Thane Schwartz
Ridgemont High School
Ridgeway, OH
Romania, Factor 12
Addressing obesity through nutrition education and improved eating behaviors

Romania ranks within the top 10 in largest territory and population rank among European Union states. Its total area is 238,391 km². The capitol of Romania is Bucharest, which is the sixth largest city in the European Nations. Romania joined the United Nations on March 29, 2004. It has hot long summers with short winters. Romania has a beautiful country side with a hilly to mountainous terrain. Romania is 1/3 plains, 1/3 plateaus, and 1/3 mountains. The hot long summers lead to a long and good growing season for farmers all over Romania, where about 28% of the population's jobs are related to agriculture. The average private farm in Romania is usually around 2.2 ha. Forty percent of farmers in Romania are expected to retire in the next 5 years. Romania is one of the highest agricultural job related countries in Europe. This shows how agriculture is so important to the people of Romania. Its absence would lead to starvation and malnutrition. The country wouldn't be able to survive without agriculture. Romania's common crops are wheat, corn, oats, barley, potatoes, sunflowers, apples, and pears. The ideal regions for farming in Romania include Walachia, Transylvania, Moldavia, Dobruja, and the Banat. Raising livestock predominates in the mountainous areas.

The region in Romania known as Transylvania has an interesting history. It has about 7 million people living in it, which is about one third of the population. It had been a disputed territory between Romania and Hungary for awhile. Transylvania was a territory belonging to Hungary from 1867 to 1919 when The Treaty of Versailles placed Transylvania under the sovereignty of Romania in 1919. In 1922 King Ferdinand I of Romania and Queen Maria of Romania were crowned at Alba Iulia as King and Queen of all Romania. Their goal was to effectively Romanianize Transylvania in a social-political fashion, after centuries of Hungarian rule. The regime's goal was to create a Romanian middle and upper class. This led to about 197,000 Transylvanian Hungarians fleeing to Hungary. The major cause of friction between Hungary and Romania was the policy of cultural Romanianization in Transylvania. In 1940 the second Vienna Award granted Transylvania back to Hungary. The Vienna Awards are two awards given by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy to enforce peace with Hungary by giving them the territory lost in 1919. After the Treaty of Paris in 1947, at the end of World War II, the territory was returned to Romania. The boundaries between Romania and Hungary were identical to the ones in 1920. The relations between Romania and Hungary have increased greatly since then.

Romanian families are traditional, consisting of the mother, father and children. The Romanian people place a high value on children. They are often expected to care their of elderly parents later on in their lives. Grandparents are often just another set of parents to the kids.

Romania's economy has grown over the past few years. Almost 25 percent were living in extreme poverty but within the past three years it has just fallen to seven percent. The average yearly income for the populace of Romania is about 12 thousand. The literacy rate is about 98 percent. The education in my country consist of Kindergarten through 12th grade, just like the U.S. The post secondary education is just like the U.S. also. It has colleges, vocational colleges, and liberal arts colleges.

Romanian voting age is 18. This is just likes the U.S. voting age. But one age is different between the U.S. and Romania; the age of legality for purchasing alcoholic drinks and tobacco products is 18 in Romania. Alcoholic beverages are large contributors to my country's problems.

Romania is a beautiful country and also very friendly, but they have a growing problem. Many countries all over the world have this same problem. Obesity is one of the largest problems in the world with over

300 million people obese and 750 million over weight. The definition of obesity is when a man weighs 20 percent more than average weight and women 25 percent. In the U.S. alone kids overweight doubled this year. In Lithuania, which is the most obese country in the world, the percent of obese people is 79 percent…. That's a huge amount. In Romania the percentage of population overweight is 50 percent. The amount of obese people is 25 percent. These are large percentages that need to be lowered.

Obesity is such a huge problem because there are many health problems associated with obesity. Even being overweight is a problem to be addressed. Health problems that are related with being overweight include increased blood pressure, increased cholesterol, and stroke. Those are really just a few risks. Obesity problems include type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and even higher chances of stroke. All problems associated with being overweight and obese go hand in hand but when you are obese your chances of having these problems go up by 45 percent. An obese person has 50 to 100 percent increased risk compared to a normal weighted person. Being overweight and obese often leads to being discriminated and prejudiced against. This leads to low self esteem and a lower quality of life. This may be as serious or more than the typical health problems.

