Overview of SNAP-Ed/WNEP Nutrition Education efforts in Washington County during FY13

Washington County SNAP-Ed/WNEP Educators made 1,352 direct educational contacts among 124 programs during the Fiscal Year 2013; the number of direct educational programs completed was impacted by SNAP-Ed staff vacancies in FY13. Statistical data revealed the audience make-up as follows: 346 (26%) parents of infants and children; 54 (4%) adults without children; 631 (47%) youth ages 4-5; and 321 (23%) youth age 6-11. Overall program participation was 768 (57%) female and 584 (43%) male. A composite of program participants by race shows the audience was 1,116 (83%) White; 160 (12%) Other; 58 (4%) Black/African American; 13 (1%); Asian/Asian American; and 5 (less than 1%) American Indian/Alaskan Native; no direct educational contact was made in the Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander racial group in FY13. The ethnic make-up of participants was 237 (18%) Hispanic and 1,115 (82%) Not Hispanic. According to the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau, the actual demographics for residents of Washington County are as follows. Gender: 50% female, 50% male. Race: 96% White; 1% Black; 1% Asian; 1% persons reporting two or more races; less than 1% American Indian and Alaska Native; less than 1% Native and Other Pacific Islander. Ethnicity: 11% Hispanic and 89% Not Hispanic. The number of direct educational contacts in FY13 was impacted by staffing vacancies.

Indirect educational contacts; 4,305 were made through newsletters—confirmed as a popular media from 3 learners surveys—with senior adults (65%) and parents of infants and children (35%).

Educational Programming by Educational Project

Washington County SNAP-Ed Nutrition Education Programming consisted of programming within the following Educational Projects during FY13:

- **After School/Summer Programs.** Teaching groups of children at after school, summer school, school or community gardens, Boys & Girls Clubs, etc. 321 educational contacts were made with school age children and youth through series of lessons at after school or summer school settings.

- **Preschoolers & Parents.** Teaching groups of Preschool children at HeadStart, pre-Kindergarten, Family Resource Center play groups, etc (along with related educational programming for their parents of the children being taught). 650 educational contacts were made with preschool age children at the West Bend School District Head Start Program and Early Head Start.

- **WIC Clinics.** Teaching learners at WIC. 135 educational contacts were made with learners at WIC.

- **Food Pantries.** Teaching at food pantries, commodity food sites, etc. 128 educational contacts were made with adults at Sts. Boniface and Gabriel Community Pantry.

- **Other Programs for Adults.** Teaching adults at adult education programs, ESL classes, sheltered housing, recovery programs, job centers, FoodShare offices, domestic violence shelters, groups of adults with developmental disabilities or chronic mental illness, etc. 101 educational contacts were made with adults at sheltered housing at Family Promise and Friends of Abused Families; Healthy Living Group of Washington County Human Services/Behavioral Health Division; ResCare Inc.’s Employment Training Workshop/Workforce Development Center; ELL Classes through Casa Guadalupe Education Center, Inc.

- **In Home/Individual or Family Lessons.** Teaching individuals or families in their homes or other locations.
11 educational contacts were made with adults at their homes and in the County Building which houses UW-Extension.

- **Other.** Direct educational programming for food stamp-eligible persons that does not fit in one of the categories.
  6 educational contacts were made with adults at an area grocery store for an educational tour led by staff of WIC and SNAP-Ed.

### Outcomes and Impacts

- **After School/Summer Programs.** Teaching groups of children and youth after school, summer school, school or community gardens, Boys & Girls Clubs, etc.

Children at the Hartford and West Bend Summer Playground Programs consume snacks and 1 or more meals daily when spending time at the parks. Therefore, the first SNAP-Ed lesson always focuses on cleanliness and food safety. Prior to the lesson, an informal assessment at 1 of the 4 parks revealed 29% of the 7 children knew how to properly wash hands; after instruction, 95% of the 33 evaluated at 4 parks did so correctly; many also adapted practices of cleaning reusable water bottles and storing food properly to avoid food borne illness and food waste. After another lesson on increasing produce intake, 69% of the learners tasted various fruits and vegetables. Of the 144 tasting trials made, 55 (38%) involved children tasting a fruit or vegetable for their first time, and 70 (49%) of the children planned to ask their families to serve the tasted fruit or vegetable at home.

- **Preschoolers & Parents.** Teaching groups of Preschool children at HeadStart, pre-Kindergarten, Family Resource Center play groups, etc along with related educational programming for their parents of the children being taught.

Classroom instruction to preschoolers and newsletters to families are mechanisms used by the Coordinator to draw parents and care-givers to SNAP-Ed educational programs. Adults of Head Start and Early Head Start families participated in a SNAP-Ed instructional program on fruits and vegetables. While adults received bilingual instruction, children watched an educational DVD and colored worksheets featuring fruits and vegetables. 100% of adults (10 of 10) learned that the nutritional content of different forms of produce—fresh, frozen, and canned—is nearly identical. All gained new knowledge about the recommended amount of produce each family member should consume daily, and all learned at least one new way to save money on produce purchases. At the end of the session, families reconvened; the adult learners tasted a variety of produce, modeling healthy eating habits. Children were eager to follow that lead, and some at the session tasted a vegetable or fruit new to them.

