

New York's Governor
has suggested a 1¢

SODA TAX

per ounce on all sugared
beverages. Many people
have strong opinions on
the issue and are spending
a lot of time and money
trying to get others on
their side.

HOW WILL YOU DECIDE WHAT SIDE YOU'RE ON?

In the spring of 2010, CUP Teaching Artists Valeria Mogilevich and Nikki Chung worked with students from Ms. Haynes's 10th grade English Language Arts class to gather data from people in the Bushwick `area about soda consumption. We read articles, conducted a census, and created data visualizations

to try understand all the sides to the soda tax debate. This booklet will help you make your own decision about the soda tax and show you how to argue your position persuasively. It might even help you find ways to figure out your opinion on some of the other controversial issues out there.



FIND OUT WHAT THE MAJOR ISSUES ARE, AND WHAT OTHER PEOPLE ARE SAYING.

Other people could be experts, journalists, or people that you talk to on the street.

NEW CAMPAIGN ASKS NEW YORKERS IF THEY'RE "POURING ON THE POUNDS"

NYC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, PRESS RELEASE

Health Department encourages consumers to choose beverages with less sugar

August 31, 2009 – It's hard to overeat without noticing it. By contrast, soda and other sugar-sweetened beverages can sneak up on you, adding hundreds of calories to your diet each day without ever filling you up. In a new effort to highlight the health impact of sweetened drinks, the Health Department is confronting New Yorkers with a bold question: Are you pouring on the pounds? The agency's new public-awareness campaign, which includes posters in the subway system and a multilingual Health Bulletin, goes live today and will run for three months.

Are you pouring on the pounds? The campaign's signature image – in which a bottle of soda, "sports" drink or sweetened iced tea turns to a blob of fat as it reaches the glass – is a stark reminder of how these products can lead to obesity and related health problems. The ads urge New Yorkers to cut back on sugary beverages and quench their thirst with

"In this article, it shows drinking soda turns into fat. Basically, soda contains a lot of sugar."
—Ivan

water, seltzer or low-fat milk instead. Many people may stir a teaspoon or two of sugar into their coffee, but few realize that a 20-ounce bottle of soda can contain 16 ½ teaspoons of sugar.

“Sugary drinks shouldn’t be a part of our everyday diet,” said New York City Health Commissioner Thomas A. Farley. “Drinking beverages loaded with sugars increases the risk of obesity and associated problems, particularly diabetes but also heart disease, stroke, arthritis and cancer.”

On average, Americans now consume 200 to 300 more calories each day than we did 30 years ago. Nearly half of these extra calories come from sugar-sweetened drinks. When Health Department researchers surveyed adult New Yorkers about their consumption of soda and other sweetened drinks, the findings showed that more than 2 million drink at least one sugar-sweetened soda or other sweetened beverage each day – at as much as 250 calories a pop. Daily consumption was highest among Bronx residents, followed by residents of Staten Island, Brooklyn, Queens and Manhattan. Sweetened-beverage consumption is higher among men than among women, and especially prevalent among 18- to 44-year-olds and among adult blacks and Hispanics.

Like Bronx adults, Bronx teens reported high intake of sugary drinks. When public high school students were asked whether they drank at least one soda a day over the course of a week, the proportion answering “yes” was 29% in the Bronx, followed by Staten Island (25%), Queens (23%), Brooklyn (22%) and Manhattan (21%). Teens who drink sugary beverages get an average of 360 calories from them each day – an amount they would have to walk 70 city blocks to burn.

“According to the article, people that drink soda are taking in a lot of calories without noticing or feeling full. Drinking soda gets people overweight without people noticing. If we taxed it, yes, people would still drink it, but not as much, which means the percent of overweight people would decrease.”
—Kathy

Rethink Your Drink

Are you pouring on the pounds? It’s no secret that soft drinks have gotten bigger over the years. Soda used to come in 6.5-ounce bottles. Today, 12-ounce cans are considered small and 20-ounce bottles are typical. A single super-sized soda can pack as many calories as three to four regular cans of soda.

Fruit juice is more nutritious than soda, and rarely consumed in such large portions, but it is just as rich in calories. Whole fruit has fewer calories and has plenty of fiber.

The Health Department advises parents not to serve their kids punch, fruit-flavored drinks or “sports” and “energy” drinks. Most of them are low in nutrients and high in empty calories. The best way to stay hydrated while exercising is to drink water. Coffee and tea drinks also pack more calories than many consumers realize. New Yorkers are often surprised when they see how many calories are listed on menu boards for these popular drinks.

The Health Department recommends these simple strategies to avoid pouring on the pounds: If you drink coffee or tea, order it plain and flavor it yourself. If you order a sugar-sweetened beverage, ask for a “small.” When you shop for beverages, read the labels and choose products with fewer than 25 calories per 8-ounce serving. And if you enjoy sugar-sweetened beverages, make them an occasional treat and not a daily staple.

“When people count calories, they too often forget to include the liquid ones, said Cathy Nonas, director of the Health Department’s Physical Activity and Nutrition Programs. “We need to start thinking of the sugar in sweetened drinks as unwanted, wasted calories. These calories provide no nutritional benefits and can lead to weight gain. Water and other zero-calorie beverages are a better choice.”

Data on the consumption of soda and sweetened-beverages comes from the Health Department’s 2007 Community Health Survey and Youth Risk Behavior Survey. For more information, New Yorkers can go to www.nyc.gov/health/obesity or call 311.

SENATE CONSIDERS FEDERAL TAX ON SODA

BRIAN MONTOPOLI, CBS

The Senate Finance Committee today is hearing proposals on how to pay for President Obama's proposed universal health care plan, which is expected to cost more than \$1 trillion. Among the proposals, as Consumer Affairs reports: A three-cent tax on sodas as well as other sugary drinks, including energy and sports drinks like Gatorade. Diet sodas would be exempt.

"While many factors promote weight gain, soft drinks are the only food or beverage that has been shown to increase the risk of overweight and obesity, which, in turn, increase the risk of diabetes, stroke, and many other health problems," Michael Jacobson of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, which is pushing the idea, said in his testimony. "Soft drinks are nutritionally worthless...[and] are directly related to weight gain, partly because

"This shows that taxing is a good idea. Soda has been shown to increase the risk of obesity. A soda tax will help lower the risk, and the tax would raise \$1.5 billion annually. Even our own government thinks we should tax soda to improve our health problem. I bet that it would lower the people in hospitals with diabetes."
—Jamel

beverages are more conducive to weight gain than solid foods."

According to Jacobson, "Beverage companies market more than 14 billion gallons of calorie-laden soft drinks annually. That is equivalent to about 506 12-oz. servings per year, or 1.4 servings per day, for every man, woman, and child."

He argued that each penny of tax on a 12 ounce drink would raise \$1.5 billion annually and lower consumption roughly one percent, improving overall health. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that a three-cent tax would generate \$24 billion over the next four years.

Such a tax might well be considered a "sin tax" similar to the taxes levied on cigarettes, which are extremely high compared to most other consumer products. Jacobson also wants the taxes on alcohol raised — he argues that doing so will "compensate society for the costs of alcohol abuse and alcoholism and to marginally reduce problem drinking." The argument echoes the idea of cigarette taxes helping pay for health care costs associated with smoking.

