

Reporting Institution:

The University of Tennessee

Program Highlights of Current Year:

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program

In 2009, The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) marked its 40th anniversary. Since its inception in 1969, more than 320,000 low-income families, with over one million family members, and 572,000 low-income youth have received nutrition education through Extension's Family and Consumer Sciences department. Skills learned through this program have resulted in improved diets for over 90 percent of families. Cost-benefit analyses have estimated that these improvements could save \$10.46 in health care costs per dollar spent to implement EFNEP. These improvements in diet are made through more effective use of resources. A cost-benefit analysis of food expenditures estimated that participants saved \$2.48 for every dollar spent to implement EFNEP, which could reduce the need for emergency food assistance and save money for other necessities. The benefits of EFNEP based on potential prevention of diet-related chronic diseases and more effective use of resources make it a wise investment both in 1969 and today.

Center for Parenting

UT Extension Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Department and the Department of Child and Family Studies (CFS) at the University of Tennessee are collaborating to operate a Center for Parenting (C4P) targeting parent educators across the state. The center was formed as a result of two research projects about parent education in the state of Tennessee that pointed to the need for a centralized resource for parent educators. The mission of the Center for Parenting is to strengthen parent-child relationships by coordinating and enriching existing parent education efforts in Tennessee. Dr. Denise Brandon, Professor, FCS, and Dr. Heidi Stolz, Assistant Professor, CFS, serve as co-directors for the center. The C4P hosts a website (www.center4parenting.org) designed to serve as a centralized information source for parent educators and their clients. Features include a parent educator database, class calendar, research-based parenting tip sheets, training opportunities for parent educators, a curriculum database, and book lists for parents and professionals. Nearly 1500 unique individuals representing 39 states and 27 countries or territories accessed the website during the first two years of operation. Other outreach efforts include quarterly e-newsletters that are sent to 201 parent educators and other professionals and parent education conferences that are held in different regions of the state. Providing research opportunities for students in CFS is another goal of the C4P. Thus far C4P staff and students have made 5 national presentations and 17 state, regional, or local presentations about the center and its research. One journal article has been published and another is under review with a third in development. The Center for Parenting will be conducting an evaluation of a parent education program for teen parents in Knox County and has received funding to evaluate a state-wide Parent Leadership Program for Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee starting in 2009.

UT Extension Physical Activity Programs

Routine physical activity is important, protective health benefits. Yet many Tennesseans avoid physical activity due to a variety of health reasons such as busy lifestyles, hate to exercise, lack of motivation, or cannot afford a gym membership. To help Tennesseans overcome such barriers, UT Extension offers fun, inexpensive and easy to learn exercise programs including Tai Chi, Walking Across Tennessee, Master Your Body and Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program.

UT Center for Community Healthy Literacy

The **University of Tennessee (UT) Center for Community Health Literacy** is a partnership between the UT College of Pharmacy and UT Extension. This unique collaborative model was established in 1999 and was the first formal partnership between these two university units to be established in the country. The Center addresses health literacy in four focus areas: medications, poison prevention, worksite health literacy and immunizations. Partners include the National Council on Patient Information and Education, Tennessee Poison Center of Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Tennessee Pharmacists Association, Merck & Co. Inc. and community pharmacists. The Center also provides technical assistance in disease prevention and self-management. Programs developed by the Center include: **Be MedWise TN, Be Poison Safe TN, It's Fall, Get the Flu Shot Not the Flu, Navigating Your Healthcare System.**

Arthritis Tennessee Education Program Partnership

Tennessee received a four-year grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help people with arthritis self-manage their disease. From 40 state proposals, Tennessee was one of 12 states awarded this funding. In partnership with the Tennessee Department of Health's Arthritis Program and the Tennessee Chapter of the Arthritis Foundation, UT Extension's Arthritis Education Program educates people in arthritis self-care such as exercise, pain management and coping strategies. Thirty-seven county UT Extension educators are certified by the Arthritis Foundation to teach the Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program and Arthritis Self-Help Program to residents in their counties. These evidence-based programs have been shown to reduce pain, depression and immobility due to arthritis. Funders recognized that UT Extension programs are a solid investment in people and solutions. Tennesseans with arthritis will be the big winners with this \$1.8 million grant award to provide programs to address their unique educational needs. In 2008-09, these two programs reached 2,500 persons with arthritis.

Family Economics

"Financial Triage to Transition" is the slogan for The University of Tennessee Extension Family Economics response to families facing loss of job, income or home related to the current economic crisis. Anticipating the crisis more than two years ago, Family Economics Specialists began preparing educational material on managing credit during a financial crisis, turning personal resources into money to get by and identifying and gaining access to government and community assistance programs. Specialists trained agents to "triage" families in crisis by helping them assess their personal resources, set priorities and deal pro-actively with the crisis at hand. A recent survey of agents across Tennessee indicates that they have worked in partnership with 115 agencies and organizations across the state to mobilize local responses to hundreds of families impacted by the financial crisis. Family Economics specialists continue to provide economic updates and assistance to Extension personnel and other groups across Tennessee who help individuals and households adjust to the new economic realities they face.

