

# FY15 SNAP-Ed/WNEP Nutrition Education -- Washington County Year-End Narrative Report

## Overview of SNAP-Ed/WNEP Nutrition Education efforts in Washington County during FY15

Washington County SNAP-Ed/WNEP Educators made 1,544 direct educational contacts through 160 programs at 21 delivery sites during Fiscal Year 2015. Unduplicated learners numbered 856, that is, 55% of total educational contacts. The total number of educational contacts in FY15 was lower than projected due to training/orientation of a new staff member and maternity leave. Statistical data of educational contacts reveals the audience makeup as 34% parents of infants and children; 18% adults without children; 4% senior adults; 15% youth ages 4-5; 26% youth ages 6-11; and 3% youth ages 12-17. Overall program participation by females was 58%, and by males 42%. In FY15, the number of teaching contacts by major SNAP-Ed Outcomes were as follows: 1,201 (78%) on Nutrition/Dietary Quality Topics; 166 (11%) on Food Safety Topics; 160 (10%) on Food Resource Management; and 17 (1%) on Food Security. Indirect educational contacts were made through 2,369 newsletters to older adults and to parents of infants and children via WIC, Head Start, and Hartford's subsidized housing units.

## Educational Programming by Educational Project

Washington County SNAP-Ed Nutrition Education Programming consisted of programming within the following Educational Projects during FY15:

- **In School.** *Teaching groups of children in grades K – 12, during school day; including school-based programs for pregnant and parenting teens.*  
45 educational contacts were made with school age children and youth through series of lessons in school classrooms.
- **After School/Summer Programs.** *Teaching groups of children at after school, summer school, school or community gardens, Boys & Girls Clubs, etc.*  
415 educational contacts were made with school age children and youth through series of lessons at after school or summer school settings.
- **Preschoolers (& Parents).** *Teaching groups of Preschool children at HeadStart, pre-Kindergarten, Family Resource Center preschooler play groups, etc (along with related educational programming for their parents of the children being taught).*  
231 educational contacts were made with preschool age children at Head Start of Rolf's Education Center, West Bend.
- **Parent Groups or Meetings.** *Teaching parents of infants and/or children at Head Start parent meetings, Family Resource Centers, school age parent groups, Parent/Teacher conferences, etc.*  
25 educational contacts were made with parents at Arbor Trace Apartments, Family Center of Washington County, and Friends of Abused Families, all West Bend locations; and the United Way Resource Center for Family Center's location in Hartford.
- **WIC Clinics.** *Teaching learners at WIC or in association with WIC*  
48 educational contacts were made with learners at WIC.
- **Seniors/Older adults.** *Teaching senior adults (over age 60) at Senior Dining sites, senior housing settings, other teaching for senior adults.*  
54 educational contacts were made with senior adults at Congregate Meal Sites of Kewaskum, Hartford, Slinger, and West Bend.
- **Food Pantries.** *Teaching at food pantries, commodity food sites, etc.*  
308 educational contacts were made with adults at Sts. Boniface & Gabriel Food Pantry, Germantown.

- **Other Programs for Adults.** *Teaching adults at adult education programs, ESL classes, sheltered housing, recovery programs, job centers, FoodShare offices, domestic violence shelters, groups of adults with developmental disabilities or chronic mental illness, etc.*  
417 educational contacts were made with adults at Casa Guadalupe Education Center Inc.; Friends of Abused Families; The Threshold Inc.; Healthy Living Group through the Human Services Dept.; and the Workforce Development Center who subcontracts with ResCare Inc.
- **In Home/Individual or Family Lessons.** *Teaching individuals or families in their homes or other locations.*  
1 educational contact was made with an adult at the Hartford Library.
- **Other.** *Direct educational programming for food stamp-eligible persons that does not fit in one of the categories.*  
0 educational contacts were made with adults at Educational Projects that do not fit in one of the other categories.

