

Join the Fight against Youth Obesity

Extend your reach to the youth market

BY MARK MCTAVISH

It is well known that the youth obesity crisis, a result of inactivity and poor food choices, has become the single greatest challenge facing our healthcare system and that it poses a greater threat than all other ailments combined.

This is a call to action, and as health

spending more and more money to get kids into shape, and the demand is increasing at a rapid pace. With a variety of new age-appropriate solutions coming to market, fitness clubs and their personal trainers are creating plenty of effective and fun programs for youth.

We live in a technology-driven

recent years, popularizing exercise methods that focus on natural body movements. This has led to a shift towards group training classes for youth in fitness clubs, and it is now starting to change the ways that physical education teachers instruct their students.

These methods include yoga, indoor cycling, Zumba and suspended body-weight training to name a few. These methods have proven to be highly effective in commercial clubs and studios, and they provide instruction in a non-competitive manner that prevents alienation of less-athletically inclined kids. For high school programs, however, two key challenges remain: securing funding and educating teachers.

Teachers are the most important piece of the puzzle because they influence a whole generation. Fitness professionals in all areas must reach out to local schools, helping to run in-school and after-school programs.

Fitness clubs are community-based businesses that rely upon on local awareness to achieve success. What better way to ensure future growth than by creating a breeding ground for future members through school programs. FBC



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and fitness leaders we have an obligation to step up and answer with real solutions.

I believe that in the coming year we will see a pivotal shift in how the fitness industry does business. Club owners, personal trainers and equipment suppliers alike will begin to realize great profits from the youth fitness segment.

The government and parents are

world where kids are surrounded by stimuli, much of which keeps them glued to their seats while staring at a screen. This presents us with an opportunity to use technology to educate and inspire our youth to lead healthier lifestyles. Using social networking and innovative software programs we can make fitness fun for everyone.

We have all witnessed the functional training movement explode in

Are you thinking of upgrading your club's current fitness equipment?

Have you considered donating it to a local school in exchange for a charitable donation tax receipt? Nearly all schools have the ability to provide a tax receipt for the fair market value of the equipment donated. It will provide great opportunities for the students and, as well, will enhance your image and secure your businesses position in the local market. Use the donation as a foot in the door then approach the school about running programs for students and teachers that will improve their chances for fitness success.



Mark McTavish is a fitness professional who has worked in various segments of the industry for the last 12 years. He had his start in personal training and club management then moved on to fitness equipment sales and consulting. Early in 2010, Mark launched a national school fitness program called SchoolFit, a unique program that specializes in improving fitness facilities within Canadian schools. For more information, visit www.schoolfit.ca.