

**Socially Responsible Design:
A Visual Health Campaign Promoting Awareness of the Type 2 Diabetes
Epidemic Threatening Children and Adolescents in the United States**

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A designer's job is to be concerned with both the tiniest details and the broadest. An itsy-bitsy detail has no meaning until it fits into the big picture. In short, designers are naturally concerned with ecology...The natural objective of the design process is to make things easier, reduce the dangers, improve the way things work—efficiency, sustainability, and 'beautility'—thus improving the quality of life.

-Tucker Viemeister, "Towards a New Ecology," *Design Issues: How Graphic Design Informs Society*, 73.

Abstract

The level of communication through graphic design can vary from public audience to private discussions; it can be persuasive and sell ideas or it can be a means of providing information about new methods of thought pertaining to issues within society. This paper is an examination of socially responsible design, or design with the primary purpose of providing informative ideas for the well-being of society.

Following the exploration of socially responsible design, the remainder of the written component of this thesis takes on the form of a design brief, with the purpose of formulating a plan for the production of a specific visual campaign. Socially responsible design can target many issues in contemporary culture, allowing the designer's voice to be heard through the visual medium. For this reason, the purpose of this visual campaign speaks to the specific health issue of diabetes mellitus within American society.

The focus of this departmental honors thesis is the production of a visual campaign which promotes a central awareness that type 2 diabetes is no longer a chronic illness limited to adults. Children and adolescents in contemporary America are facing an epidemic threat of acquiring not only the disease, but a life full of potential complications which can impair their quality of life or even lead to premature death.

Introduction

This departmental honors thesis originates from an interest in the potential of graphic design as a communication tool for social change within society. The level of communication can vary from public audience to private discussions; it can be persuasive and sell ideas or it can be a means of providing information about new methods of thought pertaining to issues within society. This paper is an examination of socially responsible design, or design with the primary purpose of providing informative ideas for the well-being of society. Steven Heller, a graphic design critic maintains that “socially responsible [design] means taking the initiative oneself, dealing rationally with issues, and having a commitment to a specific cause.”¹

Framed by an exploration of socially responsible design, both historically and in current practice, the remainder of the written component of this thesis takes on the form of a design brief, with the purpose of formulating a plan for the production of a specific visual campaign. Socially responsible design can target many issues in contemporary culture, allowing the designer’s voice to be heard through the visual medium.

The ultimate focus of this departmental honors thesis is the production of a visual campaign which promotes awareness that diabetes mellitus, specifically type 2 diabetes, is no longer a chronic illness limited to adults. Children and adolescents in contemporary

¹ “Social Relevance,” <http://www.art.uiuc.edu/ad319/Design_Technology_Society/social_subject.html> (4 June 2003).

America are facing an epidemic threat of acquiring not only the disease, but a life full of potential complications which can impair their quality of life or even lead to premature death. My hope is the visual campaign will initiate the necessary lifestyle changes to help prevent the spread of type 2 diabetes in the younger generation.

Socially Responsible Design

The visual language of graphic design mediates almost every experience in contemporary American culture. Opportunities for graphic design professionals abound with the continual invention of new products and improvements of pre-existing products. Commercial corporations understand that the language of design is what enhances a product, what makes it sell, and they take full advantage of the potential to lure the consumer through the means of the designer's profession. Because commercial design provides ample opportunity for the designer to make a lucrative profession of making products visually attractive to satisfy and even create the wants of the public, the definition of the graphic design profession has become widely accepted as solely a means to influence the economy.²

To an extent, graphic designers have become primarily service providers, and therefore are expected to serve as mediators between the client's message and its intended audience with some degree of neutrality. Designers have mastered the ability to detach

² "First Things First 2000/First Things First 1964," *IDIE for Change*, <<http://idie.net/ftf2000-1964.html#FTF1964>> (20 September 2002).

themselves emotionally from the product and look at the problem with an impartiality to translate the idea of the product for the public's eye. However, during the past decade, several calls for an improved sense of social responsibility have been invoked in the graphic design profession. Increasingly, graphic designers are bringing attention to the idea that, in addition to using graphic design's persuasive qualities to market products, the visual language of design can be used as a communicative tool to inform the thoughts and actions of society for non-commercial facets of day to day living. By doing so, this intimate level of communication has the potential to create dialogues within society and to satisfy human needs, which can change the way people interact with each other and their surrounding environments. Socially responsible design is a fairly new term used to identify graphic design not solely concerned with the economy, but rather graphic design that is primarily concerned with the ecology of society. The attention to pro bono and environmentally conscious work given by the design community during the late eighties and early nineties, as a way to balance the dominance and potential damage of commercial work, marked the beginning of an acknowledgement of the possible discrepancy between the socially desirable and the economically profitable.

However, the personal engagement of designers in political or social causes is not by any means a phenomenon restricted to current design culture.³ Early precedents exist including posters by the French group Grapus dealing with injustice and racism,

³ Liz McQuiston, *Graphic Agitation* (London: Phaidon Press, 1993), 176.

exhibitions designed by El Lissitzky proclaiming the Soviet social progress to European audiences, and Lester Beal's public campaigns promoting public works projects such as the Rural Electrification Administration in 1930's America. These three examples are important to the historical evidence of socially responsible design because they exemplify the reactionary impulse to educate society with new ideas and information. These designers used their distinct method of communication as a way to present innovative ways of thinking about the current standards within society. The designers were interested in the community around them and believed that communicating via graphic design could improve the well-being of society.

