



# 2021

## ANNUAL REPORT

EFNEP & TNCEP: SNAP-Ed

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES  
**UT**EXTENSION  
INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

[healthyfamilies.tennessee.edu](http://healthyfamilies.tennessee.edu)

# REAL. LIFE. SOLUTIONS.

## Director's update

It is an honor to share the work of the UT EFNEP & TNCEP: SNAP-Ed programs at the University of Tennessee in the Family & Consumer Sciences Department.

Cooperative Extension has the noble task of bringing the strengths of the academy into communities across the state. Our nutrition education programs developed specifically for low-income families are an exceptional part of that mission. Team members from the state office in Knoxville to the agents and program assistants in all 95 county offices work together to make healthier diets a reality for many Tennesseans.

The Tennessee Nutrition and Consumer Education Program (TNCEP) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) are direct education, social marketing and systems-level programs that work to inspire healthier diets and increase physical activity to prevent long-term health problems and improve quality of life. Of course, our programs include teaching about healthy diets and the benefits of eating more fruits and vegetables - but they deliver so much more. Our classes cover reading food labels, money-saving tips to stretch food dollars, food preparation and food safety. In addition to individual level

support, we work with community groups, including churches, food pantries, schools and retail stores, to offer healthier choices so that eating well is more attainable for everyone.

This report shows how in 2021 we continued to adapt our programs within the dynamics of a pandemic, as our team worked through nutrition education to tackle large social problems and introduce new foods to people. We developed and implemented curricula and engaged in new projects to make walking trails, community gardens and other successful initiatives a reality.

While food insecurity remains a major problem in our society, the TNCEP and EFNEP teams work hard to make a difference. When one child is less hungry, one family finds a few new healthy recipes or one senior finds a walking group, we consider our work a job well done. Join us as we improve health one person at a time with our Real. Life. Solutions.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ward, PhD, MPH  
Program director



# INSIDE THE REPORT



WEST TENNESSEE  
**Waverly Strong**  
PAGE 6



MIDDLE TENNESSEE  
**How does your garden grow?**  
PAGE 5



EAST TENNESSEE  
**Getting creative and gaining confidence**  
PAGE 7

# Healthy Families, Healthy Communities

EAT WELL, SAVE WELL, LIVE WELL



## A peek behind the scenes: The state team

Team members located in Knoxville, Nashville and Jackson provide vital support that makes fieldwork possible. Their impact includes:

- Fiscal management
- Compliance
- Content development
- Nutrition curricula
- Incentive item management
- Training
- Website management
- Market research
- Publication design
- Reporting
- Data oversight
- Staffing

In 2021, the state team expanded the Shop Smart Tennessee retail program that encourages food retailers to stock healthier items and provide recipes and shopping prompts to encourage healthy food consumption. Teen Cuisine, a curriculum geared toward middle schoolers, was implemented as a pilot to expand reach to older youth. One group developed a Global Cookbook to expand reach to refugee and immigrant communities across the state. The state team is tireless in its support of the fieldwork happening in each Tennessee county.

The University of Tennessee Extension Department of Family & Consumer Sciences (UT Extension FCS) offers both the Tennessee Nutrition and Consumer Education Program (TNCEP: SNAP-Ed) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).



EFNEP is a direct education program offering nutrition education to caregivers of children and school-age youth at risk for food insecurity. It is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).



Through TNCEP: SNAP-Ed, UT Extension FCS provides nutrition education and chronic disease prevention projects for persons eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). It is funded by the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the USDA.

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# A GARDEN OF HEALTHY CHOICES

*Diets high in fruits and vegetables lead to better health outcomes. Increasing fruit and vegetable consumption and increasing access to fresh produce are important parts of EFNEP and TNCEP programs.*



## TASTE OF SUCCESS

Sevier County TNCEP Program Assistant Meg Curtis worked with master gardener Dixie Seaton to present the Tasty Days program to first grade students at Northview Primary School. Tasty Days combines science and nutrition education to teach youth how fruit and vegetables are grown and gives them a chance to taste fresh produce.

## OVERCOMING BARRIERS

Davidson County TNCEP Agent Eboné Colclough provides nutrition education to clinic patients as part of the First Response Center Family Resource Services. The First Response Center, a partnership with Metropolitan Interdenominational Church and Meharry Medical College, addresses the impact and issues surrounding HIV/AIDS within the local African American community. The center provides a wide range of health services to those who are economically disadvantaged and marginalized.

In response to challenges presented by the tornadoes in 2020 and the ongoing pandemic, Eboné worked with local master gardeners and the center to

build a container garden to help address food insecurity issues. TNCEP provided supplies such as seeds, soil, and winter planters so center clients could grow their own food.

Although the produce was planted late in the season, the first harvest produced tomatoes, cucumbers, green beans, mustard greens, kale, Swiss chard, onions and carrots. All of the harvested food went to the center's clients who reported using TNCEP recipes to prepare salads and casseroles to eat more vegetables.

The clinic and nutrition education participants have enjoyed the fresh produce and are excited for the next growing season when they hope to expand to in-ground garden beds.



**“The purpose of the container garden was to give our participants a low-cost method of eating healthier. It also allowed participants to see they didn’t need a large yard to grow their own food.”**

*~Ebony T., First Response Community partner*

# BY the NUMBERS

# 13,597

Tennesseans received nutrition and physical activity education



## 49%

increased physical activity



## 37%

increased consumption of fruits



## 36%

increased consumption of vegetables



## HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

TNCEP Agent Leslyne Watkins combined forces with the Wilson County Civic League and Vine Branch Fellowship to engage the community in building a garden that provides free produce to local community members. The Wilson County Civic League community center provides programs and support services for local residents, and Leslyne knew that the center previously had a garden that needed to be restarted. Vine Branch Fellowship focuses on eating healthy for the prevention of chronic illnesses, such as childhood obesity and diabetes.

