

FY16 SNAP-Ed/WNEP Washington County Year-End Narrative Report

[1] OVERVIEW OF SNAP-ED/WNEP NUTRITION EDUCATION EFFORTS IN WASHINGTON COUNTY DURING FY16

During Fiscal Year 2016, Washington County SNAP-Ed/WNEP Staff made 1,451 direct educational contacts through 182 programs delivered at 25 sites. The Washington County Project partnered with 17 local agencies during the year: a limited income housing complex; an English Language learning center; recreation departments of two cities; a community-based residential care facility which supports adults who have recently experienced a mental health crisis; a family center; a domestic violence shelter; a support center for people affected by mental illness; three vocational training centers for adults (of which two focus on people affected by physical and mental illnesses, and one is a public/private venture); a food pantry; a school district's Head Start program; and four departments within county government (Aging and Disability Resource Center, Health, Human Services, and Sheriff).

Unduplicated learners numbered 759, that is, 52% of total educational contacts. The total number of educational contacts in FY16 was lower than projected due to the vacancy in the Nutrition Educator position, and the training/orientation needed for a short-term, Student Nutrition Educator for Summer Programs. Statistical data of educational contacts reveals the audience makeup as 28% adults without children; 25% parents of infants and children; 23% youth ages 6-11; 16% youth ages 4-5; 5% youth ages 12-17; and 3% senior adults. Overall program participation by females was 60%, and by males 40%. The number of teaching contacts by major SNAP-Ed Outcomes were 1,128 (78%) on Nutrition/Dietary Quality Topics, 270 (19%) Food Resource Management Topics, and 53 (3%) Food Safety Topics. Indirect educational contacts were made through 2,324 newsletters to older adults and to parents of infants and children via WIC, Head Start, and subsidized housing complexes in Hartford and West Bend.

[2] EXPANDING OUTREACH AND ACCESS TO PROGRAMMING

The Washington County Project considered the underserved population when expanding its outreach and access:

- Nutrition Coordinator Renee Vertin had attended a series of Community Talks on Mental Health and how the county organizations and residents could respond. At one presentation, a statistic was shared that 25% of people affected by mental illness live in poverty. SNAP-Ed responded by adding three partner agencies (NAMI, Our Place Day Services, and Elevate's Calm Harbor) to the existing two partner agencies who serve people affected by mental illness (i.e., The Threshold Inc. and the county Human Service Department's Healthy Living Group).
- Families of the Casa Guadalupe Education Center Inc. expressed interest in visiting their local Farmers Market (Hartford). Some who attended visited the market for the first time; Renee provided a mini-lesson, tour, scavenger hunt for children, and tastings of a recipe made with local, seasonal produce. It is anticipated that this effort will be expanded to the West Bend area next year.
- A second agreement was added to the partnership of ResCare Inc. (doing business as the Workforce Development Center)--Job Club; 100% of its clientele receive or are eligible for Wisconsin FoodShare.
- A new site (low income housing complex, Hartford) was added to extend educational outreach to seniors (more details under Section [4], bullet 3).

[3] EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING BY EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

Washington County SNAP-Ed Nutrition Education Programming consisted of programming within the following Educational Projects during FY16:

- **In School.**
71 educational contacts were made with school-age youth via series of lessons in school classrooms at the Juvenile Detention Center's Washington Street School, located within the County Sheriff's Department.
- **After School/Summer Programs.**
366 educational contacts were made with school-age children and youth via series of lessons at after school and summer school settings, such as Summer Parks Programs through two city recreation departments, and Reading Programs at two sites of Casa Guadalupe Education Center.
- **Preschoolers (& Parents).**
236 educational contacts were made with preschool-age children at Head Start of West Bend School District.
- **Parent Groups or Meetings.**
179 educational contacts were made with parents at Arbor Trace Apartments; Casa Guadalupe Education Center; Family Center of Washington County; Friends of Abused Families; ResCare Roadmaps dba Workforce Development Center; and Head Start at Early Head Start.
- **WIC Clinics.**
39 educational contacts were made with learners at two locations of WIC Clinics.
- **Seniors/Older adults.**
42 educational contacts were made with senior adults at low income housing complexes in two cities through a partnership with the county's ADRC.
- **Food Pantries.**
173 educational contacts were made with adults at Sts. Boniface & Gabriel Community Pantry.
- **Other Programs for Adults.**
345 educational contacts were made with adults at Elevate's Calm Harbor; National Alliance of Mental Illness Positive Image Center; Our Place Day Services; ResCare Job Club dba Workforce Development Center; The Threshold Inc.; and Healthy Living Group through the county's Human Services Department.

