

# 2020

## ANNUAL REPORT

EFNEP and TNCEP : SNAP-Ed



### COVID-19

How teaching and learning adapted to a new online format to reach audiences during a pandemic

# From the Director



The University of Tennessee Extension Department of Family and Consumer Sciences (UT Extension FCS) offers both the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Programs (EFNEP) and the Tennessee Nutrition and Consumer Education Programs (TNCEP), also known as SNAP-Ed. These programs have a long history of providing nutrition education to SNAP-eligible families in all ninety-five counties of Tennessee as part of the larger UT Extension network. Last year was no exception and was, in fact, a year that showcased the great need these programs meet for families across the state.

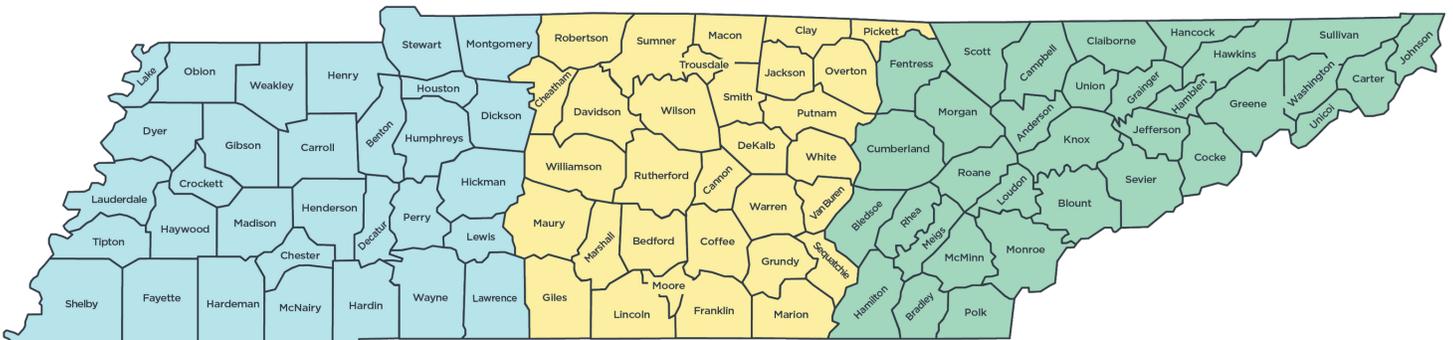
EFNEP and TNCEP are direct education, social marketing, and systems-level programs that work to inspire healthier diets and increased physical activity among low-income families to prevent long-term health problems and improve quality of life. In typical years, county agents and paraprofessionals, through UT Extension, teach nutrition curricula, food resource management tools, cooking skills, and more to Tennessee families. However, this year saw unprecedented challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters impact the state.

While food insecurity rose with schools shutting down and empty grocery shelves, the EFNEP and TNCEP teams responded by adapting curricula to online delivery, incorporating evidence-based nutrition information into local food distribution initiatives, and volunteering to help where communities needed it the most.

I'm proud to share the Real. Life. Solutions. the EFNEP and TNCEP teams created and provided this year to Tennessee. While the challenges were unlike any we could have predicted, our teams adapted the program delivery model, shifted toward broader systems changes, strengthened partnerships, and leveraged local resources. All of this resulted in incredible reach and positive behavioral changes.

**Jennifer Ward, PhD, MPH**  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR

▶ UT Extension and its programs reach all ninety-five counties in Tennessee and is a vital part of Tennessee, helping people across the state improve their quality of life.



# Healthy Families, Healthy Communities

EAT WELL, SAVE WELL, LIVE WELL



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



EFNEP is a peer-to-peer intensive direct education program using a hands on nutrition education approach to reach adults who are caregivers of young children as well as school-age youth at risk for food insecurity. EFNEP is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and by the 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). TNCEP is funded by the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

**UT Extension, Family & Consumer Sciences**

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# Adapting

## to Online Audiences

## BY THE NUMBERS

**Our EFNEP and TNCEP** teams are devoted to providing quality nutrition education founded on evidence-based nutrition research. Our programs include curricula used by county agents and program assistants to teach individuals and families with limited financial resources to make sound nutrition choices, prepare food safely and efficiently, and get the most value for their dollar.