In his testimony, Jacobson also called for a ban on artificial trans fat and a reduction in sodium levels in food.

Any soda tax a proposal is unlikely to pass easily, as New York Governor David Paterson well knows. Paterson's proposed 18-percent tax on soft drinks died amid pressure from the industry and resistance among New Yorkers who didn't want to pay more for soda.

It would also, it should be noted, only pay for a tiny portion of the health care overhaul.

Susan Neely of the American Beverage Association, which represents Coca-Cola Co., PepsiCo Inc. and others, told the Wall Street Journal that the tax would hit poor Americans hardest and would not lower consumption.

"Taxes are not going to teach our children how to have a healthy lifestyle," she said. Neely said the industry backs programs to lower consumption of sugary drinks in schools.

"People are not going to stop buying soda because it has a tax, it's not going to help children make a decision to have a healthy life. Susan Neely told the Wall Street Journal that the tax would hit poor Americans hardest and would not lower consumption."
—Larae

ARTICLE 3

HEALTH OFFICIAL WILLING TO GO TO THE MAT OVER OBESITY AND SUGARED SODAS

ANEMONA HARTOCOLLIS,
NEW YORK TIMES

New York State's health commissioner would be the first to admit he has soft drinks on the brain.

Gov. David A. Paterson and Dr. Richard F. Daines, the health commissioner, at a forum on the effects of beverages with sugar.

The commissioner, Dr. Richard F. Daines, was recently driving down Interstate 15 in Utah, his home state, when he came across four billboards in a row that beamed a subliminal message at him, and not the one the advertisers intended.

The first billboard said, "44 Ounce Soda, 99 Cents." ("This is a carbonated beverage, meant to be consumed in your car," he said, marveling at the thought of such a large serving.)

The next one said, "Any Size Soda, One Dollar." ("Who would go in and order the petite size?" he said. "It's just a signal to consume.")

The third billboard trumpeted Utah's first dedicated C-section wing with a slogan that might owe an apology to Garrison Keillor: "Where No C Is Average." ("Presumably," Dr. Daines said, "maternal obesity and diabetes are one of the reasons women are getting C-sections.")

The fourth billboard said, "We Suck Fat. Smart Liposuction."

"It kind of captures the whole thing," Dr. Daines said, getting excited as he told the story in an interview in his Manhattan office. "We underprice this commodity that we overconsume —

and I mean we, we all do it — we suffer the consequences, and then we try to buy our way back out of it, liposuction or something, bariatric surgery, some kind of pill for obesity."

Which brings him to Gov. David A. Paterson's proposed penny-an-ounce tax on sugared sodas.

Dr. Daines fits the part of the sin-tax crusader. Standing 6-foot-1, he is as lanky and folksy-sounding as Jimmy Stewart, a Spanish-speaking former Mormon missionary in Bolivia who practiced medicine in the South Bronx for 20 years.

Over the past few weeks, he has been traveling the state lobbying anyone who would listen about the scourge of obesity and championing the proposed excise tax as a possible cure that has the added benefit of plugging a giant hole in the state budget.

The state budget office estimates such a tax would raise \$1 billion a year when fully in effect, and reduce consumption by 15 percent, an estimate based, Dr. Daines says, on industry price elasticity models. Earnings would go to stave off health services cuts, so the tax is supported by the health care workers' union — 1199 S.E.I.U. — and the Greater New York Hospital Association.

Many have written off the soda tax as a lost cause, with neither the Senate nor the Assembly supporting it. Soda bottlers and many supermarkets and bodegas have mobilized to oppose the tax, saying it would cost jobs. Dr. Daines accuses politicians of caving to the soft-drink lobby, which makes regular campaign contributions.

"The article makes us see that a soda tax would not be a great idea because it will hit the poor, meaning that the poor will have a hard time affording soda. Young teens and adults love drinking soda especially when they sitting on their living room couch watching a movie or in a restaurant."
—Jonathan

“It scares the politicians away,” he said.

But he is gambling that the tax proposal might be revived during 11th-hour budget negotiations, when lawmakers are desperate.

Dr. Daines, meanwhile, has gone into polemical overdrive.

He dismisses as counterintuitive arguments by the soft-drink industry that the link between soda consumption and obesity has not been proved. “It’s obviously scientifically plausible that if you reduce consumption of excess calories, you reduce obesity,” he said.

He ridiculed what he called the “personal choice” argument that government should stay out of people’s kitchens, saying it was being promulgated by “AstroTurf false-flag operations” that are really supported by the soda industry.

“We know this elaborately with tobacco,” he said.

His passionate attacks on soda-tax opponents make one almost want to pity Nelson Eusebio, a supermarket owner in Queens who is chairman of New Yorkers Against Unfair Taxes, a coalition that is fighting the tax.

Mr. Eusebio called Dr. Daines “out of touch with reality.”

“When it comes to obesity, to attack a single industry as wholeheartedly as he has is creating a lot of confusion for the public,” Mr. Eusebio said. “It’s leading the public to think that if they stop drinking soda, they won’t be obese anymore. Soda may be a contributor to obesity, but it’s not the sole contributor.”

Dr. Daines hates the term “fat tax,” often used by supporters and opponents alike, because it sounds accusatory.

He prefers the more anodyne “beverage tax.”

But diplomacy has not necessarily been his strong suit. After Staten Island lawmakers supported an antitax rally at the Coca-Cola sales and distribution center near the Goethals Bridge, Dr. Daines fired off a scolding press release that said, “Staten Island has the state’s second-highest obesity rate, as well as the

second-highest consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages.”

“I am concerned for the health of Staten Islanders,” he added. “Sixty-five percent of Staten Island residents are overweight or obese, and 35 percent of them drink one or more cans of sugar-sweetened beverages like soda every day.”

Dr. Daines urged Staten Islanders to support their local soft-drink workers by drinking Diet Coke (which would not be taxed), adding, “I hope they also drink nutritious low-fat milk.”

Waxing passionate the other day, he managed to make soda purveyors sound almost like drug dealers.

“I raised my kids on Park Avenue,” he said. “You can walk at least from 60th Street to 96th Street on Park Avenue. You won’t see a single soda billboard, you won’t see a single fast-food outlet, and I don’t think you could buy a soda. Basically, a child raised in that corridor has a soda-free day after school.”

But walk 30 blocks north to Harlem, he said, and the picture is different. “This is cheap, it’s heavily advertised, it tastes really good,” he said. “And then we plunge kids into that environment, and we say, if you have a problem, you lack self-control.”

Mr. Eusebio, the tax opponent, recommended that Dr. Daines devote his time to promoting a “holistic diet” and educating young people about the benefits of exercise.

“Educating people helps them more than taxing them,” Mr. Eusebio said. “If taxation was a form of diet, New Yorkers would be the healthiest people on the planet because we are the most overtaxed people on the planet.”

Lisa W. Foderaro contributed reporting.

“This passage shows that it is a good idea to put taxes on soda. People who drink soda get bariatric surgery to make up for what they’ve done.”
—Jasmine

GATHER DATA TO USE IN YOUR ARGUMENT.

