

# EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

## 2015 NC Cooperative Extension Wake County

### Young Participant Shares EFNEP with Guardian Aunt

North Carolina has the 24th highest rate of obesity in the nation<sup>1</sup>. Obesity is a risk factor for serious health conditions such as high cholesterol and hypertension eventually leading to heart disease and other chronic diseases<sup>2</sup>. Wake County Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) partnered with 4-H SPACES to teach life skills including healthy eating and basic cooking skills to high risk youth, ages 10-16.

Most of the youth enrolled had very little knowledge of cooking and making healthy food choices. The EFNEP Program Assistant (PA) taught the participants basic knife skills and how to read a recipe. One participant shared that she lives with an aunt who is overweight, diabetic and has high cholesterol and high blood pressure. After each lesson, she went home and shared what she learned with her aunt. Together they prepared recipes from the workbook. They both learned the importance of eating fruits and vegetables. As a result, the aunt has improved her health by reducing her total cholesterol and managing her blood pressure and the young participant has helped her family have healthier meals at home.

*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.*

1 <http://stateofobesity.org/states/nc/>

2 <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/effects/>

3 Dietary guidelines for Americans, 2010. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

4 <http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/definitions-of-food-security.aspx>

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### Young Family Has Food for Entire Month as a Result of EFNEP

Young children need a healthy balanced diet for proper growth and development<sup>3</sup>. In Wake County, about 19.6% of children live in food insecure homes (<http://hunger-research.sog.unc.edu/content/2013-wake-county-nc>). The USDA defines food insecurity as "limited or uncertain access to adequate food<sup>4</sup>." The Wake County Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) partnered with Wake County Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to teach pregnant and/or breastfeeding moms how to make healthy food choices, stretch their monthly food allowance, and limit waste of their WIC approved foods.

A young mother of two who enrolled in EFNEP shared that she used her SNAP benefits to buy frozen meals, canned foods, chips, and fruit drinks for her children. She almost always ran out of benefits before the end of the month. In addition, the WIC foods she purchased often went to waste because she didn't know how to prepare them. The EFNEP Program Assistant (PA) taught the participant how to plan her meals so that her SNAP benefits would last the entire month. The EFNEP cookbook has many recipes that utilize WIC approved foods. For example, the participant learned to crush cereal to use as a breading for oven baked pork chops, adding a much more nutritious coating than simple refined flour and using a healthy preparation method.

As a result of EFNEP, the young mom now uses the EFNEP cookbook to prepare homemade meals and snacks for her family. She has learned to make a monthly food budget and has not run out of food before the end of the month since practicing the skills she learned through EFNEP. Prior to the program, she rarely bought fresh fruits and vegetables. However, she now ensures that a fruit and/or a vegetable is served with every meal.



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