Grapus began in response to the student revolution in Paris, in May 1968. During this month, ten million students and workers joined together to protest the elitist, conservative government in power at the time. Dissension with the government in addition to a recession in the French economy ignited interests in social and economic reform. The posters designed by Grapus under the Atelier Populaire No. 2 became symbols of the popular uprisings, illustrating the importance of collectivism thus enabling the representation and propagation of social ideas. Provocative posters were designed and printed each day, and by night they were affixed on walls across Paris. Grapus was initially formed by three individuals: Pierre Bernard, Gérard Paris-Clavel, and François Miehé, but to underline the importance of collectivism, the posters were unsigned. Following May 1968, Grapus continued to use design in political discussions

and to influence society by supporting experimental theatre groups, progressive town councils, the French Communist Party (PCF), the Communist Trade Union (CGT), and other educational causes.⁴ The mission of the Grapus collective was to “fight the stiff idiom of traditional rhetoric without replacing it by the sweet poison of advertising.”⁵

Social and political upheavals of early twentieth century Russia marked El Lissitzky's career. To promote trade and publicize socialist culture, Russia widely employed designers to create illustrative components utilized at trade fairs and exhibitions. El Lissitzky was well known for his contribution to these exhibitions with his printed propaganda of revolutionary messages. Unlike Grapus with its grassroots initiative to join social debate and commentary, the Russian government supported and recognized El Lissitzky's efforts through design. Lissitzky designed the Soviet propaganda publication *USSR in Construction*, a journal published in the Soviet Union in four languages with the mission of providing Western European audiences with information about Soviet industry, economy, and culture.⁶ Lissitzky's designs for *USSR in Construction*, which he compared to the planning of exhibitions, often consisted of larger-than-life photographic spreads. The spreads were intended to convey a mythologized image of Soviet reality, with each devoted to a single theme of socialist reform.

⁴ appendix A, plate 1.

⁵ Richard Hollis, *Graphic Design: A Concise History* (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 2001) 196.

⁶ appendix A, plate 2.

One of the best-known American social designers was Lester Beall, a self-taught designer who worked in Chicago and New York in the middle of the twentieth century. Beall designed numerous posters for The Rural Electrification Administration (REA). President Franklin Delano Roosevelt created the REA, a division of the Department of Agriculture, to improve the nation's rural areas as well as to revive the post-Depression economy by providing jobs. As one of the first graphic designers to work on this project, Lester Beall created a series of posters for the administration from 1937 to 1941. Because the audience for these posters had limited reading skills, these simple but visually dramatic posters expressed their messages in primarily graphic terms.⁷ Renowned designer, Herb Lubalin described Beall as being “responsible for taking American graphic design of the 1930's out of its mundane, tasteless form into the beginnings of what we know now as effective visual communication.”⁸ Lester Beall, along with Grapus and El Lissitzky, believed that graphic design as a communication tool could enable individuals to make better decisions about their lives and how they relate to the world around them.

Probably the most well-known and often referenced example of the desire to make a positive impact through graphic design in contemporary culture is the *First Things First*

⁷ appendix A, plate 3.

⁸ Richard Hollis, 101.

*Manifesto*⁹ Ken Garland wrote and presented this manifesto on November 29, 1963 at a meeting of the Society of Industrial Artists at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts. The audience received the manifesto with applause and many people were willing to reaffirm Garland's statements with their signatures. Through this manifesto, Garland and his fellow graphic designers, art directors, and others in the visual field of communication wished to bring attention to the issue that society's understanding of design was primarily through its commercial presence. The signatories of the manifesto were discontent with this label of design, believing that design could do more than influence the consumer. Though Garland was not declaring that the commercial practices of design be abandoned, he was "proposing a reversal of priorities in favor of the more useful and more lasting forms of communication."¹⁰ At the time of the *First Things First Manifesto*, graphic design was evolving into a more clearly defined professional occupation. Consumer culture was rapidly developing and there was a need for designers willing to use their skills to sell innovative ideas and products. Garland wrote the manifesto with fervor, knowing the choices a designer makes can have a profound impact on society's environment. The manifesto seemed a necessary step in anticipation of the design community forgetting its responsibility to communicate and mediate information within society. British designer Jock Kinneir suggested that the critical distinction, outlined in the manifesto, is between design as communication (giving

⁹ see appendix B

¹⁰ "First Things First 2000/First Things First 1964."

people necessary information) and design as persuasion (trying to get them to buy things). He stated:

Designers oriented in [the social act of communication] are concerned less with persuasion and more with information, less with income brackets and more with physiology, less with taste and more with efficiency, less with fashion and more with amenity. They are concerned in helping people to find their way, to understand what is required of them, to grasp new processes and to use instruments and machines more easily.¹¹

Many designers were inspired by the First Things First Manifesto of 1963 to create socially responsible design to help people become more aware of issues that could affect their lives. But as the twenty-first century neared, corporations seemed to not only be able to entice consumers with products, but the designers who designed the projects as well. Socially responsible design seemed to become overshadowed by lucrative job opportunities for commercial design. For this reason, *Adbusters* and six other design magazines published an updated version of the *First Things First Manifesto*, in the fall of 2000.¹² The new proclamation by thirty-three well-known designers did not necessarily arise due to a complete lack of socially responsible design, but more because they saw a need to address the increasing commodification of the American consumer society. An

¹¹ Rick Poyner, "First Things First Manifesto 2000: A Brief History," *Adbusters*, Autumn 1999, 54.

