

# EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

## 2015 NC Cooperative Extension Duplin County



### Fifth Graders Learn Appreciation for Healthy Eating and Activity

According to the Data Resource Center for Child & Adolescent Health, 31.4% of youth 10-17 years old in North Carolina are overweight or obese.<sup>1</sup>

To combat this, the 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), a part of Cooperative Extension in Duplin County, partnered with the local public school system to reach all fifth grade classes with nutrition education. The 4-H EFNEP Program Assistant presented a series of lessons from the curriculum, *Show Me Nutrition*, to all students. The lessons include creative recipes to increase fruit, vegetable and dairy consumption, encourage healthier food choices, and provide fun ways to increase daily physical activity.

At the beginning of the series, one student shared that she “did not like to eat healthy snacks or exercise”. During each lesson, the 4-H EFNEP Program Assistant made sure to engage this student throughout the discussion and ask her about each recipe she tried. To make the physical activity components fun for the whole class, the Program Assistant introduced them to dancing music videos based on a popular dance video game. The students got the opportunity to dance to their favorite songs and show off their talents.

The students loved the lessons and particularly enjoyed tasting the healthy recipes and activity with each session. Near the end of the series, the student who had previously shared that she “did not like to eat health snacks or exercise” stated that she now sees “how healthy eating can be tasty and that exercising is fun.” The teacher saw great benefit for her students as well. The teacher now incorporates the dance videos into her classroom work, and has since mentioned that the reluctant student is “excited and loves to move more” with the dance videos.

4-H EFNEP in Duplin County continues to help improve the health and well-being of its youth and community and is a partner in the fight to reduce the risk of overweight and obesity.

*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.*

### Exposure to Fruits and Vegetables Leads to Healthier Choices

Using age appropriate hands-on learning experiences, the 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) teaches a six-lesson series of classes that introduces basic nutrition and physical activity principles found in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Recently, the 4-H EFNEP Program Assistant partnered with Rose-Hill Magnolia Elementary School and worked with students in grades 3-5. The Program Assistant taught an EFNEP series to all of the classes, completing the series with one grade level at a time beginning with the 3rd grade.

4-H EFNEP teaches youth how to: plan and prepare healthy meals and snacks based on the five basic food groups, read the nutrition facts labels found on food products to determine nutrient content, and use safe food handling practices. The lessons also share information about the health benefits of being physically active each day, and youth learn how to make a healthy recipe with each lesson.

Upon delivering the fruit and vegetable lesson to 3rd graders, the EFNEP Program Assistant quickly learned that the students could not tell the difference between fruits and vegetables. Most of the youth claimed they did not like or had never tried them. After being taught a variety of lessons containing evidence-based information regarding the nutritional importance of consuming fruits and vegetables, the students were able to name specific examples of fruits and vegetables and were willing to try them. Each lesson recipe introduced the students to a new fruit or vegetable.

Following the series, the 4-H EFNEP Program Assistant returned to the school to work with the next grade level. While at the school, she followed up with the third grade teachers to ask if they had observed positive changes in the students’ ability to make healthy choices since their participation in EFNEP. The third grade teachers stated the students asked if they can make the same healthy snacks that were demonstrated as part of 4-H EFNEP for their in-school snack. Additionally, the teachers shared that they have seen the students bringing healthier lunch and snack foods to school compared to what they observed prior to EFNEP.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.childhealthdata.org/browse/survey/results?q=2415&tr=35>

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