

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2012 NC Cooperative Extension Congressional District 6

Serving Durham, Guilford, Orange and Surry counties

Participants Take a \$10 Grocery Challenge

In Guilford County, 15.9% of people live below the federal poverty line.¹ This is a major concern because poverty is strongly associated with a wide range of health problems, including chronic disease. Research shows that the highest rates of obesity occur among population groups with the highest poverty rates.² This is partly influenced by the fact that the lowest cost food options are usually composed of unhealthy calories, including refined grains, added sugars and fats. Poverty is associated with low fruit and vegetable consumption and lower-quality diets. In an effort to address this problem in Guilford County, NC Cooperative Extension EFNEP Program Assistant delivered the EFNEP Families Shop Smart, Eat Smart program to a group of mothers at Claremont Courts Apartments. Food Lion supported the program with approximately \$150 for food demonstrations and the \$10 Challenge for participants to practice purchasing healthy options for themselves and their families.

At the beginning of the lesson, participants were told they would be challenged to buy a healthy meal for a family of four for under \$10. Many of the participants felt it would be impossible to purchase a healthy meal for that small amount of money. Participants were assured that by the end of the classes everyone would have developed skills to help them accomplish this task.

During the program, participants learned important skills that would help them plan, purchase, and prepare healthy low cost meals for their families. They learned how to plan weekly healthy meals, properly read food labels, and calculate unit

prices in order to get the best bargain for their family.

EFNEP made the seemingly impossible possible task of buying and preparing healthy meals on a limited budget. After participating in the program, every mother was able to purchase a healthy meal for her family for under \$10 with complete confidence!

Families Discover They Enjoy Physical Activity

Prolonged unhealthy eating and physical inactivity significantly contributes to chronic disease and obesity. Childhood obesity has become a major problem in recent years, and NC Cooperative Extension has conducted programs aimed at reducing the number of youth impacted by this epidemic. In order to address this growing problem, EFNEP is helping two families referred by the WIC Nutritionist in Orange County. Each family has three children who struggle with obesity. During EFNEP classes, the families learned about the importance of exercise and that their children should be engaging in 60 to 90 minutes of physical activity daily. The families started to walk one hour every day and two of the children joined a soccer team. They discovered that they like to be physically active. They learned that exercise should be fun so they can enjoy it and benefit from it. By participating in EFNEP, two families are on their way to healthier living.



EFNEP helps address the challenges limited resource families face when introducing healthy changes through nutrition education, cooking classes, exercise strategies, and shopping on a limited budget.

1. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37/37081.html>

2. Drewnowski A, Specter SE. (2004) Poverty and obesity: The role of energy density and energy costs. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 79(1): 6-16.

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