

**TURN THE TIDE FOUNDATION, INC.**  
**David L. Katz; Yale University School of Medicine**

**ABOUT:**

Turn the Tide Foundation, Inc. was founded in 2007 to address America's troubling health trends – rapidly rising rates of obesity and diabetes in adults and children, and increasing rates of heart disease and other chronic diseases in adults. Turn the Tide Foundation supports a vital, evolving program and research agenda that will grow over time and in response to changing societal need. Turn the Tide operates under the personal direction of David L. Katz, MD, MPH, FACPM, FACP; Yale University School of Medicine.

**GOAL:**

To develop and evaluate creative, practical strategies in real-world settings for empowering individuals and families to achieve optimal nutrition, robust good health, and sustainable weight control; To disseminate successful strategies; and to work tirelessly to devise a robust array of defenses every family can use to protect itself from the threat of obesity and attendant chronic disease.

**HOW TO:**

The Turn the Tide Foundation was developed in response to the need to help people lead healthy lifestyles and to avoid the devastating health effects of obesity and other related chronic diseases, and to make the Foundation's programming available free of charge. As part of the process of establishing a non-profit organization, a Board of Directors was assembled. The Board is comprised of various individuals with an interest in obesity and diverse backgrounds. The Board of Directors meets formally on a yearly basis at the annual meeting, and communicates with the foundation's director and acting executive director informally throughout the year. The Board functions primarily in an advisory capacity.

Once the Foundation's non-profit status was secured, Turn the Tide began fundraising efforts to support its mission. Many of the Foundation's initial sponsors were companies and individuals that Dr. Katz and his colleagues were already associated with and had an interest in obesity prevention. Donations were also solicited by conducting targeted searches of individuals and organizations with an interest in obesity prevention. Personal contact was then made with potential donors to establish a relationship and determine whether there was a match between Turn the Tide's mission and potential donors' interests.

Turn the Tide Foundation, Inc. now works to support the dissemination of important obesity prevention programs and related materials, including Nutrition Detectives and ABC for Fitness (Activity Bursts in the Classroom). Both programs are designed to function within the existing school curriculum so they do not require additional time out of the school day. Nutrition Detectives teaches kids how to make healthy choices, while ABC for Fitness works to increase physical activity during the school day. Both of these programs are offered to all individuals, schools and other organizations free of charge and are supported by Turn the Tide. Other initiatives supported by Turn the Tide include a Nutrition Quality Labeling program and an Online Weight-management Counseling program for Healthcare providers (OWCH).

**BUDGET:**

Turn the Tide Foundation, Inc. works on a budget of approximately \$120,000 per year.

**BARRIERS:**

- **Lack of strong donor base:** As a startup organization, Turn the Tide is still in the process of developing a strong donor base to support the foundation's activities.
- **Limited human resources:** Related to the issue of a strong donor base is the issue of staffing. Funds are needed to hire a dedicated full time staff member to run the foundation on a day-today basis. The foundation is not yet in a financial position to hire full time dedicated staff and is currently run on a limited part-time basis.
- **Getting the word out:** Because Turn the Tide is relatively new and has limited human and monetary resources, it has been a challenge to raise awareness of the Foundation and the programs and services it offers.

#### **BEST PRACTICES:**

- **Use existing means to help get the word out.** In order to raise funds and to get the community to take advantage of your program, it must be known. Turn the Tide takes advantage of Dr. Katz's frequent speaking opportunities to spread the word and direct the audience to the website. Turn the Tide also takes advantage of an existing email subscriber list to send bi-monthly e-newsletters with foundation news and information.
- **Give away what you can.** One way that Turn the Tide raised awareness of its efforts was by sending the Nutrition Detectives DVD to all public school Superintendants in Connecticut.
- **Don't be afraid to get outside help.** Turn the Tide is planning to use some of its funds to hire a consultant to help plan and implement a stronger fundraising campaign and develop a stronger donor base. This will allow the organization to hire dedicated staff and expand the work of the Foundation. If you can't afford a consultant, see if there's one in your community that might consider volunteering.

#### **OVERALL LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- **Choose a focus that your community can connect with.** If your area of focus is of public interest and is something they can relate to, like obesity, your barriers tend to be more limited. Turn the Tide Foundation has seen an outpouring of support from schools and communities around Connecticut, and beyond, once they have been made aware of the organization's programs.
- **Put your Board of Directors' experience to use.** Turn the Tide assembled a Board of Directors with a wide skill set, including health research, marketing, product development, and public relations and communications. The organization utilizes these skills by engaging the Board members according to their interests and expertise.

#### **CONTACT:**

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