¹² appendix C

addendum to the *First Things First Manifesto* of 2000 illustrates the ideals behind the new statement. “In 1964, 22 visual communicators signed the original call for our skills to be put to worthwhile use. With the explosive growth of global commercial culture, their message has only grown more urgent. Today, we renew their manifesto in expectation that no more decades will pass before it is taken to heart.”¹³ Rick Poynor, a graphic design critic, writes, “It is no exaggeration to say that designers are engaged in nothing less than the manufacture of contemporary reality.”¹⁴ Design has become absorbed, ubiquitous in the daily life of the individual and it is because of this quality that design has the power to influence emotions, decisions, and actions. The *First Things First Manifesto 2000* has created a renewed discussion about graphic design’s potential as a catalyst for external change and has inspired a growing conviction that the same tools used to enforce the status quo can be shaped into a powerful critique of it.

The recently renewed interest in social responsibility is evident in the work of many contemporary designers. Pamela Hoveland, a graphic designer who works in New York City and teaches design criticism at Yale University, is a founding member of Class Action. This group of graphic designers came together in 1991 as an art collective promoting community action. The group is committed to using the language of graphic design and activist strategies to produce and incite awareness of social issues. Class

¹³ “First Things First 2000/First Things First 1964.”

¹⁴ Rick Poynor, 54.

Action has received national and international attention due to projects focusing on issues surrounding the human body, such as domestic violence, AIDS awareness, and reproductive rights, among other topics. Hoveland states, “my art making is as a social activist, using design as a tool to affect social change.”¹⁵ Early in Hoveland’s professional career, she became dissatisfied with the content of her work and the issue of the designer as author, or at that point the lack of authorship. Graphic design can be an outlet for the designer’s speak to society, the visual language allows for the designer to make a statement of his or her convictions. Hoveland felt restricted by graphic design’s often compromised role as a communicator of other people’s ideas. Because of this crisis of authorship, Hoveland chose to become a social activist, allowing herself to choose goals pertinent to her and design work that would allow her own voice to have an effect on issues in the society around her. By making work that could potentially change a mind, initiate a discussion or simply give out valuable information, Hoveland exemplifies the effect that socially conscious design can have on society.

Stefan Sagmeister, principal designer of Sagmeister Incorporated in New York City, also is currently dealing with issues of how design can be used to affect the world around him. At one point in his career, Sagmeister stated, “design felt impotent and frivolous. There is nothing inherent in graphic design that forces us to support worthy causes, to

¹⁵ “Alumni,” Bemidji State University, summer 1999, <<http://info.bemidji.msus.edu/Alumni/horizons/summer99.html>> (29 April 2002).

promote good things, to avoid visual pollution.”¹⁶ As a result, Sagmeister took a year long hiatus from clients and explored the possibility of using graphic design to touch one’s heart, design that was “less about cool and more about significant.”¹⁷ Sagmeister refers to the idea that the current culture is in a crisis of the unnecessary so now maybe there is room for content and time to think about the choice of what to do and for whom to do it. The idea of designer as author, also present in Sagmeister’s exploration of the intent of graphic design, illustrates that design can be even more potent when the designer has a part of him or her devoted to the issue at hand.

Individual designers have also begun to form organizations to make a better contribution to socially responsible design. The International Council of Graphic Design Associations, or ICOGRADA, along with The International Federation of Interior Architects and Designers (IFI) and The International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID) have recently formed a collaborative organization, Design for the World. This volunteer organization’s mission is “to serve all humanity, particularly people in critical need, by applying creativity, expertise, and experience to the betterment of quality of life for all.”¹⁸ The non-profit organization allows individuals to partake in

¹⁶ Stefan Sagmeister, “How Good is Good,” *Typotheque* <http://www.typotheque.com/articles/how_good_is_good.html> (5 May 2003).

¹⁷ Stefan Sagmeister.

¹⁸ “Mervyn Kurlansky: Design Matters,” *Graphis* <<http://www.graphis.com>> Reprint, *International Council of Graphic Design Associations*, <<http://www.icograda.org/web/articles/feature.shtml>> (28 January 2003).

projects committed to aiding the disadvantaged, victims of war, disasters and extreme poverty, people living in heavily polluted areas, the elderly and the disabled.

Even many large corporations are joining the movement to be socially conscious. Sappi Limited, the world's leading producer of coated fine papers, created a program in 1999 called "Ideas that Matter" as a way to give back to communities and encourage projects that promote change in society. The program allocates grants of one million dollars to designers from Europe, North America and South Africa, to fund projects that the designers create with the desire to enhance the well-being of society.¹⁹

Although large companies have the monetary ability to support social causes, there is debate that some companies do not contribute to social well-being simply to aid others. In the 1980's and 1990's it became common for corporations to create a socially responsible identity. Esprit, a large clothing company created a print and television advertising campaign raising a single social question to multiple people: "What would you do?"²⁰ The campaign challenged a wide range of social issues from urging teens to stay in school, to racism, to AIDS. The advertisements did not feature Esprit clothing, but targeted the potential buyers by portraying young women and girls of all different

¹⁹ "Ideas that Matter," *Sappi*, <<http://www.itm.sappi.com/>> (1 February 2003).

²⁰ Liz McQuiston, 204.

ethnicities. Other companies who took on similar socially and environmentally minded campaigns were Kenneth Cole and Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream.

