

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2015 NC Cooperative Extension Franklin and Warren Counties

EFNEP's Lessons Help Mom Balance Work and Family

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) encourages limited resource families and youth to explore and learn how to Eat Smart and Move More. The nutrition education classes include food safety, portion control, increasing physical activity, and food resource management. EFNEP partners with community stakeholders and agencies to offer classes to help families get the most value from their food dollars as well as provide fun and simple strategies designed to improve participants' knowledge and understanding to obtain and maintain good health.

In Warren County, the EFNEP Program Assistant partnered with Work First, a program within the Department of Social Services (DSS) that offers a wide range of educational training, and job opportunities to support participants as they reach their goals of increased self-sufficiency, reduced time spent on public assistance, and improved social functioning.

During the series of EFNEP lessons, the parents often talked with each other about their struggles of balancing work and home schedules, and that frequently, planning for family mealtime had become a low priority. One parent shared that she had a household of picky eaters and that this added to the difficulty and stress of planning meals that everyone could enjoy together.

Utilizing the recipes in EFNEP's *Families Eating Smart and Moving More* curriculum, the program assistant taught the participants how to plan and make quick, inexpensive, and healthy meals through discussion and hands-on food preparation. She encouraged them to plan family meals using the recipes from class and, just as they did together during the class, involve their families in the food preparation. One parent stated that "surprisingly her picky eaters did not mind seeing or smelling food that they were not accustomed to, and in fact, enjoyed tasting these new foods." She went on to explain that, "typically her children would not put unfamiliar foods on their plates and would definitely not eat them." However, now they are helping in the kitchen and eating these once unfamiliar foods. Thanks to EFNEP, this participant has learned skills to balance her work and home life, providing her family healthy meals and helping her toward her goal of self-sufficiency.

Youth Decide to "Whoa" the Fat, Sugar, and Calories

In Franklin County, the 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) partnered with the local school district to teach healthy eating, physical activity, and food preparation skills in an effort to decrease childhood obesity among the students. The program assistant offered lessons from the *Teen Cuisine* curriculum which is designed to help youth become self-sufficient in the kitchen while learning healthy habits that will last a lifetime and influence the people around them.

In a recent series of lessons, 8th grade students at Terrell Lane Middle School learned about the importance of reading the Nutrition Facts Label on foods to identify fat content. In an activity called "Find the Fat", students learned to identify foods using a fun tool called "Whoa, Slow, and Go". In this tool the "whoa" represents foods highest in fat, added sugars, and calories; the "slow" represents foods higher in fat, added sugar, and calories than healthier choices; and the "go" foods are lowest in fat and added sugar and low in calories.

Prior to the lesson, the students said they never gave much thought to making healthy choices and looking at fat content in their favorite foods. Because of this activity, they now see how they can make healthier decisions about the foods they choose. One of the groups decided to make a change to reduce the fat, sugar, and calories in one of their favorite snacks. The group of girls said they now choose to eat frozen yogurt, a "Go" food, instead of regular ice cream, a "Whoa" food.



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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