You could use charts
people have already
made.



ARE YOU POURING ON THE POUNDS?

Drink	Number of Calories	Teaspoons of Sugar
Iced White Chocolate Mocha (16 oz)	340	14
Cola (20 oz)	250	10
Lemon Lime Soda (20 oz)	240	10
Orange Delight Drink (16 oz)	225	9
100% Apple Juice (16 oz)	220	9
Lemon Flavored Iced Tea (20 oz)	210	9
Café Latte (16 oz)	190	8
Sports Drink (20 oz)	120	5
Water, Seltzer (20 oz)	0	0

“It shows how many
tablespoons of sugar are in
beverages. This shows that
people need to know the
truth in order to go from
against to for a soda tax.”

—Ivan

academy of urban planning
**Soda census
 2010**

START HERE

1. Location of interview: restaurant
2. Are you male or female?
 Male
 Female
3. Age?
 0 - 18 years old
 19 - 24 years old
 25 - 44 years old
 45 - 64 years old
 65 or older
4. What's your occupation?
Home
5. What's your ethnicity?
 White
 Black
 Hispanic
 Asian
 Other
6. On an average day, how many sodas do you drink? A bottle counts as two cans. Don't include diet soda or seltzer.
1
7. Why do you drink soda?
 Energy
 Taste
 Thirst
 Cost
 Other:
8. What kind of soda do you drink?
berry soda

9. Do you prefer diet or regular soda?
 Diet
 Regular
10. How much do you spend on transportation per week?
 \$ 40
11. How much TV do you watch a day?
 1 hour per day
 2-4 hours per day
 5 or more hours per day
12. What time of day do you drink soda?
 7am - noon
 noon - 2pm
 2pm - 6pm
 6pm +
13. How much do you spend on soda per week?
 \$ 4.00
14. Do you know how many teaspoons there are in a can of Coke?
 Yes
 No
15. Do you know anyone with diabetes?
 Yes
 No
 Not sure
16. Are you for or against a tax on sugared beverages?
 For
 Against
17. What if the revenue from the tax was used to support programs for the prevention of obesity in children and adults?
 For
 Against

You could use census data.

Find census data that's already out there, or collect your own.

If you talk to enough people in your neighborhood, and you collect data from them...



“It was great to go outside and see what people think about soda.”
— Alberto



...then you can make your own charts.



DECIDE WHAT YOU THINK THE DATA IS TELLING YOU, AND CONNECT IT TO AN ARGUMENT.

Try to find the trend or the pattern in the data.

WHAT'S THE HIGHEST?

WHAT'S THE LOWEST?

IS IT INCREASING OR DECREASING?

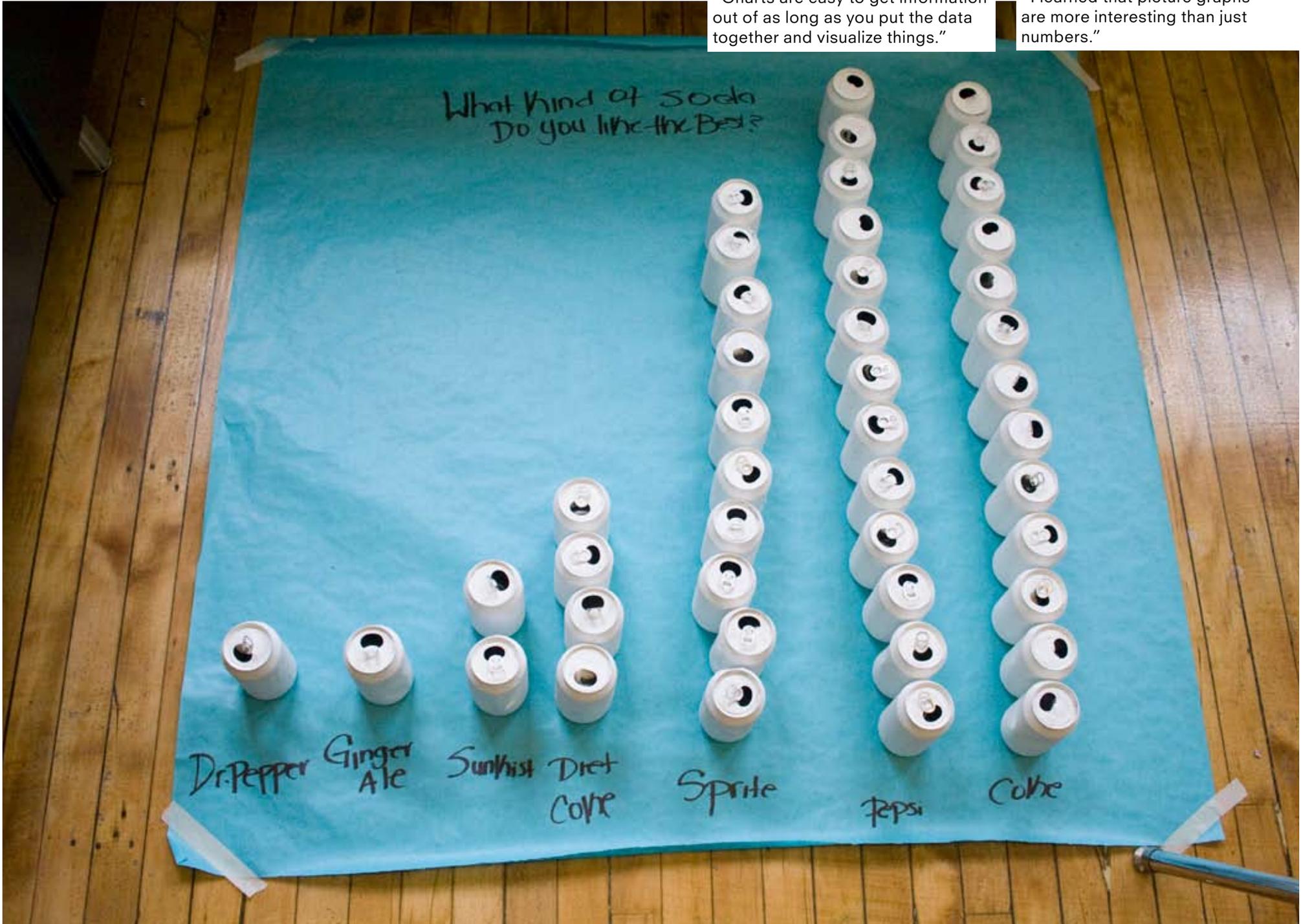
USE WORDS LIKE "THE MOST," OR "ALMOST ALL."

—QUIANA

"Charts are easy to get information out of as long as you put the data together and visualize things."

—IVAN

"I learned that picture graphs are more interesting than just numbers."