A more controversial use of social causes to promote corporate identity is the clothing company Benetton. In an advertisement from the late eighties, the slogan "The United Colors of Benetton" began as a theme of multicultural youth in brightly colored clothing of the company, advocating ethnic and racial harmony. The next step of Benetton's promotional campaigns, designed by advertising director Oliviero Toscani, consisted of productless photographs of sensationalist images. Images of an Angolan rebel soldier nonchalantly holding a human bone, a monk kissing a nun, and an AIDS sufferer on his death bed are examples of the provocative campaign images used, without text except for the Benetton logo. Audiences of the campaigns have been both captivated and infuriated. One poster using a photograph of a black woman breast feeding a white baby was banned in the United States, while winning numerous awards in Europe. The social advertisements developed into a company magazine, *Colors*, initially edited by designer Tibor Kalman, because of the lack of context for the images in the advertising mediums of posters and billboards. Pictures are, above all else are the expressive medium of *Colors*: a method that is universal and reaches the greatest number of people with a strong, immediate impact.

Design continues to have the potential to be a purposeful means of communication for the betterment of society. Tucker Viemeister, in his essay “Towards a New Ecology” states, “design is communication on the most intimate level.” This becomes evident in the presentation of the objectives of design: “to make things easier, reduce dangers, and improve the way things work.”²¹ The aims of the design process facilitate human actions and human needs thus improving the quality of life. Whatever the motive is for socially responsible design, individuals, groups, and corporations are supporting the movement to contribute to society’s well-being. The values of these socially conscious designers illustrate the importance that is placed not only on the value of good design, but design that does good. Estella Conwill Majozo, a public art critic, depicts the individual’s relation to the surrounding society. “There is a connectedness between what we see in the world and who we are, between who we are and what we do.”²² In 1967 Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore anticipated the effect technology would have on society’s structure in *The Medium is the Massage*:

‘Time’ has ceased, ‘space’ has vanished. We now live in a global village...a simultaneous happening...too many people know too much about each other. Our new environment compels commitment and participation. We have become irrevocably involved with, and responsible for each other.²³

²¹ Tucker Viemeister, 73.

²² Estella Conwill Majozo, “To Search for the Good and Make it Matter,” *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, ed. Suzanne Lacy (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), 88-89.

²³ Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage* (New York: Random House, 1967) 63, 24.

During the past decade, the need to understand the responsibility of the designer has become even more important. The idea of community has expanded due to communication technologies such as the Internet and therefore new challenges have arisen for graphic design as a language. A designer who is interested in the well-being of his or her own community has the potential to affect individuals, specific groups, or even society at large. Each designer has an opportunity to use his or her special talents and convictions in ways that illuminate the important issues in society and build understanding of both shared and different values.

Design Brief

I. Project Definition

The purpose of this project is to create an effective visual campaign promoting the awareness that type 2 diabetes as a new epidemic affecting children and adolescents in America and initiating lifestyle changes that can aid in the prevention of the disease.

II. Background/Research

A. Type 2 Diabetes in Children: A New Epidemic

The acute need for an awareness among the population at risk for developing type 2 diabetes is evident in the rising numbers of those affected. According to the American Diabetes Association, “approximately 17 million people in the United States, or 6.2 percent of the population, have diabetes.”²⁴ While an estimated 11.1 million have been diagnosed, 5.9 million, or one-third of the total, are unaware they have the disease.²⁵ Nationally, diabetes has increased by almost fifty percent in the past ten years. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), predicts some 45 million to 50 million could have diabetes by the year 2050 under the current societal trends.²⁶ At this rate, plus the inclusion of a younger population to the total, socially conscious design efforts become essential to curbing the epidemic. In addition to society’s well-being,

²⁴ *American Diabetes Association*, <<http://www.diabetes.org/main/application/commercewf>> (23 September 2002).

²⁵ *American Diabetes Association*.

²⁶ “HHS Launches First National Diabetes Prevention Campaign,” *National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases*, 20 November 2002, <<http://www.niddk.nih.gov/welcome/releases/11-20-02.htm>> (3 December 2002).

addressing diabetes from the financial issues of the healthcare industry brings attention to the overwhelming amount of money needed to aid an individual with the disease. United States health expenditures examined in a study by the American Diabetes Association in 2002 totaled 865 billion dollars, of which 160 billion dollars was incurred by people with diabetes. Per capita medical expenditures totaled \$13,243 for people with diabetes and only \$2,560 for people without diabetes. Moreover, the direct cost of diabetes has doubled during the past five years from 42 billion to an alarming 88 billion, this in addition to indirect costs of the disease which reach upward of 130 billion.^{27/28} With these considerable numbers in mind it becomes evident that the healthcare system may be best served by relying less on treating illnesses like diabetes and more on emphasizing prevention of the disease, thus curtailing spending before it starts.

A recent press release from the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) reinforce the timely need for a campaign promoting the awareness of the increase of type 2 diabetes onset in all ages. On November 20, 2002, the HHS and the NDEP initiated the first national diabetes prevention campaign known as “Small Steps, Big Rewards.”²⁹ HHS

²⁷ Joyce Howard Price, “Children Now at Risk for Type 2 Diabetes,” *The Washington Times*, 13 April 2003, <<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20030413-32858177.htm>> (3 May 2003).

²⁸ “Diabetes Ad Blitz Targets At-Risk Minorities,” *Houston Chronicle*, 21 November 2002, Reprint, *American Diabetes Association*, <http://ada.yellobrix.com/pages/ada/Story.nsp?story_id=34563135&ID=ada> (28 November 2002).

²⁹ “HHS/NDEP Diabetes Prevention Campaign,” *National Diabetes Education Program* <<http://ndep.nih.gov/get-info/dpi.htm>> (14 February 2003).

