

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2012 NC Cooperative Extension Transylvania County County



Participants Make a Colorful Stir Fry

To encourage Work First participants to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables, the Transylvania County Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP) program assistant arranged a walking field trip to the local tailgate market. The program assistant identified vegetables at the market the participants were unfamiliar with and shared how to prepare them. The participants were then challenged to pick out a rainbow of vegetables for a stir-fry that would be made later that day in class. Participants picked a red tomato, a purple sweet pepper, green snap peas, a green jalapeño pepper, a yellow patty-pan squash, and a white onion. Plus, a yellow watermelon was purchased for dessert.

Upon returning, the program assistant showed the participants how to properly clean and store the vegetables they had selected for their stir-fry. She then presented a lesson in which she discussed the daily recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables, as well as the health benefits provided by each color.

During the food preparation activity, the program assistant taught the participants how to slice and season the rainbow of vegetables purchased during their tailgate market field trip. One participant stated that she was particularly interested in the patty-pan squash because she had never eaten it. Another, who had purchased fresh produce for her family's supper while at the market, wanted to replicate the stir-fry experience at home for her family.

This one EFNEP lesson taught the participants how to select good quality vegetables, store them at home, and prepare them in such a way as to provide a low-cost, nutritious meal for their families. Having the opportunity to experience these practices will give the participants the courage and ability to try them again at home. Once the participants discover how easy it is to purchase and prepare vegetables at home, they will continue to include these foods in their family meals. In doing so, they will be providing the essential nutrients needed to reduce the risk of their family contracting a chronic disease.

Students Try New Healthy Foods and Help Others

The Transylvania County EFNEP Program Assistant provides hands-on opportunities for youth to discover the origin of their food and learn the importance of eating fruits and vegetables. She arranged a field trip to a local farm for 28 first graders. The EFNEP Program Assistant partnered with the teacher to provide a lesson during the first grade classroom unit on health and the human body. During the field trip, the Program Assistant taught a healthy foods lesson using MyPlate that focused on the benefits of fruits and vegetables. She encouraged the students to eat a rainbow of fruits and vegetables and then took them on a garden tour to see the various colors of produce. She discussed the parts of each plant that were consumed. She then taught the students how to harvest bell peppers. The students gleaned 90 pounds of produce.

As a result of this field trip, every student was able to take a pepper home to try with their family. Many had never eaten bell peppers before and were eager to try them and tell their parents why it was important to eat fruits and vegetables. The students were proud that they were able to donate the remaining peppers, 75 pounds worth, to the local soup kitchen. One student told the Program Assistant "We are doing an important job—we are giving healthy vegetables to people that don't have any food."

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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