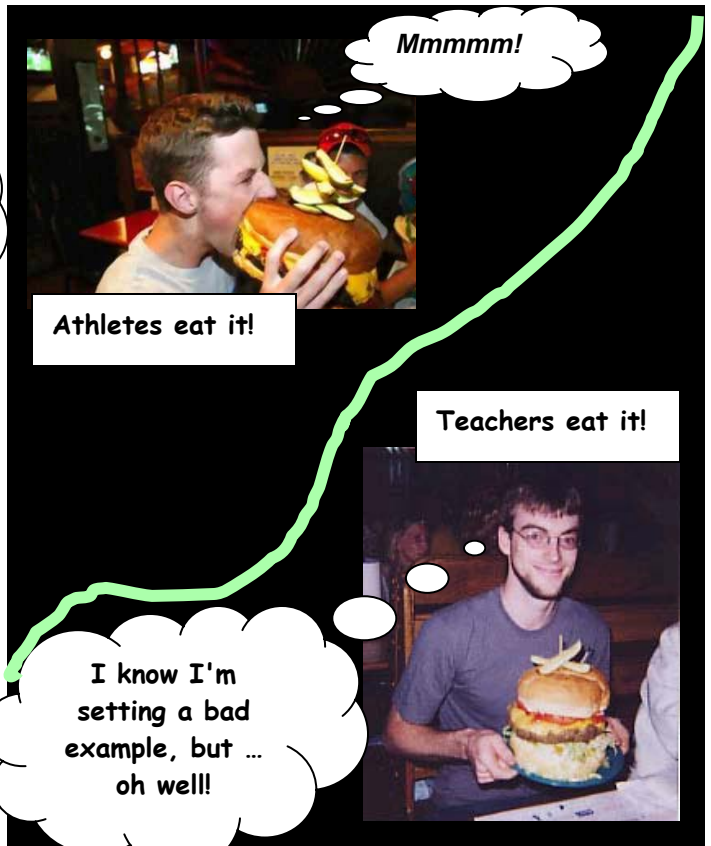
I think it's frozen food

It's nasty!

I want something fresh and juicy!

Right!

Yeah, right! Everyone else eats school food!



Mmmmm!

Athletes eat it!

Teachers eat it!

I know I'm setting a bad example, but ... oh well!

So what's the big deal? I eat that stuff all the time and I'm just fine!



The way you feed your face is a kind of eating disorder, D - and it IS a big deal, - just look at those anorexics - even a guy! Is "weird" what you want?

Diego.. You're SO not *'fine'*! You don't eat right, you get sick all the time and half the time you can't even find your inhaler!



Ok Jasmin, OK! ..But am I supposed to be the one to have to deal with my health? And my *food*? Sure, my parents are real busy and they don't pay attention, but I'm only 16! What am I supposed to do? Grabbing a burger at least makes it easy.

How can you be so clueless?





Well, I even saw Ms Kaney in the classroom, stuffing her face. It's like as if everyone eats fast food - like people think healthy food is nasty!

I think that's why school doesn't make or sell more healthy food!



Later, outside during lunch, the discussion continues...

Well if people really care about their health they should bring home-made food...

@!! Eric, no! That would be **so embarrassing!



The first bell rings and soon Diego is alone in the quad...

Just one more bag of hot heatos and I'll go to class...



He left me here on the table and he's forgotten all about me! He'll be sorry!

The second bell rings...

Uh oh! This is messed up!



Judith is late. She rushes by Diego, not even seeing him!

What a messed up day!
I'm late for work, my
boyfriend dumped me -
we're broke! I feel like
!!@**?#@!!



Choke!

I'm too stressed out to stick
with "improving school food"!
I don't have time and the
principal doesn't care anyway!



Thud!

She only hears Diego when he collapses - and she's the only one there to help!

What the !!!##@@??!!##?



Zzzzzz!!

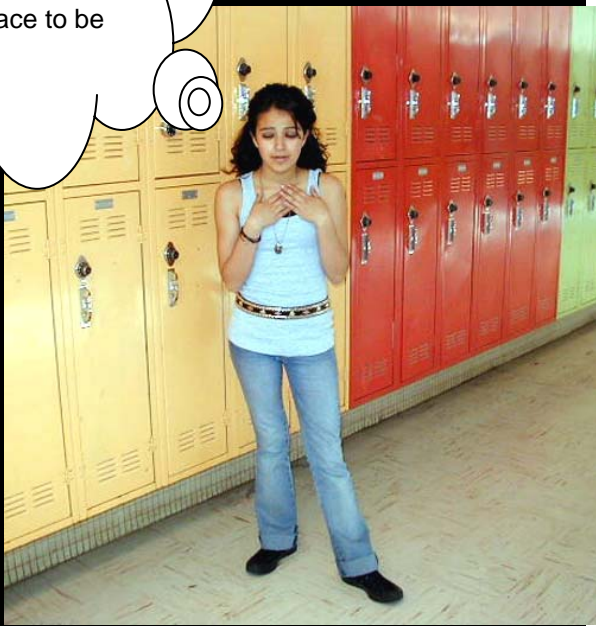
Meanwhile, Erika's pretty discouraged right now. The guy she thinks is SO cute is talking to Eric, and they don't see her...

Erika? Yeah, I checked her out - but
she's way too skinny. No meat - just
a bag of bones - that's not for me!



That's so ... so... how *could* he be so harsh? I feel hot - no, I feel *cold*! I feel like I'm going to throw up! I've got to find someplace to be alone...