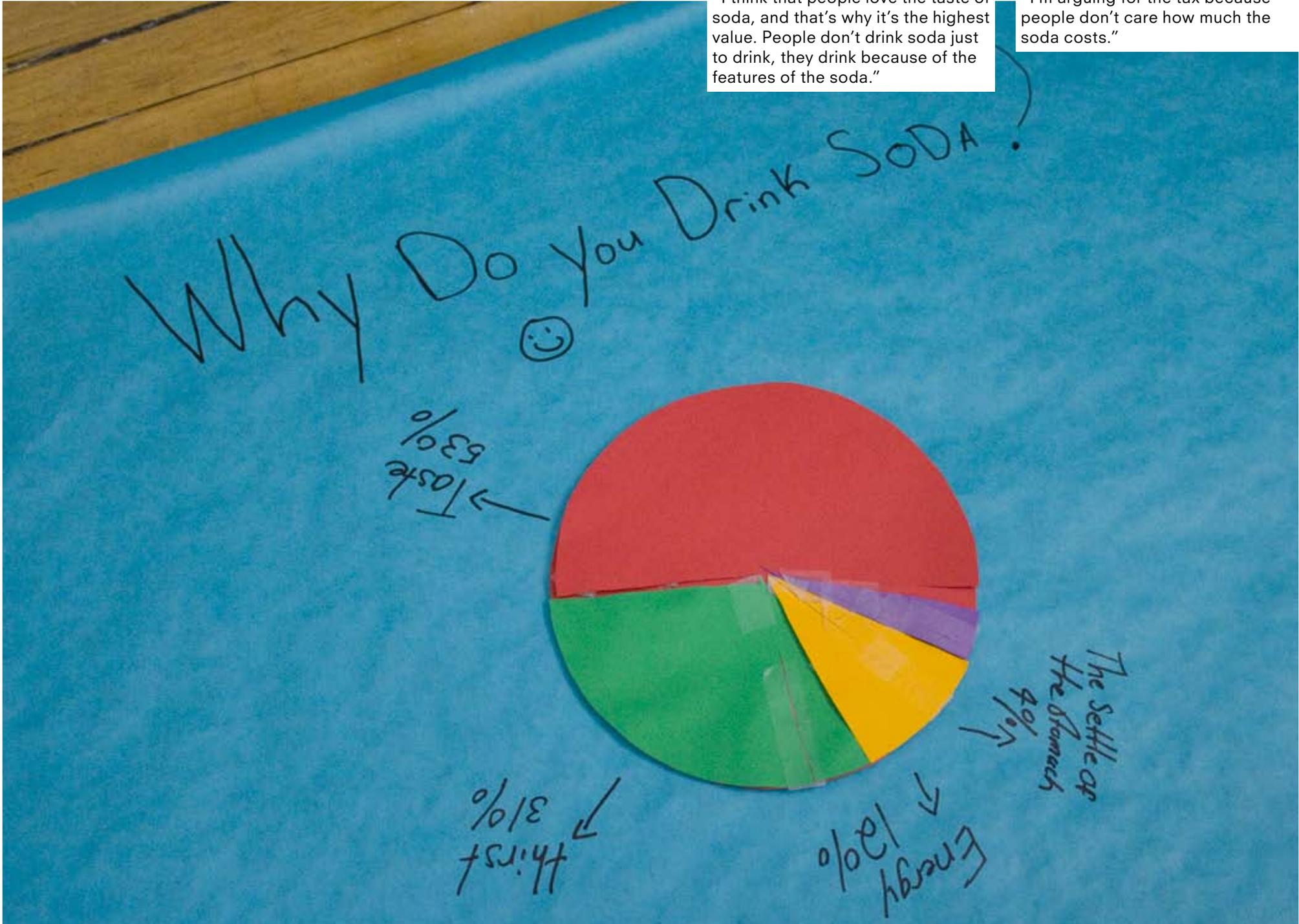


—JAMEL

"I think that people love the taste of soda, and that's why it's the highest value. People don't drink soda just to drink, they drink because of the features of the soda."

—ALBERTO

"I'm arguing for the tax because people don't care how much the soda costs."

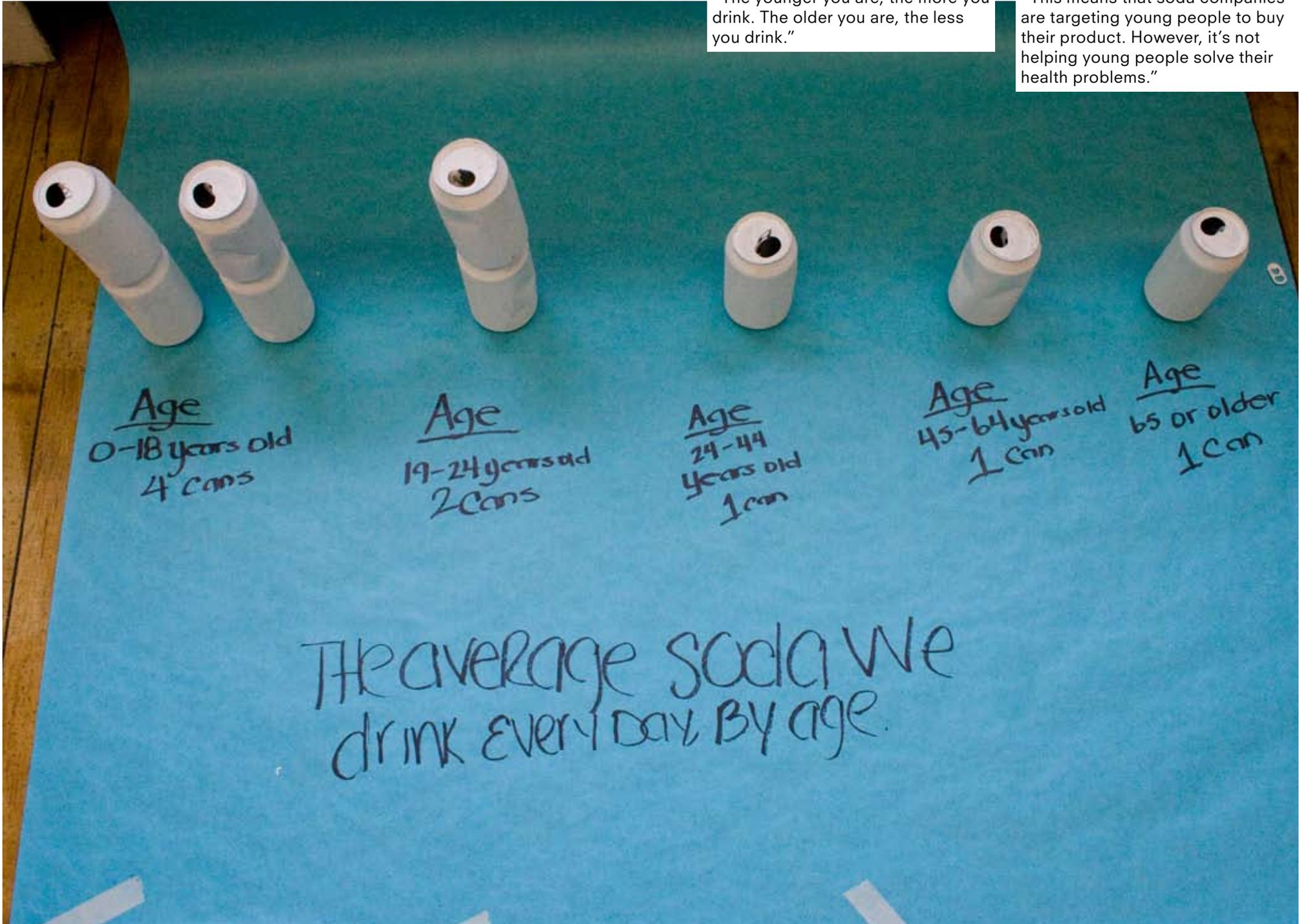


—IVAN AND TYWAN

“The younger you are, the more you drink. The older you are, the less you drink.”