[4] OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

PART A: OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS OF SNAP-ED DIRECT EDUCATION

- **In School.**

Two lesson series were provided at the Washington Street School of the county's Juvenile Detention Center. By assessing youth of one series, Renee learned that all were intending to live on their own within the next month to three years; however, of the 11, only one had been enrolled in a health science class, and none in a food and consumer science or a cooking class. Through 17 programs, Renee made 71 educational contacts. A portion of the evaluation results: 60% learned a new food safety tip that they would use; 56% learned at least one new thing about making a grocery list; 83% stated by using some of the ideas from the lesson to spend less on food away from home, they could save \$5 to \$10 per week. Because some youth didn't know how to cook, one-dish meals and using a slow-cooker were also discussed.

- **After School/Summer Programs.**

Because most children influence family food purchases, they are an important target audience for SNAP-Ed. Student Nutrition Educator Meggie Casey taught a 5-week series to 59 youth who attended West Bend and Hartford Parks Programs. Through hands-on experiences and physically active games, the youth learned how to use MyPlate to make healthy lifestyle choices. They were eager to share with their families their shocking discoveries of the sugar content in many beverages. Youth also used props to create healthy meals—filling half their plates with fruits and veggies—and were invited to sample a variety of veggies. Leaders at a Hartford park served as positive role-models by participating in the tasting; as a result, 52% of youth at that park sampled an unfamiliar veggie, and 73% of the samplers intended to ask for the food at home. At parks with no role modeling, the combined results were 36% and 42%, respectively.

- **Seniors/Older adults.**

Older adults at limited income housing complexes in Hartford and Kewaskum participated in a 5-session series. ADRC's Dietitian (specially trained in the *StrongWomen* Program) and Renee facilitated discussions and interactive learning using the *Eat Smart, Live Strong* curriculum. With the new skills learned, knowledge gained, and comradery built, the 15 have adapted specific eating and physical activity behaviors shown to improve health and well-being, such as consuming the recommended amounts of fruits and veggies, eating brown rice, and increasing flexibility and strength through regular exercise. Participants were evaluated after each program; 81% (34 of the 42 educational contacts) rated the programs as useful or very useful.

- **Food Pantries, etc.**

Forty-one clients of the Sts. Boniface & Gabriel Community Pantry in Germantown participated in mini-lessons with Nutrition Educator Tamara Johnson on how to safely store leftover food, and how to include leftovers in meal planning. Of the learners who completed a goal-setting activity, 61% (25) revealed they would divide leftovers into smaller portions and store in shallow containers in the refrigerator; 58% (24) planned to refrigerate cooked leftovers within two hours (one hour when temperatures are over 90°). Learners who handle food according to recommended guidelines reduce their risk of food borne illness, lessen food waste, and make the best use of their food dollars.

- **Other Programs for Adults.**

At The Threshold Inc., 22 adults participated in two series of programs taught adjacently by Meggie. Each of the five sessions included a discussion topic, hands-on activity, and a tasting of a healthy food—a recipe which learners or their caregivers could easily replicate in their homes. Post-session evaluations revealed 88% of the learners rated the review of nutrition basics as helpful or very helpful; 64% intended to start—or to more often—measure amounts of food at home to enhance their portion awareness skills; and 74% committed to becoming more physically active in the short run. Impact from this lesson series reveals that TTI learners are motivated to make small, meaningful steps toward healthier lifestyle choices, and to achieve or maintain a healthy weight.

