

# EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

## 2014 NC Cooperative Extension Brunswick County



### **Mother and Her Five Children Are Now Food Secure Following EFNEP**

The USDA defines food insecurity as when “the consistent access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources at times during the year.” Through various studies we have learned that for children, food insecurity has been associated with health concerns and behavior problems “that may hinder their ability to function normally and participate fully in school and other activities.”<sup>1</sup> According to Feeding America, 26.7% of the children in North Carolina are food insecure. At 185% of poverty level, 72% of the children are income eligible for some type of supplemental food assistance and/or education.<sup>2</sup>

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in Brunswick County provides limited income families with the knowledge needed to positively change their eating behaviors. During a recent EFNEP class, a single mother with 5 children expressed concern over not having enough food to sustain her family through the month. She shared with the EFNEP program assistant that because of her busy schedule, she used SNAP benefits to buy “easy to fix” microwave meals that the older children could easily and safely prepare for the smaller ones while she is at work. Those meals were expensive so her SNAP resources did not go very far.

To help her better manage the family’s food resources, the program assistant taught the mother how to plan meals following MyPlate guidelines and shop using a grocery list that contained items needed. She also taught the mother how to read the nutrition facts label to ensure items purchased were healthy, and how to calculate unit prices to determine best buys. Through hands-on food prep experiences, the program assistant provided easy, quick, and tasty recipes that the children could help prepare for dinner. The program assistant also suggested that, if possible, the mother prepare and freeze dishes found in the EFNEP Cookbook that could be easily reheated by the children while she was at work.

After being taught these easy ways to plan, shop, fix and eat, the mother reported she was budgeting her food stamps more wisely and using her EFNEP cookbook to prepare meals with and for her family. The skills she learned through EFNEP helped this family become food secure.

*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.*

#### References:

1. [http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/food\\_insecurity\\_and\\_health\\_impacts](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/food_insecurity_and_health_impacts)
2. [http://help.feedingamerica.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Hunger\\_in\\_america&s\\_src=W14ADIRCT&s\\_subsrc=http%3A%2F%2Fhelp.feedingamerica.org%2Fsite%2FPageServer%3Fpagename%3Dhome\\_page.htm%2Fsearch-results.aspx](http://help.feedingamerica.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Hunger_in_america&s_src=W14ADIRCT&s_subsrc=http%3A%2F%2Fhelp.feedingamerica.org%2Fsite%2FPageServer%3Fpagename%3Dhome_page.htm%2Fsearch-results.aspx)

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