

2022 NC Cooperative Extension Rutherford County Report

EFNEP SUCCESS

EFNEP Results in a Shared Food Exchange System

The Henderson County Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) teaches enrolled adults how to eat healthy, move more, keep food safe, and stretch their food budget. One class, “Shop: Get the Best for Less,” had a particularly positive influence on participants who faced an inability to obtain basic food items due to financial constraints. During class, they learned how to acquire coupons and use other money-saving tips on the items they needed. They were also informed of local food assistance agencies where they could obtain needed items for free.

Participants have reported that they are now shopping smarter and saving more after learning how to “get the best for less.” One participant even took the concepts learned a step further and started a shelf-stable goods exchange, where individuals can share items that they are unable to use, with others in need. This has lessened their financial burden, which greatly increases their emotional health. It has also allowed them to eat more nutritiously which has improved their overall physical health.

EFNEP — Putting It into Practice

The Johnston County Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) partnered with the TRIO program at Johnston Community College (JCC) to deliver Families Eating Smart and Moving More.

One couple wanted to set the example of being healthy for their daughter so they enrolled in EFNEP. The couple found it challenging to find nutritious, delicious, and budget friendly recipes for her family. One of the most exciting and encouraging parts of EFNEP was seeing the cooking demonstrations and tasting new recipes. In addition, after each lesson, the EFNEP educator gave each participant a bag of fresh produce donated by the Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC.

The participant shared that, each week, she prepared the same recipe she learned from EFNEP. She also used the shopping list tool to make budget-friendly and healthy choices at the grocery store. Sharing photos of her new dishes with the EFNEP Educator kept her motivated to continue preparing the new healthy recipes. “I learned so much, from how to budget, make a shopping list, and how to prepare healthy foods.”

Even since the classes ended, this participant continues to walk after lunch, chooses healthier snacks, and incorporates more fruits and vegetables in her family’s meals.

Hands-on Learning Leads to Success

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) uses interactive hands-on learning experiences which empower participants to become more self-sufficient in their cooking skills and abilities.

The EFNEP educator in Pasquotank County taught the “Fix It Safe” lesson in the Families Eating Smart and Moving More curriculum to a group of participants. She demonstrated how to chop, cut and dice food on a cutting mat. She stressed the importance of using separate cutting surfaces for fresh produce and raw meats, poultry and seafood to prevent the cross contamination of harmful bacteria spreading from one surface to another.

One participant didn’t know about the risks of cross contamination as she only uses one cutting board. After taking the Fix it Safe class, she has added another cutting mat to use in her kitchen. She said that using one cutting mat for raw meat and another for cooked foods and/or fresh produce has kept her from cross contaminating foods. By applying what she learned in EFNEP, she has reduced her family’s risk of food borne illness.

EFNEP Makes Learning Fun!

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) works with local middle schools in Rowan County to deliver Teen Cuisine. The EFNEP educator taught students basic cooking skills so they can eat more nutritious meals everyday. Students learned about the relationship between good health and their growing bodies. They practiced preparing healthy recipes that included whole grains, fruits and vegetables. The EFNEP educator also showed them different ways to be active.

One teen expressed gratitude for the class and shared that both she and her mother were walking daily, which they weren’t doing before she enrolled in EFNEP’s Teen Cuisine. Learning about fun ways to exercise motivated her to do more. She is now spending less time on electronic devices and more time on physical activities. In addition, the hands-on food demonstrations sparked a passion for cooking. As a result of EFNEP, the student is considering a Culinary Arts degree in the future. “Thank you for making learning FUN!”

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