In 2020, EFNEP and TNCEP teams rapidly adapted programs to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and applied creative virtual solutions to meet the needs of their target populations. UT Extension agents and program assistants utilized a variety of methods. Some team members initially were apprehensive to move online, but they soon found that they were able to reach a broader and more diverse audience than before.

At UT Extension in Carter County, Lacie Young was successful in bringing TNCEP curriculum to life using visuals and virtual engagement. "I like to use all the senses to teach and learn—touch it, feel it, see it, taste it. So I needed to figure out how I could make that happen for participants."

In an in-person classroom setting, Young would pass around a long red rope to teach about fiber and digestion. But online, on a two-dimensional screen, she instead pulled and pulled the red rope representing the intestine across the screen to emphasize its length and its importance in the digestion and absorption of nutrients. "Learning how to engage online is all about trial and error. I am always trying to figure out ways to make lessons better for my participants so they can receive valuable information and learn something new," says Young.

We are grateful to all our educators for finding ways to safely adapt to remote instruction and other changing conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participants in EFNEP and TNCEP programs report being more physically active and eating more fruits and vegetables.

**25,840**

Tennesseans received nutrition and physical activity education overall



**38%**  
INCREASED  
physical activity



**38%**  
INCREASED  
consumption  
of fruits



**37%**  
INCREASED  
consumption  
of vegetables

**38%** DECREASED intake of sugar sweetened beverages



*"Now, my daughters are working together in the kitchen and cooking together. They are making recipes I never thought they would ever try and they're really excited to cook every night!"*

*- Parent of participants*

(left) Lacie Young, program assistant for UT Extension in Carter County, displaying a large and colorful My Plate.



(above) LaQuita Clark, program assistant, watering the Gibson Community Garden in 2020.



"I care that [my community] eats healthy and that we educate the next generation to have a healthier lifestyle."

- LaQuita Clark  
TNCEP Program Assistant

# Shifting

## to Policy, Systems, and Environmental Changes (PSE)

**TNCEP educators** regularly lead and support policy, systems, and environmental change (PSE) projects across Tennessee. In 2020, the pandemic pushed the team to reimagine PSE efforts. Educators continued to work with their partners and coalitions virtually and shifted their focus to outdoor environmental change projects such as walking paths and gardens. Additionally, they worked to resourcefully deliver PSE focused programs, such as Shop Smart Tennessee, in new ways that allowed for social distancing. In 2020, more than 100 nutrition supports were implemented to sustain direct education and further TNCEP's goal to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

LaQuita Clark, program assistant for UT Extension in Gibson County, saw a need when her participants wanted to eat healthy foods from class but didn't have the resources to purchase them. Along with FCS agent Barbara Berry and Master Gardener Manuel McKnight, Clark started a community garden to respond to this need. With help from multiple partners, the result is an active garden maintained by volunteers year-round that supplies participants in classes with locally grown fresh produce. When asked about the project, FCS Agent Barbara Berry said, "What made this garden successful was the community partnerships and the hard work from everybody."

## BY THE NUMBERS ▼

EFNEP and TNCEP partner with community sites across Tennessee to implement changes that bring lasting health impacts.



**\$64,605,83**

dollars **SAVED** in long-term health care costs <sup>^</sup>

*That means, for every \$1 spent in nutrition education, there is a potential long-term health care cost reduction of \$10.64.*

**101**

nutrition supports were implemented across the state

**13,459**

individuals were reached with changes to physical activity and nutrition environments

After EFNEP and TNCEP programs, families work together to shop for healthy foods.



**\$17,624**

participants **IMPROVED** their food resource management skills **79%**

dollars **SAVED** on monthly food purchases



<sup>^</sup> Reference: Rajgopal, R., Cox, R. H., Lambur, M., & Lewis, E. C. (2002). Cost-benefit analysis indicates the positive economic benefits of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program related to chronic disease prevention. *Journal of nutrition education and behavior*, 34(1), 26-37.

