



Victoria A. Reinhardt

BOARD OF RAMSEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

DISTRICT 7

January 26, 2010

DARREN E. TOBOLT
ASSISTANT TO COMMISSIONER
Darren.Tobolt@Co.Ramsey.MN.Us

220 COURT HOUSE
SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA 55102
TEL. (651) 266-8350 FAX (651) 266-8370
Victoria.Reinhardt@Co.Ramsey.MN.Us

Mrs. Obama
First Lady of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington DC 20500

Dear Mrs. Obama:

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to addressing the crucial issue of childhood obesity in our nation. Through the influence of your position as First Lady and your personal leadership, we are confident significant strides will be made to improve child and adult health across America. The purpose of this letter is two-fold: to offer you resources developed locally that we believe can be very useful in achieving your national goals, and to invite you to Ramsey County and Minnesota as a part of your national tour to share your vision and take part in some of the very exciting work in our local community.

Our Public Health Department has been working on the issue of childhood obesity and promotion of healthy lifestyles for many years. Saint Paul was one of four communities in Minnesota funded through the CDC's Steps to a Healthier US initiative from 2005-09, and we are presently part of the State of Minnesota Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP).

During the last two years of our Steps grant, we gathered a diverse group of community members to address the question: *What do people need to have in their lives in order to seek and sustain healthy lifestyle choices and behaviors?* The answer we heard back from our community was simple and compelling: *people need a sense of the possibility that they could feel better, and then simple, doable tools and strategies to make it real in their lives.* The response led to *Exercise Your Right to Feel Better Minnesota*, the collective work of a remarkable group of community members, leaders and artists. (Additional information can be found on our web site, www.feelbetterminnesota.com.)

We invite you to visit Minnesota as a part of your national effort to address obesity, to share your ideas and energy around this topic and to share the work we have done here with you. A partnership with Saint Paul Public Schools and local health leaders and systems will be sponsoring a series of community-wide efforts in April and May of this year built around the *Feel Better* theme and tools, culminating in a 5K Walk/Run the afternoon of May 21st. We would be honored to arrange events in our community during any times that fit your schedule, and to share our video and print resources with you for your national efforts. Should you wish any additional information please contact Donald Gault, Healthy Communities Section Manager, Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health, at 651-266-2404, or via e-mail at donald.gault@co.ramsey.mn.us.

Sincerely,

Victoria Reinhardt
Chair, Board of Ramsey County Commissioners

Minnesota's First Home Rule County

printed on recycled paper with a minimum of 10% post consumer content