—ALBERTO

“This means that soda companies are targeting young people to buy their product. However, it’s not helping young people solve their health problems.”



—JUANITA

"A lot of people don't know how much sugar is in their soda, they just drink it."

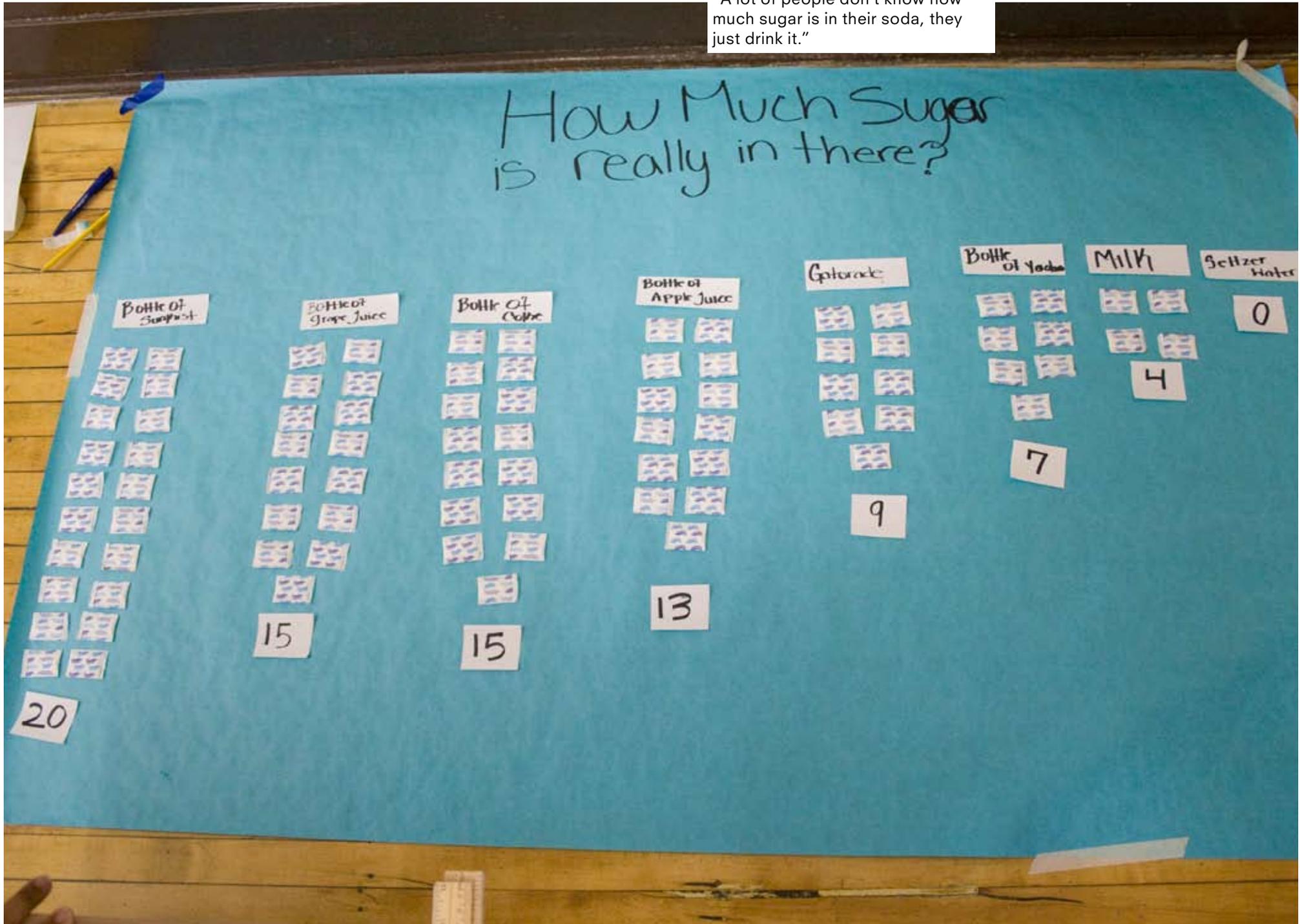


CHART 5
DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH SUGAR IS IN THERE?

—JUANITA
"This shows us that people do not know what they are drinking. I'm for soda tax because people will be more aware of what they are drinking and how much sugar it contains."

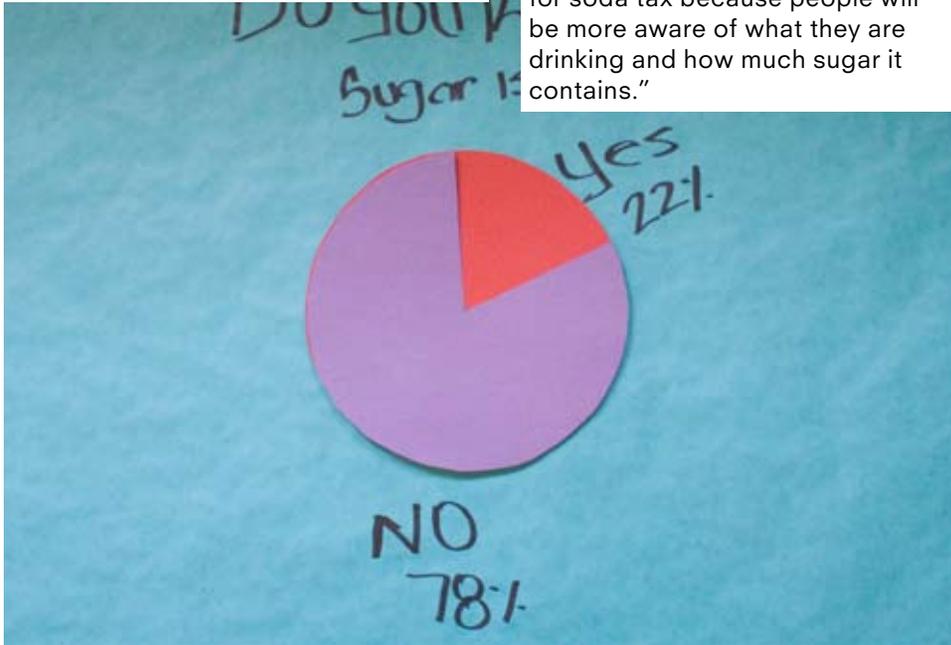


CHART 6
HOW MUCH SODA DO YOU DRINK A DAY?

