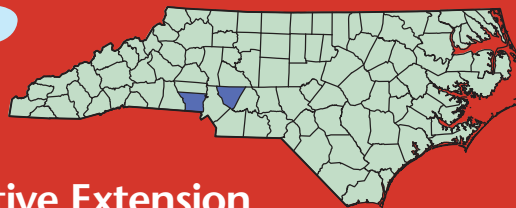




EFNEP



Serving
Cabarrus
and Gaston
counties

2007 NC Cooperative Extension Southwest District Report

EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (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. Using “hands-on” experiences, participants are taught to: make wise choices with their food dollars, improve eating habits, and practice food safety principles.

EFNEP is offered through North Carolina Cooperative Extension as a part of university outreach at NC State University and NC A&T State University. In 2007, North Carolina EFNEP served 43 counties.

EFNEP’s mission is to assist families and youth with limited resources in making simple changes in eating behaviors and daily physical activity so that, over time, healthy choices become healthy habits.

Supporting North Carolina’s Families with Greatest Needs Since 1969

EFNEP helps families and youth with limited resources—those most at risk to suffer from hunger, food insecurity and the inability to connect with available support systems. EFNEP offers practical nutrition information, food preparation, food resource management and food safety education in settings convenient for the participants. EFNEP graduates reflect significant, lasting improvement in eating behaviors and healthy food habits.

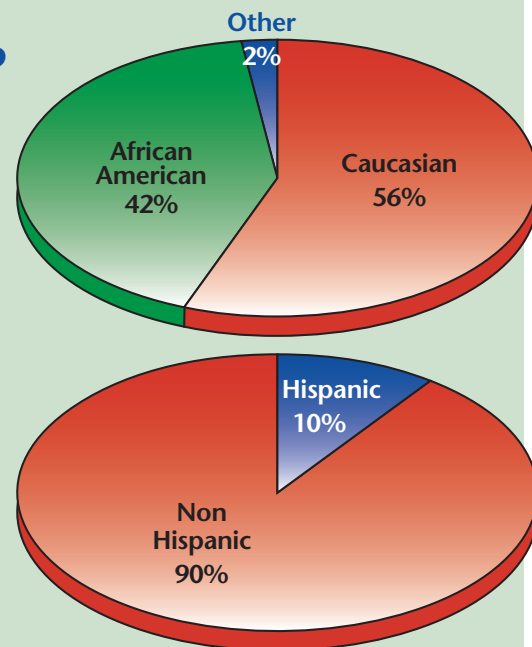
Volunteers Strengthen EFNEP

In 2007, 143 adults and youth donated 1,456 hours on behalf of EFNEP. At a rate of \$18.77 per hour this is equivalent to \$27,329. Volunteers make a difference in their own communities, and contribute to EFNEP’s ongoing success.

North Carolina EFNEP Reaches Diverse Audiences

In 2007,

- 262 families enrolled in EFNEP
- 1,222 participated in 4-H EFNEP
- 24% of EFNEP participants were also WIC participants
- 86% of EFNEP participants enrolled in one or more food assistance programs.



In 2007, the Southwest District EFNEP programs obtained over \$25,000 in funding and support from local efforts.

EFNEP Makes a Real Difference for Limited Resource Adults

Participants completing the series of lessons improved nutrition, food behavior and food safety practices. As a result of participation in EFNEP:

- 78% improved in one or more food safety practices
- 69% used food labels more often to make food choices
- 92% improved in one or more food resource management practices
- 49% of participants increased the amount of physical activity
- 98% of participants improved their diet
 - 59% increased fruit consumption
 - 47% increased vegetable consumption
 - 56% increased consumption of calcium-rich foods

Recent research shows the positive effects of families eating together. In North Carolina, we track meals eaten together as an indicator of participant families' well being. In 2007 clients were asked "How often do you eat meals or snacks with one or more family members?" After EFNEP participation, 46% of families more often ate together. EFNEP makes a difference in families!

EFNEP Makes a Real Difference for Limited Resource Youth

Through a series of classes, 4-H EFNEP participants learn basic nutrition, the importance of daily physical activity, how to make healthy food choices, and food safety in preparation and storage. Evaluation data shows the following:

- 85% of the youth reported eating a variety of foods
- 84% increased their knowledge of human nutrition
- 79% increased their ability to select low-cost, nutritious foods
- 78% improved practices in food preparation and safety

Evidence suggests a relationship between the amount of sodium we consume and the incidence of high blood pressure. The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in Cabarrus County teaches participants how to use food label reading skills, food preparation techniques, and good food choices to limit the sodium in their diets. Several participants in a recent class had high blood pressure and were concerned about the amount of sodium in their food. Many of the participants shared they were currently eating fast food and vending machine items regularly. They also purchased a large amount of convenience food items from the grocery store. Following the series, the participants have started reading the nutrition facts labels in order to avoid high sodium foods and have reduced the frequency that they choose fast food and vending items. This is one step they have taken as a measure to decrease their blood pressure. According to statistics

Proper handwashing is a food safety technique that can help to prevent the spread of harmful bacteria and viruses. The 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in Cabarrus County teaches proper handwashing to limited resource school-age youth. During the winter months, colds are very common and spread easily among children. The proper way to wash hands was taught to an afterschool group of children. After washing their hands, the children were given the challenge to teach someone at home the proper way to wash hands. As a result of being taught hand washing, some staff members at the school noticed several children singing the ABC song while washing their hands. With the understanding and practice of proper hand washing, the spread of colds and other germs can be reduced.

A high level of food resource management skills are needed in families with limited resources in order to provide healthy and cost effective meals for their families. When families lack these skills it can lead to food insecurity, as well as poor health. The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in Gaston County partnered with a local agency to offer a series of lessons to parents with addictive issues. Each lesson includes an opportunity for participants to participate in a "hands-on" food preparation activity featuring a healthy, low-cost recipe they can make for their families. Participants of this program shared they were making the recipes for their children and that they appreciated receiving healthy recipes that were also low cost and easy to prepare. As a result, these participants have been able to feed their families meals including a variety of foods on a limited budget.

