



# 2023

## ANNUAL REPORT

EFNEP & TNCEP: SNAP-Ed

# FROM THE DIRECTOR

I'm excited to share with you the work that our Health Families, Healthy Communities team has been doing across the state of Tennessee in 2023.

We are part of the University of Tennessee Extension system and the Family and Consumer Sciences department, delivering real life solutions for people's everyday problems.

As a mother, I know how difficult it can be to feed children and even more so when funds are tight. Our Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) reaches caregivers of children and children themselves, to teach cooking skills and basic nutrition information to make that load a little lighter. In fact, when people leave our classes, they rave about the things they learned and often report saving money at the grocery store. More than half of participants change what they eat!

Similarly, our Tennessee Nutrition Consumer Education Program (TNCEP) reaches people throughout the life span (preschoolers to older adults) with savvy social marketing campaigns, direct education classes, and efforts to change the food environment. Kids love our *Learn, Grow, Eat, Go* curriculum and gardens have been sprouting all around Tennessee with our team's efforts to promote growing and eating local nutritious food.

You'll see in the following pages that our programs can be found where people gather, grow, live, and shop. That's what I've always loved about the Extension idea. We bring the academy to the community and all corners of Tennessee with county-based programming. The evidence of our impact is clear and what's more, we know through the stories people tell that we are changing more than just what's on the dinner table. We create belonging in our classrooms, we share ideas and celebrate what food means to us, we solve problems, and we show up for Tennessee.

Food insecurity is a big problem, and our goals are to continue reaching more people with our tried-and-true methods while innovating our delivery models, incorporating more information online, and working with partners to truly transform the way people nourish themselves and their families. Thank you for joining us in this endeavor.



**Jennifer Ward, PhD MPH**  
Program Director

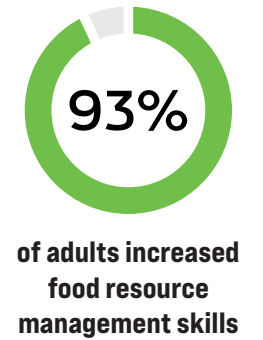
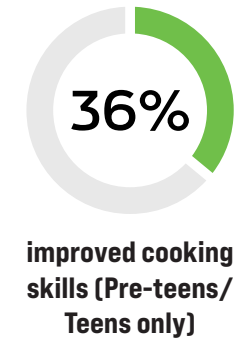
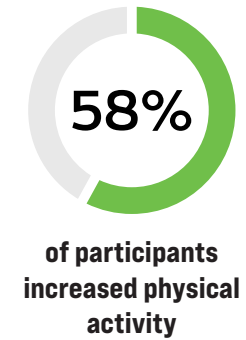
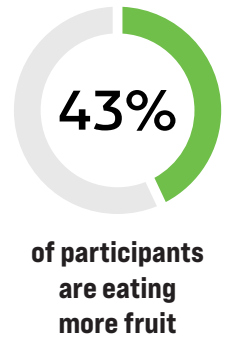
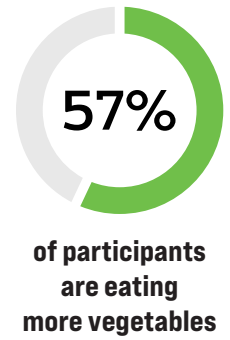


# OVERALL DATA FOR THE TNCEP/EFNEP GRANT

## REACH



## BEHAVIOR CHANGE



## RETURN ON INVESTMENT



**\$63,820,205**  
in reduced long-term health costs  
**\$4,678** saved on food

## SOCIAL MEDIA



**302,203**

### LEADERSHIP

**Janet Fox, PhD**  
Assistant Dean & Professor  
jfox35@utk.edu  
122 Morgan Hall, 2621 Morgan Circle  
Knoxville, TN 37996-4530  
865-974-7384