Secretary, Tommy G. Thompson, stated that this campaign is an “effort to stem the explosion of [type 2] diabetes.”³⁰ This campaign was developed in response to scientific data produced by the Diabetes Prevention Program Clinical Trial (DPP) conducted by the National Institute of Health (NIH). The DPP results revealed that type 2 diabetes can possibly be prevented or at the very least, an individual can delay the onset of the disease. Even a delayed onset can improve the quality of life because the longer an individual lives without the disease, the greater the chances of not acquiring complications associated with type 2 diabetes. Associate Professor of Endocrinology at Yale University, Sonia Caprio states, “if a person is diagnosed with type 2 diabetes before the age of twenty, then he or she is facing almost a lifetime of being highly at risk for diabetes complications.”³¹ Possible complications from a prolonged life with type 2 diabetes or uncontrolled diabetes can include heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, blindness, kidney disease, and amputations to name a few. For this reason alone, the importance of reversing the rising amount of childhood cases of type 2 diabetes is evident. Through modest lifestyle changes, the risk of acquiring type 2 diabetes is cut by more than half.³² According to HHS Secretary Thompson, “you don’t have to be a

³⁰ “HHS Launches First National Diabetes Prevention Campaign.”

³¹ “Obese Children ‘Heading for Diabetes,’” *BBC News: Health*, 14 March 2002, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/1871532.stm>> (5 May 2003).

³² “National Diabetes Prevention Campaign Launched,” *Cornell Cooperative Extension, Food and Nutrition*, <<http://www.cce.cornell.edu/food/fdarchives/111202/diabetes.html>> (14 February 2003).

marathon runner or starve yourself to prevent diabetes. You can make small changes and take small steps that translate into big rewards.”³³

The “Small Steps, Big Rewards” campaign was a direct result of the DPP and is therefore limited to the study of adults who are labeled as pre-diabetic, or whose blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not elevated enough to be labeled as diabetic. According to the NDEP Chair, James R. Gavin III, MD, Ph.D., “now we are seeing a new phenomenon—an alarming rise in the number of children with type 2 diabetes.”³⁴ Presently there are no results from studies on children with type 2 diabetes. But Craig Hanis, professor of the University of Texas School of Public Health in Houston states that, “we don’t need to understand all the hows and whys and wherefores” before taking the initiative to change lifestyles that are directly related to the disease. Hanis goes on to say that, “we have to, one of these days, start to reverse the rising diabetes rate [and] lifestyle interventions are a very promising way of doing it.”³⁵

While it used to be that children or teenagers diagnosed with diabetes had type 1 diabetes, or insulin-dependent diabetes, there has been a significant increase in type 2 diabetes in children and adolescents in recent years. Type 1 diabetes is caused by a defect in the immune system, which leads to destruction of the insulin-producing beta

³³ “HHS Launches First National Diabetes Prevention Campaign.”

³⁴ “HHS Launches First National Diabetes Prevention Campaign.”

³⁵ “Diabetes Ad Blitz Targets At-Risk Minorities.”

cells. In other words, the body no longer produces insulin, and the individual must rely on insulin injections to survive. This form of diabetes, accounting for only five to ten percent of the seventeen million Americans affected by the disease, is unpreventable and for the most part, at this time, unpredictable. Type 1 diabetes has classically been considered the only type of diabetes in children except in rare instances. Indeed, type 1 diabetes has been traditionally referred to as ‘juvenile diabetes.’ However, in recent years an increasing amount of children are being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes, which used to be called ‘adult-onset diabetes,’ is a metabolic disorder occurring when the body doesn’t produce enough insulin or loses its ability to efficiently use insulin. This type of diabetes is usually treated with oral medications, a regulated diet and the addition of exercise routines, though in some extreme cases insulin can be used as a treatment. According to the American Diabetes Association, type 2 diabetes is most commonly diagnosed in adults over the age of forty-five, but the rapid increase of children being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes is so startling that it is being called an epidemic. Though there is no established data, it is estimated that one-third to one-half of all new cases of childhood diabetes are now diagnosed as type 2, contradicting the belief that children are only susceptible to type 1 diabetes.³⁶ “What used to be a disease of our grandparents and our parents – type 2 diabetes – has now become a disease of

³⁶ “The Rise of Obesity and Type 2 Diabetes in Children,” *Personal Care*, August 2002, <<http://www.personalcare.org/visitor/personalbest/2002fall/pb2002fall-obesitydiabeteschildren.pdf>> (3 May 2003).

our children,” states Dr. Francine Kaufman, the new president of the American Diabetes Association and a pediatric endocrinologist.³⁷

Researchers are studying the new phenomenon and do not yet fully understand the reasons for such a shift. As an adult, the most common risks for a person to acquire type 2 diabetes are if he or she is related to someone with the disease, has high blood pressure, is obese or significantly overweight, is forty-five years or older, or is of a particular race or ethnic background.³⁸ Similarly for children and adolescents, there appears to be a host of potential genetic and environmental risk factors, but perhaps the most significant factor is the increased incidence of obesity in youth in America, a result of increasingly sedentary lifestyles and poor eating habits. As many as eighty percent of newly diagnosed children are significantly overweight.³⁹ Since the 1980’s, the cases of obesity in children have grown rapidly, increasing by 42%.⁴⁰ “Nowadays we’re seeing that 15 to 20 percent of kids are obese,” meaning they are at least 30 percent above normal body weight, says John H. Graham IV, Chief Executive Officer of the American Diabetes Association. He adamantly states that “almost exclusively, kids with type 2 diabetes are morbidly obese.”⁴¹ Dr. Naomi Neufeld, a pediatric endocrinologist, began

³⁷ Francine Kaufman, “Type 2 Diabetes in Children and Young Adults: A “New Epidemic,” *Clinical Diabetes*, Fall 2002, 217-18.

