

# EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

## 2014 NC Cooperative Extension Ashe County



### Fourth Grader Teaches Parent How to Read Food Label

Reading the Nutrition Facts Label correctly to compare ingredients and nutrients in similar products is a great tool when trying to make smarter food and beverage choices. The Nutrition Facts Label is an easy tool for making quick, informed food choices that contribute to a healthy diet.

Through Ashe County's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in partnership with Ashe County Schools, fourth graders learned to read the Nutrition Facts Label and practiced their skills by reading labels on foods and beverages they consumed. The children discovered there is "hidden" sugar, fat, and sodium in foods that can contribute to the onset of chronic disease.

Following the lesson, a 4th-grade student shared with the 4-H EFNEP Program Assistant that his father had been reading food labels because the father was concerned about the amount of added sugar his family was consuming, but his father had never looked at the serving size when comparing foods. This misunderstanding led the father to believe his favorite soda had half the amount of sugar than another brand. After the 4-H EFNEP lesson, the student taught his dad how to read the Nutrition Facts Label to determine calories consumed per the amount consumed. The father learned from his son that he was not reading the label correctly for the amount of soda he was drinking. Because of the nutrition information learned in EFNEP, the student and his family are now reading labels correctly and keeping track of calories consumed.

Additionally, to reduce their consumption of added sugars, they are also now choosing healthier beverages, like water and low-fat and fat-free milk. Learning how to read nutrition labels helped this family learn how to make healthier beverage choices. As a result, this family has taken steps to reduce their risk for developing chronic diseases due to poor nutrition.

### Families Save \$50 in Food Costs for One Month

In 2013, 30.4% of children in Ashe County were living in food insecure homes.<sup>1</sup> This, along with soaring grocery prices, prompted the Ashe County Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) to emphasize food resource management tips when delivering nutrition education classes. During a recent series of lessons, EFNEP enrolled families participating in a gardening project with a charitable organization, Outreach Ministries. Outreach Ministries is an organization that aims to eliminate food insecurity by helping families learn how to grow their own food. Through EFNEP, participants learned ways to stretch their food budget and consistently provide nutritious meals for their families. They learned to new skills that helped them to incorporate and prepare delicious recipes using the produce they grew from their gardens. In addition, they participated in a grocery store tour where they practiced using a shopping list, did price comparisons using newly learned math skills, and practiced reading the Nutrition Facts Label to help them choose nutritious lower-cost foods.

By using the skills learned in class and using the produce they grew, each family reported saving at least \$50 that month at the grocery store. Participants are now more confident in their ability to save money at the grocery store while purchasing better quality more nutritious foods for their families.

*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://hunger-research.sog.unc.edu/content/2013-ashe-county-nc>

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