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[March is National Nutrition Month](#)

By [dadofdivas](#)
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As National Nutrition Month begins, there's one innovative childhood obesity prevention program being taught in thousands of schools every day, which is structured unlike any other. Although there are programs with the same goals, The OrganWise Guys' Comprehensive School Program offers scientific evidence it is working to transform the health of school-aged children across the country with easy to understand tools and lessons about nutrition, exercise and healthy living habits.

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Statistics concerning childhood obesity in America are staggering. One in three children is considered obese and those classified as obese are likely candidates to develop diabetes and other lifelong challenges. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, \$147 billion dollars was spent in 2008 to combat this epidemic and overall, the obesity statistics continue to rise nationally.

What makes The OrganWise Guys school curriculum and home-based teaching aids unique is the way life-changing messages are disseminated to children. Subject-based curriculum is built around a group of engaging characters that personify the major organs of the body to teach children as young as three years old as well as adults how to be “healthy and smart from the inside out.” The loveable characters, such as Hardy Heart and Madame Muscle, make a direct connection with children by explaining the impact that nutrition and lack of physical activity has on each individual organ (wise guy) because of the lifestyle choices they make; good or bad.

The popularity of The OrganWise Guys is growing. To view a short video of the effectiveness of the program, please visit: <http://www.youtube.com/user/ORGANWISE%23p/u/0/uLb38X52bUE>

“Children don’t understand that eating large amounts of saturated fat on a continual basis may injure their heart,” stated Dr. Michelle Lombardo, D.C., founder and President of OWG, Inc. “However, young ones understand, and remember, this “bad fat” message when Hardy Heart shares the scientific information with them through fun and playful stories. In fact, independent research shows The OrganWise Guys curriculum, when combined with school meal programs, helps children live healthier lives and score higher on standardized tests than children who have not been part of the program,” said Lombardo.

OWG Inc began teaching children and adults about healthy living nearly two decades ago. Used primarily in schools and community-based settings, the program is expanding exponentially as the number of organizations using the fun and effective OWG program has increased 10-fold since its inception in 1993.

The OWG is an interactive, evidence-based curricula taught by these fun, organ shaped characters, such as Peri Stolic (the large intestine), and Sir Rebrum (the brain), coupled with physical activity lessons, to show children how to make obesity prevention-oriented eating and physical activity choices. The OWG is the only program in the published, peer-reviewed literature to show significant weight and blood pressure improvements, as well as higher standardized test scores, in children who participated in the program as compared to children who did not participate (see citations below).

The OWG approach to healthy living continues to grow in popularity due to its use in many United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) nutrition and school-feeding programs, as well as the recent national television agreement with American Public Television, which is playing OWG public service announcements in many communities throughout the US.

The multi-media set of OWG educational materials include plush toys of each organ, DVDs and other electronic media, books, and an interactive website for children and adults.

The OrganWise Guys was the primary educational program tested in a four-year quasi-experimental study recently published in top-tier health and nutrition journals. According to the lead author, Dr. Danielle Hollar, Ph.D., “participation in the OWG interventions was associated with significant improvements in weight, blood pressure, and academic scores of elementary-aged children, particularly for Hispanic and White children. To have both positive academic and health-related outcomes is very exciting.”

“The evaluation data also shows that parents are increasingly engaged with their children’s nutrition and healthy food choices as a result of the nutrition education resources provided through the schools,” added Hollar.

Additional positive academic and health-related outcomes were published earlier this year in prestigious journals including the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, the *American Journal of Public Health* and the *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*.

As the nation, under the direction of First Lady Michelle Obama, launches the “Let’s Move” campaign against childhood obesity and hunger, these research findings offer hope for a solution. “Mrs. Obama is looking for innovative, effective programs that improve health and academic achievement, and what is very exciting is that we have shown that an existing nutrition and healthy



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living program, The OrganWise Guys, really works,” says Hollar. “And, it’s easy to implement through already-funded, large networks of community-based U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Nutrition Educators, especially those participating in the SNAP-Ed program, which are located in almost every county in the United States and its Territories.”

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• About Dad of Divas

I am a father of two girls who everyday works to regain control of my kingdom. Is this even possible in a divadom? This blog is dedicated to chronicling my experiences and challenges in being a father as well as providing some food for thought to other dads. History of this Blog - I started writing this blog full time in January 2008 prior to my second daughters' birth. Since then, the blog has exponentially grown and I have continued to find my groove through both reading and networking with other bloggers as well as writing on a myriad of varying topics. Outside of home I am a Student Affairs Professional who has been working in the field of College Administration now for 12 years with extensive experience in precollege planning, admission, advising, and other areas.

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