# Strengthening Partnerships Through Collaboration



(left) Mary Cranmore, EFNEP program assistant for UT Extension in Hamilton County, and Ray Woodall, director of the Soddy Daisy Food Bank, have been working together over 10 years.



(above) Mary Cranmore, in Hamilton County, adapted to COVID-19 safety measures by setting up her teaching tables outside to maintain social distancing and sanitation regulations.

**When the pandemic** sent everyone home, the new COVID-19 restrictions prevented the delivery of face-to-face education and food demonstrations. “We no longer have a place for you to teach classes here,” said Ray Woodall, director of the Soddy Daisy Food Bank. Nevertheless, Mary Cranmore, a program assistant for UT Extension in Hamilton County, was determined to maintain UT Extension’s presence at the places where people needed it most. She suggested that she move outside instead, where she could set up a small table to hand out her educational materials and avoid personal contact by wearing gloves, masks, and shields.

The food bank director was reluctant but eventually agreed. Every week since that day in March, Cranmore has been promoting EFNEP classes from the parking lot. She has taken every precaution to maintain social distance by setting up a table outside and putting the lesson materials and incentives into plastic bags. She then conducts her nutrition lessons one-on-one over the phone with each of her food bank participants. Cranmore pays particular attention to the recipes she shares with her participants, coordinating with the food bank to incorporate many of the items they receive in their food distributions for that month’s recipes. On peak days, Cranmore hands out more than 300 lesson bags to participants. Combining education with food distribution allows participants to take the food they



## BY THE NUMBERS

Collaborating with the community is critical to our reaching our audiences.



**459**

local partnerships



**674**

community sites served

receive in their food boxes and prepare nutritious meals with it.

To increase EFNEP and TNCEP program efforts and efficiency, agents coordinate coalitions, participate with local health councils, and collaborate with communities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Extension specialists, agents, and program assistants continued to network, participate in cross-sector collaborations through social media platforms, and build strong state and community partnerships, like the one between Cranmore and Woodall.

*“Working with Extension as a partner has been a great asset to us. They fill a need we have to educate some folks on how to prepare food, especially the commodities that come in their boxes,” says Ray Woodall, Food Bank Director.*

# Leveraging Local Influencers

## Social marketing,

or marketing for positive behavior change, is an integral part of TNCEP programming. Each year, several social marketing campaigns are launched via print media, like posters, brochures, and bookmarks, social media, and other county-based initiatives. In 2020, the TNCEP team decided to partner with the Partnership for Healthier America (PHA).

PHA has a tried and trusted model of using national celebrities to promote the consumption of fruits and vegetables. We knew we wanted to bring that model to Tennessee, but with a local twist. Instead of using nationally known celebrities that might feel distant to Tennesseans,

local celebrities from a specific area in Davidson County were featured in positive produce advertisements.

TNCEP agent Eboné Colclough recruited community influencers in the faith-based, food production, and food retail arenas to be the faces and voices of healthy nutrition. These individuals were micro-level influencers recognizable to the people in an area of Davidson County that faced two tough challenges in 2020. Not only was the food system disrupted by COVID-19, but the neighborhood was also devastated by tornadoes that ripped through the area in March. In such trying times, it became imperative to highlight and amplify familiar and

trusted voices. Digital content was created and promoted locally for three months. FNV ads encouraged Nashvillians to remember to eat their fruits and veggies and that fresh produce was still available for purchase even when pandemic panic emptied much of the grocery store. The FNV campaign launched on three digital platforms: Twitter, Facebook, and ad displays. Most people accessed the FNV messaging with a smart phone and more than a third (38.2 percent) were between the ages of 25 and 34.

The campaign was a success. Many individuals in the campaign's audience completed surveys reporting that they were eating more fruits and



vegetables at the end of the campaign. They were also making these foods a priority in their diet. COVID-19 presented many challenges for TNCEP programming and for the people in the community, but it was no match for the creative and timely marketing that came from the partnership between UT and PHA.