- **WIC Clinics.** Teaching learners at WIC.

Informal, pre-session assessments revealed only 1 of 27 WIC participants were aware of Vegetable Subgroups, a concept emphasized by MyPlate and the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The Coordinator used an instructional flipchart at two clinic sites to explain 1) that vegetables are categorized by their nutrient content, and 2) by eating a variety of vegetables (within the context of an overall healthy eating pattern) people reduce their risk of many chronic diseases—overweight/obesity, cancer, diabetes and heart disease. After instruction, 25 of 27 (93%) of learners identified the names of the 5 Vegetable Subgroups, and 26 of 27 reported they intend to try to eat more vegetables each day. Evaluations also revealed only 14 of 27 (52%) were able to identify the minimum amount of vegetables needed daily by people age 8 and older; WIC and SNAP-Ed will consider this finding when planning the content of future educational efforts.

- **In Home/Individual or Family Lessons.** Teaching individuals or families in their homes or other locations.
A mom called SNAP-Ed to find out ways to stretch money for food. Reportedly, her husband worked in a good-paying job after serving in the military, and the couple didn’t have to be judicious about spending. Dad was laid off due to the recession; when rehired in different industry, he made less money, and feeding a family of 5 became difficult. During the home visit, the Coordinator inquired about the routine for shopping, meal planning and eating. After participating in hands-on educational activities, the couple agreed to reduce food spending by planning for appropriate serving sizes of meat, poultry and fish; using dry beans as meat extenders; and including the recommended amount of produce and grains for a more balanced diet. At the 1-week and 3-month marks, the family was eating a more healthful diet, made possible with their checking unit prices, using more coupons, planning meals, and tracking spending.

Multi-Level Projects or Efforts
In the past, SNAP-Ed education was not provided in area pantries for several reasons. (1) The selection of partner agencies by SNAP-Ed was dependent upon the ability to obtain in-kind donations (which excluded federal and private funds) in order to financially support the project. (2) Concerns of area pantries that SNAP-Ed education would not fit into the small physical space. (3) Concerns of pantries about the interruption of flow to their operations.

Pantry volunteers and SNAP-Ed attended the Nutrition Subcommittee of the Healthy people Project of Washington County in 2012. Volunteers reported concerns that young families are not well skilled in some aspects of food preparation; as a result, donated produce is not as readily accepted by them.

Volunteers at two pantries agreed to further explore with SNAP-Ed the possibility of providing nutrition education to its clients. A survey conducted over two months at a Kewaskum food pantry revealed that pantry clientele had low interest in attending nutrition education programs, in spite of an array of options offered relating to topics and potential education delivery sites.

In Germantown, however, the pantry manager at the St. Boniface & St. Gabriel Community Pantry and the Director of Administrative Services at St. Boniface Church worked with SNAP-Ed to figure out the logistics of programming. More details can be found under the section entitled “Civil Rights Outreach Efforts.”

Success Story
Situation: Although fruits and vegetables contain nutrients to be healthy, fight disease, and maintain an ideal weight, most Americans do not eat enough produce. The same deficiency was apparent among the Human Services Department’s Healthy Living Group, whose members are affected by serious, continual mental illness and other medical challenges. The group facilitators—two Registered Nurses—and members took action: in 2012, they cultivated a vegetable plot in the nearby Community Gardens, coordinated by Extension’s Master Gardener Volunteers.

The RN facilitators noted several factors made many group members unable to reap benefits from the produce: fatigue (a common medication side-effect) and limited food preparation skills. The high outpatient caseload of the RNs did not allow them time to search for appropriate curriculum and to teach their group about using garden produce.

Response: At a 2011 meeting with the Family Living Team, the HSD Director and RNs identified a need for nutrition education within the HL Group. The WNEP Coordinator constructed an agreement; in 2012, adults visiting outpatient clinics were encouraged to attend SNAP-Ed’s hour-long sessions. 5 lessons of varied topics were presented, each with a segment on a “featured vegetable” from the
group’s garden plot. The group learned about nutritional value of vegetables and tasted recipes which could be easily replicated at home. At the series-end, learners received UWEX Guides on Using Wisconsin Produce. Pleased with the effectiveness of SNAP-Ed programs, the RN facilitators wholeheartedly renewed the agreement.

6 “Nutrition Mondays” were taught over the summer of 2013. The Educator recognized that adults with cognitive impairments often require easy-to-understand information, hands-on techniques, and repetition for effective learning. As a result, content from the 2012 lessons was reinforced; to captivate interest, new topics and learning activities were added.

**Results:** The 2013 series reached 19 separate learners, and the average class size was 8.

Learners were instructed on the proper techniques to check temperatures of their refrigerators, freezers and food; each took home a thermometer to reinforce lesson content. Subsequently, 80% of participants had correctly used their thermometers at home.

