

PARTICIPATING COMMUNITY MEMBERS

AVERAGE MILES PER DAY

CALORIES BURNED

SCHOOLS VISITED

INDIVIDUALS REACHED THROUGH MEDIA

OF SCHOOL LUNCHES

STUDENTS EDUCATED

The School Food Tour (SFT) was a solo bicycle trip examining school nutrition practices across the country. The SFT aimed to: ...

Raise public awareness about the importance of wholesome school food

***Gather best practices
in cafeteria meals and
nutrition education***

Engage students through:

- *Lessons about real food and physical activity*
- *Activities empowering them to make healthy choices*
- *Bicycle outings to gardens and farms*

Objectives

- Raise public awareness about the importance of providing students with fresh, wholesome food
- Collect best practices and challenges from cafeterias and school gardens in a broad range of regions around the United States
- Provide students with a fresh approach to health education and empower them to improve their health habits
- Inspire community engagement concerning food and school health issues

Methods

Unique Mode of Travel

- Solo, self-supported bicycle ride around the United States as a strategy to attract substantial media attention
- Leverage the Tour as an inspirational tool to motivate action and behavior change in youth and adults

School Activities and Student Education

- Classroom & school-wide sessions focused on creating individual health-related goals for each student
- Cafeteria & school garden tours with teachers, food service staff and school administrators

Community Health Advocacy

- Meetings with national legislators and local officials
- Community outreach & educational presentations

Sustainable Change

- Follow-up resources through website and consistent communication
- Program focus on progressive achievable change left participants empowered and prepared for action

Key Findings

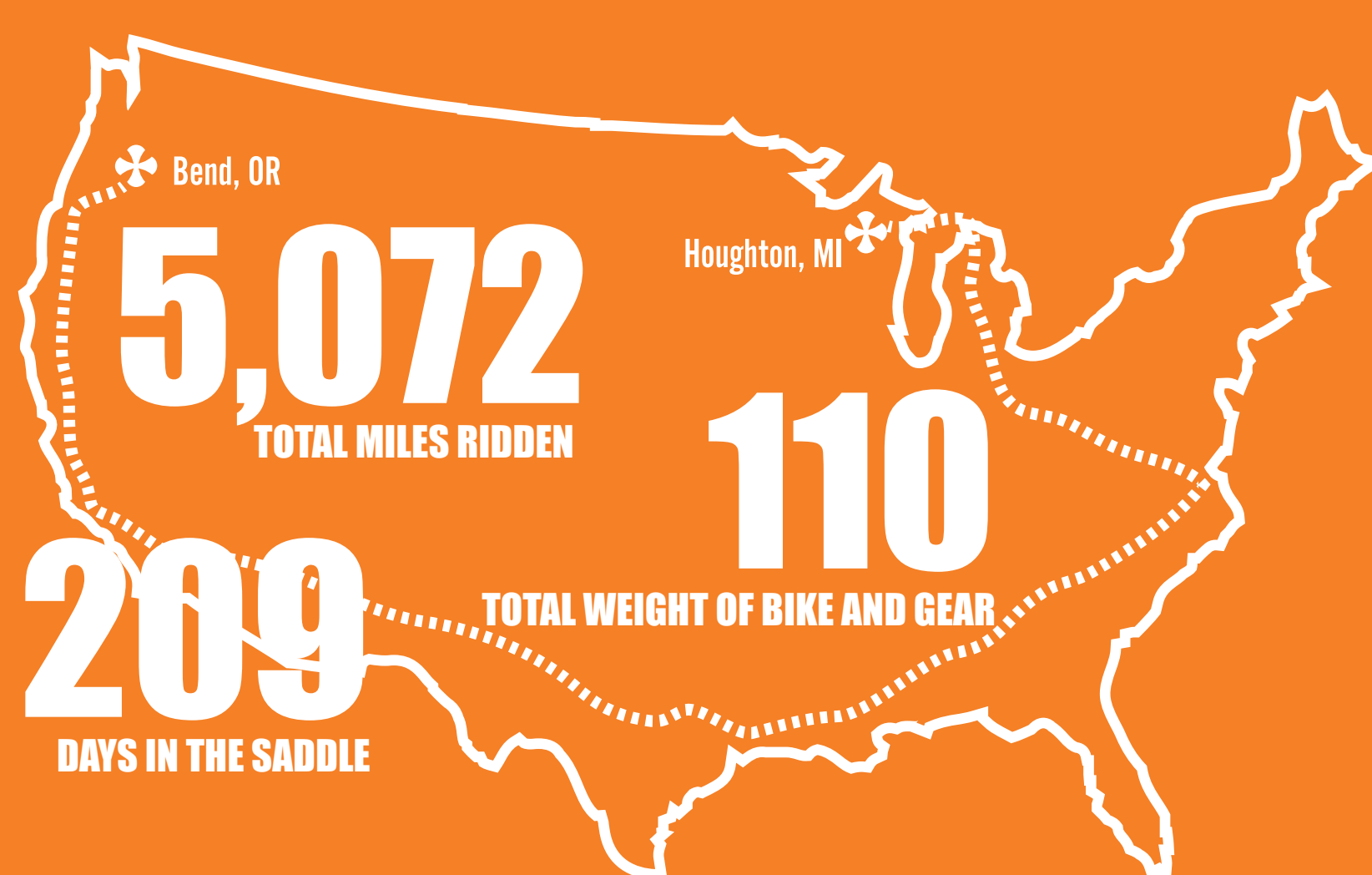
- Robust model programs were found in all regions featuring schools with a wide range of student demographics. Creative solutions were often used to overcome income barriers, a common challenge for many areas.
- The most progressive cafeteria and garden programs featured strong community partnerships for funding, labor, menu planning, food education and policy creation. Cross-sector collaboration and a strong champion for change to lead reform efforts were key to success.
- Most students are aware of their unhealthy habits, care about their futures and are willing to make changes — however healthy behaviors must be encouraged and modeled by school staff. There is a clear need to frame the conversation in a way that empowers youth and improves their self-efficacy and enthusiasm for behavior change.

Challenges

- Lack of knowledge about funding sources was a consistent message heard throughout the tour from school staff
- Lack of personnel, limited space or inappropriate equipment were the most common barriers to more scratch-cooking in school cafeterias

Recommendations

- Increase training and collaboration opportunities for school staff
- The SFT was limited to the sites it could visit due to mode of travel—there is vast interest for more programs of this kind



“This is important because the obesity rate in America is going up and we should all strive to become healthy people.” Daniel - Age 16

"I am going to start to take control of my health along with trying to help my family too." Alex - Age 14

"I told my parents about what you are doing. They have already changed our meals and the way they prepare it." Nina - Age 15

A **SARA SALO-MPH** PROJECT

For more information visit: www.schoolfoodtour.org