IMPACT

University of Idaho Cooperative Extension System

Cooperative Extension System, District IV EFNEP, Pocatello, ID

Reducing food costs from $1000 per month to $400 per month

The Situation

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) assists low-income families to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and changed behavior necessary for nutritionally sound diets. EFNEP also works with families to help them provide the food they need as economically as possible.

Our Response

Linda joined EFNEP as a referral from the Head Start Program. Initially Linda expressed interest in the program because she didn't know how to cook or how to follow a simple recipe. She is Native American and had years of commodity food stored in closets and pantries throughout her house. She and her family ate out at almost every meal and ate a lot of cold cereal. Their food bill was $1000 a month. She made a $1000 a month in wages, so every penny she made went for food. The whole family has a weight problem and her husband has high blood pressure.

The first thing Linda learned was how to plan meals a week in advance. The EFNEP Nutrition Advisor went through her cupboards with her and took inventory of the food she had. She was given some simple EFNEP recipes, with six ingredients or less, and was given the basic cooking lesson along with some other cooking techniques. Next they incorporated recipes that were for commodity foods so she could use up her store of canned salmon, flour, cornmeal, canned pork, and beans. The Nutrition Advisor tried to cook with her every week and talk to her about the importance of eating well balanced, low fat foods.

Achievements

Linda has reduced her food bill to $400 a month and they only eat out about twice a month. Her husband takes his own lunch to work and both Linda and her husband say they feel a lot healthier.

The Future

EFNEP will continue to provide as much one-to-one teaching as funds permit, so clients can have these types of successes.

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For More Information:

Audrey Liddil
State EFNEP Coordinator
University of Idaho
130 N. 6th Avenue
Pocatello, ID 83205-4228
Voice Phone: 208-236-7318
Fax: 208-236-7316
E-mail: efnepiv@uidaho.edu

Wayne Sharp
Extension Educator Fort Hall
University of Idaho
P.O. Box 306, Pima Dr. Bldg. #7
Fort Hall, ID 83203-0366
Voice phone: 208-238-3777
Fax: 208-238-8018

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IMPACT

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Cooperative Extension System, District IV EFNEP, Pocatello, ID

Teaching Health and Welfare TAFI Recipients Money Management

The Situation

The Welfare Reform legislation became effective October 1, 1997 in Idaho. At that time welfare recipients had 2 years maximum they could stay on the welfare rolls. The goal of all agencies in Idaho working with welfare families was to get them self sufficient so they could get work and manage what resources they have in order to not need welfare assistance.

Our Response

University of Idaho Cooperative Extension let Health and Welfare know about programs that we have available that could help families achieve the goal of leaving welfare. A new curriculum was developed called "Balancing Work and Family" that has 3 sections. The sections are on managing food, managing money, and managing family life. The Pocatello office of Job Service, working with welfare recipients, wanted Extension to teach classes on money management. We started teaching the 3rd week of each month for 1 hour and 15 minutes for each class. This started in February 1998 and is still continuing. Approximately 113 people have participated so far in this program.

Achievements

By the time the week was over and evaluations were taken, every person who had been in the class learned something new that would help them manage their money more efficiently. Some specific successes included a lady who found out about the Earned Income Credit because of this class and got over $1000 when she applied. Another item that was repeatedly expressed as useful was how to get a personal credit report from the reporting agencies. Other ideas that the participants found useful included using the envelope method to manage money, re-establishing credit, information on Consumer Credit Counseling, organizing important papers, tracking spending, Earned Income Credit, and determining needs and wants. Because of these lessons several participants in each class requested to take the Extension Nutrition Education lessons. This will give us an opportunity to work one-on-one with these families for a longer period of time.

The Future

Extension will continue to work with Health and Welfare and Idaho Job Service to teach welfare recipients how to balance work and family so

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they can do better when they leave the welfare program.

For More Information

Audrey Liddil
Extension Educator EFNEP
University of Idaho
130 N. 6th Avenue
Pocatello, ID 83205-4228
Voice phone: 208-236-7318
Fax: 208-236-7316
E-mail: efnep@uidaho.edu

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IMPACT

University of Idaho Cooperative Extension System

Bannock County EFNEP P.O. Box 4228 Pocatello, ID

Combined Families Benefit From EFNEP

The Situation

Because of financial hardship and health issues, two families moved in together in one apartment to help each other. Between them they have three boys, one who is autistic. One of the mothers is diabetic and was having problems controlling her blood sugar level.

Our Response

One of the mothers was involved with WIC and had an EFNEP lesson and learned about the University of Idaho nutrition programs at WIC. She signed on to take lessons and then her diabetic roommate decided she wanted to take the lessons as well. We began teaching them as a group and helping them plan menus that were appropriate for a diabetic and the likes and dislikes of the two distinctive families. One of the mothers had many questions that the EFNEP Nutrition Advisor could not answer concerning her health. The nutrition advisor felt that she needed to see a doctor because she had pain in her joints and tendons.

Achievements

She went to the doctor and was diagnosed with a rare genetic disease that could affect her children as well. The only treatment for the disease at this time is a good diet and physical therapy. The families are even more careful about planning healthy meals and the result has been that they are all feeling better. The diabetic mother is controlling her blood sugar better and one of the dads said he has never felt so good. The autistic child began showing interest in the nutrition lessons that pleasantly surprised his parents. The doctor that is caring for them is pleased with their progress and can really see a difference in their lifestyle changes.

The Future

As nutrition advisors meet with families in their homes to teach the EFNEP lessons, they find each family has different needs. This requires that we emphasis different lessons depending on the needs of the families we teach. We have many success stories as we work with Idaho families. We hope that EFNEP will continue to be funded so we can positively affect the lives of those we reach.

For More Information

Audrey Liddil
EFNEP State Coordinator
University of Idaho
Cooperative Extension System
130 N.6th
Pocatello, Idaho 83201-4228
Phone: 208-236-7318
Fax: 208-236-7316
aliddil@uidaho.edu

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College of Agriculture

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