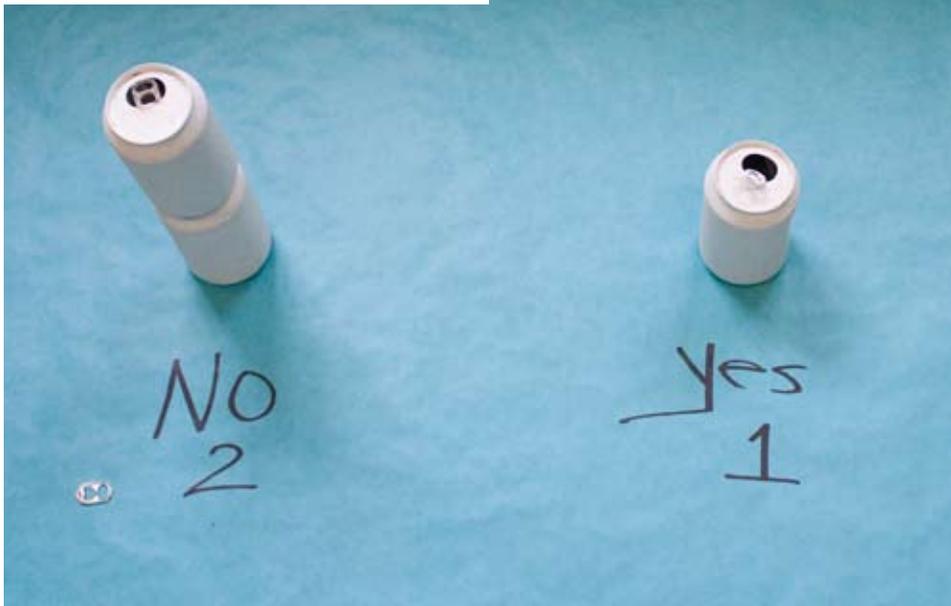


CHART 7
DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WITH DIABETES?

—JASMINE
"Most people said they know a lot of people that have diabetes."

—JUANITA
"If there were a soda tax, less people would have diabetes because they won't drink soda because of the price."

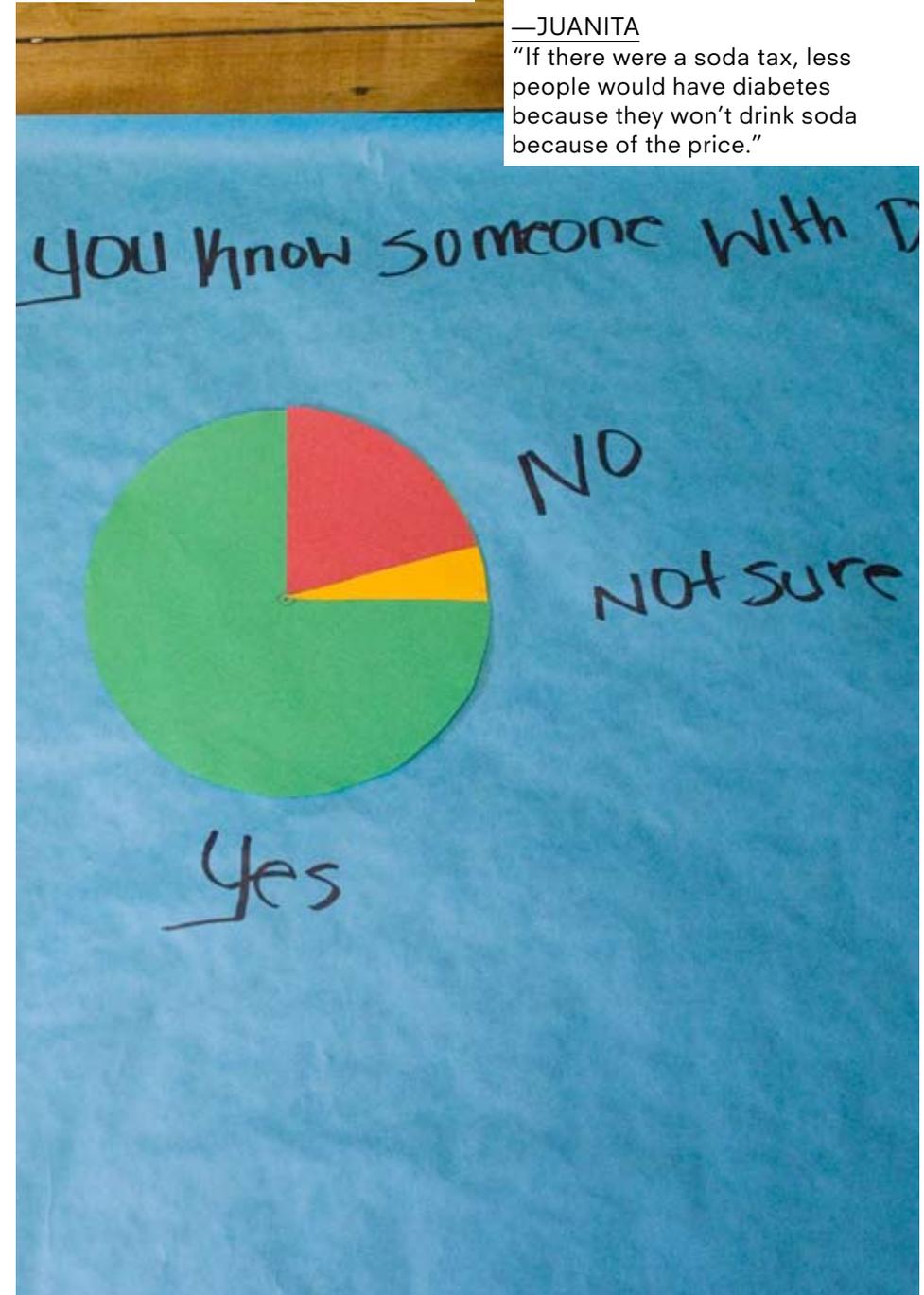


CHART 8
SODA DRINKING BY LOCATION

—WALTER
"The charts could be like this because we only asked people from Bushwick."

