



# Extension’s educational programs help families live well

## INTRODUCTION

University of Minnesota Extension Family and Consumer Science educators develop local and statewide programs to help families and communities live well. Programs target food and nutrition, healthy lifestyles, family life, food safety, financial management and healthy homes.

## HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Providing healthier food options with dignity and respect at food shelves is a priority for Extension nutrition educators, Kelly Kunkel (Mankato), Megan Hruby (Crookston) and Anna Snelties (St. Cloud). Through training, technical support and changing the food environment, food shelves in 27 counties across Minnesota serve their clients in new and innovative ways.



SNAP-Ed Educators, like Donna Anderson (Park Rapids) provide colorful tastings monthly to 3<sup>rd</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup> graders in 50 Minnesota schools. After participating in the **Go Wild with Fruits and Veggies!** program, students increased their daily fruit intake by 1/3 cup.

Health and nutrition educators, Mary Schroeder (Marshall) and Kelly Kunkel (Mankato) teach the **Start Strong: Cooking, Feeding, and More** curriculum to Minnesota child care providers. They learn food preparation skills, meal planning and alternative cooking techniques to create healthy food environments for children. After the training, 91 child care providers indicate greater confidence and ability to prepare healthy food for the 400 children they serve.



Extension Health & Nutrition educators trained as Certified Technical Assistance Providers (TAP) through the nationwide **Smarter Lunchrooms** program promote healthy food choices in schools using research-proven strategies. Kelly Kunkel (Mankato) and Mary Schroeder (Marshall) are part of a team. In 2019, they helped 35 schools across Minnesota change the cafeteria environment to help make the healthy choice the easy choice for students.

## HEALTHY HOME AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Family resiliency educators Lori Hendrickson (Grand Rapids) and Becky Hagen Jokela (Cloquet) developed and teach the train-the-trainer **RentWise** curriculum to human service professionals. After completing the training, 98% of participants (2017-2019) indicate they feel prepared to teach their clients to be successful renters.



## FINANCIAL PREPAREDNESS FOR DISASTER

Sara Croymans (Morris) and Lori Hendrickson (Grand Rapids), both Family Resiliency educators, developed a series of webinars, workshops and conferences to inform both professionals and consumers about **Financial Preparedness for Disasters**. Eighty-seven percent of the 1,074 participants strongly agreed or agreed they would apply what they learned in their preparedness efforts.

## FOOD SAFETY

Food safety educators, Kathy Brandt (Marshall) and Suzanne Driessen (St. Cloud), educate Minnesota cottage food producers through the **Cottage Food: Keep it Safe! Keep it Legal!** program. Participants implement safe food handling practices taught to reduce foodborne illness and food allergic reactions. In Minnesota, over 4000 registered cottage food producers are part of this growing homemade food industry.



**Serve It Up Safely™**, a continuing education online course for Minnesota certified food protection managers, is available online 24/7. Food safety educators Suzanne Driessen (St. Cloud) and Kathy Brandt (Marshall) updated the course in 2019 to reflect new food code changes and current best practices. Over half of the 1600 course participants indicate they will use the information from the course to train other food service employees.

## PROTECTING OUR RESOURCES – FAMILY LIFE

The national **Military Families Learning Network (MFLN) Family Transitions** program helped 516 military family service professionals gain knowledge and identify basic strategies for nurturing resilience in military children and parents in 2019. The series of 6 webinars, facilitated/co-facilitated by Extension Educators Sara Croymans (Morris) and Anita Harris Hering (St. Cloud), provide continuing education units for providers and has been accessed via archives an additional 1,128 times.

## IMPROVING CHILDREN'S LIVES

Children build connections between growing and eating fresh fruits and vegetables through hands-on gardening, science and nutrition education through the **Children's Garden in Residence** summer program. Anna Sneltjes (St. Cloud) SNAP-Educator and team collaborated with Master Gardeners, 4-H and youth-serving organizations sharing their expertise with 588 children across 17 Minnesota counties.



Head Start parents and children consume more fruits and vegetables and are more physically active thanks to a new Minnesota SNAP-Ed curriculum, **My Time to Eat Healthy & Move More**. The curriculum, developed in part by Associate Program Director Mary Caskey (St. Cloud), uses the home setting as a base for teaching parents and children together.



Health and Nutrition SNAP-Ed educators, including Megan Hruby (Crookston), provide an opportunity for children to spend \$2 on fresh produce at local farmers' markets through the **Power of Produce (PoP)** program. Implemented at 10 sites across the state, the program increased revenue for local growers, market attendance and support for healthy eating.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- University of Minnesota Extension. <http://www.extension.umn.edu/>
- National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences <http://www.neafcs.org/impact-statements>



## QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

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