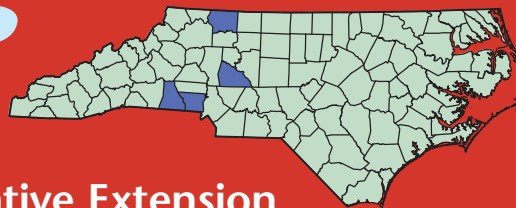




EFNEP



Serving
Cleveland,
Gaston,
Rowan and
Surry
counties

2008 NC Cooperative Extension West Central 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.

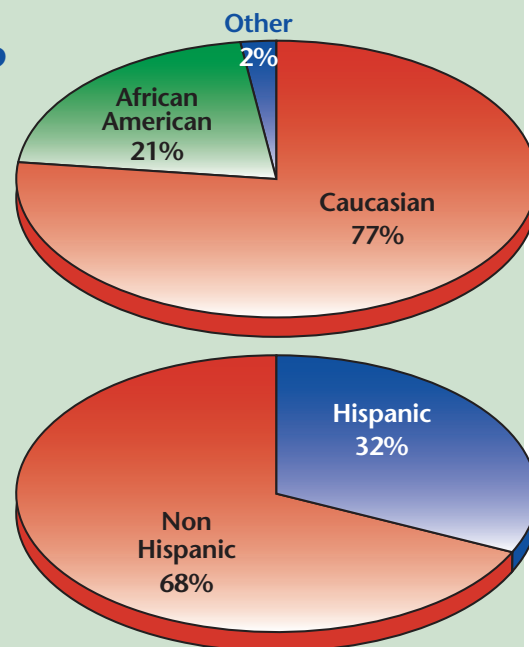
Volunteers Strengthen EFNEP

In 2008, 140 adults and youth donated 2,288 hours on behalf of EFNEP. At a rate of \$19.51 per hour this is equivalent to \$167,879. Volunteers make a difference in their own communities, and contribute to EFNEP's ongoing success.

North Carolina EFNEP Reaches Diverse Audiences

In 2008,

- 734 families enrolled in EFNEP
- 607 participated in 4-H EFNEP
- 51% of EFNEP participants were also WIC participants
- 87% of EFNEP participants enrolled in one or more food assistance programs.



The West Central District EFNEP programs obtained over \$111,120 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:

- 73% improved in one or more food safety practices
- 96% improved in one or more nutrition practices
- 69% used food labels more often to make food choices
- 96% improved in one or more food resource management practices
- 39% of participants increased the amount of physical activity
- 98% of participants improved their diet
 - 56% increased fruit consumption
 - 57% increased vegetable consumption
 - 60% 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, 54% 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:

- 95% of the youth reported eating a variety of foods
- 100% increased their knowledge of human nutrition
- 99% increased their ability to select low-cost, nutritious foods
- 91% improved practices in food preparation and safety

EFNEP Makes a Real Difference for Limited Resource Pregnant Teens

EFNEP encourages pregnant teens to make healthy food choices, seek professional prenatal care, and achieve their educational goals. Pregnant teenagers that take part in our hands-on program use the knowledge they gain to make positive choices in their diet, which results in reduced risk of low-birth-weight infants. Society at large benefits from reduced infant mortality, lowered health care cost and the increased economic stability of families. As a result of participation in EFNEP:

- 100% improved their diet
 - 70% increased vegetable consumption
 - 80% increased consumption of calcium-rich foods

Unhealthy lifestyles have produced a significant impact on our local community. Four of the top five leading causes of death in Cleveland County (heart disease, cancer, cerebrovascular disease, and diabetes mellitus) are all influenced by lifestyle choices. These four diseases resulted in 60% of deaths in Cleveland County during 2001 – 2005.

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) provides nutrition education to limited resource families. In partnership with the Abuse Prevention Agency, EFNEP delivered a series of classes to residents. One resident wanted to know how she could better control her blood glucose. A food recall taken during the first session revealed that she was consuming large amounts of "empty-calorie" foods. She also reported that she was not currently including any physical activity as part of her daily routine.

Before graduating from EFNEP, this participant stated that her blood glucose had gone down from the 350's to the 150's. She also stated that what she learned in EFNEP (how to read food labels; portion control; increasing fruits and vegetables in her diet; and increasing daily physical activity to 30-40 minutes per day) made the difference.

A comparison of this participant's entry and exit food recalls and food behavior surveys showed she has made numerous healthy improvements in her choices and the choices for her family.

While research supports many benefits of breastfeeding, pregnant teens either do not want to or feel they cannot breastfeed their infant. The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) teaches young mothers the benefits of breastfeeding and the importance of good nutrition to a child's overall health. At the beginning of the program, two pregnant teens were adamant about not breastfeeding their infants. After learning the benefits for both mom and child, they decided to give breastfeeding a try.

Children and teens consume too many soft drinks and not enough milk. This is contributing to weight gain, obesity and osteoporosis. The 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (4-H EFNEP) teaches children the importance of making smart drink choices. One group of children shared they did not drink much milk and would rather have soft drinks. The 4-H EFNEP Program Assistant presented a lesson on the importance of choosing low-fat milk and other products that contain calcium for good bone health. At the next class, several students shared that they are now drinking milk with their lunch and their meals at home. They also shared they were now eating yogurt parfaits and cheese, as a way to get more calcium into their diets. As a result of their participation in 4-H EFNEP, the children realized that calcium-rich foods are an important part of good nutrition and health.

