

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2013 NC Cooperative Extension New Hanover County



Pre-Teen Girls Learn to Value Good Health

It is estimated that 2.7% of 13-18 year old girls will battle an eating disorder.¹ The National Eating Disorder Information Center has found that “children learn unhealthy mainstream attitudes towards health at a very young age.”²

The New Hanover County 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (4-H EFNEP) partnered with a local summer camp to deliver nutrition education to pre-teen girls. The girls learned the importance of making healthy food choices and living an active lifestyle. They shared their concerns that they would never look like the celebrities they see on television or in magazines. They also didn't understand how eating three meals a day and two snacks is healthier; they felt it would make them gain weight.

During one EFNEP class, the lesson focused on nourishment, healing and wellness. This led to discussions of self-esteem and goal setting. The girls learned that eating nutritious foods and being active every day achieves good health and also helps them to maintain a healthy weight. They also learned that restrictive diets jeopardized their health.

Through interactive games and food tasting activities, the girls were able to learn ways to include more fruits and vegetables in their diet. As a result of EFNEP, these young ladies changed their eating practices. Rather than choosing to eat whatever they wanted or restrict food to lose weight, these girls began eating for good health. One young lady who was highly influenced by the media's standards of body image shared that she would rather eat and live healthier than follow a celebrity's diet plan.

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.

EFNEP Helps Entire Family Get Moving

Cooperative Extension's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) serves limited resource families with young children. Education is targeted to the adult who makes the decisions regarding purchasing, preparing and serving foods for the family.

A female EFNEP participant attending a series of classes in New Hanover County at First Fruit Ministries expressed her gratitude for the lifelong lessons that she learned through EFNEP.

She and her family were already focusing a great deal on managing their limited food dollars while trying to avoid unhealthy foods. She reported a history of diabetes in her family and explained that the whole family supported eating healthy foods. What her family had not yet mastered was adding physical activity into their daily lives.

Through the lesson on moving more, the participant learned simple ways to be more active throughout the day. She learned tips to involve the entire family. The participant reported that she had begun scheduling activities into her calendar on her phone, which she used to organize the busy schedules of her husband and her children. The family discussed the activities that they most wanted to do and by scheduling them into a calendar, everyone knew the activity plan for the day and looked forward to it. The participant was especially excited that her son was recognizing the value of intentionally getting more activity and he had begun taking their family dog on long walks in addition to the family activities.

While this family was already practicing healthy eating, EFNEP helped them to learn strategies that worked to include physical activity each day. Thanks to EFNEP, this family has taken one more step to reduce their risk of health issues in the future.

1. http://www.nimh.nih.gov/statistics/1eat_child.shtml

2. <http://www.nedic.ca/knowthefacts/statistics.shtml>

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