

## Bannock County EFNEP impacts Drug Court participants

### The Situation

Drug and alcohol abuse are known for their detrimental affects on the human body and most people are aware of the danger of excessive drinking to the liver. In Idaho, food and information about the nutrients food contains are readily available. However, for those who abuse their bodies with alcohol, nutrient deficiencies are common. Chronic drinking leads to a poor diet thereby reducing available nutrients. It also contributes to poor nutrient absorption and greater vitamin destruction. Of importance to clients of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is the risk of nutrient deficiency.

Local citizens who have been involved with drugs may be court ordered into the Bannock County Felony and DUI Drug Court programs. An important component of the Drug Court system is a Wellness Program. Nutrition education, food resource management, menu planning, and food safety are some of the topics presented during Wellness classes.

Bannock County staff who oversee the Drug Court programs were in need of an educator for the Wellness Program who could lead the group classes. Time and budgetary restraints, and minimal nutrition knowledge limited their ability to provide the classes.

### Our Response

The Bannock County EFNEP Coordinator learned of the Wellness Program in fiscal year 2010 and offered to partner with the County by providing the EFNEP paraprofessional staff members to serve as the educator.

As part of their Drug Court plan, several individuals were waiting to participate in the Wellness Group. The classes started in FY2010 with assistance from a County employee well versed in the unique needs of



Angela Wojcik, Bannock County EFNEP Paraprofessional, teaching a class.

individuals recovering from drug and alcohol abuse. As EFNEP paraprofessionals gained confidence in their ability to handle the classes, the County employee discontinued her assistance in FY2011 and EFNEP staff assumed full responsibilities for the classes. During the last session the only assistance the County employee provided was serving as a guest educator for one class.

During fiscal year 2011, 17 individuals were enrolled in the EFNEP through two Drug Court groups, representing about 4% of the annual Bannock County EFNEP case load. Sixty-five percent of the group members were age 30 to 39. Fifty-three percent were female (9 individuals) and 47% males (8 individuals). Most had a High School Diploma or GED (65%). Group members had 65 family members that were impacted through the Wellness Program. Notably, 34% of their children were aged 1 - 5.

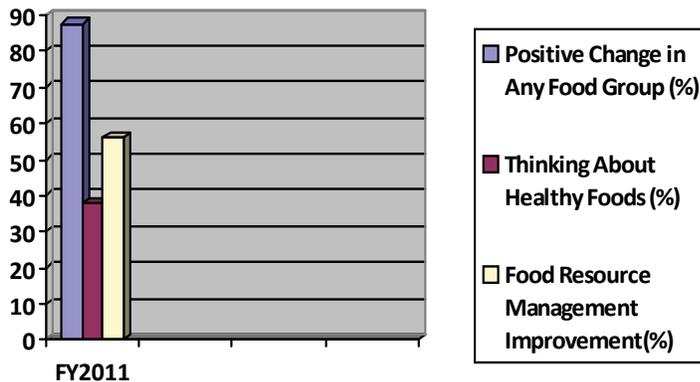
Each group met for nine weeks with each class lasting two hours. The classes were presented in two different locations. The Drug Court staff hosted the first class of FY11 in their building. As the EFNEP paraprofessionals gained confidence and it became apparent they could facilitate the classes alone, the location changed to the Bannock County Extension office.

EFNEP curricula used for these classes was the 2005 Dietary Guidelines based Idaho adult curriculum, *Eat Right for Life* developed by the University of Florida and the *Eating Smart Being Active* curriculum developed by Colorado State University and University of California, Davis. Cooking skill development became an important component of the Wellness Group with a hands-on cooking lab being incorporated nearly every week. At the conclusion of the group, each member received an EFNEP certificate of completion.

### Program Outcomes

Every week included new skills being taught to all participants. Data gathered from pre/post diet recalls and behavior checklists indicates that 87.5% of participants improved their diet quality in at least one food group, 38% of the group is now thinking about healthy food choices when deciding what to feed their families, and 56% of participants showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices (i.e. plans meals, compares prices, does not run out of food or uses grocery lists).

Bannock County EFNEP is an important contributor to an effective program that has a very low recidivism rate and dietary changes made by the group members can help them replace nutrient deficiencies.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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