

Great Outdoors Week Plea to First Lady: Fund Parks to Fight Obesity

Local News

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by Mike CliffordSEATTLE - Today marks the start of Great America Outdoors Week. As part of an effort to get kids moving, the Trust for America's Health is asking for the the First Lady's help.

Rich Hamburg, deputy director, Trust for America's Health, explained why his group is one of them.

"As we see obesity rates increasing over the last 20 to 30 years in adults and children, we need to think out of the box

Many Americans may be surprised to learn that the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a major source of f

Krista Washington, communications coordinator, U.S. Soccer Foundation, said her group partners with Washington Youth Soccer to reach out to under-served kids, especially those in urban areas.

"In our biggest program in the Seattle area, Soccer for Success, we're serving close to 1,000 children," she said. "Kids are not only learning physical activity, but they are also learning how to eat healthy: what to drink, what not to drink; what to eat, what not to eat."

LWCF funds do more than just build soccer fields, Hamburg explained. They help adults and children live healthy lifestyles by increasing their physical activity.

"We're asking for greater investment in the Land and Water Conservation Fund," Hamburg said, "which is used to provide grants for bike paths, soccer fields, baseball fields and activities meant to spur active living."

That fund uses royalty fees from off-shore gas and oil drilling, not taxpayer money, to fund parks. Michelle Obama has expressed support for the Interior Department's work, calling it critical to children's health and well-being.

The letter is available at <http://groundworkusa.org>.