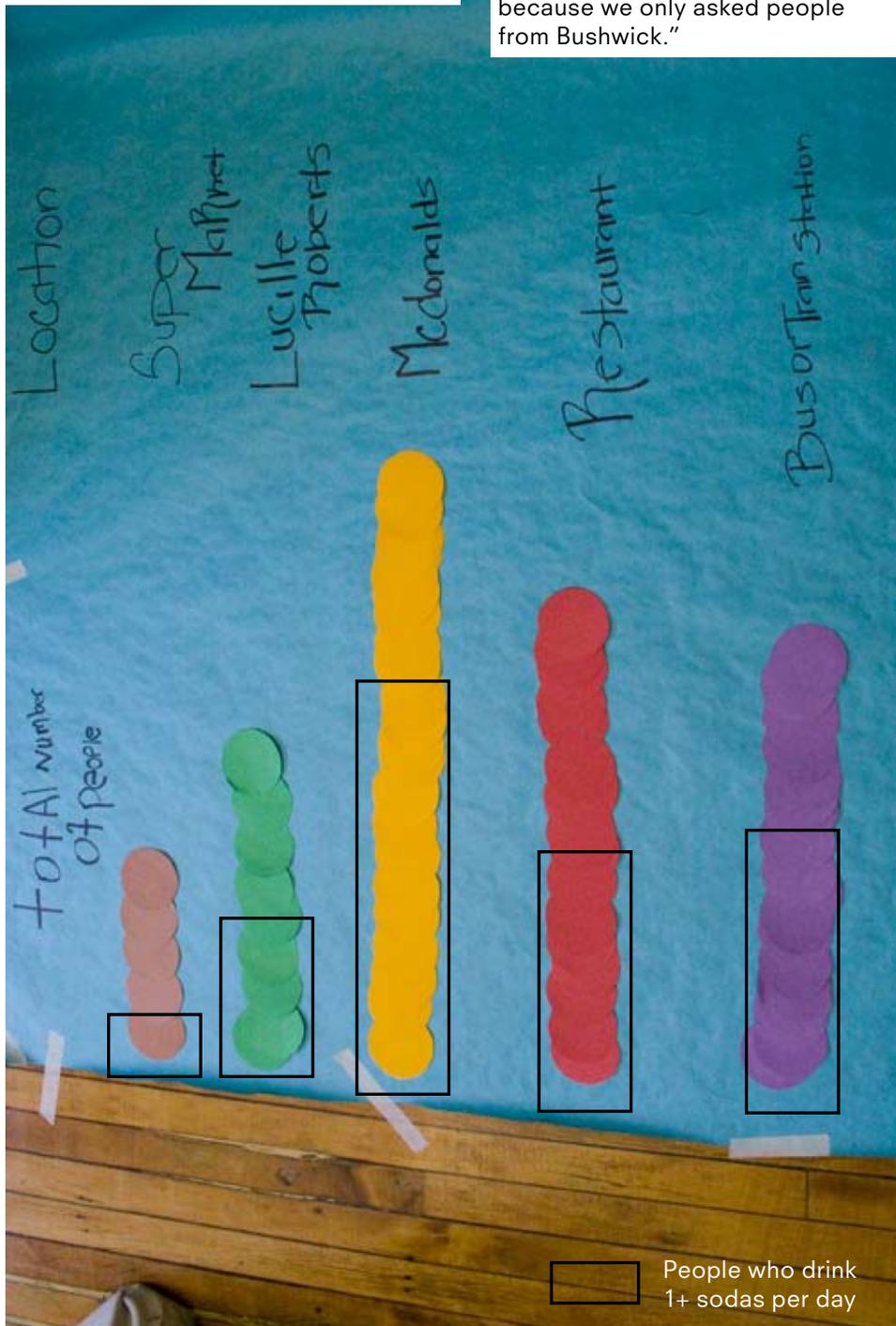
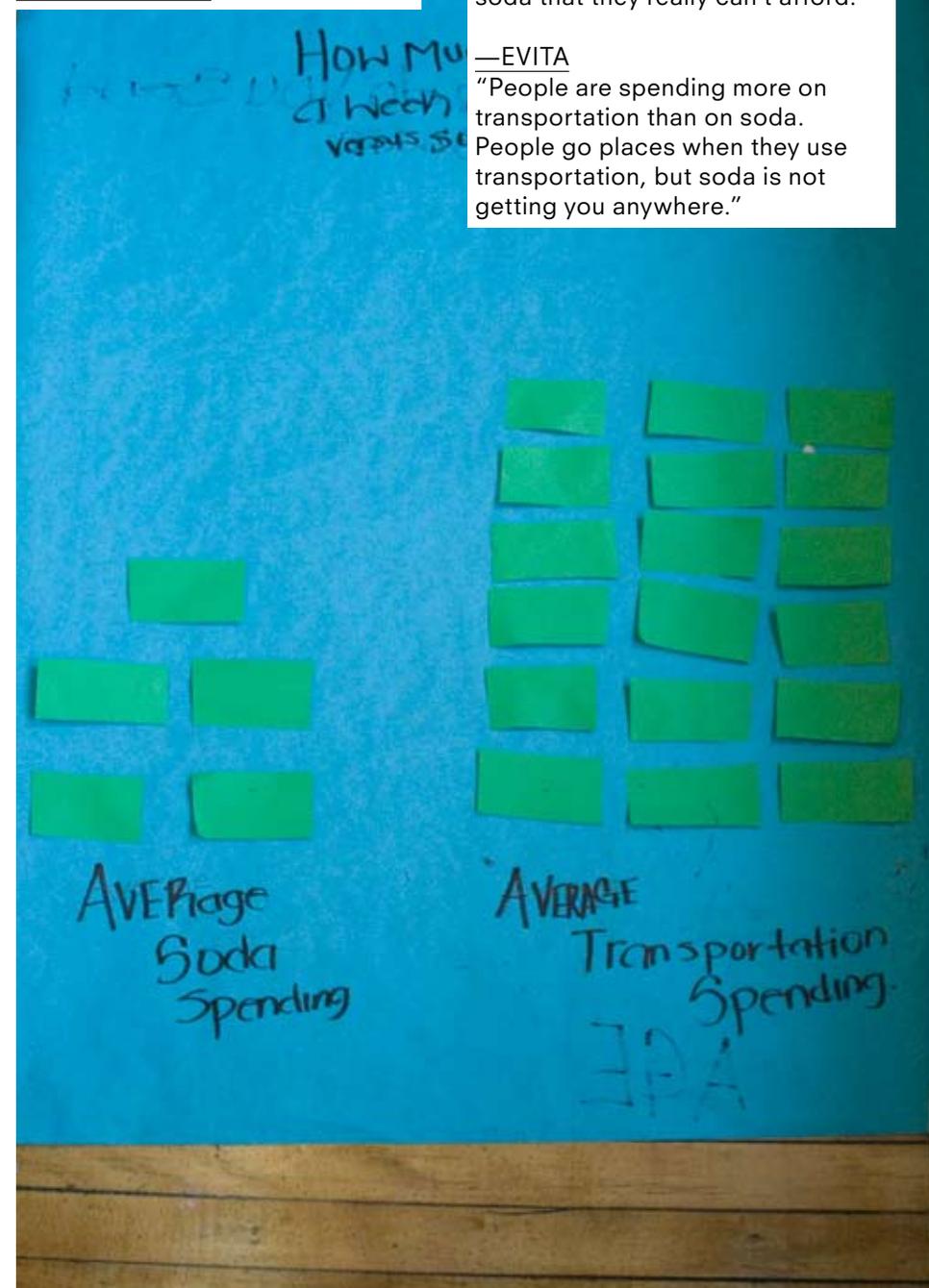


CHART 9
HOW MUCH DO YOU SPEND A WEEK ON TRANSPORTATION VERSUS SODA?

