



NJ AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
RUTGERS
COOPERATIVE RESEARCH & EXTENSION

Presented to: NASULGC Food and Society Meeting,
July 19-20, 2005



Motivating Behavior Change Through Community-focused Education

*NJ Children's Health
Summit – Fighting Back
Against Childhood
Obesity*



THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
RUTGERS
COOK COLLEGE

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
RUTGERS

Presented by: Marilou Rochford, MA, CFLE
Associate Professor, Family and Community Health Sciences Educator
Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension, Rutgers University

Who we are



- **Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension**
- **Outreach component of Cook College, Rutgers University and the NJ Agricultural Experiment Station**
- **Family and Community Health Sciences (new name/focus in 2004)**

Why we focused on childhood obesity



- **FCHS is responsible for providing research based education in nutrition and human development**
- **Working in human development, we learned that community needed education on obesity – both on the prevalence the consequences and the solutions**
- **Conducted needs assessment with community partners**

Responded quickly to community needs

- **Created pilot program with the goal of raising awareness, addressing the problem and beginning to effect solutions**
- **Educated professionals in key organizations - those with front line responsibility for children and their welfare (teachers, counselors, social workers, school nurses, food service directors, club leaders)**
- **Included parents, though not the primary target**

Pilot program background

Children's Health Summit



Building Healthy Kids

- **Held in Dec. 2003 in Cape May County**
- **Provided latest research on causes, consequences**
- **Addressed local concerns**
- **Funded by HSAC and RCRE**
- **Involved state and local partners**
- **More than 90 attended**

Children's Health Summit Model



Pilot's success led to development of a model for further outreach

Model components: workshops, exhibits, working lunch and built-in networking opportunities

Workshop topics: Causes and consequences of obesity in children, Staying healthy in a super-sized world, Helping families cope with the emotional impact of obesity, Health and student achievement, Increasing activity for children

Working lunch spotlights local professionals and resources that stay in place in the community after the conference has concluded

Children's Health Summit Framework

Children's Health Summit: Fighting Back Against Childhood Obesity

Building Healthy Kids Coalitions

Cape May

Atlantic

Union

Passaic

Cumberland

Steppin' Out
Walking Project

Children's Health Summits Statewide Implementation

OUR GOAL - Provide focused, targeted, community-centered education consistently across the state and collect statewide data

Created a conference planner with step-by-step instructions and appendices with all sample documents

Planner provides instructions for: budgeting, site selection, media relations, speaker and exhibitor selection and management, coalition building, sponsorship solicitation, on-site and follow-up event coordination.



Current program status

Children's Health Summit

- **Three regional conferences held in 2005, one additional planned for November**
- **More than 350 have attended**
- **Involved state and local partners**
- **Raised awareness, mobilized local partners to take action**



Pilot
Summit

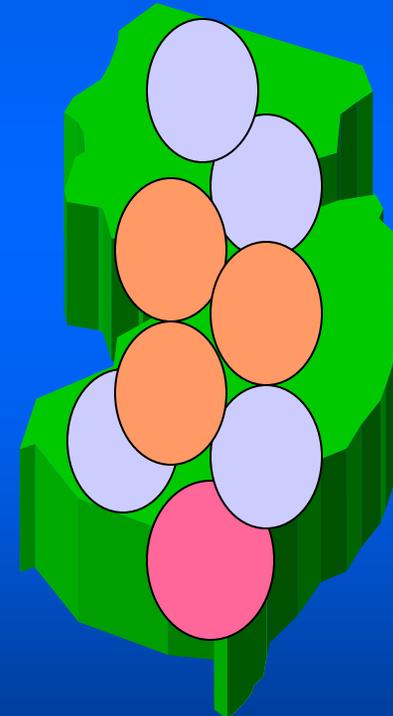


2005
Summits

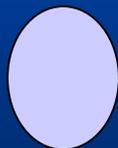
Future Plans

Children's Health Summit

- Additional Summits are planned for 2006
- By the end of 2006, will have reached professionals in all of the major population centers in NJ



Pilot
Summit



2005
Summits



Projected
Summits

Preliminary results from focus groups and evaluations

- **Key indicators: 92% better understanding of causes; 93% better understanding of physical and emotional consequences; 93% better understanding of portion sizes; 87% better understanding of benefits of physical activity**
- **Actions as a result of participation: 95% agreed to share information with at least one other person; 85% will encourage children to eat a nutritious diet; 83% will set a good example**
- **Areas for future intervention: 42% will urge clubs to serve healthy foods or have non-food fund raisers; 59% will refrain from using food as a reward or bribe**



Success Stories from Focus Groups

Participants' actions taken as a result of attending the conference

- **School food service director switched all bread to whole grain**
- **School initiated a Girls on the Run physical activity program for girls age 10-13, a group at high risk for inactivity**
- **Three schools implemented walking clubs for students and staff**
- **School changed reward structure for students to receive non-food rewards**



What we have learned...

