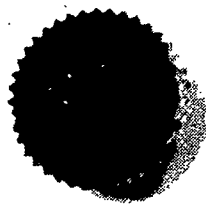


MOVE on the

Story by Mike Latona
Photos by Greg Francis

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION



Like a good son, Liam Gilroy sticks to the square meals that his mother provides. Most of the time.

Then again, there was the time that Liam ate an entire large pizza on a dare from a friend. No drastic side effects, except that "I felt huge," he said.

"I love greasy pizza," said Liam, 13, a parishioner at Immaculate Conception Church in Ithaca.

At home, Liam is allowed cake or ice cream after dinner, provided he's cleaned his plate first. He admits that if his mother didn't keep him on a structured diet, he'd probably veer off course much more often.

"Of course I love junk food!" he said. "I love all kinds, but my favorite is chocolate cake or anything that involves chocolate. As long as I live, I am never going to avoid junk food."

It's an ongoing battle — trying to eat what's good for us but caving in to food that's not so healthy. The dilemma, said Immaculate Conception's Regina Fabbioni, is that "people like junk food because it tastes good."

At times, Regina includes herself in that crowd. She said she prefers canned potato chips because they're less fatty than bagged chips — but there are also times when she's less cautious about her food's nutritional content.

"I will go on binges of junk food if I'm at a party or it's a special occasion like a holiday. Candy, chip-and-dip stuff," said Regina, 14.

For the most part, though, Regina said she sticks to a good diet. She

eats balanced meals and when she does snack, she favors crackers and fruit over junk food. These snacks, she said, are both tasty and healthy.

A consistent diet is also important to Michelle Bellonte, especially when she's playing fall and spring sports.

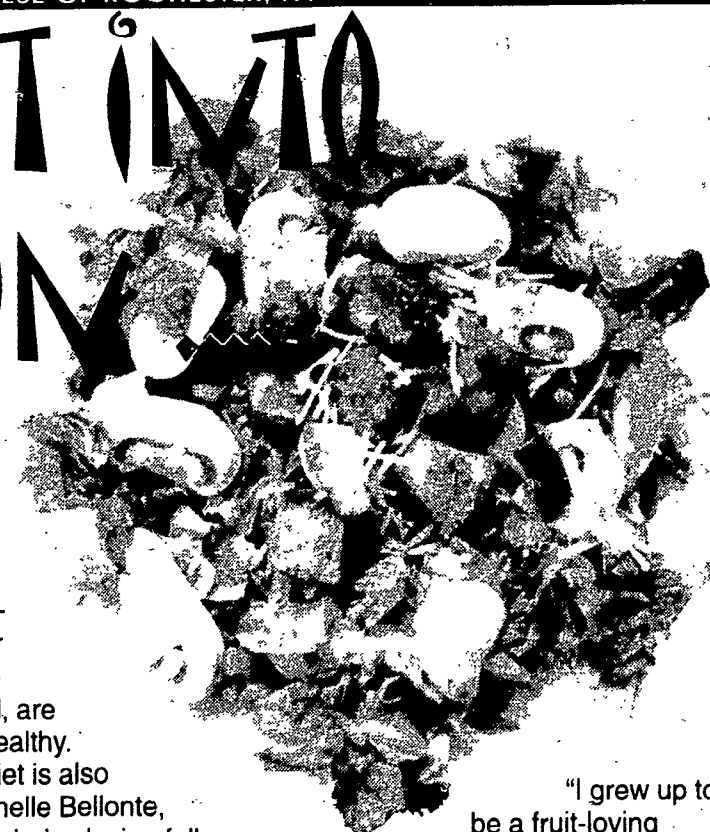
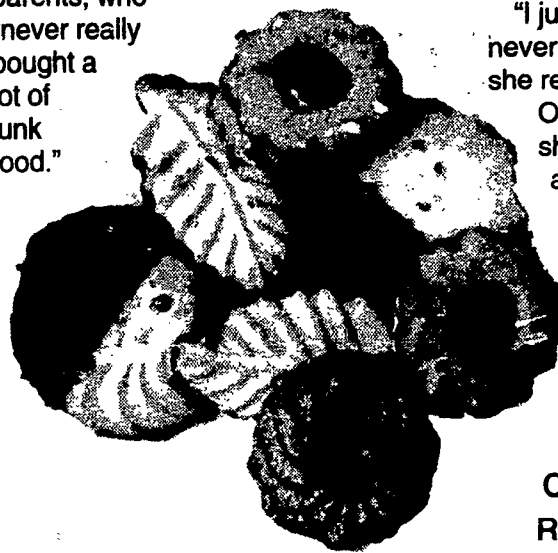
"In general, I try not to eat a lot of fatty foods. No ice cream, chocolate or cookies. I might have one cookie, instead of a lot," said Michelle, 15, from St. Agnes Church in Avon.

Michelle said she strives to eat three meals per day. So does St. Agnes' Thomas Carroll,

who encourages all his fellow teens to get a good breakfast in the morning.

"I know a lot of people in my school who don't have breakfast. Sometimes I see kids fall asleep in class and I think that's why," said Thomas, 15. "They might get a snack before school, a Pop-Tart, but that's not good enough."

Thomas said he learned his disciplined eating habits from his parents, who "never really bought a lot of junk food."



"I grew up to be a fruit-loving person," said Thomas,

whose favorite fruits are oranges and bananas.

However, even Thomas has his moments. He said that when he visits his cousin, they seize the chance to "watch TV and eat a lot of chip-and-dip."

Liam feels that occasional food binges are OK for teens because their bodies can withstand junk food better than adults.

"Adults have to be much more careful because their metabolism slows down," Liam said.

Perhaps, but Regina said it doesn't hurt for teens to get into the practice of healthy eating.

"If you start watching what you eat as a younger person, you'll probably have better eating habits when you're older and are less likely to become overweight," she said. "Also, I think it will make you feel better about yourself."

Michelle said she doesn't feel so great when she overeats.

"I just feel, like, lazy. I say that I never should have eaten all that," she remarked.

On the other hand, Michelle said she doesn't get overly hung up about an occasional helping of greasy French fries, saying that an obsession with food can lead to some sort of eating disorder.

"I'm not counting every single vegetable I eat," Michelle said.

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