## Outcomes and Impacts

- **Preschoolers (& Parents).** *Teaching groups of Preschool children at HeadStart, pre-Kindergarten, Family Resource Center play groups, etc along with related educational programming for their parents of the children being taught.*

123 Head Start students participated in a SNAP-Ed lesson featuring a germ puppet, and practiced proper hand washing techniques. Because adults serve as role models for children when they regularly practice hand washing, teachers and parents were included in educational efforts. 100% (9) classroom teachers reported the lessons positively impacted students. One replied, “we all learned a great deal, and the children are now very excited about washing their hands.” Results from the 22 parent surveys returned revealed that the children had carried their new skills and motivation into the home setting: 68% of parents reported their child seemed more willing to wash hands; 55% conveyed their child has been washing hands for 20 seconds; 50% noted their child is now washing hands without being reminded; and 59% expressed that their child has been reminding others to wash. These behavior changes may prevent/reduce the spread of illness, and may result in fewer missed school days.

- **WIC Clinics.** *Teaching learners at WIC.*

WIC and SNAP-Ed participate in county-wide obesity prevention efforts through educational programs and a health coalition. Participants attending WIC clinics have learned about the relationship between portion size, calories, and obesity from SNAP-Ed mini-lessons. They were surprised to see that the calorie content in many common foods had increased two-fold—or more—over the last 20 years; the learners appreciated the easy tips furnished on portioning foods and making nutrient-dense selections. When evaluated, 96% (27) learners stated they will use a bowl, plate, or snack bag to moderate their portions instead of eating foods directly out of the bag or package; 100% (28) planned to follow the MyPlate guideline to “make half (their) plate fruits and vegetables.” Individuals who apply these strategies are more likely to achieve and maintain a healthy weight status without counting calories.

- **Food Pantries, etc.** *Teaching at food pantries, commodity food sites, etc.*

SNAP-Ed surveyed pantry clientele for educational needs; balancing food and physical activity was identified as one of the high priority topics. SNAP-Ed provided two mini-lessons at the Sts. Boniface and Gabriel Community Food Pantry on baking and serving foods with less fat—an especially

appropriate topic for the holiday season. Of 33 learners evaluated after the lesson, 94% (31) planned to use one or more methods learned to consume healthier types of fats and/or to reduce the amount of fat consumed. Prior to other mini-lessons on portion awareness, 15% (6 of 40) were able to correctly identify the proper portion size of cooked meat in a standard reference diet; post-lesson, 100% were able to do so by equating the amount to a deck of cards. Through these lessons, SNAP-Ed contributed to the statewide efforts toward achieving the Cross-Cutting Objectives of Healthiest Wisconsin 2020.

- **Other Programs for Adults.** *Teaching adults at adult education programs, ESL classes, sheltered housing, recovery programs, FoodShare offices, Job Centers, domestic violence shelters, groups of adults with developmental disabilities or chronic mental illness, etc.*

Participants of the English Language Learners class, and the director and teachers of Casa Guadalupe Education Center concurred: smart shopping was a top educational need to be addressed by SNAP-Ed. At the initial lesson, participants compared product costs through exercises on unit pricing. SNAP-Ed used a hands-on activity from the Money for Food curriculum for a follow-up lesson; learners placed each of 40 cards describing thrifty food shopping habits into categories: I do this already, I will try this, I won't try this/it's impractical. Of 18 learners, 89% (16) heard at least one new way to get more for their food money and planned to use the idea(s) within the next month or so; and 89% rated the session as very or somewhat helpful. ELL teacher feedback: "Exercise... got students of very different abilities talking about a really important topic. Well done!"

## Results Narrative

### Purpose for Programming and Approach:

The mission of TTI Industries (a division of The Threshold Inc.) is to create opportunities for individuals with disabilities to live fulfilling lives. TTI's Prevocational Services Program provides daily paid work opportunities to 150 people, cultivating their vocational skills while increasing independence for community-integrated employment.

The majority of TTI employees are individuals with developmental disabilities who live in independent living situations or in supervised environments while working toward independence. Most of these adults do not have children, and have at least some responsibilities for food shopping and preparation.

