

# EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

## 2014 NC Cooperative Extension Cabarrus County

### Middle School Youth Adds Healthy Foods and Physical Activity and Improves Self Esteem

Children who take part in family meals are less likely to be overweight, eat more healthy foods, have greater academic achievement, improved psychological well-being, and positive family interactions.<sup>1</sup> The 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in Cabarrus County helps youth learn about the importance of eating healthy by eating a variety of foods from MyPlate and being physically active each day.

At the beginning of the a recent series of lessons to middle school students, one sixth-grade girl told the 4-H EFNEP Program Assistant that she often skipped meals and did not like to exercise. Taking these comments into consideration, the 4-H EFNEP Program Assistant focused her teaching on emphasizing the importance of regular, healthy meals to all of the students. Students practiced building meals that included each of the food groups from MyPlate. Additionally, the students learned fun ways to be physically active each day. Instead of thinking of it as “exercise,” the Program Assistant taught the middle school students to think of it as “being active while having fun.” Since attending the lessons, the young girl who had previously shared with the program assistant reports that she has started eating more fruits and vegetables and helps her parents select them at the grocery store. Also, she says she now feels more comfortable about how she looks and feels since adding more daily physical activity.

1. Cook, E. and Dunifon, R. 2012. Do family meals really make a difference? Cornell University Cooperative Extension. Policy brief. [http://www.human.cornell.edu/pam/outreach/policy\\_briefs.cfm](http://www.human.cornell.edu/pam/outreach/policy_briefs.cfm)



### Youth Increase Whole Grains

Youth are often picky eaters, especially when given new foods. Teachers and caregivers can help children overcome their picky eating by allowing them to explore and taste new foods. During a summer program at the Boys and Girls Club of Cabarrus County, the 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) Program Assistant working through NC State University and a nutrition education intern from North Carolina A&T State University delivered a series of lessons about eating healthy and being active each day to a group of kindergarten through second grade students.

During one lesson, the students learned about the importance of choosing whole grain foods after a staff member noticed that when the students were served snacks made with whole wheat bread, they often didn't eat it. During the lesson students learned about the different parts of a whole grain and talked about how eating whole grains is important for being strong and healthy. Following the lesson, the staff reminded the students that the sandwiches eaten as part of their snack were made with whole wheat bread. The staff reported that more of the students ate the sandwiches, and they said, “they tasted good.” Several of the students stated they would go home and ask their parents to make similar sandwiches.

*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.*

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