In the summer of 2021, TNCEP and the partners came together with the community to assemble the raised beds and plant the seeds. Leslyne worked to create a gardening club and taught nutrition education to youth and adults to help promote healthy recipes with all of the fresh vegetables that were harvested for community members.



## EXERCISE CREATES BETTER OUTCOMES

*Exercise builds muscle, loosens joints and gets the heart and lungs pumping. EFNEP and TNCEP educators offer programs to help Tennesseans from youth to seniors get physically active.*

### BAND OF EXPECTING MOTHERS

Debbie Strickland, Greene County EFNEP program assistant, teaches new and expectant mothers about the importance of being physically active. By introducing stretch bands, she helps attendees increase strength and flexibility. Debbie even assisted a woman with reduction of chronic back pain who later told her: **“Thank you for these exercises, they really help!”**

### WAVERLY STRONG

In August 2021, a catastrophic flood hit the town of Waverly. Debra attributes her survival to her faith and the strength she gained through the Stay Strong Stay Healthy classes taught by Denise Schaffer, Humphreys County Family & Consumer Sciences agent. As Debra was swept into the floodwaters, she clung to a floating pole until she was able to climb to higher ground. **“I want to say thank you for bringing Stay Strong Stay Healthy to the senior center. I feel that my involvement in the class helped me save my life during the flood,”** Debra shared.

**“I feel that my involvement in the class helped save my life during the flood.”**

### HELPING SENIORS THRIVE

Inspired by the monthly Eat Well Feel Well program, seniors at the Mount Carmel Senior Center in Hawkins County decided to start their own exercise group. When TNCEP Program Assistant Jackie Webb arrived to teach the next class, several participants shared comments from their doctors and physical therapists about their increased strength, flexibility and mobility. Many participants were more energized and amazed at the positive impacts of physical activity. Sue Jarrett, the center director, agrees: **“We work at our own pace and encourage each other.”**



## BY the NUMBERS



**\$64,904,701**

saved in long-term health care costs



**196**

physical Activity supports



**208**

nutrition supports implemented across state



**92%**

participants who improved food resource management skills



**17,723**

individuals reached with changes to physical activity and nutrition environments



# LOCAL COMMUNITY PARTNERS LEAD TO FOCUS ON RECOVERY

*Across the state, EFNEP and TNCEP teams work in diverse community settings to educate people about how healthy eating and being active can help fuel them to better health. Educators link like-minded organizations to coordinate expertise and resources.*

## GETTING CREATIVE AND GAINING CONFIDENCE

Rebecca Layman, Monroe County Extension Family & Consumer Sciences agent, led a series of Eating Smart at Home classes for women living at The House that Mercy Built, a residential recovery center. The women learned how to prepare healthy recipes. They were surprised at how they could add vegetables to different foods such as onions and carrots to hamburgers – and the Big Orange Burgers were a hit!

Using fresh produce from the garden, the women planned and cooked meals together using the new skills that they learned from Rebecca. Experienced cooks taught and mentored others and together the group found confidence and creativity in the kitchen.



**"I have never thought to add vegetables to my meals!"**

## HYDRATION FOR HEALTH

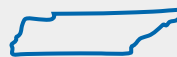
Amy Dever, Knox County EFNEP program assistant, has been teaching nutrition and physical activity classes at a medication-assisted treatment center for about six years. She emphasizes the importance of drinking water and staying hydrated. Travis thought drinking liters of soda each day could keep him hydrated as a roofer. After learning about the negative effects of drinking too many sugar-sweetened beverages, he began removing soda from his daily routine and instead used the money saved to buy bicycles for himself and his family. Now, he and his daughters ride their local greenway together.

## HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS ARE MORE THAN A SUGGESTION

In Davidson County, Sandra Bush, EFNEP program assistant, partnered with Meharry Medical College-Lloyd C. Elam Mental Health Center to help clients gain access to healthier food. During her nutrition classes, Sandra discovered clients were not offered healthy food options unless they had a chronic condition such as hypertension or diabetes.

Sandra encouraged the use of a suggestion box so clients could request certain fruits and vegetables to be added to the menu. She worked with the staff to offer everyone fresh fruit and vegetables at mealtimes and for snacks.

**BY the  
NUMBERS**



**511**

community sites served



**380**

local partnerships

# 2021 IN PHOTOS

1. Educator Tamara C. prepares to teach a class for older adults, including a recipe from the “Eat Smart, Move More: Eating Smart at Home” series, in Memphis.



2. Keys Kademy high school students make their own spaghetti sauce to go with whole wheat pasta in a class led by Perry County agent Jenny S.



3. Bianca J. and Eboné C., nutrition educators with TNCEP in Davidson County, peel back the layers of nutrition to reveal the true wealth in living a healthy lifestyle in the Banana Peelers podcast.



4. Bedford County educator Yesenia L. leads a bilingual class in Shelbyville.



5. Educator Charley G. teaches “Eat Smart” classes to Veterans at Operation Stand Down in Nashville, including how to prepare this super soul food bowl.



6. Educator Debbie S. in Greene County leads the “Teen Cuisine” program. Here, a teen prepares a healthy meal.



For references for data found in this report, please visit <https://healthyfamilies.tennessee.edu/>.

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Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences and resource development. University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating.

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