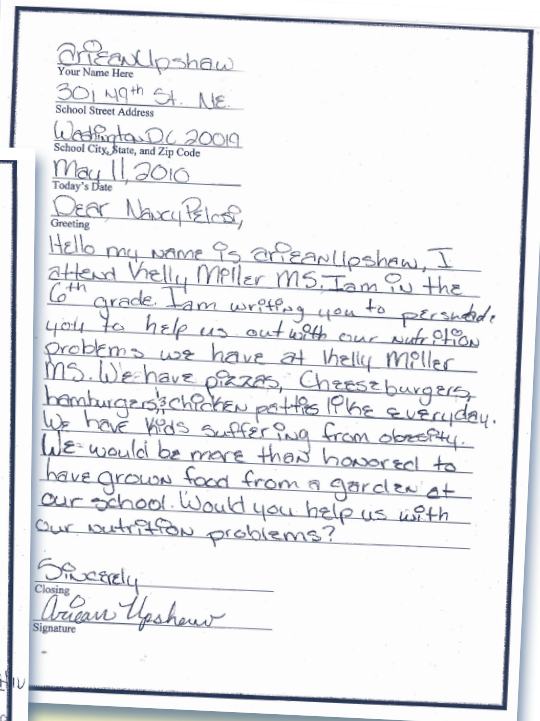
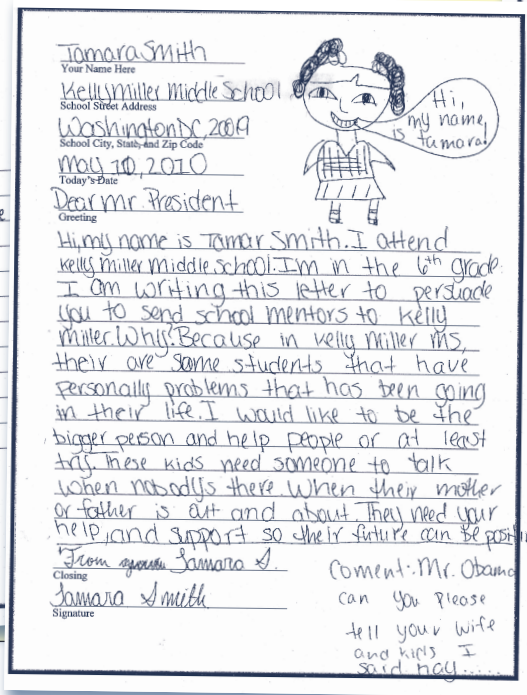
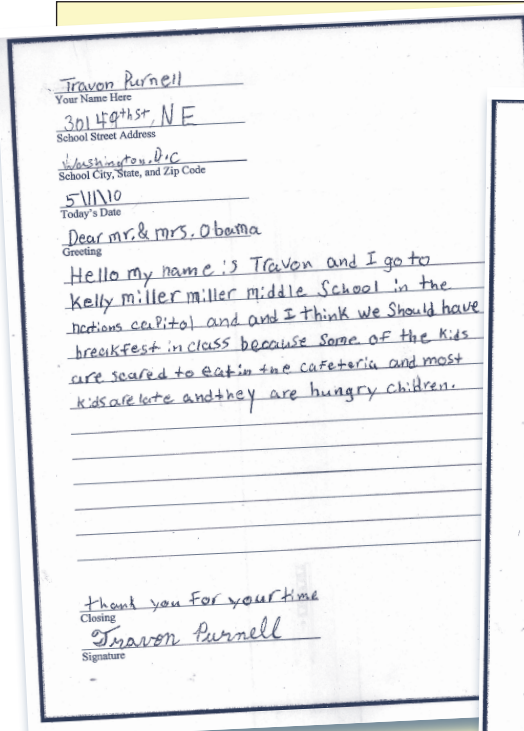


## On the Quad HEALTHY DISH



### Fit to Thrive

*Dear President Obama,  
I have researched on the internet that most children are obese because they don't get enough exercise and eat foods with too many calories. Please help, we need help to become healthy adults.*

The letters that went to the White House from sixth graders at Kelly Miller Middle School in Washington, D.C.'s Ward 7 told a story familiar to those who study children living in poverty: poor breakfasts, locked-down schools with recess reduced to an indoor break, grocery stores that are "always empty, with no strawberries or bananas."

But the children didn't know anything was amiss until AU became involved with their school. After a month of learning, they were ready to push for change.

It began with Anastasia Snelling's summer class, Urban Health for Teachers, when she connected with a student who was a guidance counselor at Kelly Miller—where the principal, coincidentally, had once taught at AU. "The stars just aligned," says Sarah Irvine Belson, dean of the School of Education, Teaching and Health, and the schools joined forces.

Like many urban schools, Kelly Miller struggles with low reading and math scores. Snelling and others

from the College of Arts and Sciences designed and led the Community Voices for Health: Kids Take Action project to teach students about health and nutrition while reinforcing skills in language arts, math, and social studies. The sixth graders:

- were outfitted with pedometers and used math to estimate and graph their daily steps
- learned to be smart consumers of media and food
- learned about nutrition and exercise, and used cameras to document the healthy and unhealthy aspects of their environment: empty shelves at corner stores, run-down playgrounds, healthy and unhealthy foods
- wrote letters to President Obama and Michelle Obama, sharing their concerns and ideas

The faculty collaborated to:

- secure approval from District officials to add whole grains and healthier options to the lunch menu
- devise a plan for a community garden at an adjacent Parks and Recreation site
- meet the criteria for a "Healthier U.S. School" Kelly Miller is the only middle school in the District with the national designation.