PART B – PSE AND COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

- **PSE Effort # 1** United Way Kickoff Campaign Projects to Address Hunger

From 2009 to 2014, the County's poverty rate increased, households realized a decline in real income, and nonprofit agencies faced an increased demand for services while their own fiscal health worsened. The goal of the United Way (UW) kickoff campaigns in 2013, 2014 and 2015 was to improve the food security of residents while lessening the financial strain on food pantries. UW coordinated the yearly events of assembling fortified meal packages. Over 200 organizations donated money and/or employee teams; more than 30,000 packages (180,000+ meals) were distributed to six pantries in three years.

Initially, a significant number of packages were refused, placed into food donation barrels at stores, or returned directly to pantries. Renee interviewed pantry clientele and volunteers; two main reasons for non-acceptance emerged: unfamiliarity with soy protein isolate, and reticence of using a white-colored cheese product.

SNAP-Ed responded with ongoing educational efforts to pantry volunteers and clientele, and to other SNAP-Ed learners. A handout (designed by Renee with alternative cooking methods, nutrient-dense add-ins, and recipes) was distributed with the 2015 meal type, and Tamara offered tastings at one pantry. Two pantries reported fewer returned packages. However, four months later in a SNAP-Ed survey, 14 clientele noted that the meal packages were not a resource they'd like to receive on a regular basis, even when tips from the handout had been used.

The 2013-15 UW Projects are complete. The 9/2016 UW Campaign features School Readiness Backpacks for 2,500 preschool children with a focus on how nutrition impacts learning.

- **PSE Effort # 2** Safe & Healthy Food Pantry Project – Multi-level Programming with Area Food Pantries

Renee provided area food pantry managers an introduction to the *Safe & Healthy Food Pantries Project* (S&HFPP) and the resources available in the UW-Extension-produced toolkit; assistance was offered at any stage of a pantry's assessment or process improvement. Although follow-up was conducted twice in 2016, only one pantry has verbalized an interest. Once the SNAP-Ed project is fully staffed, Renee will collaborate with the Ruby Pantry's staff at West Bend to provide the training and to invite representatives from other pantries to join.

Renee continues to build a working knowledge of the Full Shelf Food Pantry. She served as an Interim Secretary for five quarters; updated the Intake Form for the Full Shelf Food Pantry by removing the names of defunct organizations and reformatting; motioned, as a Director on the Pantry Board, that eggs be provided as a high quality protein for a reasonable price— impact: 500 households per month; and fulfills expectations of a Board Member to sort food following major food drives (U.S. Post Office and Boy Scouts).

Pantry volunteers and Tamara worked cooperatively to link the monthly mini-lesson topic with the healthy foods featured in prefilled bags. The pantry provided some or all of the foods used in SNAP-Ed tastings, which are offered on an occasional basis. Tamara furnished handouts on the mini-lesson topics and related recipes; Spanish language materials were provided when readily available. Through mini-lessons and the distribution of handouts, impact is estimated at 150 households per year.

[5] RESULTS NARRATIVE: Include the following sections in the narrative.

SNAP-Ed Supports Parents to Instill Healthy Eating Behaviors

Purpose for Programming and Approach:

Low-income parents are one of the target audiences for SNAP-Ed and for good reason. Overall, one-third of American adults and two-thirds of children are overweight or obese. With over half of American children living in poverty, a higher prevalence of obesity in low-income individuals, and the grave health impacts of this disease, it is especially important that SNAP-Ed reaches low-income parents with nutrition education.

Parents' eating behaviors throughout pregnancy and feeding practices afterward are important to their health and the health of their children. Additionally, the attitudes, behaviors, and decisions of parents regarding what, when and how to feed their children are significant. Parents who model healthy eating habits raise children who are more willing to try and eat healthy foods. Further, family mealtimes translate into healthy diets: families who eat together are more likely to choose healthy foods, including fruits and vegetables and calcium-rich food sources.

