



Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

—*Family Nutrition Program 2003*

Putting Knowledge to Work for Georgia Families

The University of Georgia

Cooperative Extension Service

The Problem

- More than one million people in Georgia live at or below the poverty level (The Georgia County Guide 2003).
- According to Census 2000, the percentage of persons below poverty in Georgia (14.7%) is higher than the percentage of persons below poverty in the U.S. (13.3%).
- Poverty puts families at higher risk for malnutrition and disease.
- The Food Stamp Program through the United States Department of Agriculture provides food coupons for America's neediest people to prevent malnutrition, hunger and disease. According to Georgia DHR, 632,155 people received food stamps in Georgia in August 2002. The total value of food stamps issued in Georgia was \$578.4 million in 2002.
- According to the 2003 Georgia County Guide, heart disease was the main cause of deaths in Georgia accounting for 27.1% of the deaths in 2001.
- Providing food resources alone will not prevent malnutrition and disease.

Research-based Solutions

- Providing education and assistance in utilizing the food stamps for greatest benefit is the key to getting the greatest impact from the dollars spent for the food assistance program.

Extension's Role

- Through the Family Nutrition Program, funded and conducted in partnership with the Georgia Department of Human Resources State Food Stamp Nutrition Education Plan, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension provides comprehensive nutrition education to food stamp-eligible audiences in 145 Georgia counties.

Extension's Contribution to Solving the Problem

- Over 400 nutrition class series covering topics such as food safety, meal planning, healthy food choices, nutritious snacks, food budgeting, and healthy cooking techniques were held for the food stamp eligible clients.
- Over 248,550 hours of foods and nutrition education were provided to 83,054 Georgians in 2003. Almost 77% of the participants were low-income Georgians.
- Extension Agents delivered over 69 food and nutrition educational programs such as *Food Fun and Reading* program to young children.
- Extension Agents organized and facilitated *Food Buying* and *Meal Planning* nutrition extension programs for over 1100 Georgians in 2003.
- Media was a major strategy for Family Nutrition Program in Georgia. Food and nutrition education was provided through 109 TV presentations to over 2.5million people, more than 485 radio broadcasts to over 3.8million listeners, 403 newspaper articles to over 5million, and 14,211 health fairs and exhibits to 72,800 people. More than 2,620 newsletters reached over 403,000 people.

Impact on Georgians

- Over 93% of the Georgians who participated in the *Meal Planning Nutrition Education Program* said that it was helpful for them to learn healthy meal planning concepts and practices. The majority of the participants who completed the program said that they intend to adopt healthy meal planning and dietary practices. For example, 78% indicated that they make sure they eat at least five fruits and vegetables each day; 69% indicated that they plan to eat low-fat snacks and desserts; 64% indicated that they plan to eat at least two servings of low-fat dairy products each day; 63% said that they plan to include at least one new fruit or vegetable in their diet; and 62% said that they plan to eat chicken without skin.
- Nearly 96% of the participants who completed the *Food Buying Education Program* said it was helpful for them to learn how to buy nutritious foods with limited resources. Most of them said that they plan to apply learned food buying practices. For example, 79% said that they intend to use the Food Guide Pyramid in planning balanced meals; 61% said that they plan to use the unit price to compare products; and 56% said that they plan ahead for meals.
- Almost 58% of the participants who completed food safety extension programs improved their food handling and sanitary knowledge. The majority of them said that they plan to apply food handling safety practices. For example, 98% planned to wash their hands with warm running water and soap for at least 20 seconds before working with foods; 90% said that they plan to reheat leftovers to a rolling boil and solids to 165⁰F before serving; and 92% said that they plan to thaw food either in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave right before cooking.
- Nearly 80% of the children who participated in the *Professor Popcorn* nutrition education program improved their food and nutrition knowledge. The children significantly developed their ability to identify foods from different food groups of the Food Guide Pyramid.

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