

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2015 NC Cooperative Extension Northampton County

Participant Loses 35 Pounds with EFNEP's Help

For about a year, the EFNEP Program Assistant in Northampton County would encounter a neighbor who asked her about strategies for eating healthier and making healthy foods that her children would eat. Each time, the Program Assistant would encourage this neighbor to come to one of her ongoing EFNEP series so she could learn ways to eat smart and move more. The EFNEP Program Assistant would explain that the nutrition education lessons included food safety, portion control, increasing physical activity, and food resource management and that during each lesson they tried a healthy recipe together. And each time, the neighbor expressed interest but did not take the offer to attend the classes. After some continued prompting and previews of class offerings, the neighbor decided to attend.

The neighbor-turned-participant stated, "One day I looked in the mirror, and I really didn't like myself at all—that's when I decided to do something about it. I had been asking the Northampton EFNEP Program Assistant for all this information but never applied it into my family life and me. But in January 2015, I started the classes and my journey, and she helped me learn a healthy plan that worked for me. That's when we changed our eating habits."

The participant shared that prior to EFNEP "my weight had increased up to 250 pounds over the years. I was tired with no energy and no motivation to do anything. All I wanted to do was sit and watch TV. I did not like to go shopping for clothes because I did not feel good about myself. I felt that nothing looked good on me and I was not attractive, being so huge."

During the series of lessons, the participant began making changes. She "cut out soda, chips, candy", and changed her portion sizes and anything that had lots of sugar, salt, and fat from her and her family's diet. (Prior to EFNEP) "I was a junky for those types of snacks and foods. I have stopped going to fast food places to eat out, and I prepare more of my family's meals at home. Also, I take my lunch to work."

The participant began incorporating more fruits and vegetables into her diet and limiting her portion sizes. She encouraged her husband to do the same. These behavior changes have resulted in big changes for her health.

Recently she shared, "By doing these small changes I was able to lose more than 35 pounds from January – May. I've still got some more weight to lose, but I feel better, I look great, and I have more energy than before."

Though this participant has now graduated from EFNEP, she contacts the EFNEP Program Assistant weekly to keep her up to

date on her progress. She shared that she has now started walking for physical activity—something she did not do prior to EFNEP—"to increase my weight loss and (get) better results."

As for her experience with EFNEP and the skills she learned, she stated, "I am happy with my results thus far, and I'm looking forward as I continue my journey."



Program Partner Shares Healthy Changes Made After EFNEP

In Northampton County, 34 percent of adults are obese.¹ Only 45 percent exercise the recommended daily amount.² In an effort to address this problem, Northampton County Extension partnered with the Weldon Adult Learning Center (WALC), to deliver a series of Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) lessons.

During the series of EFNEP lessons, the coordinator of the WALC program observed the lessons. After listening to several lessons, she began applying the concepts of eating smart and moving more in her home with her husband and five children. The coordinator shared that EFNEP "has encouraged me to walk more and to have some 'me time' without feeling guilty." One of the skillbuilders she received from EFNEP called Walk Indoors with Leslie Sansone has helped her to move more. She shared that the DVD allows her to double the amount of steps she takes since she does not have the opportunity to get outside and walk around during the day. She has even shared the DVD with family including her mother who recently had hip replacement surgery and needed an activity to do indoors. The Walk Indoors DVD has encouraged her to move more any opportunity she has, including using the stairs instead of taking the elevator, parking farther away from the building or store in the parking lot, and getting up throughout the day to walk around in the office.

With the increased movement, the coordinator shared that she has seen her body transform from a size 24/22 to a size 18/16. She said because of the Northampton County EFNEP Program Assistant, the "classes are very informative, and she will show you how to enjoy what you love in a healthy way!"

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

1 <http://iei.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Northampton.pdf>

2 Ibid

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