

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2014 NC Cooperative Extension Congressional District 6

Serving Durham, Guilford, Orange and Surry counties

Partner Agency Matches Policy to EFNEP Lessons

Overweight and obesity continue to be a problem in Guilford County. According to the State of Guilford County Health Report for 2012, 28% of adults are obese and 23% of adults are physically inactive.¹ Often times, poor diet and limited physical activity will result in obesity which can lead to other serious health concerns.

In an effort to address this problem, Guilford County Extension partnered with Carelink Solutions, a local nonprofit agency that provides educational opportunities to limited resource individuals, to deliver a series of Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) lessons.

During the series, the local agency's coordinator, who serves as an EFNEP volunteer, observed the lessons. After listening to several lessons, the coordinator realized that the lunches served through her program, and to the current EFNEP participants, did not match with the nutrition messages that were shared as part of the EFNEP lessons. She discovered that her agency served a lunch that consisted of convenience foods, often high in calories, fat, and sodium.

After making this realization and with help from the EFNEP Program Assistant, the coordinator worked with her kitchen staff to develop a meal plan that incorporated all the food groups from *MyPlate*, especially fruits and vegetables. In addition, to encourage her participants to increase their physical activity, the coordinator built a physical activity component into the program that included three-times a week scheduled group physical activity classes led by a fitness instructor.

As a result of partnering with EFNEP, this local agency now serves their participants healthy nutrient-dense lunches that are high in fiber and low in fats and sodium. Furthermore, the agency has continued to offer physical activity. Recently, the coordinator reported that these changes have a positive effect on the learning environment as well as the health of the participants.

1. www.co.guilford.nc.us/publichealth/divisions/wpcontent/uploads/2013/01/2012sotchfinal.df

Better Choices Lead to Lower Blood Pressure and Savings on Food Costs

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends reducing daily sodium intake to 1500mg among persons who are 51 and older and those of any age who are African American, or have hypertension, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease.² One participant enrolled in the Durham County Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) fell into this category. She shared that she ate one hot dog from a local fast food restaurant every day and drank soda almost every day. She noticed her blood pressure was higher than normal.

While enrolled in EFNEP classes, this participant saw how much salt and fat were in popular fast foods and learned how to read the Nutrition Facts Label, paying close attention to sodium, fat, and sugar contained in foods she considered for purchase. The participant also practiced making a week-long menu by choosing foods that were low in fat, sodium, and sugars.

Upon completion of EFNEP, this participant has not ordered fast food as she did previously and has replaced regular soda with diet soda and water. She now pays close attention to the Nutrition Facts Label when grocery shopping and better monitors her sodium and sugar intake. Lastly, this participant has joined a weekly walking club with some of her fellow program participants. As a result, her blood pressure has decreased, and she reports that she is saving at least \$20 a week in food costs by eliminating fast foods.

2. <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/dietaryguidelines.htm>

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.



United States Department of Agriculture
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