



**Gaston 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

**EFNEP Provides Opportunities**



**18** volunteers committed  
**104** hours

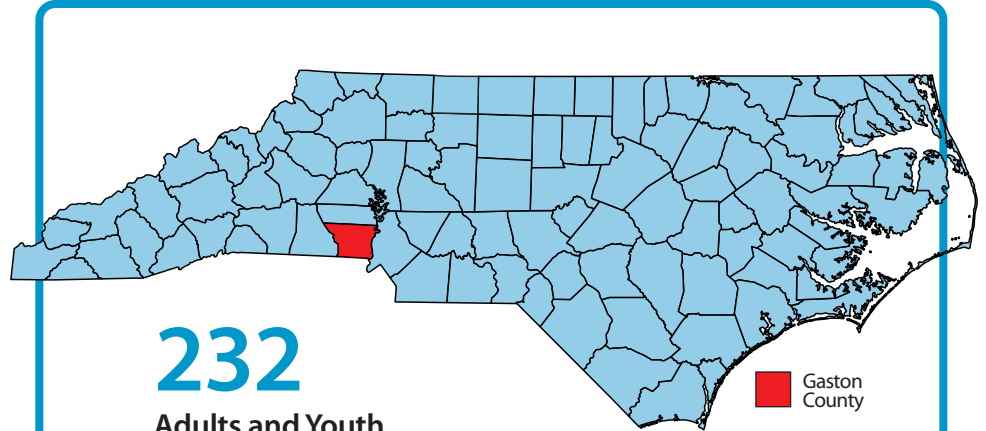


**\$3,307**  
estimated value of volunteer time

Gaston County EFNEP programs obtained over

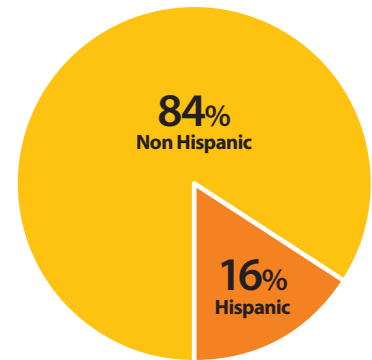
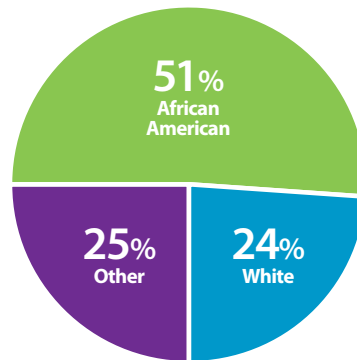
**\$3,900**

in funding and support from local efforts.



**232**

Adults and Youth participated in EFNEP.



**EFNEP Makes a Real Difference**



**86%**

of EFNEP participants improved diet quality.



**51%**

now practice daily physical activity.



**59%**

practice better food resource management.



**46%**

have improved their food safety habits.



## A Partnership Recipe that Improves Food Resource Management

After visiting the Common Ground, a food pantry in the First United Methodist Church in Stanley, NC, the Gaston County EFNEP educator realized that many families faced difficulties utilizing all the foods in their food boxes. This was primarily due to the lack of knowledge about food preparation. To address this issue, EFNEP partnered with Gaston County Cooperative Extension agents and Common Ground to create a digital recipe book featuring recipes that were easy to prepare, cost-effective, and nutritious. The aim was to provide families with a resource to help them utilize the items in their food boxes with little to no waste.

The cookbook was shared with the pantry volunteers and clients, who sampled one of the recipes, Tuna Green Bean Casserole. They were also provided a digital link to the free cookbook. The response to the cookbook was overwhelmingly positive, with families expressing gratitude for the resource that can help them prepare healthy meals for themselves and their families.

**Thanks to this partnership, EFNEP was able to demonstrate recipes and teach participants how to make healthy meals using the food items in their food boxes. This enabled them to provide healthy and nutritious meals for their families, helping them better manage their food resources.** Additionally, this partnership opened doors for EFNEP to deliver programs during the church summer camp and gardening classes, further contributing to the community's well-being.



## Youth Discovers New-Found Love of Vegetables

The Gaston County Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) partnered with the Pharr YMCA to offer Camp, Cook, Play, a fun summer camp program designed to teach youth about healthy nutrition, food safety, and physical activity. During the camp, one young man admitted he had a very limited diet because he could not find whole food options he enjoyed. He ate very few, if any, vegetables.



However, during the protein lesson, the camper was introduced to a new food during the food demonstration portion of the class—Crispy Edamame.

He wasn't excited to try it but did so with an open mind. To his surprise, he loved it! The

crunchiness and unique flavor of the edamame appealed to his taste buds in a way other vegetables had not.

**From that moment on, the camper's perspective on food changed. He began asking his parents to include edamame in his lunches. He was excited about the taste and felt a sense of accomplishment in finding a nutritious snack he genuinely enjoyed.**

EFNEP teaches youth in a classroom setting, and the program allows them to experiment with new foods. In this case, it helped to expand this young man's diet to include more whole foods and gave him confidence to continue trying others!