



# EFNEP



Serving Avery, Buncombe, Clay, Henderson, Macon, Transylvania, Watauga and Yancey counties

## 2008 NC Cooperative Extension West 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 2008, North Carolina EFNEP served 45 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.

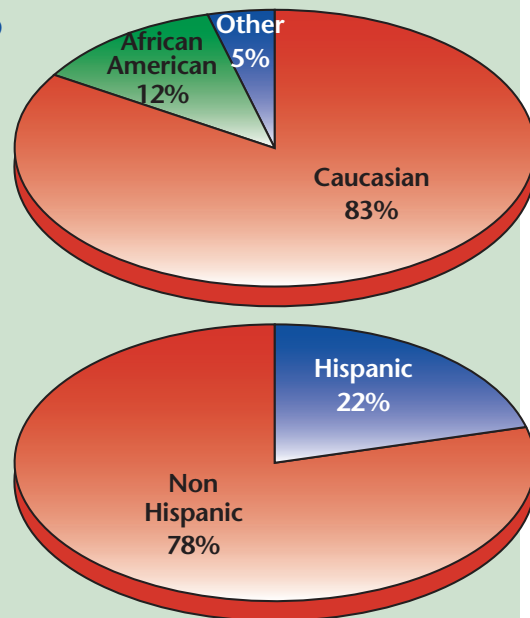
### Volunteers Strengthen EFNEP

In 2008, 181 adults and youth donated 2,288 hours on behalf of EFNEP. At a rate of \$19.51 per hour this is equivalent to \$44,639. Volunteers make a difference in their own communities, and contribute to EFNEP's ongoing success.

### North Carolina EFNEP Reaches Diverse Audiences

In 2008,

- 460 families enrolled in EFNEP
- 1,108 participated in 4-H EFNEP
- 71% of EFNEP participants were also WIC participants
- 93% of EFNEP participants enrolled in one or more food assistance programs.



The Western District EFNEP programs obtained over \$20,730 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:

- 76% improved in one or more food safety practices
- 92% improved in one or more nutrition practices
- 72% used food labels more often to make food choices
- 92% improved in one or more food resource management practices
- 45% of participants increased the amount of physical activity
- 96% of participants improved their diet
  - 62% increased fruit consumption
  - 47% increased vegetable consumption
  - 59% 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 2008 clients were asked "How often do you eat meals or snacks with one or more family members?" After EFNEP participation, 63% 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:

- 67% of the youth reported eating a variety of foods
- 76% increased their knowledge of human nutrition
- 75% increased their ability to select low-cost, nutritious foods
- 45% improved practices in food preparation and safety

Nationwide, the prevalence of overweight has more than doubled in children ages 6-11 in the past several years. Because of this rate of increase, childhood overweight is no longer an individual matter. It is a family concern.

Recently, an overweight Yancey County student with low self-esteem participated in a series of 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (4-H EFNEP) lessons. Inspired by what she had learned, she shared with her family a desire to lose weight and make healthier lifestyle choices. To support the child, the entire family decided to improve their nutritional behaviors as well. They planned and prepared healthier meals at home and ate at fast food restaurants less often. They also controlled portion sizes and became more physically active.

The mother told the 4-H EFNEP program assistant that as a result of their efforts her daughter had lost 10 pounds and the weight loss had helped to greatly improve her daughter's self-esteem.

Only two percent of children today meet the USDA's recommendations for fruit and vegetable consumption. Following these recommendations can reduce the risk of overweight and obesity, conditions that are at epidemic proportion today. To emphasize the benefits of including fruits and vegetables in children's diets, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in Avery County provided Head Start parents with hands-on food preparation experiences including fruits and vegetables. These guided practice sessions allowed the parents to understand how easily a variety of fruits and vegetables could be included in their family's meal plan. After the EFNEP series, one mother confessed that her children had never eaten many fruits and vegetables. Now, because she'd learned to prepare them in ways everyone liked, they ate them everyday—they had even taken the place of junk food in their home. As a result of the changes she had implemented, one of her daughters had lost five pounds.