Obesity is still growing everywhere and in Romania still. People are still gaining weight and everyday people become new statistics of being overweight and obese. The government has spoken out about obesity and being overweight. They have said they are trying to find solutions to fix the problem. They have proposed a "fat tax", which is a tax based on foods listed as excessive in fat, sodium and cholesterol. This is really the only thing they have done to prevent obesity, when they could be doing so much more.

If Romania and the world could reduce or eliminate obesity and being overweight there would be a lot more money to go around. I say this because in the U.S. alone 92.6 billion dollars were spent on the problems dealing with obesity and over half those costs were paid by government sponsored insurance agencies. This shows that there could be so much more money left for other problems that need to be fixed or just emergency funds. Also obese people often have problems working and providing a steady income due to the health risk of obesity and missing work attending doctor appointments. If they could keep themselves in shape and get help to overcome obesity, they could bring in a steady income and hold a good job to help provide for them and their families.

People who are obese face many difficulties of overcoming obesity. They face the fact that everyone has busy lives and they don't have the time to create a healthy meal; this also leads into the development of a habit that leads to eating at fast food restaurants and consistently making bad choices of diet. I'm not saying fast food places are bad, but eating at them all the time is. People need to find a schedule of how to regulate where and what you eat. Fast food places are coming out with healthier choices on their menus, but aren't always advertising them to the community.

I believe there are many ways and choices of how to overcome obesity. The first step in fighting this problem is a personal choice. People need to decide if they are going to spend the rest of there lives being obese or are they going to fight to overcome this health problem and increase their lives and feel healthy. My second solution is that there need to be commercials on TV all over Romania addressing this issue and telling people to be aware of this problem and how serious it really is. Then there should be programs like what we have in the U.S. as Play 60, Obesity Prevention Program, and Activ8Kids. These four programs give people, and especially kids, a way to learn about obesity and how to prevent obesity. The Play 60 program consists of getting kids to exercise more and promoting healthy lifestyles. They achieve this goal by getting active through the school and also in after school activities. The program also inspires kids and gets them motivated by partnering with the NFL. If you're lucky enough you'll be able to play along with NFL players. Some activities kids can participate in include a NFL flag football league, building playgrounds for schools and communities to play on and also setup activity drills. A program like this could be started in Romania by partnering with popular sports leagues or celebrities in the

country. Another organization I mentioned above that would be very helpful is the Obesity Prevention Program. They specialize in epidemiological studies, intervention to prevent childhood obesity and the effects of health services on obesity. OPP (Obesity Prevention Program) studies how obesity develops and its sequelae, including metabolic syndrome, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. Having this information would be very helpful because people can see how to treat problems dealing with obesity and also how to prevent them. I also believe that there should be clinics in all major cities that are free of charge to obese people who need help. In these clinics there would be a trained doctor, nutritionist, and motivational coaches. The patients and participants in the clinics would be taught how to eat right, how to exercise, and they would also get the needed support to fight this growing problem. If we all could get these suggestions to happen I know the obesity statistics would drop and almost be demolished.

In Romania to get my solutions accomplished I would partner up with local TV stations all over the country and ask them to commercialize the dangers of obesity and all its problems. Also I would get together with their national sports teams and celebrities to try and get an organization like Play 60 as we have here in the United States started to get kids active and want to play. I would also try to partner up with fast food restaurants to discuss the possible options of having healthier choices on the menus and letting people know about the possibilities of having healthy meals. If you combine all these opportunities or even just a few obesity would drop dramatically. If the problems dealing with obesity and being overweight continue there could be dramatic consequences. As I stated above billions of dollars are being used by the government to pay for problems dealing with obesity, there could be drops in government funding if their budget becomes too tight, more and more people will die, and poverty levels could rise. These problems can all be avoided if we follow the listed policies.

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