

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2012 NC Cooperative Extension Robeson County

Mother Makes Healthy Lifestyle Changes

The rates of obesity and overweight have steadily grown in recent years. In fact, compared to other states, North Carolina ranks 41st in obesity prevalence, and fewer adults are physically active (44.0% versus 49.5%). This trend is appearing in children as well; more than 3 out of 10 children between the ages of 2-18 in North Carolina are overweight or obese, placing them at increased risk for developing diseases such as type 2 diabetes or hypertension and making them more likely to face social discrimination and have low self-esteem.¹ In Robeson County, 67% of adults are overweight or obese.² In 2007, almost \$12 million spent on Robeson County Medicaid was attributed to overweight and obesity related issues.³

In order to address the obesity epidemic in Robeson County, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), in partnership with Robeson Community College Adult Literacy Program, delivered nutrition classes to demonstrate to participants how to cook quick, easy and healthy meals, food safety skills, and how to plan affordable menus which helped them save money on the cost of food.

One participant stated that she was glad to have the opportunity to be a participant in the classes and learn things about nutrition that she didn't know before. Every week she has learned a new health tip that can help her and her family eat healthier. As a result of one of the classes, she now only serves her children 100% fruit juice instead of sodas. In addition, she now substitutes the Easy Fruit Salad for sweet desserts, such as cakes and junk food. Before attending the EFNEP classes, this participant never realized the importance of making sure the kitchen area is sanitized in addition to being cleaned. She stated that the Adult EFNEP classes were extremely helpful and informative for her and her family. She is very grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of EFNEP.

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.

Young Children Learn Why Hand Washing Is So Important

Each year, seasonal flu places a huge burden on the health and well-being of children and families. This results in increased medical expenses and absences from school and work. Schools are especially prone to outbreaks because germs are easily spread through coughing, sneezing, talking and/or touching. One way to prevent the spread of the flu virus is through proper hand washing. The Robeson County Cooperative Extension and 4-H EFNEP, in partnership with W.H. Knuckles Elementary School, delivered classes to 37 students in order to stop the spread of the flu. During the first lesson, students were shown the proper steps to washing their hands. They were also given the opportunity to see how easily germs are spread from person to person through a demonstration using glo germ powder and black light. After completing the 4-H EFNEP program, teachers reported that students now sing the ABC song when washing their hands. They are also reminding each other to cover their mouths when coughing or sneezing. What a great testament to the 4H EFNEP program!



Youth Make Healthy Food Choices

According to the North Carolina Behavioral Risk Factor System Survey, 88% of people in Pitt County are not eating the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables.⁴ To increase the number of vegetable servings children consume daily, nutrition classes were offered by Robeson County Cooperative Extension's 4-H EFNEP to students at Rowland Middle School. The 4-H EFNEP program delivered six food and nutrition lessons focusing on the importance of consuming vegetables as well as the health benefits vegetables provide. More than sixty youth used food models and measuring cups to determine the correct amount of vegetables needed each day. After completing the program, written evaluations revealed that 100% of the participants increased their healthy food choices and vegetable servings. Due to the success of this program, Robeson County Cooperative Extension's 4-H EFNEP will continue to partner with middle schools to increase children's daily vegetable intake.

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Overweight and obesity. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/consequences.html>.

2. NC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey, NC State Center for Health Statistics, NC Department of Health and Human Services (2006)

3. Robeson County: Eating Smart and Moving More <http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/CountyProfiles/Texts/Robeson%20County.pdf>

4. NC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey, NC State Center for Health Statistics, NC Department of Health and Human Services (2006)

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