When TTI employees are not engaged in completing paid work, they attend small group sessions on-site that focus on soft skills needed in a work environment. TTI Supervisors also saw the value of training employees on healthy lifestyle choices: balancing food and physical activity to sustain or improve health, reduce the number of missed work days due to illness, and maintain good employment status. WNEP's proposal to form a partnership occurred as Supervisors considered options for educational programs for their employees.

Public health data reveals overweight and obesity are prevalent health problems among Washington County residents; informal observations by SNAP-Ed revealed the same problems are common among TTI employees. TTI Supervisors noted that the vending machines offered few to no healthy options. They had noticed that employees enjoyed the freedom of deciding how to use their earned money, and that a good amount of lunch and snack foods consumed by employees were bought from the machines. Unfortunately, employees did not walk during their lunch breaks to a grocery store--less than a quarter mile away--to buy healthier options.

Further, SNAP-Ed brought several options of curricula and consulted with a TTI Supervisor prior to the first lesson. It was agreed that adaptations would be made to the Stepping Up to a Healthy Lifestyle, Simply Good Eating, and Professor Popcorn Curricula for the lesson series.

In January, 2014, SNAP-Ed started programs, using a series format. TTI Supervisors selected the 40 employees who would comprise five groups, with eight learners enrolled per series. The initial, six-lesson series was whittled down. Four weekly lessons were deemed to be a better fit for TTI to ensure employees were available for contracted work. SNAP-Ed also found a four lesson series provide the right amount of content and enough time to evaluate the short-term impact of the program.

Pre-assessment tools were used to identify typical dietary intake and physical activity habits of the learners; with the information gathered, SNAP-Ed targeted the lesson content to address educational needs. Each one hour lesson was structured to include a hands-on learning activity related to nutrition, as well as a brief physical activity component to provide learners with a “brain break” mid-way through the session. SNAP-Ed changed the learning environment for one lesson during the summer series: all went to an open, grassy area outside of TTI and participated in physical activities using a variety of free and low-cost props. Other teaching topics included MyPlate, portion awareness, whole grains, and healthy snacks featuring fruits and vegetables. The same assessment tool was used post-series to evaluate program effectiveness.

Teaching topics of FY15 reinforced content taught in FY14; 33 learners participated. SNAP-Ed reviewed how to use the MyPlate teaching tool to make healthy food choices. The content from the Label Logic Lesson was divided among two lessons to maximize learner understanding of Nutrition Facts labels. These skills were practiced in subsequent lessons on choosing beverages, and planning and preparing healthy snacks. TTI employees participated in a new learning environment for their last lesson; Threshold’s Senior Day Services (SDS), located next door to TTI, provided SNAP-Ed and its learners access to its kitchen. Pre-Voc learners practiced how to handle food safely while preparing a food from a Smart Snacking lesson.

While SNAP-Ed and TTI planned out the details for the FY16 agreement, the TTI Supervisor mentioned that its employees had attended a workshop on shopping for food. Coincidentally, SNAP-Ed had just taught a similar lesson from the Simply Good Eating curriculum; SNAP-Ed shared details about the hands-on activity in which learners identify the grocery store departments in which particular foods are located. The Supervisor stated that the content would supplement the content from the workshop, and agreed the activity would help learners to better understand how to shop for food. SNAP-Ed designed promotional mini posters for the optional session and the interest was massive...55 employees registered! SNAP-Ed divided the registrants into two groups to facilitate teaching and to fit within space constraints. At this session, employees also learned how to use unit pricing to find the “best buy”. Further, a “blind” taste-test was conducted which allowed employees to compare a name-brand food to a store-brand version.

### **Outcomes and Impact:**

This first set of programs in FY14 was so well received by the learners and staff, that a week after the series ended a TTI Supervisor contacted SNAP-Ed to inquire when the next series could be scheduled. Learner comments on post-series evaluations: very valuable information; learned about different foods I didn’t know about; I learned how to eat healthy; it was valuable to me; I would say yes to tell others to take the class; I want to take Nutrition 2 (an informal reference to a follow-up series).

