

# EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

## 2012 NC Cooperative Extension Avery County

### Lessons Learned from Food Safety Activity Surprise Participants

To help reduce the risk of and costs associated with contracting food-borne illness, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program and Avery County Youth Opportunities partnered to provide a series of 10 lessons to the parents of children attending 4-H afterschool. In addition to teaching good nutritional practices and food resource management skills, EFNEP introduced the parents to techniques used to eliminate the spread and growth of bacteria in the home. Specifically, parents were taught how to prepare solutions for sanitizing kitchen surfaces, proper methods for thawing meat, and time and temperature guidelines for storing and cooking foods to ensure safe consumption.

After participating in the program one mother reported, "I never knew how quickly bacteria grew on meat thawing on the kitchen counter. Nor did I know how quickly it spread on various food preparation surfaces. I now thaw frozen meat on the lowest rack in the fridge, sanitize all kitchen surfaces in an effort to kill germs, and wash fresh produce before serving it to my children."

This participant continued, "Because I feel the food safety information I learned in EFNEP was so important, I've shared it with my extended family. I feel confident that food stored and cooked safely will impact our household budgets by reducing waste resulting from spoilage or contamination. I also feel confident that by practicing food safety our families will eliminate the risk of incurring medical costs resulting from food-borne illness. Plus, by staying well, we won't feel the financial pinch associated with missing work and our children won't miss school. We win all around when practicing food safety!"



### Avery Youth Get Excited about Living Healthy

The problem of childhood obesity requires a multifaceted and coordinated effort to reverse this problem in Avery County. To educate children on how to manage their weight, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) partnered with the local school system to provide a series of six nutrition education lessons to first graders. The lessons focused on teaching MyPlate concepts of selecting and eating a variety of nutrient-dense foods, controlling portion sizes, and safely storing and preparing healthy foods at home. They also focused on ways kids can incorporate physical activity into every part of their day.

After the series, one mother stated that since participating in EFNEP, her daughter has replaced sugar-sweetened soda with water or milk. Another mother reported that her daughter had requested the family take a walk together after school each afternoon. And teachers shared they had witnessed an increased willingness by the children to participate in moving more activities both inside and outside the classroom.

Parents and teachers alike attribute the positive behavior changes to the children's participation in EFNEP. They are convinced EFNEP has inspired their children to want to eat right and become more physically active. Both parents and teachers believe the improvements put into practice today will allow their children to grow into healthy adults. With the lessons learned through EFNEP, Avery County first graders are more likely to grow into health conscious Avery County adults of tomorrow.

*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.*

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