Post session evaluations revealed 50% of learners planned to start, or to more often, refrigerate take-out foods and perishable groceries promptly, within 2 hours; 75% reported an awareness of portion sizes for foods; 63% intended to use a bowl, plate, or snack bag instead of eating directly out of a large bag or package; and 63% planned to look at the number of servings in a container when deciding how much to eat.

After the program series:
- 83% participants reported that they always or often used the nutrition facts label to choose foods while shopping (compared to 44% in the beginning of the program).
- 67% reported that they always or often drank milk every day, compared to 50% in the series-start. Additionally, the purchase of high sugar drinks dropped from 89% to 50% by the series-end.
- 50% reported regularly eating fruits or vegetables as a snack, compared to 13% prior to the series.
- 67% reported that they would describe their diet as excellent or very good, compared to 22% at the series-start.

Feedback from an RN group facilitator: “Everyone was impressed with (the Educator’s) teaching ability; the booklet (lessons’ content + “tasted” food recipes) is above and beyond.”

As a result of the two series of lessons, HL group members gained more knowledge; they made behavior changes which lead to better health and nutrition in the long run.

**Evidence:** The Educator conducted a pre-assessment evaluation to obtain a realistic starting point for the learners, and provided the tool again at the series-end. Changes in learners’ attitudes, skills and behaviors were also tracked via oral evaluations, anecdotes, and observations.

**Civil Rights Outreach Efforts**
SNAP-Ed continued to provide lessons to the combined audiences of Head Start and Early Head Start Families; EHS has a proportionately high Hispanic enrollment; a Spanish language translator and Spanish language materials were utilized.
Three educational programs were initiated to Spanish-speaking adults in Hartford while their children attended a 4-H Summer Youth Reading Program. The adults had attended two semesters of the English Language Learners class sponsored by Casa Guadalupe Education Center Inc. Three sessions on family finance were provided to adults by the Family Living Educator and three sessions were provided by SNAP-Ed (with a hired translator). In FY14, education expanded to reach ELL adults and their children in Hartford and West Bend; adults in the group speak Spanish or Bosnian as their primary language.

The West Bend Recreation Department and West Bend School District partnered to offer the “Playground Program” and “Picnic Lunch” (Summer Food Service Program) for the first time to reach youth ages 6-11 at the Arbor Trace Apartments in West Bend, a subsidized housing complex. SNAP-Ed provided educational programs there, and at two city parks. Protected groups reached through this program effort included youth identified as Black/African American and the Other racial category. Notably, youth participating in lessons at the apartment complex were greater in number and more consistent in attendance than youth at city parks (well-established program locations). SNAP-Ed expanded its outreach in FY14 to connect with parents of children who participate in the Playground Programs of West Bend and Hartford.

This project provided direct education at a pantry for the first time in May. Hispanic/Latino, Black/African American, Asian/Asian American, and women clients have received education from WNEP. Clients at the St. Boniface and St. Gabriel Community Pantry in Germantown continue to receive SNAP-Ed programs in FY14.

Outreach efforts were also made to educate outpatients who use services at the Albrecht Free Clinic. Among those reached by WNEP through indirect education were outpatients from these protected groups: Hispanic/Latino, and women.

**Looking Forward**

About 1200 county residents are served by the Albrecht Free Clinic each quarter. The FY13 SNAP-Ed guidelines enabled SNAP-Ed to provide indirect education, and a partnership was formed. SNAP-Ed furnished an unattended display from July through September. The display was exhibited in a prominent location, provided basic instruction on label-reading, and featured interactive components. The clinic coordinator noted that the content was “right in line with what the Nurse Practitioner was trying to accomplish.” The display was a first-time effort to educate all patients in the waiting area; it helped the NP to gauge patient interest, and to support grant writing for similar educational efforts. Nurses and student interns used the display for direct education with patients on how to use the Nutrition Facts section of a food label. Even visiting, drug sales reps commented on the quality and usefulness of the display! Although direct education by SNAP-Ed at the clinic is not feasible in the near future, outreach efforts to acquaint clinic patients and others with SNAP-Ed Programs and the UW-Extension were successful.

The *Cooking Matters at the Grocery Store* tours, co-led by WIC and SNAP-Ed, continue to make a strong educational impact on learners who participate. Tours will continue to be offered based on participant interest (measured by tours being filled to capacity) and the ability of WIC and SNAP-Ed to commit time and resources.

The Coordinator would like to see more consistency in the programming of the Washington County Project with an area shelter, a substance abuse treatment program, and an alternative high school. Due
to staff turnover in two of these agencies and SNAP-Ed vacancies, the number of educational sessions completed was less than the number specified on the agreements.

With approval of the State Fiscal Office, the vacancy for the Nutrition Educator position will be filled in FY14. Refilling the position will enable SNAP-Ed to more effectively meet educational needs identified among its partner agencies. This project is making more purposeful efforts to educate adults (decision-makers) and to educate adolescents (youth who will soon age into adulthood and increased responsibilities). As a result, programming at the Juvenile Detention Center (through which the Washington Street School operates) will resume; programming will start at two new partner agencies, the Veterans Service Office and The Threshold Inc.