Supporting healthy behaviors in parents helps to ensure the same healthy lifestyle choices are replicated by their children, thereby reducing the rate of obesity and overweight in subsequent generations. The 16 year partnership between West Bend School District's Head Start and Washington County SNAP-Ed (since the project inception in 2000) has provided resources to empower thousands of at-risk families to choose healthful diets, become more food secure by spending dollars wisely, and handle food safely.

SNAP-Ed uses a "whole-family approach" with its programming at Head Start.

- Youth ages 4-5 receive two preschool lessons during the school year with topics that reinforce what families may be doing at home, such as exposing preschoolers to new fruits and vegetables and teaching them proper hand-washing.
- Parents and caregivers receive two editions of Family Newsletters each year and are invited to programs with topics that complement and expand upon the preschool education topics. For example, the theme of family mealtimes was carried throughout multiple educational contacts: "Eat Together" was the focus of a preschool lesson; "Eat Together" was a topic featured in the Family Newsletter; and "Eat Together" was offered as a Family Fun Outing within the Family Newsletters and separate invitations.
- In previous years, other modes of education and teaching topics have been provided: a SNAP-Ed Healthy Lifestyles bulletin board at Head Start with topics updated monthly; a grocery store tour; a Family Fun Outing in which Family Advocates taught about container gardening (each family planted a tomato plant), and SNAP-Ed taught about how to use garden produce; a hands-on exhibit in which families were able to try out low-cost physical activity toys and receive handouts on free/low-cost community resources; and a special outing for men and children featuring healthy, one-dish meals.

Prior to each school year, SNAP-Ed staff (Coordinator and Nutrition Educator) meets with the Student Services Coordinator and the Family Advocates of Head Start. Early Head Start (EHS) collaborates with Head Start, allowing SNAP-Ed's Drop-in Sessions and Family Fun Outings to take place at their site; because some families have children who belong to both EHS and Head Start, the EHS Director also participates in the meeting to plan topics which fulfill the educational needs of families of both schools.

For each fiscal year (2015 and 2016), Tamara taught a 30-minute lesson in each of the nine Head Start classrooms; each lesson consisted of a story book reading, a movement activity, and a vegetable tasting or hands-on activity. Teaching topics, curricula and titles for the two yearly lessons are noted:

FY15: Hand-washing - *Wash Your Hands, Make Lots of Bubbles*; Fruits and vegetables - *Sesame Street: Healthy Habits for Life*, "Eat a Rainbow of Fruits and Vegetables"

FY16: Family meal times - *Eat Smart*, "Eat Together"; Fruits and vegetables – *Eat Smart*, "Eat from the Garden"

Within FY15 and FY16, Tamara offered four daytime Drop-in Sessions for parents. Ten mothers participated in these sessions. Curricula and lessons used:

- *Loving Your Family Feeding Their Future*, "Family Meals = Easy, Tasty, and Healthy"
- *Eat Smart, Be Active*, "Eat Smart Be Active For Pregnancy", "Feeding New Baby", and "Feeding Baby Solids"

Tamara also led four evening Family Fun Outings. Four dads, and 24 moms attended these sessions in FY15 and FY16. Curricula and lessons used:

- *Money for Food*, "Good Foods to Have on Hand" and "Eating Away from Home"
- *Feeding for Healthy Eating*, "Eat Together" and "Cook Together"

Outcomes and Impact:

After participating in nutrition education activities, Head Start and Early Head Start parents reported their intentions in evaluations.

- ***eat healthy during pregnancy***
 - 100% (2/2) stated "positively yes!", they will use the information from the nutrition activity during their pregnancy.
 - "I will keep me and my baby healthy by trying to eat more than one type of vegetable each day."
- ***make healthy and safe choices when feeding their infants***
 - 75% (3/4) stated "positively yes!", they will use the information from the nutrition activity with their child, and 25% (1/4) probably will.
 - I plan to "breastfeed up to a year", "wait until my child is sitting up in a high chair by himself before introducing solids", "never put bottle in microwave", and "make sure to give my baby breaks while feeding baby the bottle".
 - I will feed baby healthy foods like, "rice cereal and vegetables", "pureed fruits and veggies", and "salmon and cheese".
 - I will keep baby's food safe by "having a jar of baby food in refrigerator up to 3 days", and "keeping the kitchen very clean".
- ***eat together at mealtimes***
 - 100% (7/7) were able to write down three meals that they would share as a family within the next week.
 - 80% (6/7) stated they would remake the recipe used in the food demonstration activity in their own homes.