**Jennifer Ward, PhD, MPH**  
SNAP-Ed: TNCEP/EFNEP  
Program Director  
jward38@utk.edu  
19 Morgan Hall, 2621 Morgan Circle  
Knoxville, TN 37996-4501  
865-974-7349

### CONTRIBUTORS

**Kim Chaney-Bay, MEd**  
Extension Assistant  
kchaney@utk.edu

**Yetunde Fadipe, MPH**  
Extension Specialist  
yfadipe@utk.edu

**Johnna Ferguson, BS**  
Extension Assistant  
jfergu36@utk.edu

**Karen Franck, PhD**  
Assistant Professor  
kfranck@utk.edu

**Lisa Fuller, MS, RD, LDN**  
Extension Specialist  
lfuller1@utk.edu

**Rita Jackson, EdD**  
Extension Specialist  
rjacks15@utk.edu

**Egla Lopez, MS**  
Extension Assistant  
elopez4@utk.edu

**Natalie Owens, MS**  
Extension Specialist  
nowens3@utk.edu

**Jeanmarie Salie, MPH, CHES**  
Extension Specialist  
jsalie@utk.edu

**Cori Sweet, MPH, RDN**  
Extension Specialist  
csweet5@utk.edu



Summer Flavor Celebration at Oak Ridge Farmers Market, Anderson County

## FARMERS MARKET FRESH

*Farmers Market Fresh* is a social marketing campaign targeted to SNAP participants, who are encouraged to use their benefits at local farmers markets to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables. *Farmers Market Fresh* booths are staffed by University of Tennessee Extension agents and educators at farmers markets across the state. These staff offer a wealth of research-based information on nutrition, food safety, food preparation, and home food preservation. Food demonstrations and children's challenges are often included.

### PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

As a child, Amber Morgan visited the West Tennessee Farmers Market in downtown Jackson with her mother every week. The market has grown a lot since then and now Amber is the TNCEP agent for Madison County. This summer was Amber's first time implementing the *Farmers Market Fresh* outreach campaign. She secured a spot on "Food Truck Friday," when many downtown employees come by to eat lunch and visit the market. The bright banner on her table encouraged many to stop by and ask questions about healthy eating and recipes. "Talking with people- hearing their thoughts on cooking at home and eating more fruits and vegetables - was big."

Market manager Bruce Bond was in full support of her efforts. "The *Farmers Market Fresh* booth provided vital information for consumers," he said. Assistant manager Ricky Lawson agreed. "The agent has done a great job bringing more people to the market and supporting wholesome nutrition through food samples and take-home recipes."



**95%** of participants are now eating more **locally grown fruits**

**97%** of participants are now eating more **locally grown vegetables**

**76%** of participants have used at least one of the ***Farmers Market Fresh* recipes**



# SHOP SMART TENNESSEE

*Shop Smart Tennessee* encourages low income families to purchase and consume healthier foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein. This program works with small food stores across Tennessee that accept SNAP/EBT, so that families have healthier foods available in stores in their neighborhoods. Education is a key component of *Shop Smart Tennessee* and is delivered by University of Tennessee Extension staff through a variety of activities including interactive educational displays, food demonstrations, tastings, and recipes. Stores use signage, shelf labels, and in-store promotions to bring awareness of healthy food products.



Shop Smart Tennessee  
Henderson County

## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

TNCEP Agent Leslyne Watkins has implemented *Shop Smart Tennessee* in Wilson County for several years. Leslyne recently partnered with Al's Foodland in Lebanon. The store managers gave her a prime spot in the food and vegetable aisle, where customers first walk after entering the store. In addition to her table display featuring healthy food samples and recipes, the store allowed her to hang up shelf tags by the highlighted healthy foods of the week. One day a customer approached Leslyne's table and said that she had seen the program display and promotions the previous year. The customer shared how the program helped her to get recipes and healthy ideas while she shopped.