BY THE NUMBERS ▼

## 2,617,400

individuals from the North Nashville community were exposed to FNV messaging



TWITTER

## 279,448



FACEBOOK

## 888,050



DISPLAY

## 1,449,902

## 4.2%

of individuals surveyed indicated that they were consuming MORE fruits and vegetables at the end of the FNV campaign

## FRUITS N' VEGGIES (FNV) CAMPAIGN

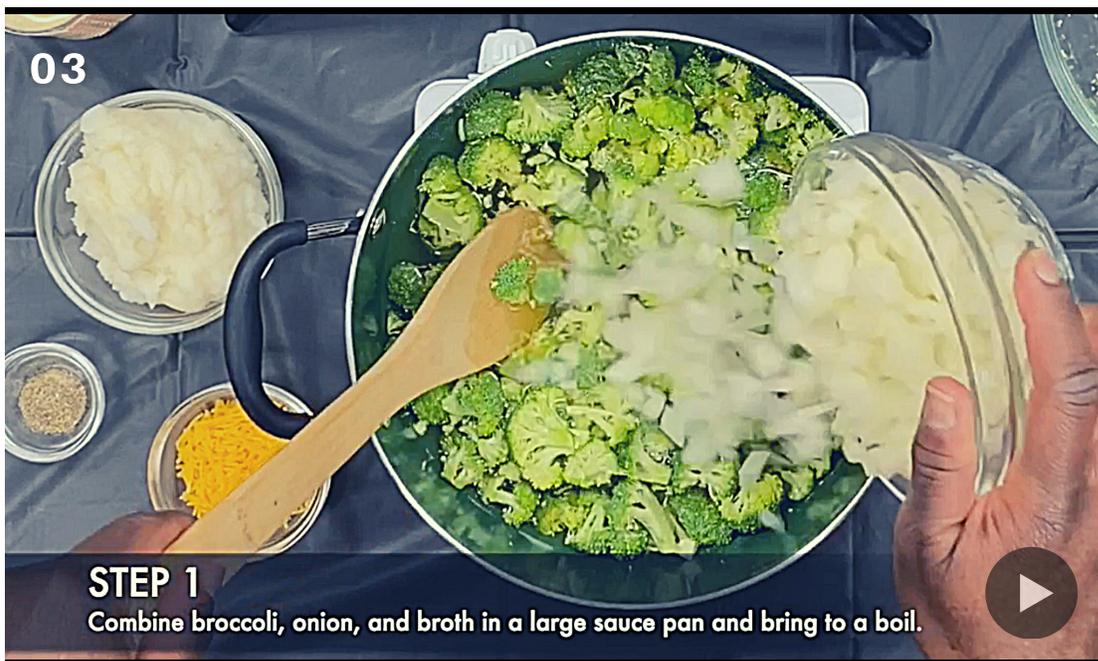


(above) Mariah Ragland, a local Nashville influencer, shares her favorite recipes.

**01** We may have been sent home, but many of us found connection through technology. Cooking together through Zoom became the norm in 2020. Here is Sarah Ballance, UT Extension program assistant in Washington County, and a few of her Adventures in the Kitchen students.



**02** Yesenia Lira-Garcia, UT Extension program assistant in Bedford County, teaches classes in Spanish to the Latinx community.



**03** Ebone Colclough, UT Extension TNCEP agent in Davidson County, made food demonstration videos to share on various social media platforms.

**04** UT Extension agent Miguel Mendieta and program assistant Jenny Biggs, both in Sumner County, leveraged social media platforms like Facebook and YouTube to advertise their EFNEP nutrition classes and share recipes and other important resources. Here they introduce their Healthy Eating Series.

**05** The foundation of Extension education is in-person instruction. COVID-19 forced us to go online and adapt our curriculum to virtual formats. Despite the challenges, educators met their audiences online and continued to educate in homes across Tennessee. Here a Shelby County participant is tasting the smoothie he just learned how to make in the Adventures in the Kitchen class, which was team-taught by UT and Tennessee State University educators.



Find us on  Find us on Facebook @UT Extension - Healthy Families, Healthy Communities

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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.*

*UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.*