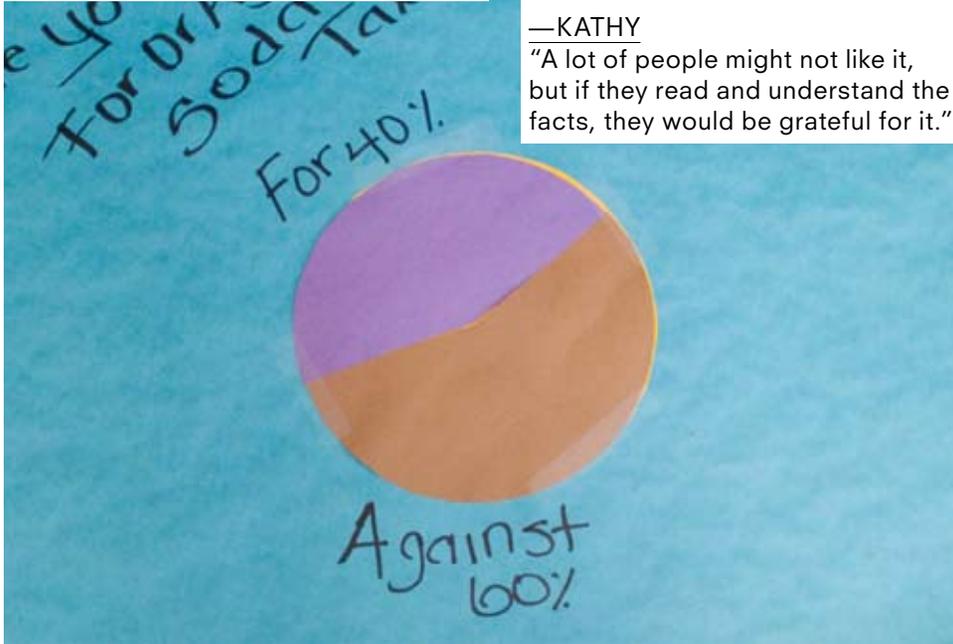
—RITA
"It is important that some people watch how much they spend on soda because people are buying soda that they really can't afford."



—EVITA
"People are spending more on transportation than on soda. People go places when they use transportation, but soda is not getting you anywhere."

CHART #10

ARE YOU FOR OR AGAINST SODA TAXES?



—TYWAN

"It's showing that people don't want a soda tax."

—KATHY

"A lot of people might not like it, but if they read and understand the facts, they would be grateful for it."

STEP 4

WEIGH THE ARGUMENTS

Here are some arguments on each side based on the charts and articles.

CHART #11

WHAT IF THE MONEY FROM THE TAX WAS USED TO SUPPORT PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH OBESITY?



—LARAE

"Many people would be affected by the tax, but the people who would be affected the most are the politicians, because if they vote for the soda tax, they might lose votes."

FOR

The money could be used for programs to help adults and children with obesity
—Natasha

People would stop buying soda, it would lower rates of obesity
—Jasmine

Less people would have diabetes.
—Juanita

Soda is not the only drink out there, people would start drinking more water.
—Jonathan

AGAINST

A tax would affect certain people more, especially poorer people.
—Tywan

If you put a tax on soda, it's bad for business. People that work in grocery stores might lose their jobs because they're not selling enough soda.
—Tywan

A lot of people don't want the soda tax, so the government should not tax it.
—Natasha

Stop aiming tax at soda! They could focus on fast food restaurants. They should force everybody to exercise.
—Quiana

MAKE YOUR ARGUMENT

INTRO

EVIDENCE

EXPLAIN!

EVIDENCE

EXPLAIN!

CONCLUSION

Soda taxes should not be allowed! Senators in New York should vote against soda taxes. This issue is important to people all over the world that like soda because with taxes, they will not be able to afford it. The graphics “Are You For or Against Soda Tax” and “How Much Soda Do You Drink Per Day,” and the article “Health Official Willing To Go To the Mat” discuss the soda tax.

The passage in “Health Official Willing To Go To the Mat” shows soda is not the only reason for obesity. According to the passage, soda may contribute to obesity, but it is not the only contributor. This shows that taxing soda will not bring down the rate of obesity. Mr. Eusebio recommended to Dr. Daines to devote his time to promoting a “holistic diet” and educate young people about the benefits of exercise. This shows that no matter if they put a tax on soda, people will continue to stay unhealthy because there are more unhealthy things that contribute to obesity. There are more important things that contribute to obesity, such as lack of exercise. Soda gets the blame, but lack of exercise is a reason for obesity too.

State your opinion clearly and forcefully!

Explain why the topic is important.

Use information from the articles to back up your argument.

Connect the quote to your thesis.

It's great to suggest alternatives if your opinion is “against.” What would work better?

The chart “Are You For or Against Soda Tax” shows taxing soda is not a good idea. According to the chart, 60% were against soda tax and 40% were for a tax. This shows most people disapprove of the taxation. According to the chart “How Much Soda Do You Drink Per Day,” teens (0–18) drink more soda than anyone else. This shows people from ages 0–18 will be affected more by the soda tax because they won’t be able to afford it and won’t buy it.

New York City lawmakers should not approve the law for soda tax. Many people will be affected by soda tax, and will not like that they have to pay more money for soda. If some families only make enough money to buy exactly what they can afford raising soda will harm them more because they won’t be able to afford it.

—Quiana Moreno

Use the data in your argument.



Don’t just repeat the information in the graph, explain the trend or the pattern.

Restate your position in your conclusion.

Starting with a question is a good way to get your reader interested.

State your thesis right away.

Explain why the topic is important.

Use a quote from an article and help your reader understand what it means.

Does New York City really want to put a tax on soda or rather just leave off the tax on soda?

The officials in New York City should be for soda tax because of what it does for a lot of people and their health. This topic is important because of people and their health but also so the obesity rate would no longer increase. The article “Health Officials Willing To Go To the Mat” helps discuss why New York City officials should be for a soda tax.

The passage in the article shows that soda tax may just be a good idea. In the quote, “We suck fat. Smart liposuction,” it shows that many people know the consequences of soda and what it can do to a person’s body but really do not care because of the many things that can fix our bodies. Things like liposuction and bariatric surgery make it so that it never even looks like people ever drank soda.

The article also says “Beverage companies market more than 14 billion gallons of calorie-laden soft drinks annually.

WHAT'S YOUR ARGUMENT?

This is equivalent to about 506 12 oz. servings per year, or 1.4 servings per day, for every man, woman, and child." This shows that maybe if people did look at the data in this article they may just take a second look about their health and how they want to live.

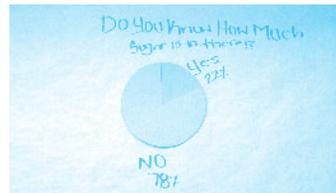
According to the graph, "Do We Know How Much Sugar is in Soda," 78% of the people that were asked said they did not know how much sugar was in soda at all. This shows the problem that most people didn't even know what they were drinking or putting into their body at all. Another example is the graph is "Are You For or Against the Tax on Soda" 60% are against because they many not even know the risk that soda can do.

I am for soda tax because soda tax may have a good effect on New York City, because people would think about their health and what soda can do to a person.
—Natasha

Reference statistics!

It's great to include a quote and then break down how it connects to your thesis.

Use the data in your argument.



Don't just repeat the numbers, explain the trend or pattern in the chart.

Restate your position in your conclusion.

USHWICK CAMPUS

NOTICE
[Small text notice posted on the wall]



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ABOUT CUP

The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) is a nonprofit organization that uses art, design, and visual culture to improve the quality of public participation in urban planning and community design. Find out more at:

www.anothercupdevelopment.org

