



## NC Cooperative Extension 2019 REPORT

### Henderson County

#### Supporting North Carolina's Families with Greatest Needs Since 1969

EFNEP helps address the challenges limited resource families face when introducing healthy changes through nutrition education, cooking classes, physical activity strategies, and shopping on a limited budget. EFNEP provides:

- Peer-to-peer, hands on education in the community
- Healthy, low-cost recipes
- Simple strategies to help families move more together

#### North Carolina's Challenges

- In North Carolina, **1 in 5** children live in poverty.
- North Carolina's adult obesity rate is currently **32%**.
- **15.2%** of 2- to 4-year-olds from low-income families are obese. This makes us the **16th** most obese state.
- North Carolina has the **15th** highest rate of diabetes and the **11th** highest rate of hypertension.

#### WHAT IS EFNEP?

EFNEP serves limited-resource families with young children, school-age youth, and pregnant teens through a series of lessons offered by paraprofessionals and volunteers, many of whom are indigenous to the population. In 2019, EFNEP served 45 counties in North Carolina. Participants learned how to:

- Make wise food choices
- Increase daily physical activity
- Manage food resources
- Practice food safety



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## EFNEP SUCCESS

### Improving a Community Through Partnership

Although many factors influence food insecurity rates, education is one strategy that can help alleviate the effects of and reduce, food insecurity. Nutrition education provided to adults and children who are living in food-insecure households can help to reduce local food insecurity and improve the quality of nutrition in these households.

Healthy People, Healthy Carolinas and North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service in Henderson County have formed a partnership to provide the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) to the citizens of Henderson County. Through the Duke Endowment, Healthy People, Healthy Carolinas Initiative helps communities in North Carolina and South Carolina address chronic health issues such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease. The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program is a federal government initiative that aims to teach low-income families and youth how to “improve their diets, improve their nutrition practices, stretch their food dollars, handle food more safely, and increase their physical activity levels.” Lessons are delivered by peer educators who typically live in the communities where they work and use an interactive, hands-on approach to teaching. Classes can be held anywhere people gather—at churches, in community centers, through school enrichment programs and 4-H clubs, or at youth camps.

It has been over a decade since Henderson County’s last EFNEP program. Through the insight of Healthy People, Healthy Carolinas (HPHC), funding was secured and awarded to Henderson County in 2018 to bring EFNEP back to the county and a new EFNEP Educator was hired in August 2019. Since the EFNEP Educator was first hired, she has been canvassing the community to develop partnerships with other organizations in the community serving EFNEP’s target population.

The EFNEP Educator began building new partnerships through the collaborative relationships established by Henderson County Cooperative Extension to reach low-income youth and families in the community. Using her knowledge from previous experience in building key community relationships, the EFNEP Educator began engaging with the Committee for Activity and Nutrition (CAN) in Henderson County. Through this network, the EFNEP Educator has met and collaborated with dietitians and program coordinators from the local health department, local non-profits, and Henderson County Schools.

The Henderson County 4-H Extension Agent and 4-H Program Assistant provided guidance to establish partnerships with two local schools: The Mountain Community School and Dana Elementary. With this collaboration; the EFNEP Educator will have the opportunity to teach close to 600 children through the 2019–2020 school year. In addition, the 4-H staff have assured that opportunity to reach 4-Hers in low-income communities will be provided through 4-H club programming throughout the year.

Through the network of the Henderson County Health Department, the EFNEP Educator has partnered with a Health Promotion Coordinator to provide *Faithful Families Thriving Communities (Faithful Families)*, a project of EFNEP. *Faithful Families* works directly in communities of faith to promote healthy families and communities. The practice-tested program is open to all faith and religious traditions and engages faith communities in health education, environmental changes to support health, and community-wide health initiatives. The EFNEP Educator has recently contacted a local church to begin the program in 2020.

Working with other organizations through informal and formal networks can provide a holistic approach to meeting the community’s needs, with better and more efficient access to valued services. This furthermore improves the quality and consistency of service to community needs. Thanks to this new Partnership, the new EFNEP Educator is already making an impact in Henderson County.

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