

Mealtime Inspirations: An educational community event in southeast Idaho

AT A GLANCE

Community members watch creative demonstrations to increase knowledge and plan for behavior change

The Situation

Requests for cooking classes have increased from community members to University of Idaho Extension family and consumer sciences (FCS) educators' offices. The interest to prepare their own food, control food contents and to ensure safe food handling continues to encourage consumers to seek education. With the increase in adults working, less time is available for food preparation, so quicker, easier meal options and tips for meal planning are needed. The University of Idaho Extension eastern district FCS educators decided to provide a Mealtime Inspirations community event to share cooking, meal preparation, simple home décor and money management presentations. What started out as a one-community event expanded to a multiple county, two-night event.

Our Response

The Mealtime Inspirations program has a six-year history of presentations in southeast Idaho. Each year the eastern district FCS educators meet to discuss community needs which could best be addressed using the Mealtime Inspirations venue. The theme, location, presenters and marketing plans are decided. Themes have included "Family Edition," "Harvest Edition," "Holiday Edition," "Quick Tips" and "Home Edition."

The town and location for the event is rotated throughout the district. Effort is made to include both



Lorie Dye, University of Idaho Extension, Jefferson County FCS educator teaching at 2016 Mealtime Inspirations event.

urban and rural sights, thus providing lesser reached communities as well as established city towns an opportunity to enjoy the event. An eight-minute presentation is planned by each of the six presenters, to include a variety of food demonstrations, simple home décor and money management programming which inform community members of emerging topics. The presenter is videotaped and the program is posted on YouTube. Two minutes is allowed for questions from the community members after each presentation. Prizes relating to the topics presented are donated by the presenters and drawn as door prizes for those attending. A tasting table is provided to allow participants to taste the foods demonstrated. In 2016, social media outreach was included in promotional efforts by creating a webpage, and listing the Facebook address on the fliers. To encourage attendance, in 2016 a radio spot was paid for and tickets given away by calling into the radio station.

Program Outcomes

Survey data has been collected at each Mealtime Inspirations event to assess knowledge gained and interest in using information learned. Knowledge questions were multiple choice or true/false and were presented after each demonstration segment. Both paper, and more recently electronic survey tools, have been used and the data is presented in the table below.

Event year	Attendance	Percent correct answers	Percent plan to use knowledge
2011	59	100	67
2012	66	88	69
2013	23	83	97
2014	49	NA	100
2015	29	NA	100
2016 site #1	11	88	100
2016 site #2	20	73	100

Mealtime Inspirations assessments – Each faculty video is released to YouTube to increase exposure of Extension outreach programs. As of Feb. 15, 2017, there have been a total of 2024 views during 2011-2015 years of video programming.

The southeast Idaho Mealtime Inspirations event unites FCS educators from six different counties towards providing a collective effort which is stronger and more effective than one single program. The community responds to the cooking show format with delight and enthusiasm. Participant comments in 2016 include, “At my ‘age’ I feel I am in a ‘rut with meals’ – so it was good to receive the information and be able to come home with material to help remind me!!! I was going over the information yesterday and thought this was really great to receive – so THANKS again.”

The Future

Mealtime Inspirations events are planned to continue to engage community members in this creative educational event.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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