

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2015 NC Cooperative Extension Pasquotank and Camden Counties



EFNEP and Food Bank Partner To Help Families in Need

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and the Food Bank of the Albemarle have partnered to provide an avenue of nutrition at selected mobile sites and food pantries. The EFNEP Program Assistant provides hands-on nutrition education at these selected mobile sites and food pantries. This year, the Food Bank of the Albemarle received shipments of fresh tomatoes from a local farmer and apples from one of the orchards from the western part of North Carolina. They also receive shipments of cereal from Kashi Foods. The program assistant learned that participants “would have just thrown it out” since they were not familiar with how to prepare these foods.

After discovering this through class dialogue with participants, the program assistant met with the staff at the Food Bank to develop a better system to communicate specific foods distributed. She then planned her food demonstrations to utilize the foods being distributed as a part of EFNEP recipes so the participants could see how to use the foods they receive. As part of each lesson, program participants receive handouts to help guide them in making better choices for meal planning. Participants are also able to taste the sample recipes. As a result, participants have repeatedly shared their thanks for EFNEP’s help in learning how to prepare the foods they receive for their families.

One participant shared that after sampling EFNEP’s Fresh-Made Salsa recipe, his children liked the taste of it better than the jarred salsa they typically purchase. He said if they had not sampled the recipe at the food bank, they would likely never make it. However, since having the experience of tasting it before making it at home, this father will now make it at home using the fresh tomatoes he receives as part of his distribution box. He also stated that the homemade version would be a less expensive option since “it makes more than the kind that we buy out of the store.”

Because of this collaboration, participants have made several changes. They have decreased the amount of food waste from their distribution boxes and decreased the amount of foods given back at the food bank sites because they didn’t know how to prepare it. Because food bank participants are now using more of the foods they receive, they have also increased their fruit and vegetable consumption.

Head Start Parents Dedicated to Improving Health Through EFNEP

In North Carolina, winter weather can often delay travel, cancel school, and cause other disruptions to scheduled events. In the past year winter weather in the northeastern part of the state was especially harsh and resulted in cancelled school days. This situation can be particularly difficult for parents of school-aged children who may not have flexibility in childcare services and other resources to accommodate the necessary changes.

In Pasquotank County, collaborative efforts between the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) of Pasquotank County and the staff and volunteers of Head Start, a federally funded, comprehensive preschool program, helped low income families in their community meet these challenges.

After numerous weather delays and cancellations, the program staff realized they would need to adjust their original schedule in order for the participants to graduate from the program on time. Due to the value of the information they received from the program, the participants eagerly adjusted their schedules and stayed for longer sessions in order to graduate. The participants shared that they wanted to make sure they received their skillbuilders—measuring cups, a cutting board, a *Cooking with EFNEP* cookbook and other kitchen tools—to allow them to practice at home the skills they learned in class.

Data collected from this group show that participants were able to put into practice the strategies they learned. At exit from the program, 59 percent increased their vegetable intake and 53 percent increased their fruit intake. Among other positive behavior changes: 82 percent increased their dairy intake and 24 percent increased their whole grain consumption.

EFNEP in Pasquotank County continues to help improve the health and well-being of its families and community.

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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