Everyone has a piece of the many solutions. Partnerships at the local level have helped to change the conversation and to change behavior

Combining talents, training professionals and giving them tools helps to disseminate a clear and consistent message

There is a great need for a focus on the emotional as well as physical effects of obesity



Challenges and Barriers

For educating professionals:

Limited staff

Dwindling budgets

Competing messages

Uncoordinated efforts



For changing behavior:

Lack of food preparation skills

Adapting to current lifestyles

What higher education needs to know...

Cooperative Extension (FCHS & 4H) is the perfect vehicle to teach professionals and reach families

Next generation needs to see the larger picture (multi-disciplinary education, practical applications)

Program success depends on a coordinated effort, a consistent message and committed resources





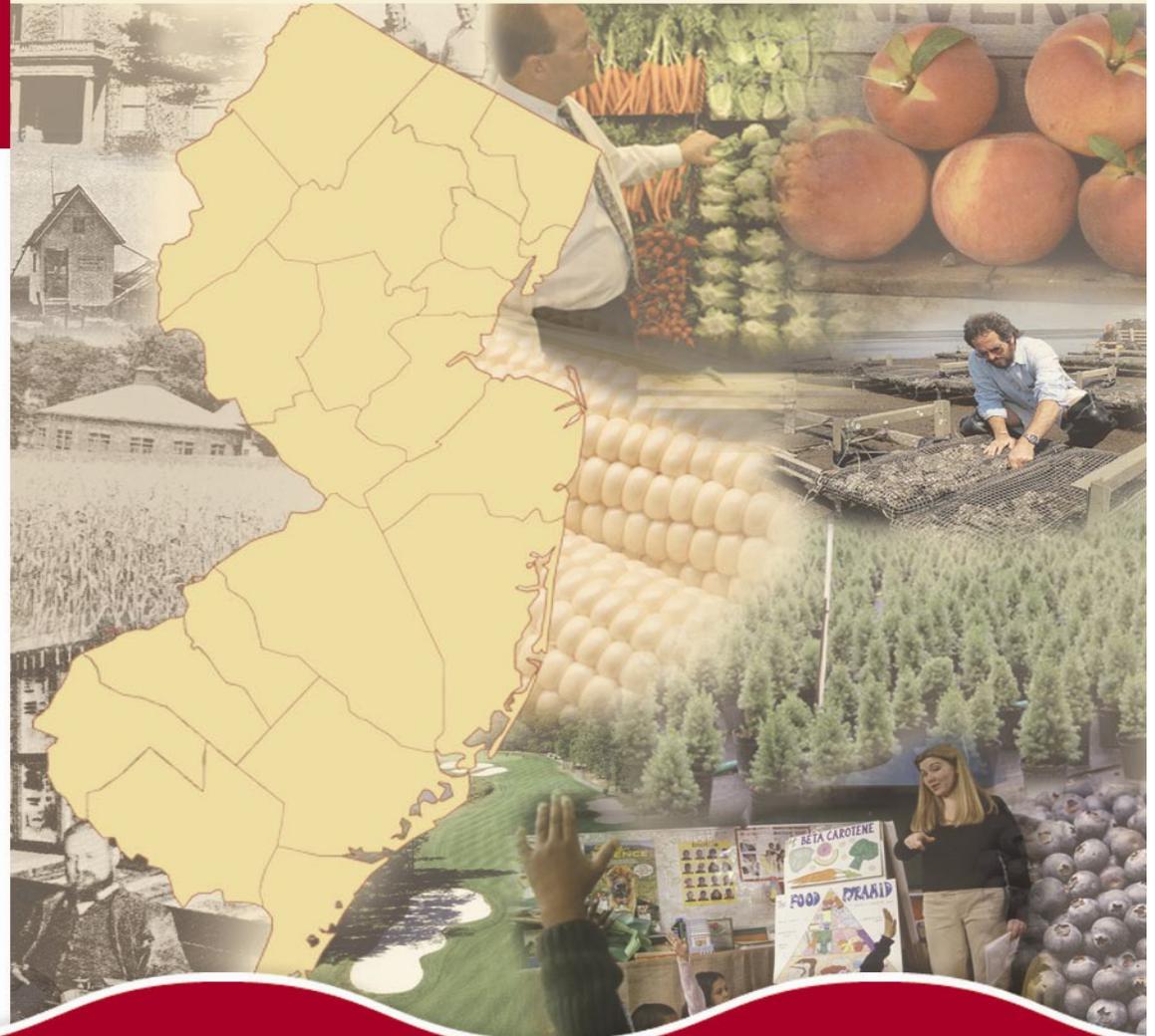
NJ AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
RUTGERS
COOPERATIVE RESEARCH & EXTENSION

Questions or comments?

Contact Information:

**Marilou Rochford, MA,
CFLE, Family &
Community Health
Sciences Educator, RCRE
of Cape May County,**

**4 Moore Road, Cape May
Court House, NJ 08210
(609) 465-5115, ext. 609
rochford@aesop.rutgers.edu**



THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
RUTGERS
COOK COLLEGE

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
RUTGERS