³⁸ appendix D

³⁹ “Diabetes Facts and Figures among Youth,” *American Diabetes Association*, <http://www.diabetes.org/main/info/facts/facts_youth.jsp> (5 May 2003).

⁴⁰ “Obesity: A deadly risk,” *On the Inside*, Discovery Channel, 8 October 2003.

⁴¹ Joyce Howard Price.

an exercise program called Kidshape in response to the overwhelming rise in the number of children she was treating whose medical problems, such as pre-diabetes or type 2 diabetes, could be entirely attributed to their weight.⁴²

The rise in obesity of children in the United States seems directly related to the increase in society's acceptance of fast food meals. Fast food chains are becoming a norm in the eating habits of an average American. Restaurants of all types capitalize on this lifestyle by promoting poor eating habits such as larger portions to convince the consumer he or she is getting a better value for the price of the food.⁴³ Though there is some attempt to hold the fast food chains legally accountable for exasperating the nation's weight problems by knowingly serving meals that cause obesity and disease,⁴⁴ it is the individual who possesses the ultimate responsibility for his or her eating habits. In addition to poor diets, a lack of importance is being placed on exercise in daily activities. This is exacerbated by the fact that more and more children are engaged in a sedentary lifestyle, spending much of their time watching television and playing video games, and not participating in physical activities.

⁴² *Kidshape*, <<http://www.kidshape.com/>> (14 February 2003).

⁴³ "Battling Against Big Food," *The Economist*, 21 December 2002, 108-10.

⁴⁴ "Fat Americans Sue Fast Food Firms," *BBC News*, 25 July 2002, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/2151754.stm>> (15 February 2003).

Even more significant, the leading factor in childhood obesity is the parental example.⁴⁵ Children learn to mimic the behaviors of their parents, including eating habits and physical activity. Moreover, the trends of the American public also create a provocative influence on the younger generation's lifestyle values. Many schools have dropped physical education programs and maintain vending machines that provide the children with high-fat, high-calorie foods. Well-balanced meals, daily exercise, and positive parental example are the key components to initiating the prevention of type 2 diabetes in America's youth. A new report issued in June 2003 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that one out of every three children in the United States born in 2000 will become diabetic by the time they reach adulthood unless more people start eating less and exercising more.⁴⁶ Even Ananda Lewis, MTV personality and a representative of the younger generation, recognizes that "modern lifestyles are putting kids at risk for developing what used to be an adult disease,"⁴⁷ and prevention needs to start now before children and adolescents are at a greater risk of acquiring diabetes.

B. Methods to Prevent Type 2 Diabetes in Children

The Diabetes Prevention Program Clinical Trial (DPP), conducted by the National Institute of Health (NIH) researched the effects moderate lifestyle changes can have on

⁴⁵ "Obesity: A deadly risk."

⁴⁶ "CDC Issues Diabetes Warning for Children," *USA Today*, 14 June 2003, <http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2003-06-14-diabetes-odds_x.htm> (15 June 2003).

⁴⁷ "Emerging Diabetes Epidemic Triggers National Call for Screening," *Diabetes Week*, 1 July 2002, 15.

those at risk for acquiring diabetes. The study found that by losing five to seven percent of body weight and getting at least thirty minutes of physical activity such as brisk walking on most days effectively and qualitatively reduced the risk of type 2 diabetes. These lifestyle changes worked for men and women, and for people of every ethnic or racial group who participated in the study. Exercise and diets are so effective for the prevention or delay of type 2 diabetes that the DDP actually ended a year early because the results in the patients occurred so quickly.

Awareness is the first step in preventing the diabetes epidemic of today's younger generation. Possibly more important than targeting the children is informing parents so they can set good examples and create healthy environments for their children. Because as many as eighty percent of children being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes are overweight, parents need to be informed of the health issues related to their children's weight.⁴⁸ Alarming, one-third of mothers who have overweight children do not realize their children are at risk for acquiring the disease. In fact, according to a federal survey many of these mothers believe their children are at a normal weight.⁴⁹ Helping parents become aware of the serious life altering complications involved with a chronic illness like diabetes and the lifestyle changes that could prevent these problems is potentially the most effective treatment in the reduction of the younger generation's susceptibility to the

⁴⁸"Diabetes Facts and Figures among Youth."

⁴⁹ Marilyn Elias, "Moms Often Unaware that Kids are Overweight," *USA Today*, 5 May 2003, sec. D.

disease. Notably important to emphasize is that dieting is not a solution to a child's weight problem. In childhood, the effects that dieting has on the body can be destructive, asserts psychologist Ann Kearney-Cooke, an eating disorder expert. Even more, dieting in children could create additional problems such as bingeing and eating disorders.⁵⁰ The most effective treatment for overweight children is through parental example illustrating the benefits of physical activity and well-balanced meals.⁵¹

III. Objective

The objective of the visual campaign of this project is to combine the effective aspects of socially responsible design with the pertinent information about preventing type 2 diabetes in children and adolescents to create a greater awareness of the epidemic.

IV. Vision

The posters of the campaign emotionalize the idea that children who acquire type 2 diabetes will endure a life full of threatening health complications. The target audience is the parents of children and adolescents for the specific reason of the role they play as models for acquired behaviors. The intent is for the campaign to create an emotive response by the audience to influence action to prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes.

⁵⁰ Marilyn Elias.

⁵¹ appendix E

V. The Design⁵²

The posters exemplary of a visual campaign promoting awareness of the type 2 diabetes epidemic in children use a focal statement to attract the attention of the viewer. The headline, “Children should act their age, not yours,” creates an intimate connection with the target audience by including the reader in the statement. The reader is being spoken to in the second person in order to initiate a relationship between the message of the campaign and the audience member.

