

Howard County Unsweetened

As the largest source of added sugar and calories in kids' diets, America's sugary drink habit is making us sick. Our challenge: Help the Horizon Foundation reverse the trend in Maryland's Howard County.

Knowing our target was primarily moms who were buying sugary drinks as an easy way to make their kids happy, we pursued a strategy to help parents (rather than lecture them) and establish a new norm of choosing tasty alternatives to sugary drinks, using policy, communication and technology. We built a Better Beverage Finder, an app where users shop for healthy beverages, sorting through more than 300 choices and where to buy them. We also launched a Switch the Drink app that suggests alternative beverages based on one's favorite sugary drink. We

also supported Horizon's Better Choices Coalition that successfully pressed for changes in public spaces, in government policies and on school grounds. Through street team interventions, targeted social media and digital campaigns, and local television spots, we spread the word that Howard County was a community where sugary drinks were so last year.

The results:

An independent evaluation published in the Journal of American Medical Association showed that after three years of the campaign local soda sales have dropped nearly 20%, exceeding the reported annual decrease of 1% to 2% nationally. Marketing for Change continues to be the primary media partner for this campaign. This year's campaign will focus on tackling lesser known sugary culprits like sports drinks and juice that aren't seen as unhealthy compared to soda.



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