

# EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

## 2013 NC Cooperative Extension Mitchell County

### Children Make Changes for Better Health after Participating in EFNEP

According to a recent report by the American Heart Association on obesity in children and teens, children who spend time cooking with adults learn to try new foods at an early age and experience the long-term benefits of healthy eating behaviors into adulthood.<sup>1</sup> For children, healthy eating essentially means eating more fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grains and learning to choose leaner types of animal foods.

To introduce these healthy eating habits with the children in Mitchell County, the North Carolina Cooperative Extension's 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (4-H EFNEP) offered a series of six nutrition classes to children attending a local public school. At each session, the children were given a simple nutrition lesson based on *MyPlate* recommendations for healthy eating. The children were also given an opportunity to make their own healthy snack. Recipes and letters were sent home to parents after each session.

After participating in the program one teacher reported, "I was so encouraged after your wonderful class series. I have seen great changes in the kids I work with each day. They are eating healthier foods at lunch and report many changes in their eating habits at home. I also have one child who has begun to try new foods who never would have done this before your series. I wish all children could participate in EFNEP. It is a wonderful program."

EFNEP provides youth with the knowledge to help them make healthy choices. EFNEP works!



### EFNEP Helps Young Boy Understand Importance of Regular Physical Activity

Regular physical activity in childhood and adolescence improves strength and endurance, and helps to build healthy bones and muscles, control weight, improve self-esteem and reduce anxiety. Most importantly, along with good nutritional habits, regular physical activity can reduce the risk of overweight and obesity.

Cooperative Extension's 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (4-H EFNEP) in Mitchell County partnered with Mitchell County public schools to provide a series of six nutrition and physical activity lessons to third graders.

During the series, the children participated in physical activities to help them learn to move more everyday. The children were encouraged to teach their families the activities and participate in them together at home. At the close of the series one parent reported, "My son's doctor says that he is overweight and has asked me to make sure he exercises every day. After you worked with his class, I have had a much easier time getting him to quit playing video games and go for walks with me. I don't think he understood why he needed to exercise before. Now he likes going to the park and asks me to take him several times a week. I am already seeing a difference in his weight. Thanks for working with our kids in the county schools!"

*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.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/HealthierKids/HowtoMakeaHealthyHome/Top-10-Tips-to-Help-Children-Develop-Healthy-Habits\\_UCM\\_303805\\_Article.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/HealthierKids/HowtoMakeaHealthyHome/Top-10-Tips-to-Help-Children-Develop-Healthy-Habits_UCM_303805_Article.jsp)

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