The phrase has more than one layer of meaning with which the audience may walk away from the experience. The relationship of the phrase and the images of children mimicking adult behaviors illustrates that children should have fun, and enjoy the innocence and playfulness of their age. In addition, the phrase implies that children because they are young and inexperienced, need role models from whom to learn good behaviors which will lead to a healthy life. The use of the second person pronoun “yours” labels the target audience as that person who can implement a good example for his or her child to follow.

Another interpretation of the phrase is the potential lifestyle that comes with a childhood of type 2 diabetes. Children who acquire the disease must “grow up” faster with

⁵² appendix F, plates 1 and 2

unfamiliar responsibilities of checking their blood glucose level and watching what they eat. A child who cannot enjoy ice cream with his or her friends cannot be truly enjoying their “age.”

The relationship between the message of the campaign and the audience becomes more personal due to the quality of the images. The “snapshot” quality of the images could be found in the scrapbook of any family, and most parents can recall memories of their own children that are referenced by the photographs. Also, the children in the photographs are imitating an adult lifestyle. The depiction is a positive childlike action, but the reality of a child with type 2 diabetes who must take on adult behaviors to maintain better health invokes a negatively uncomfortable response.

Ultimately, the copy links the emotive qualities of the focal statement and the images by informing the audience of the threat of this recent childhood disease with the intention to promote a change of both thought and action by the viewer in his or her own life.

Conclusion

As a result of the exploration of graphic design as a catalyst for social change and the production of the visual campaign as a method to instigate change in American lifestyles, my hope is that the epidemic of type 2 diabetes in children and adolescents will be affected in a positive way. My expectation is that my personal connection with the chronic illness, diabetes, and my interest in using graphic design as a way to voice my convictions to society will initiate a change for the well-being within society around me.

Appendix A

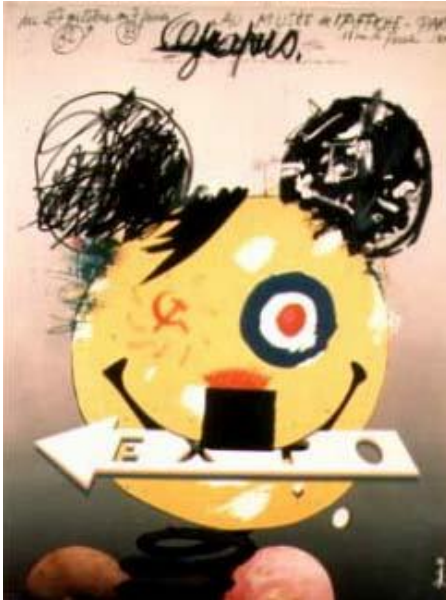


plate 1 – Grapus, *Expo Poster*, 1985



plate 2 – El Lissitzky, *USSR in Construction*, issue #2, 1933



plate 3 – Lester Beall, *Rural Electrification Administration*
Poster, c. 1937

Appendix B

First Things First Manifesto

Original version written by Ken Garland, London, November 29, 1963

Published in Adbusters magazine, Autumn 1998, page 22.

We the undersigned, are graphic designers, photographers and students who have been brought up in a world in which the techniques and apparatus of advertising have persistently been presented to us as the most lucrative, effective and desirable means of using our talents. We have been bombarded with publications devoted to this belief, applauding the work of those who have flogged their skill and imagination to sell such things as: Cat food, stomach powders, detergent, hair restorer, striped toothpaste, aftershave lotion, before shave lotion, slimming diets, fattening diets, deodorants, fizzy water, cigarettes, roll-ons, pull-ons, and slip-ons. By far the greatest time and effort of those working in the advertising industry are wasted on these trivial purposes, which contribute little or nothing to our national prosperity.

In common with an increasing number of the general public, we have reached a saturation point at which the high pitched stream of consumer selling is no more than sheer noise. We think that there are other things more worth using our skill and experience on. There are signs for streets and buildings, books and periodicals, catalogues, instructional manuals, industrial photography, educational aids, films,

television features, scientific and industrial publications and all the other media through which we promote our trade, our education, our culture and our greater awareness of the world.

We do not advocate the abolition of high pressure consumer advertising: this is not feasible. Nor do we want to take any of the fun out of life. But we are proposing a reversal of priorities in favour of the more useful and lasting forms of communication. We hope that our society will tire of gimmick merchants, status salesmen and hidden persuaders, and that the prior call on our skills will be for worthwhile purposes. With this in mind, we propose to share our experience and opinions, and to make them available to colleagues, students and others who may be interested.

Signed:

Ken Briggs
Ray Carpenter
Robert Chapman
Gerry Cinamon
Anthony Clift
Harriet Crowder
Ivan Dodd
Germano Facetti
Robin Fior
Anthony Froshaug
Ken Garland

John Garner
Brian Grimby
Bernard Higton
Gerald Jones
Ivor Kamlish
Sam Lambert
Ian McLaren
Caroline Rawlence
William Slack
Geoffrey White
Edward Wright

Appendix C

First Things First 2000

Updated version published by Adbusters Magazine, fall 1999

We, the undersigned, are graphic designers, art directors and visual communicators who have been raised in a world in which the techniques and apparatus of advertising have persistently been presented to us as the most lucrative, effective and desirable use of our talents. Many design teachers and mentors promote this belief; the market rewards it; a tide of books and publications reinforces it.

