

Nutrition & Food Safety Essential to Health of Community

Nutrition Programs For Health's Sake

Dietary factors are associated with 4 of the 10 leading causes of death (coronary heart disease, some types of cancer, stroke and type 2 diabetes) and with osteoporosis, which affects 1 in 2 women over age 50.

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County helps people eat healthier through a variety of educational and outreach methods.

"Nutrition and Osteoporosis" was developed as a workshop offered to worksites and community groups. Articles were also distributed via THE NEBLINE, the FOOD Web site, an e-mail newsletter and in-house fact sheets. Response was so positive the Power-Point presentation component was posted on the Internet and subse-

quently downloaded by more than 3,000 educators in Lancaster County and throughout the United States.

The "Cook It Quick" program was created for both onsite presentations and for access over the Internet. Materials stress quick and nutritious food preparation and food safety tips.

Food Reflections is an e-mail newsletter sent to more than 6,300 health professionals, educators and consumers. Each month, a nutrition or food safety topic is discussed in "how-to" language. One subscriber, Suzi, wrote, "Not only do you do creative, high-quality work, but you are generous and share it far and wide! Thank you



Extension Educator Alice Henneman (left) and Mary Torell of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture combine nutrition education and food safety information in a presentation.

for another terrific resource from University of Nebraska Extension."

The "Pyramid Power: the Food Guide Game," which Lancaster Extension staff developed in 1994, continues to be a useful educational tool, with more than 2,000 educators in all 50 states having purchased the game.



Handling Food Safely

Food safety is a farm-to-table issue. Cooperative Extension is the lead agency in Lancaster County for educating consumers about food safety. Lancaster Extension also partners with community organizations in providing training to commercial food service establishments.

Consumers are reached through programs, presentations, booths, Web articles, e-newsletters and news releases through the media. Many consumers call the extension office with home food safety concerns.

Lancaster Extension developed a game, "Don't Get Bugged by a Foodborne Illness," for educators to teach consumers important food safety practices. The game has been recognized by an award from the National Extension Association of Family & Consumer Sciences. Approximately 3,000 copies of the game have been sold to educators nationally and internationally.

The ServSafe Program provides training on safe food handling practices to food service establishments. Lancaster Extension partners with UNL, Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department and the Nebraska Restaurant Association in this program.

Extension also provides yearly training for child care provider directors and cooks in cooperation with the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department and the State Department of Education.

Lancaster Extension and County Benefit from AmeriCorps*VISTA



VISTA member Boshra Rida (left) assists a Norris student at a Leading With Character Counts! Camp

AmeriCorps*VISTA is a national program that places full-time volunteers in local organizations for one-year terms. University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County has two Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA), Ali Alkhazraji and Boshra Rida. Both of these VISTA members assist in developing ways to reach communities not previously covered by extension's programs, with a special focus on character education.

TRANSLATION EFFORTS

With the help of Lancaster Extension Community Coordinator Sief Mahagoub, extension has begun translating educational materials into other languages including Arabic, Spanish, Russian and Vietnamese.

Extension Builds Strong Families and Communities

Leadership and community development, as well as fostering family strengths, are by-products of most of Cooperative Extension programs. Extension also has programs specific to these areas.

Extension partners with a variety of community agencies to present workshops such as Strengthening Families, resource management and basic investing, Real World — Real Decisions, Parents Forever (for divorcing parents) and other Family Strengths programs.

Leadership, teamwork and a better understanding of self and others are developed through Real Colors Matrixx and Myers

Briggs Temperament Inventory (MBTI) Workshops delivered by Extension Educator LaDeane Jha. One participant commented: "Wow, this really opened my eyes. My boss isn't a jerk — he's just different than me."

In addition to direct outreach in these issues, extension provides staff development and training to educators, government officials, agency workers and community groups, both locally and regionally. Some of these workshops include leadership trainings, diversity issues, poverty simulations, Success Outcome Markers for Extension and character education trainings.

Nutrition Education Programs for Limited Resource Families

University of Nebraska's Cooperative Extension's Nutrition Education Program (NEP) helps limited resource families learn to prepare nutritious and safe foods while stretching their food dollars.

In NEP, qualifying adults learn through small groups at agency or community sites, or individually through home visits, mail lessons or phone consultations.

"I've learned how to include dairy foods like cheese and yogurt in my diet to get calcium," says Michelle, a Lancaster County Early Head Start mother who can't drink milk.

This year, NEP teamed up with the Food Bank of Lincoln to educate families on how to use potatoes donated by the Idaho Potato Growers, and with community agencies to provide food preparation and safety information to families receiving holiday food baskets.

Lancaster Extension NEP partners with 87 agencies and coalitions and receives funding from the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) through USDA, the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program (FSNEP) through Health and Human Services, Lincoln Housing Authority, Early Head Start through Lincoln Action Program, and other sources. Women, Infants and Children (WIC) continues to be a primary partner.

More than 2,426 Lancaster



Nutrition advisors Sandy Phillips (above left) and Patrice Broussard (above right) demonstrate use of perishable foods at Lincoln Action Program.



Extension Assistant Karen Wobig presents "Who Wants to be a Milk-N-Aire" to Mahoney Manor residents.

Family and Community Education Clubs



Longtime FCE members were honored at this year's Achievement Night in Lancaster County, including Donna Gill (above left), a member for 45 years.

Family and Community Education (FCE) clubs are an educational, social and community-oriented program designed to meet the needs and interests of Nebraska homemakers.



"Our local extension Office honors the land grant mission of the University of Nebraska. We have progressed as a people because of the educational opportunities and delivery of research-based knowledge through Cooperative Extension."

—Alice Doane, member of Lancaster County Extension Board