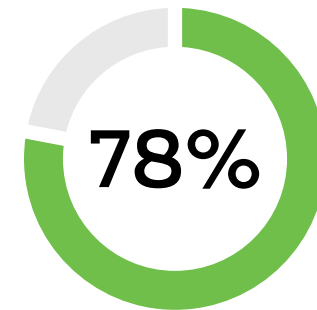
"I love the *Shop Smart Tennessee* program," Leslyne says. "Getting to meet people face-to-face where it really matters - in the grocery store - where they have the option to buy healthy or unhealthy food is motivating. Giving people the opportunity to think about their choices and providing them with the resources to do that is very meaningful."

## NATIONAL AWARD FOR SHOP SMART TENNESSEE

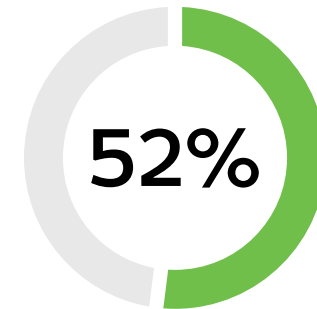
UT Extension Family and Consumer Sciences *Shop Smart Tennessee* program was recognized at the 2023 National Health Outreach Conference with the Jeanne M. Priester Extension Health-Innovative Program Award. The program is led by Cori Sweet, Christopher T. Sneed, Jennifer Ward, Karen Franck, and Jeanmarie Salie. The Innovative Programs Award honors extraordinary Extension programs that go beyond traditional programming to address an identified need in the community.



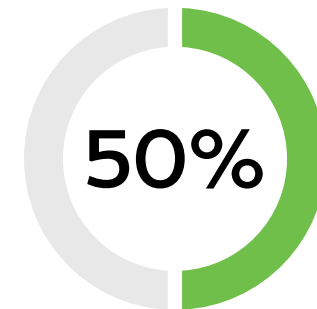
Shop Smart Tennessee  
Wilson County



of participants were more aware of healthy foods sold at the store



of participants said their grocery purchases were influenced by the in-store displays



of the store managers/owners started stocking or increased their current stock of healthy items

**We really enjoyed the experience of working with UT Extension on *Shop Smart*. People were excited seeing the new food demonstrations each week, especially where it had a healthy twist to it. Also, it helped our small store as all items were purchased here, and our community members were exposed to recipes they may have not thought of as a simple snack idea.**

- Store manager/owner



# GARDENS

TNCEP empowers University of Tennessee Extension agents and program assistants to work with partners to connect limited resource families to community gardens. TNCEP funds small tools, soil, plants, and seeds for the gardens; agents and programs assistants facilitate related nutrition education programs that include information on growing healthy vegetables, gaining cooking and food safety skills, trying unfamiliar vegetables, and learning new recipes using produce grown in the garden. Additional benefits include using food from the garden to supplement site meals and snacks, donating produce to the community, and expanding opportunities for home gardening through seed sharing.

## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

During the growing season, TNCEP program assistant Blake Helderman stays busy tending gardens in Claiborne County at four schools and the public library. At each of the sites, Blake teaches children about healthy eating through *Learn, Grow, Eat, and Go*.

The garden program has been so successful that Blake plans to expand the program to four more schools next year. Blake credits the success of the program to key partnerships with the school district's School Health Coordinator, Delynn Kline, and the Friends of Claiborne County Library organization.

Blake is looking forward to next year's garden season. "Seeing the kids nurture and grow the plants is very rewarding. They are learning where their food comes from. The time and dedication is worth it."