Encouraged in this direction, designers then apply their skill and imagination to sell dog biscuits, designer coffee, diamonds, detergents, hair gel, cigarettes, credit cards, sneakers, butt toners, light beer and heavy-duty recreational vehicles. Commercial work has always paid the bills, but many graphic designers have now let it become, in large measure, what graphic designers do. This, in turn, is how the world perceives design. The profession's time and energy is used up manufacturing demand for things that are inessential at best.

Many of us have grown increasingly uncomfortable with this view of design. Designers who devote their efforts primarily to advertising, marketing and brand development are supporting, and implicitly endorsing, a mental environment so saturated with commercial messages that it is changing the very way citizen-consumers speak, think, feel, respond

and interact. To some extent we are all helping draft a reductive and immeasurably harmful code of public discourse.

There are pursuits more worthy of our problem-solving skills. Unprecedented environmental, social and cultural crises demand our attention. Many cultural interventions, social marketing campaigns, books, magazines, exhibitions, educational tools, television programs, films, charitable causes and other information design projects urgently require our expertise and help.

We propose a reversal of priorities in favor of more useful, lasting and democratic forms of communication - a mindshift away from product marketing and toward the exploration and production of a new kind of meaning. The scope of debate is shrinking; it must expand. Consumerism is running uncontested; it must be challenged by other perspectives expressed, in part, through the visual languages and resources of design.

In 1964, 22 visual communicators signed the original call for our skills to be put to worthwhile use. With the explosive growth of global commercial culture, their message has only grown more urgent. Today, we renew their manifesto in expectation that no more decades will pass before it is taken to heart.

Signed:

Jonathan Barnbrook
Nick Bell
Andrew Blauvelt
Hans Bockting

Irma Boom
Sheila Levrant de Bretteville
Max Bruinsma
Siân Cook

Linda van Deursen
Chris Dixon
William Drenttel
Gert Dumbar
Simon Esterson
Vince Frost
Ken Garland
Milton Glaser
Jessica Helfand
Steven Heller
Andrew Howard
Tibor Kalman
Jeffery Keedy

Zuzana Licko
Ellen Lupton
Katherine McCoy
Armand Mevis
J. Abbott Miller
Rick Poynor
Lucienne Roberts
Erik Spiekermann
Jan van Toorn
Teal Triggs
Rudy VanderLans
Bob Wilkin

Appendix D

Risk factors of type 2 diabetes.⁵³

- blood relatives of someone with diabetes
- high blood pressure or very high blood cholesterol or triglyceride levels
- obesity or significantly overweight
- forty-five years or older
- women who have had gestational diabetes (temporary diabetes while pregnant)
- women who have had a baby weighing more than nine pounds at birth
- individuals of a certain race
 - African American
 - Hispanic American
 - Asian American
 - Native American
 - Pacific Islander

⁵³ *American Diabetes Association.*


Appendix E

*Tips for parents to help children avoid obesity.*⁵⁴

- Children should not be forced to finish meals. Their appetite should be respected, and more importantly do not reward a finished meal with a sweet treat.
- Food as a method of comfort or reward can lead to a child's habitual relationship with food.
- Children should be encouraged to join in sporting or exercising activities. Children need about sixty minutes of exercise a day, but even twenty to thirty minutes will help prevent obesity and type 2 diabetes.
- Providing a healthy diet of fish, fruits and vegetables encourages good eating habits for children. Avoiding sugary foods and allowing for thirty percent or fewer calories of total food intake are good things to remember when preparing meals.
- The most important factor of a good eating regimen is to lead by example. Children mimic their parents' behavior and if the parent has poor eating habits or is inactive, then the child will learn to have the same behaviors.
- Remember that a child's growing process is not individual. He or she must not be the only one in the household who should eat well and exercise. Plan family outings and encourage everyone to be healthy.

⁵⁴ "The Rise of Obesity and Type 2 Diabetes in Children."

Appendix F



children should act their age,
not yours.

Your child may be at risk for an adult disease.
Increasingly, health care providers are diagnosing more and more children with type 2 diabetes, previously known as "adult onset diabetes." Type 2 diabetes in children can be a direct result of obesity and inactivity. A child who acquires type 2 diabetes will face a life of growing up fast and dealing with many possible complications such as blindness, kidney failure, heart disease, and premature death.

Lead by example - so your child can act his age.
Your children look up to you. If you are overweight or inactive, then it is likely that your child will be also. Diabetes can be prevented by moderate life-style changes. Encourage your child to learn good eating and exercising habits by leading by example. Plan fun family activities that will help your child enjoy his childhood, and lead a healthy life.

Know if your child is at risk for type 2 diabetes.
For more information contact the National Diabetes Education Program
1-800-486-5535 or www.ndepi.nih.gov

plate 1 – original poster, 18 x 12”



children should act their age,
not yours.

Your child may be at risk for an adult disease.
Increasingly, health care providers are diagnosing more and more children with type 2 diabetes, previously known as "adult onset diabetes." Type 2 diabetes in children can be a direct result of obesity and inactivity. A child who acquires type 2 diabetes will face a life of growing up fast and dealing with many possible complications such as blindness, kidney failure, heart disease, and premature death.

Lead by example - so your child can act her age.
Your children look up to you. If you are overweight or inactive, then it is likely that your child will be also. Diabetes can be prevented by moderate life-style changes. Encourage your child to learn good eating and exercising habits by leading by example. Plan fun family activities that will help your child enjoy her childhood, and lead a healthy life.

 **Know if your child is at risk for type 2 diabetes.**
For more information contact the National Diabetes Education Program:
1-800-438-5385 or www.ndep.nih.gov

plate 2 – original poster, 18 x 12”

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