- **cook healthy meals as a family**
 - 70% (7/10) of families planned to make a healthy meal together as a family in the week following the nutrition activity.
 - 86% (6/7) stated “positively yes!”, they will cook together as a family, and 14% (1/7) probably will.

- **save money on food at and away from home**
 - 100% (6/6) of the moms at the “Eating Away from Home” session heard at least one new way to eat away from home once in a while without spending too much, and that using the ideas they learned would save between \$5 and \$10 a week.
 - An Early Head Start home visitor for Spanish-speaking families shared with Tamara that the Hispanic mothers especially appreciated the program because it helped them better understand the American food system.

- **keep “go-to” meals on hand so that their family does not run out of food**
 - 100% (5/5) of the parents at the “Good Meals to Have on Hand” session wrote down a meal (and ingredients needed) to keep on hand when other food is not available.
 - “I’ll try to have more go-to meals, also make more easy meals yet healthy and filling.”

With parents choosing and modeling healthy eating behaviors, SNAP-Ed programs being provided, and teachers reinforcing content, the end-of-the-school-year parent/caregiver evaluations revealed that Head Start preschoolers are:

- **practicing proper and safe hand washing practices** (FY15)
 - 68% (15/22) are more willing to wash hands; 55% (12/22) are washing their hands for 20 seconds; 50% (11/22) are washing hands without being reminded; and 59% (13/22) are reminding others to wash their hands. (A U.S. FDA report reveals that these behavior changes may prevent or reduce the spread of illness, and may result in fewer missed school days.)

- **eating more fruits and vegetables** (FY15)
 - 57% (8/14) are eating more fruit; and 50% (7/14) are eating more vegetables.
 - My child is now “very open to trying new foods.”
 - My child “has been eating more carrots than ever before—very proud and happy about this.”

In the same weeks that Tamara taught preschool classroom lessons, Family Newsletters were sent home with students to support the teaching topics. The newsletters encouraged families to support the messages which had been taught by Tamara and reinforced by the Head Start teachers; parents were also alerted of upcoming SNAP-Ed events. The total Indirect Educational Contacts made in the two fiscal years were 500 in the English language, 62 in the Spanish language.

Tamara met one-to-one with a mom after a referral was made from a Family Advocate. The mom had been struggling to create routines for her children, including family meals. Tamara provided the *Money for Food* “Planning Meals” lesson with the mom, a FoodShare recipient. As a result of the session, the participant stated she intends to spend more time meal planning for her family.

The successes of Head Start—SNAP-Ed partnership have been documented and shared in a number of ways.

- An in-person testament was provided in November 2014 by a Head Start Family Advocate to the UW-Extension Civil Rights Review Committee.

- Since 2000, Renee, Tamara, and other Nutrition Educators have contributed 62 articles and mentions of Head Start in the office's monthly newsletter publications. Newsletter recipients include County Board Supervisors, Elected Officials, partner agencies, UW-Extension colleagues, and the general public (223 recipients are on the e-mail list for the electronic monthly newsletter). A Washington County UW-Extension web page always contains a year's worth of the monthly newsletters, as well as three years of SNAP-Ed Annual Reports.
- The following excerpt from the Dec. 2011 Washington County UW-Extension monthly newsletter is a specific example which highlights the success of the Head Start—SNAP-Ed partnership:

A report released by the American Heart Association revealed that preschool-based education helped to prevent early trends toward obesity and instilled healthy eating habits in low income, multi-ethnic 2- to 5-year olds. WNEP has made thousands of such contacts to Washington County preschoolers and families with a focus on age-appropriate topics—increased exposure to different foods, eating a variety of foods, and daily physical activity. Head Start teachers incorporate WNEP program content into their lessons, and role model good nutritional habits during mealtimes and snacks. Families receive WNEP newsletters on nutrition, and are invited to attend the WNEP family lessons. In the 9/16/2011 edition of the Daily News, a West Bend mother, who currently has a daughter enrolled in Head Start, shared an anecdote about her son. Two years prior he had attended Head Start and said one day that “he wasn’t going to eat candy anymore because it wasn’t a ‘healthy choice.’” The mother remarked that school programs help because “that is what I am teaching at home. Suddenly I am not a mean mommy anymore... eating healthy (is) important.” Through two approaches (classroom education and family-based programs), families learn how to take small steps. Says one health official, the health benefits derived are “real, measured and cost-effective.”

Creating Access to Underserved Audiences:

Knowing that childcare and transportation are common barriers for Head Start parents and caregivers to attend educational programs, Family Advocates arrange for volunteers to provide childcare, and for taxis to convey the families. When appropriate materials were available, Tamara provided the volunteer childcare providers with educational supplies to conduct mini-lessons and activities for youth, thus mirroring the SNAP-Ed topics of the adult sessions.

Renee attended Head Start Back-to-School event in the fall of 2015 with a promotional flyer that Tamara created which explained the partnership between SNAP-Ed and Head Start, described the preschool nutrition lessons, and promoted the parent/caregiver sessions for the school year. Tamara also created promotional flyers for each parent session. Head Start colleagues translated these promotional materials into Spanish, sent them home in the appropriate language to the families, and registered families for the events.

A number of Head Start families reside in the Arbor Trace Apartments complex which provides limited income housing (West Bend). SNAP-Ed has made educational outreach via newsletters to promote its programs at the Family Center of Washington County and at the complex's community room. The SNAP-Ed sessions held in the community room have been jointly sponsored: 1) family programs were co-sponsored with the West Bend School District, and 2) youth sessions were backed by the West Bend Rec Department and the School District Food Service Department to support the Summer Food Service Program, which runs in tandem with the city Parks Program.

SNAP-Ed collects data on the gender, ethnicity, and race of its learners. Head Start is an ideal setting in which to access underserved audiences. Tamara used the Head Start demographic report to analyze attendance at the first of two teaching events. Of the 124 children who attended, the ethnic/racial breakdown for those

attending was 23% Hispanic, 16% Multi-racial, 3% African American, and 2% Native American; the percentages for those four categories exceeded the percentages of county residents in the same categories, according to the 2010 U.S. Census data.

Relationships and Capacity Building:

The SNAP-Ed Program is one of multiple supports in the community which encourages Head Start families to make the healthy choice, the easy choice. SNAP-Ed offers its programs in settings where its target audiences eat, live, learn, work, shop and play.

Programs provided by the Family Living Educator Carol Bralich include *Money Smart for Head Start*, *Wisconsin Bookworms™*, and *Raising a Thinking Child*. Carol has also promoted the *Parenting the Preschooler* newsletters.

Carol and Renee share a position on the Head Start Policy Council. A photo of the group holding a Head Start banner was posted on the school's Facebook page; Renee will attempt to use their social media presence in the future to promote SNAP-Ed Programs and the events of other partners which may be of interest to Head Start families. A new Food Service Director for the West Bend School District was hired in 2015, joined the Policy Council, and plans to implement more from the Smarter Lunchrooms Initiative; she, Carol, and Renee all participate in the Well Washington County Coalition.

Head Start, Early Head Start, WIC, West Bend City Rec Department, and SNAP-Ed all refer clientele with needs or interests to each others' programs.

Scholarship and Learning:

As a result of the Head Start—SNAP-Ed Partnership, parents, caregivers, and preschoolers are making healthier lifestyle choices. One criteria of Scholarship is that the programs are "valued by those for whom it was intended"; the value of SNAP-Ed's programmatic efforts are evident from the evaluation results and the quotes shared in the "Outcomes and Impact" Section. The inclusion of Family Living and SNAP-Ed in the Head Start Policy Council is also proof of its value to Head Start.