School garden, Claiborne County

**“ Many kids said they liked vegetables and fruit even more now because they grew them. Some even tried fruits and vegetables they had never had before. A couple said they'd never had their hands dirty before - and liked getting them dirty! ”**

- TNCEP educator

**1,223** nutrition education participants

**27** fruit and vegetable gardens in **13** counties across Tennessee

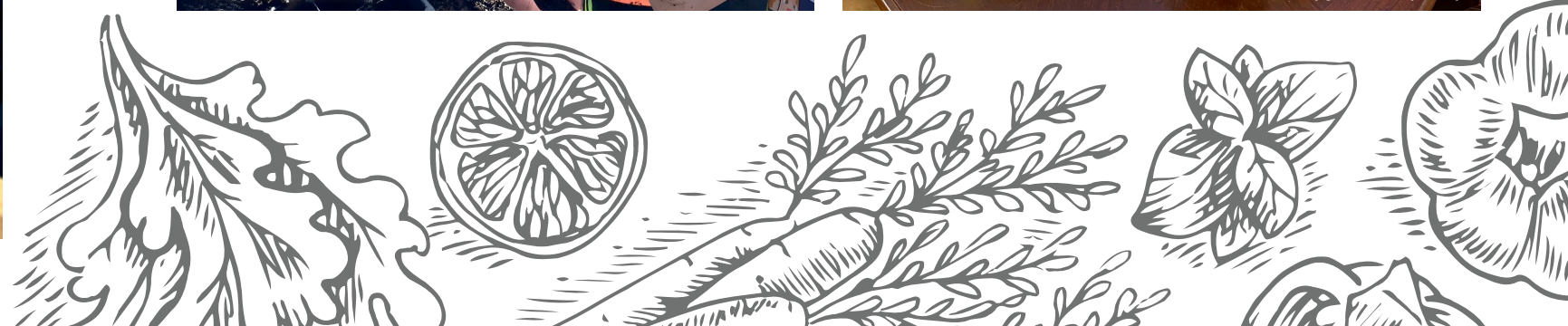
**7** garden sites initiated or expanded use of garden produce for on-site meals/snacks



School garden, Claiborne County



Community garden, Bradley County



# SIGNAGE

Policy, Systems, and Environments (PSE) strategies include activities where a community or site makes a change to improve access to healthy eating and physical activity opportunities. University of Tennessee Extension staff partner with local sites including schools, senior centers, recovery programs, community centers, and parks to add signs that promote physical activity and healthy eating. They also engage in supports – including water bottle refill stations - that encourage Tennesseans to drink water, walk, or choose a healthy snack. PSE efforts across the state aim to be on-going and sustainable with the goal of supporting long-term health for Tennesseans.



## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

EFNEP program assistant Kent Armstrong teaches nutrition education classes to residents at Steps House in Knox County. Steps House is a non-profit organization helping men in recovery and men experiencing homelessness. Kent teaches the men about how to make healthy choices and be physically active.

To encourage the residents to move more, Kent partnered with Steps House staff and TNCEP agent Lauren Woods to install a walking trail around the facility. Kent and a resident marked out spots for distance signs along a simple trail. The trail has been a real asset; eight to ten men walk the trail each week. "They feel better when they walk regularly," Kent says. "And they have a good time when they walk together – it builds camaraderie and support, which is one of the goals of Steps House."

**“ We really do appreciate the sign. It helps patients see that the stairs are conveniently located and that using them is a great way to get moving. ”**  
 - Library Director

**“ I feel that these signs can help motivate people to make healthier choices. ”**  
 - Senior Center Manager



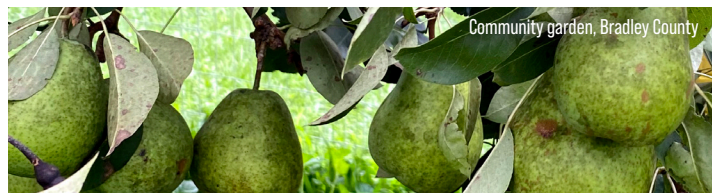
Signs reached  
**1,400+** adults  
 &  
**4,000+** youth  
 at **32** sites across the state.





# Healthy Families, Healthy Communities

EAT WELL, SAVE WELL, LIVE WELL



This material was funded by USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) under an agreement with the State of Tennessee.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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.

Discover more  
of what EFNEP &  
TNCEP: SNAP-Ed  
have to offer

