

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2012 NC Cooperative Extension Durham County

Participant Encourages Coworkers to Exercise

In Durham, approximately 65% of adults are overweight or obese this year.¹ Being overweight or obese is a significant risk factor for many chronic diseases, including diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. It is also very expensive: if the adult obesity rate remained at the 2008 rate of 29.5% rather than increasing, North Carolina would save an estimated \$851 per adult in health care costs by 2018, which is a savings of \$6 billion dollars.² Obesity is extremely damaging for North Carolina's health, quality of life, and finances.

To improve these concerning statistics, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) partnered with Healthy Start Academy (HSA) to host a series of nutrition classes for parents in Durham County. One of the participants attended the sessions faithfully and loved the concept of the walking at home. She began an exercise group with her coworkers. The *Walk Indoors* DVD became a daily routine for the group Mondays through Thursdays for one hour.

This participant even influenced a fellow co-worker who struggled with weight gain. As a result of exercising on a regular basis, she lost four pounds and increased her water intake while cutting back on sodas. With the EFNEP participant's encouragement, the coworker began packing a healthy lunch instead of eating fast food every day.

Using *Walk Indoors* gave the participant a push to move more during her spare time. Now she walks the Duke Trail for two hours, four days a week and even uses the Total Gym system for six hours per week. She has lost weight, has a boost of energy, and rests better since incorporating more physical activity into her schedule. EFNEP shows how adding just a few more steps to your day can motivate a total lifestyle change.

Man Learns How to Use SNAP Benefits More Efficiently

In Durham County, 16.1% of people live below the federal poverty line, which is greater than the state average of 15.5%.³ 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.⁴ 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.

But even families with limited resources can save money while still eating healthy. Attentiveness to details is one way that can help save money on groceries. In order to demonstrate how families can

achieve healthy living on a budget, Durham County EFNEP collaborated with a local wellness center to host a series of nutrition classes for parents in the Fall of 2011.

Budgeting food dollars was one of the most vital topics discussed throughout the sessions.

Before taking the classes, one participant never planned his meals ahead of time and always selected what he thought was the "cheapest" buy when shopping for food. When he learned how to compare items by examining the unit price, he immediately started practicing unit pricing in the grocery store. Within a few weeks, he was amazed at how he was able to stretch out his SNAP benefits. By the end of the program, he planned his meals more often with his family and they saved about \$50 on their grocery store bill. The concepts presented in EFNEP give practical tips about saving money on food in tough economic times.

Boy Inspires Family to Exercise More

When we think of kids and physical activity, we often think that there's no way a child would lack the necessary time each day to exercise. However, the reality is that with all the "screen time" had these days by the average school-age child, it is unfortunately all-too-common that kids do not get the exercise they need for a healthy life. In fact, 36.2% of high school students in North Carolina watch 3 or more hours of TV on an average school day.⁵ It is not difficult for someone to spend an entire day inside rather than getting physical activity.

That's why the youth at Healthy Start Academy have defied the odds and broken a trend. While teaching the youth for the second consecutive year, they have grown accustomed to EFNEP and the messages we try to relay. One such message is that everyone needs at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day. On the first day of our new set of classes, a 3rd grader raised his hand to tell of some changes he had made since last year.

The student explained that after he took 4H EFNEP last school year, he went home and started walking at night with his mother and grandmother. Right after dinner, he would gather his shoes and wait by the door until his mom and grandma joined him and they would walk around the block, a total of about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile. While this doesn't sound like much, walking is one of the best exercises we can do since it is low-impact and we can engage our arms and core.

This young man not only increased his physical activity, but he also inspired his family to get out and walk as well. This type of thing has a ripple effect and improved not only his quality of life and health but that of his loved ones too.



1. State Center for Health Statistics, NC Department of Health and Human Services. North Carolina Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey System (BRFSS), 2005-2009. <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/brfss>
2. Thorpe K. (2009) The Future Costs of Obesity: National and state estimates of the impacts of obesity on direct health care expenses. Collaborative report from United Health Foundation, the American Public Health Association and Partnership for Prevention.
3. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37000.html>
4. 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.
5. Youth Risk Behavioral Survey. North Carolina Healthy Schools. Department of Public Instruction and Department of Health and Human Resources. 2009. <http://www.nchealthyschools.org/data/yrbys/>; 2009 National Youth Risk Behavioral Survey Overview. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Division of Adolescent and School Health. http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbys/pdf/us_overview_yrbys.pdf

Distributed in furtherance of the acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University commit themselves to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, or disability. In addition, the two Universities welcome all persons without regard to sexual orientation. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.



EFNEP
EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION
EDUCATION PROGRAM

efnep@ncsu.edu • www.ncefne.org

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

NORTH CAROLINA A&T
STATE UNIVERSITY

NC State University
A&T State University
**COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION**
Empowering People • Providing Solutions