

I'm sometimes surprised when and where government information becomes useful. (This won't surprise anyone who has ever spent any time in the govdocs world, but humor me—this is my column after all.)

Recently I found myself in a bar at 7:30 p.m. on a Thursday. Before you start wondering what a wild and crazy life I lead, I was attending a Junior League meeting and we were planning a children's health fair. We brainstormed ideas and each group came up with a variety of activities to engage kids and help them learn about healthy living. (For context, the focus of the Junior League of Grand Rapids is on improving children's physical health. Projects range from Wellness Adventure Yards that provide a safe place to play to Kids in the Kitchen, where kids are introduced to healthy foods.)

My group chose to run a pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey-style game, except instead of a donkey we would use an image of a person, and instead of a tail we would be using different foods. The goal would be to stick the food to the part of the body that it supports—think milk is “good for bones,” etc. Since not everyone could attend the meeting, one person from each group was asked to send an email out to everyone to get the process rolling. Those of you who have been on the receiving end of my endless requests for submissions will not be surprised that my group asked me to coordinate.

Being a librarian, I figured the least I could do was include some reliable information in the email along with a reminder of what we chose to do. We want to make sure our information is correct, after all. This led me to falling through the rabbit hole of children's nutritional education resources. Of course, I knew there would be a lot (Michelle Obama's “Get Moving!” campaign meant the topic got significant coverage over the past several years), but I severely underestimated the magnitude of available information. I found interactive books, printable stickers and posters, teacher kits, and a *lot* of PDF files. They came from extension offices, universities, agencies, and schools, and were geared towards toddlers, parents, and everyone in between. I'm a little worried I overwhelmed my group members (even though I only sent the top few links I found), but I'm also incredibly grateful to all of the resources that were freely available to help us plan this event. My biggest hope is that this encourages my group-mates to use some of these materials with their families and in future League projects.

When I signed up to join Junior League this summer, I knew I would get the opportunity to meet some amazing women and positively impact my community. I wasn't expecting to do so much outreach, but when you work with govdocs, there's always an opening.