

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2013 NC Cooperative Extension Cabarrus County

EFNEP Connects Farmer to Students to Help Increase Fruit and Vegetable Consumption

Fruit and vegetable intake among children is inadequate. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables suggests that less than 10% of North Carolina youth are consuming the required 2 servings of fruits and 3 servings of vegetables daily.¹ Because fruit and vegetable consumption lessens the risk of chronic disease caused by being overweight and/or obese, adequate consumption is essential for good health.

One teacher at a local elementary school noticed several of her students brought in high fat, high sugar snacks and were often hungry by mid-day. As a result, she requested that the 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) program assistant teach classes that focused on encouraging youth to try different foods and to give them strategies to encourage their parents to purchase healthier snack options. As part of the series of lessons, the youth prepared healthy snack recipes with local, fresh fruits and vegetables. Each week a local farmer donated the fresh produce, and the program assistant talked with the youth about how their families can support local farmers and eat healthy.

After trying new foods the youth stated that they would make these recipes at home with their families and would ask their parents to buy healthier, fresh foods from local sources. EFNEP connected the children of this school with a local farmer resulting in 96% of the youth improving the quality of their diet to include an increase of fruits and vegetables.

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. <http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/downloads/State-Indicator-Report-Fruits-Vegetables-2013.pdf>

96% of Children Improve Their Ability to Eat Smart

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) attributes childhood obesity to the consumption of too many calories and lack of physical activity.² They also claim that children and adolescents find themselves in environments that advertise unhealthy foods, have high sodium, high calorie and highly processed foods widely available, and offer very large portion sizes.³ With the pressure and availability of less healthy foods surrounding children, it is important that they begin to learn how to choose foods based on dietary recommendations and what their bodies need to grow strong.

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) aims to give adolescents the knowledge and tools they need to begin and then continue choosing meals and snacks that build a balanced diet and follows the Federal Dietary recommendations of USDA's *MyPlate*. The program assistant in Cabarrus County used hands-on activities, examples, and food tastings to introduce children to healthy eating concepts. Through EFNEP, children learned the importance of consuming a variety of foods throughout the day. They also learned how to compare choices using the Nutrition Facts label to make the healthiest selection. Through the interactive lessons, children had the opportunity to try fruits and vegetables, many times, for the first time.

A comparison of pre and post data concludes that after completing the series of EFNEP classes, 96% of the 987 participating youth in Cabarrus County improved their ability to choose foods according to the Federal Dietary recommendations. EFNEP has helped these children make tremendous changes to improve their health and reduce their risk for overweight and obesity.

2. <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/problem.html>

3. http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/



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.



NC STATE UNIVERSITY

NORTH CAROLINA A&T
STATE UNIVERSITY



United States Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture