

# EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

## 2012 NC Cooperative Extension Orange County

### Mother Improves Family's Financial Security by Healthy Budgeting

Limited resource families often have a difficult time gaining access to information on nutrition and health related data. In Orange County, 16.3% of people live below the poverty line, which is significantly higher than the state average of 15.5%. 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.<sup>1</sup> 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 order to address these concerns, the Orange Cooperative Extension, in partnership with the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), presented a free Summer Program for parents and kids on nutrition. In the program, participants learned how to save money through budgeting, eat healthier and spend time in physical activity. Each parent created one-recipe meal with a ten dollar cost, and they shared the recipes with each other and received a \$10.00 gift from Food Lion to buy the meal.

One family of four, two parents and two children, was spending one hundred eighty dollars in food per week. From the lessons she learned from EFNEP, the mother prepared one budget spending only ninety per week, adding WIC vouchers. She now feels very happy and more financially secure to see she can save three hundred sixty dollars per month. For this family, EFNEP made the seemingly impossible possible task of buying and preparing healthy meals on a limited budget.

EFNEP supports families who struggle overcoming the barriers to living a healthy lifestyle through education, budgeting, community support, and creative ways to prepare and cook healthy foods. With EFNEP, many families impacted by the program have made the necessary changes in their lifestyles to decrease their risk of chronic disease and improve their family's overall health and wellbeing.

*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. 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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### 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.

### Kindergarteners Learn about Food Groups

After participating the EFNEP classes, a kindergarten teacher says her students are learning to eat the My Plate way. They are learning the food groups and how to identify foods in each group. One parent said that her children are learning about different grains, fruits and vegetables, and how they grow and what they do for the body. In addition, the hands-on food demonstrations have helped her children to appreciate the food they eat.

### Youth Food Safety and Nutrition Practices

One local teacher has said that, "4-H EFNEP is a great way to give kindergarteners a jump-start with nutrition." One of the lessons, "Mean, Nasty, Dirty, Down Right, Disgusting Germ," is always a favorite with the children. The teacher share with EFNEP that weeks after the lesson she can hear the students telling their parents and others about what they learned about germs.

This year youth also took a trip to one of the local Lowe's Food grocery store to learn more about foods. They were able to taste more fresh fruits. They were allowed to touch different foods in the produce department. They visited the deli, meat, and bakery departments to see other foods in the My Plate groups. These lessons are very important in encouraging young people to eat more healthy foods.