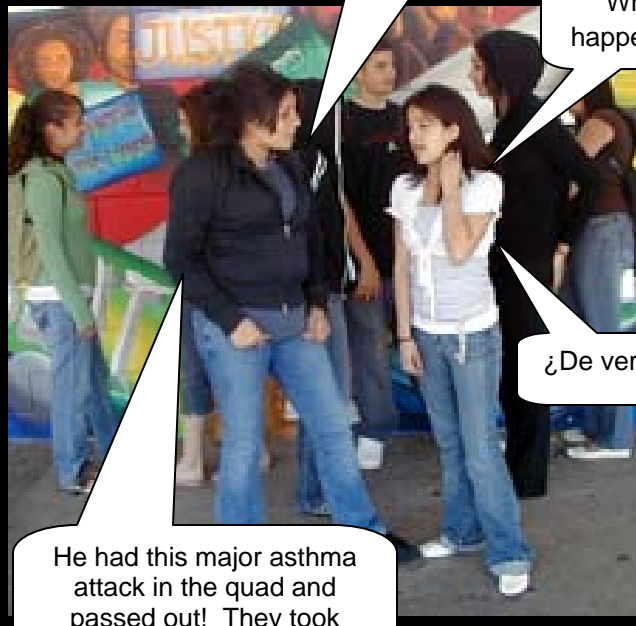
No place to hide...



A few days later...

OMG, I feel so bad about talking trash to D!

What happened?



¿De veras?

He had this major asthma attack in the quad and passed out! They took him to emergency!

Everyone feels so stressed...

No inhaler, of course! Lucky Judith found him - she saved him!

Ariana, everything is falling apart! What can we do?



2 weeks later, Diego is back, and he's better. They go to see the principal -

I feel really stupid

We'll help you out. That's what friends are for - don't forget, I *am* your neighbor...



We **NEED** to do SOMETHING!

In the principal's office, Diego tries to express his concerns.

No ... no... I can't talk about it!

Come on - you can tell him!



Ten minutes later he is still talking about what he learned about responsibility...

And then... and so.. and I learned.. and I need to learn to eat better, so...



So how about some veggies and fruits for the students?

Just then Judith rushes in...

Sorry I'm late! I just found out I got a job in the cafeteria at lunch! I'll help make some changes!

Hey! A vegetable truck just pulled up outside the kitchen!

I am *not* an elitist!



The moment is intense ...

Mr. R, I hope you are going to do the right thing!

You want veggies? Come with me. It's important to know just what's involved!

Sssh! Judith! ¡Con respeto!



Please, please please!

Mr. Ramirez, we put a lot of effort into this you know. Don't say it's too expensive!

Everyone walks over to the cafeteria... to find a happy ending.

Do you like it? This is a 'pilot', to see if students will really eat salad for lunch!

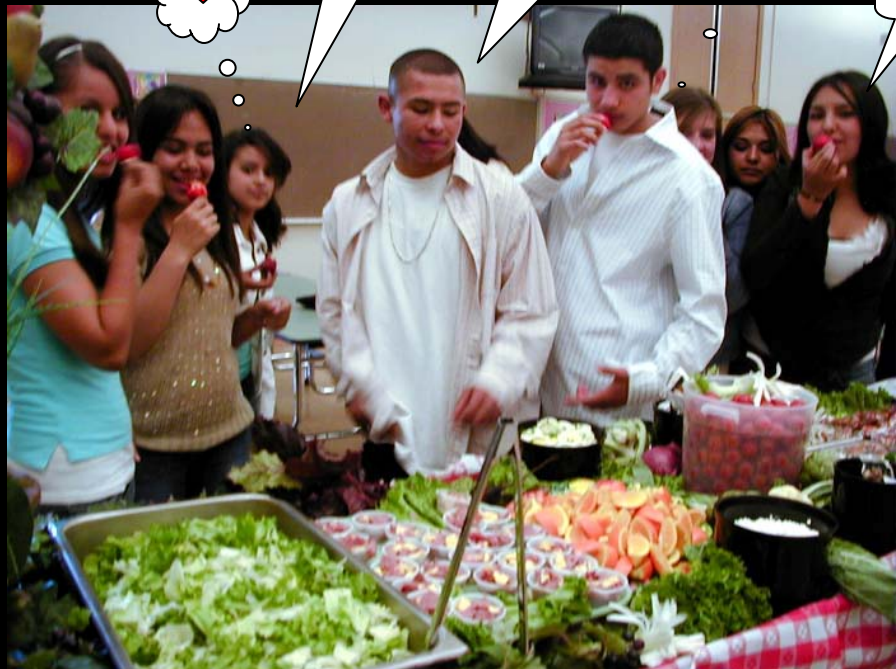


Fresh and juicy - just what I wanted!

Let's go for it!

Wow!

Finally!



As it turns out, this group of students *was* better informed. They made better choices, then they took it all a step further and concentrated on responsibility.

They focused on personal responsibility- for their own health- and responsibility to the whole school community by advocating for fresh foods to be served at school. The happy ending? The pilot salad bar really happened! May 24, 2006

Thanks to all the Health Academy students who made this dream come true. Thanks to Principal John Ramirez, Health Academy Coordinator Kari Kaney, Cafeteria Manager Bertha Maldonado, Food Service Director Christina Varela, Elsa Ramirez-Brisson MPH, RD School Health Coordinator for Steps to a Healthier Salinas Program. Special thanks to Alfaro Martinez for the wonderful strawberries and ALBA Farmers for the donation of fresh veggies to launch the salad bar.

Conceived, directed, edited & published by Kathleen Nolan, UCCE