Tennessee Nutrition and Consumer Education Program

In FY 2008, the Tennessee Nutrition and Consumer Education Program provided 20,810 nutrition education sessions to families and individuals participating in the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). These sessions provided over 443,000 contacts with SNAP recipients and eligibles and taught participants to effectively use their SNAP benefits and related resources to promote healthy eating habits. The success of the program is strengthened with our partnerships with community coalitions in 92 counties, involving over 1,650 local partners. Impact data indicate that program participants are improving their choices of healthy foods and physically active lifestyles. The estimated economic impact of the TNCEP program in FY 2008 was a benefit of \$66 million in reduced long-term healthcare costs for \$6.2 million spent.

Programs to Fight Obesity in Tennessee

Tennessee is the third fattest state in the country (30.1% obese), according to 2008 estimates of Centers for Disease Control and it ranks 47th in physical activity (40.1% inactive). This translates into high rates of other co-morbid conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, arthritis, some types of cancer, and dementia. The Family and Consumer Sciences Department is addressing this problem by developing and implementing programs to combat obesity at different ages in the lifecycle.

- **Healthy Steps – 4 and 5 year olds.** This is a train-the-trainer program for preschool teachers that focus on food and physical activity.

- **Power U – 4th grade.** Power U teaches fourth graders decision-making skills for healthy eating and daily physical activity. It stresses the impact of healthy choices on performance in school and sports and on preventing excessive weight gain. This program is implemented in more than 56 Tennessee Counties.

- **Media Smart Youth- adolescents.** Youth today encounter more than 40,000 advertisements a year. The majority of these advertisements are for food, primarily for cereal, candy, and fast food. Media Smart is an after-school program that teaches young people the skills needed to understand and critically evaluate media messages.

- **BodyWorks – adolescent girls and their mothers or caregiver -** BodyWorks stresses conversation between mother and daughter around making healthy food choices. Mothers and daughters learn skills needed for healthy lifestyle choices.

- **Power of Choice – adolescents.** This program helps young adolescents understand how their decisions about eating and physical activity affect their health now and for years to come.

- **Tennessee Shapes Up- weight management for adults.** This program consists of a series of lessons to help participants develop the skills needed for healthy living. Participants learn how to control their weight and reduce their risk for chronic diseases.

- **eWellness – adults.** eWellness is a web-based program that promotes a few healthy lifestyle behaviors that are the foundation for good health. Participants engage in diet and physical activity behaviors by learning how to make healthy habits that fit into their daily routine as well as their cultural preferences. The program was developed to be positive and provide support, accountability and rewards for accomplishing healthy living goals. The program consists of short-term (eight-week) phases so that awards and recognition could be provided frequently. But healthy living is a lifetime effort; so, soon after a phase ends and recognition of teams has occurred, a new phase soon starts and the cycle is repeated.

- **Working and Eating Well – adult.** This is a program designed to help busy families manage time and food resources in order to get healthy meals on the table in 30 minutes or less. The lesson teaches families how to plan, compare foods for best buy, stock the pantry for quick-and-easy meals, and engage the entire family in meal preparation.

Personnel and Budget Update:

Personnel:

Personnel Update: The TNCEP team welcomed Dr. Karen Franck, Evaluation Specialist in October 2008 and Ms. Laura Bossaer, Evaluation Extension Assistant, in June 2009.

Searches for four key leadership positions are currently underway. These include Assistant Dean for Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Resource Development; Assistant Dean for 4-H/Youth Development; Regional Director, Western Region; and Regional Program Leader, Family and Consumer Sciences, Central Region. Nominations of qualified individuals are encouraged, and a diverse pool of candidates is expected. Position announcements and application information is available at <http://ext1.ag.utk.edu/Employment/Jobs.nsf/Web%2FDefault?ReadForm>.

Budget:

UT Extension FY10 budget reflects a decrease in state funds, but an offsetting increase in ARRA and MOE funds resulting in a total budget that is approximately equal to FY09. A total of 40 individuals have participated in a retirement program, many of whom will be rehired in half-time term appointments of 11 months. ARRA and MOE funds will be used to pay these term salaries. New programs and program enhancements will also be considered for funding using these funds. Our FY12 state funding is currently budgeted for a \$2.6 million reduction. This reduction is only possible through elimination of the 40 positions vacated through retirements, and will require a new staffing plan if the economy (and our budget) does not improve over the next 18 month.

New or Unique Collaborations and/or Funding Sources:

TNCEP was one of two national recipients of research funding from the Land Grant Universities SNAP-Ed Programs. The purpose of the funding is to demonstrate methods for improving SNAP-Ed programs and evaluations. The title of the TNCEP project is “Comparative evaluation of interactive, facilitated discussion and indirect nutrition education methods for SNAP-Ed Clients.” For the project, FCS County Extension agents in selected sites across the state are teaching the USDA curriculum “Loving Your Family, Feeding their Future” using one of the three different education methods. The TNCEP Evaluation team will compare short-term and intermediate term nutrition behavior outcomes in order to determine effectiveness of nutrition education methods. The knowledge gained from the research will lead towards improved teaching and evaluation methods to better document the impact of the SNAP-Ed program.

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