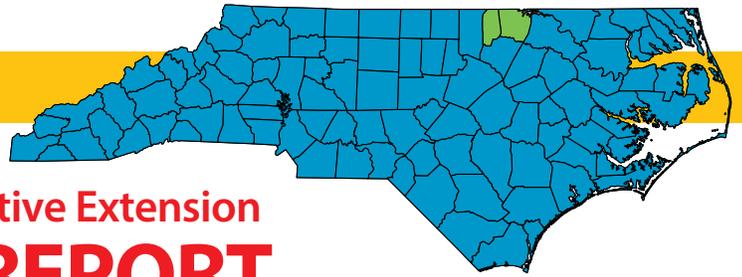




# NC Cooperative Extension 2021 REPORT

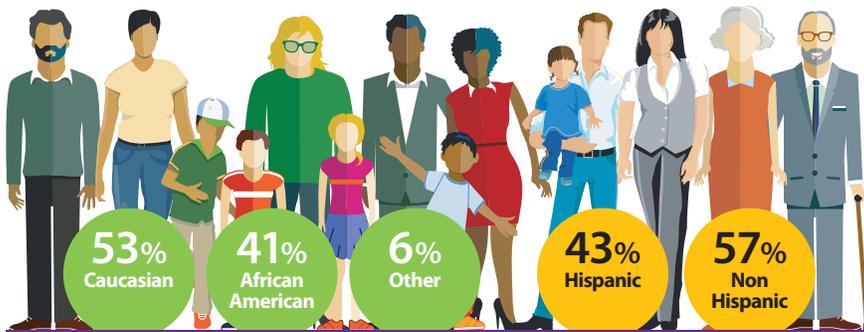


## North Carolina

### 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 EFNEP Reaches Diverse Audiences

#### In 2021:

**1,233** families enrolled in EFNEP.

**9,032** youth participated in 4-H EFNEP.

**84%** of EFNEP participants were enrolled in one or more food assistance programs.

North Carolina EFNEP programs obtained over **\$808,383** in funding and support from local efforts.

#### 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 2021, EFNEP served 42 counties in North Carolina. Participants learned how to:

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

#### EFNEP Makes a Real Difference

**97%** of EFNEP participants improved dietary intake.

**85%** now practice daily physical activity.

**96%** practice better food resource management.

**91%** have improved their food safety habits.

#### Volunteers Strengthen EFNEP

In 2021, **900** adults and youth donated time to EFNEP, making a difference in their own communities and contributing to EFNEP's ongoing success.



# 2021 NC Cooperative Extension Vance and Warren Counties Report

EFNEP used multiple strategies to get needed nutrition and food safety information to low-income audiences throughout the pandemic. In Vance and Warren Counties, 102 individuals were reached through direct programming.

## EFNEP SUCCESS

It's not rare for kids to enjoy cooking, but Camryn Kearsey, 11, and Parker Greene, 12, have the distinction of the title "Chef in Training," thanks to an online Italian cooking camp offered through the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP) program at Cooperative Extension at N.C. A&T State University.

The hands-on camp was offered to third through fifth graders in Warren and Vance counties in June 2021. It gave youth and their parents a chance to learn some Italian recipes, understand the importance of good nutrition and exercise, and spend some quality time with family members as they prepared meals and shared their newfound culinary skills.

"I learned to sauté vegetables without burning them and I learned to make a pizza from a tortilla," said Camryn, a resident of Manson in rural Warren County and the youngest of five siblings. Her mother, Nikeena Boyd-Kearsey, said that although the camp was virtual, it was immersive and engaging, and her daughter "was cooking actual things people could eat in every class."

"As a parent, I loved that the class was so interactive," said Boyd-Kearsey. "She came to every class ready to cook. It was a great learning experience for her."

Parker Greene, who lives in Henderson in Vance County, said he already enjoyed cooking and enrolled in the camp because he thought it would be fun to learn some new recipes and improve his culinary skills.

"I wasn't very good with knife skills or cooking vegetables without burning them," said Parker. "Now, I cook almost every day and I'm using the knowledge I learned to get better at it."

Both Parker and Camryn said they might consider becoming professional chefs, but the Italian cooking camp had a larger purpose than grooming future chefs. Nitasha Kearney, EFNEP educator in Vance and Warren counties, said obesity is a problem in the area and that obesity and poor eating habits often lead to chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease.

"Teaching youth to prepare healthy meals will help them become healthier and decrease their chances of developing

chronic diseases as they grow into adulthood," said Kearney, who partnered with local 4-H agents to offer the camp. "We also encouraged family members to cook along with their children, so it became a great family activity."

Kids and their families joined the virtual sessions every Tuesday and Thursday in June from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The children received recipes and a meal kit each week so they could cook along with Kearney and the 4-H agents. Some of their creations included chicken parmesan, vegan ratatouille, and skinny pizza made with tortillas as the crust.

"I didn't know much about Italian cuisine, so it was fun to try some new things that none of us had eaten before," said Parker, who often attended the camp with his mom, Dorothy Greene. He said panna cotta, a healthier version of the creamy Italian dessert, was his favorite recipe.

"Even if this doesn't become a career for me, I would recommend it because it is skills you will always use," he said. "Anyone would have a lot of fun in this class, and it's something everyone should know."

Boyd-Kearsey said she was grateful to have access to the camp in a rural area that has been hit hard by COVID-19 and lacks summer activities and educational opportunities for youth.

"It brought some excitement to our summer," she said. "It was a time for us to come together and learn what Camryn could do. She was used to watching her older siblings doing things and this was a chance for her to share her skills. We tasted her ratatouille, and it was good!"

Overall, 92% of the camp participants said they improved their nutrition habits and 76% improved their food safety practices. More than half said they increased their fruit and vegetable consumption and about half reported increasing their daily physical activity.

Kearney and the 4-H agents plan to stay in touch with the children who excelled in the camp, including Camryn and Parker, and groom them to be health ambassadors who will help teach the camp next summer.

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