Quantitative results: prior to the series, 70% of the learners understood the concept of a whole grain food;

afterward, 95% demonstrated understanding. The percentage of learners who were correctly able to identify a healthy snack choice increased from 45% before the lesson to 73% afterwards. Learners who were able to correctly define what being “physically active” means increased from 60% pre-lesson to 82% post-lesson.

The effectiveness of FY15 programs was measured with written and oral evaluations. One enthusiastic participant in the series was Eric, a male in his early 20’s who resides with his parents. He communicated that he had been posting SNAP-Ed handouts on the refrigerator and that he had been successful in influencing his parents to switch to whole grain bread. After each group lesson, Eric stopped by to meet with SNAP-Ed, asking questions about applying concepts he had learned, and inquiring whether anything new or different had been shared in another class that day.

Another learner, Stacy, had been told by her doctor she needed to lose weight; she chose to attend the workshop series twice to review concepts and to reinforce newly acquired knowledge and skills. Stacy became more physically active, and switched from chocolate milk to low-fat white milk to save calories.

Quantitative results: 73% of learners said they planned to use nutrition labels to make decisions about the food they eat; 66% stated they looked at food labels more often; 76% will choose healthy snacks more often; and 58% planned to make more healthy choices about beverages.

### **Creating Access to Underserved Audiences:**

People with disabilities are a protected class. Demographic data collected by SNAP-Ed on the TTI employees who participated in SNAP-Ed programs reveals that there is proportional representation on the basis of gender, ethnicity and race.

There is a wide range of physical and intellectual abilities among learners within each group. Supervisors contribute input to SNAP-Ed on learner needs, how to best work with specific learners, and the techniques which can enhance educational effectiveness. Learner reinforcement incentives were effective with this group. Handouts were modified with the addition of graphics to enhance comprehension. The font size of the text was enlarged as needed, and materials were read aloud. The pace of the lessons was adjusted (e.g., the Label Reading topic was presented over two teaching events). Concepts were explained in a variety of ways and with multiple repetitions to help improve retention. For evaluations, images were added and a check-box format was used to encourage completion. Content from each lesson was reviewed at the subsequent sessions.

### **Relationships and Capacity Building:**

A TTI Supervisor agreed to share her impressions of SNAP-Ed’s work with TTI employees to the Civil Rights Review Committee who visited the Washington County UW-Extension Office in November 2014. Two county board supervisors (of the five appointed to the Extension Committee) joined the group on the Review Day.

Further, SNAP-Ed featured an article about TTI Programs in the March 2014 Monthly Program Highlights, an office newsletter. The publication was promoted electronically via an e-mail list serv and was posted on the County Extension Office’s web site.

SNAP-Ed also spoke about TTI during a presentation to the Education and Culture Committee at their June 2015 meeting.

Capacity has also been built as a result of programming: two extra, optional programs were offered in the summer of FY15. Threshold's Senior Day Care offered SNAP-Ed an opportunity to use their kitchen facilities for programming; the SDS clients were offered the opportunity to participate in the activity with TTI employees; those who chose to do so were introduced to some of the lesson content, received a tasting of the healthy snack prepared and were offered educational handouts.

UW-Extension's Master Gardener program partners with Threshold, and has provided several raised garden beds and instructional support to SDS clients. SNAP-Ed may explore with TTI and Master Gardeners the possibility of using garden produce in one or more educational programs.

On the UW-Extension Recording Results database SNAP-Ed located a success story of a colleague who had taught a similar group. Her suggestions were helpful in preparing to work with this audience.

### **Scholarship and Learning:**

Three of the four elements of scholarship were met through this effort:

- 1) "reviewed by the scholar's peers who affirm its value" – please refer to paragraph 1 under the Results Narrative's Relationships and Capacity Building. An excerpt from the Review Team's report revealed that "Threshold Vocational Services expressed the value of the (Extension) partnership and outreach efforts..... Targeted efforts (partnerships) are excellent and result in good outreach to potential audiences."
- 2) "added to our intellectual history through its communication" – see paragraph 2 under the Creating Access to Underserved Audiences.
- 3) "valued by those for whom it was intended" – note paragraphs under paragraphs 2 and 4 under the Outcomes and Impact section