

# **Plan for Food Stamp Nutrition Education in Rusk County during fiscal year 2008**

## **Overview of the Rusk County Nutrition Education Program**

The Nutritional Education Program began as a tri-county effort in 1994 in response to the Family Living Agent's effort to develop a collaborative program that would encompass the large population of food stamp eligible participants. Rusk County began its own program in 2005 bringing a new focus to the changing needs of the population. We have concentrated our efforts and our focus on the youth and their families. We have the opportunity to shape nutritional habits of youth in their formative years. Our work with the youth occurs in each school in Rusk County and the two head start centers that we have. We also work with the families of school aged youth to make sure the messages and information taught is carried over into their home environments. Multi-session group lessons have been an effective tool to distribute the nutritional information we are teaching to this population. Staffed walk-bys during parent/teacher conferences, newsletters, and our presence at after-school events ensure that the families of the youth are receiving nutritional information. We have significantly limited our use of home visits, occurring only with the elderly and head start families when we teach stretching the food dollar, and utilize the multi-session group lessons on a regular basis. By utilizing this approach we are increasing the likelihood that participants will change their behavior based on the topical nutritional information presented. Our county board committee receives monthly written and verbal reports from each educator in regards to the audiences reached and the teaching topic presented. Ongoing communication has resulted in strong support for our program as well as suggestions and questions from committee members.

## **Characteristics of the low income residents in Rusk County**

### Demographics of Rusk County

According to the 2000 U.S. census 15,347 individuals live in Rusk County with a very low minority percentage. The population of youth under 18 yields 24.8 percent of the total population with over half of these individuals living in poverty, 14.67 percent. In 2003 the Wisconsin Food Security Project revealed 46.75 percent of children in Rusk County were approved for free or reduced price lunch in the Schools. Seventy-Five percent of Rusk County schools are considered high poverty. The health of our youngest children, aged 2-4, is becoming a real issue. According to the Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance Data, 2001 reports that 13.5% of low income children between the ages 2 and 4 are overweight in our county. Local data indicates that children in the Headstart program fall in the following categories based on 65 children:

- 3 students with a BMI percentile of 20% or less
- 34 students with a BMI of 21-85%
- 13 students with a BMI of 85-94%
- 15 students with a BMI 95% or more

According to the 2000 census, there are 2,608 households in Rusk County. Of those households, 1,717 are households with families. The average earning per job in Rusk County is \$21,716 compared to \$30,006 statewide. Unemployment is also higher than the state average with 7.9 percent in Rusk County being unemployed compared to the state average of 5.5 percent. Obesity has become an epidemic in our nation and according to the Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance

System, 21 percent of Wisconsin residents living in the Western counties, including Rusk, are obese.

Of the total population of residents in Rusk County, 23.4 percent are over the age of 60; of these, 11.49 percent are in poverty.

#### Food Insecurity in Rusk County

The total number of residents receiving food stamps in Rusk County in 2004 was 1,540. Each of the following populations are targeted by our program due to the food stamp usage and high poverty rate indicated in each group. The number of youth receiving food stamps in 2004 was 679, indicating that 18 percent of the youth in Rusk County are receiving food stamps. The child poverty rate in Rusk County is 14.7 percent compared to 10.8 percent in Wisconsin.

The poverty rate in Rusk County is 11.8 percent compared to the state average of 8.7 percent. In 2004, 861 adult residents received food stamps. According to the Federal Nutrition Assistance Program, in 2004, there were 845 WIC participants. Forty percent of WIC households are food insecure with 12 percent being food insecure with hunger.

Rusk County's elderly nutrition programs include 6 congregate meal sites with 19,212 meals served in 2003. There were 74 (3.03%) elderly food stamp recipients in 2004.

#### **Nutrition and nutrition education needs of Food Stamp Program recipients and other low-income residents of Rusk County**

Rusk County continues to include agencies and participants in preparing educational programs. The results of a survey sent to agencies and participants in each of the following populations are as follows:

Youth under 18 years of age: Understanding the food guide pyramid, healthy snacks, serving sizes, eating fruits and vegetables, reading food labels, physical activity, and food safety.

*WNEP response:* WNEP will work in all of the elementary schools to address specific topics. Newsletters will be sent to parents of these participants with educational information on these topics and more. WNEP will be involved in the Strengthening Families 10-14 program and 3-5 program as well as the two Head start centers in our county.

Families with children: How to use the food guide pyramid, budgeting, making low cost meals, education on serving sizes for children and parents, maintaining a healthy weight for a healthy child, understanding nutrition labels, food safety. A budgeting program will also be implemented in collaboration with the Family Living Agent to address the food insecurity issue.

*WNEP Response:* WNEP will work with Head start families by participating in home visits with the parent educator to address budgeting issues. A monthly newsletter will be sent to each family throughout the year to bring educational nutrition education to these families. WNEP will also work with the Strengthening Families Programs in the county to reach parents on these issues. One on one budgeting will be offered in collaboration with the family living educator to reach families who are having difficulty stretching the food dollar.

Elderly population: Budgeting, food safety, a healthful diet, choosing and preparing foods with less fat, cholesterol and sugar, reading food labels, determining resources for food, physical activity

*WNEP Response:* WNEP will work in each of the Senior Meal Centers to bring topical information to the seniors. A one on one budgeting program in collaboration with the family living educator will reach seniors who are having difficulty stretching the food dollar.

### **Educational Projects planned for FY08**

**In School:** Adventure Day for Bruce Elementary School: Nutrition topics taught to elementary aged children on Adventure Day. Two to three staff per group.

Classroom lessons at Bruce Elementary School: Classroom lessons grades Pre-K thru 5 on food safety and the food guide pyramid. Two visits per classroom per year.

Classroom lessons at Bruce Middle School: Classroom lessons grades 6-9 on food safety and the food guide pyramid. Two visits per classroom per year.

Bruce School Special Ed. student nutrition displays: Special education staff working with special education youth with nutrition displays in the schools.

Winter Blues Day for Bruce Middle School: Six groups of middle school-ages students with emphasis on community projects related to nutrition and physical activity.

Classroom lessons at Flambeau Elementary School: Classroom lessons for elementary aged students grades Pre-K thru 4<sup>th</sup> on food safety and the food guide pyramid. Two lessons per classroom per year.

Classroom lessons at Flambeau Middle School: Classroom lessons for middle school aged students on food safety and the food guide pyramid. Two lessons per classroom per year.

Monthly Healthy Lifestyle lessons at Flambeau Elementary School: Monthly classroom lessons grades Pre-K thru 4<sup>th</sup> on nutrition and physical activity. Six 1-hour session, one time per month, 9 sessions per year.

Special Ed. Student Nutrition Displays at Flambeau School: Special education staff working with special education youth with nutrition displays in the schools.

Monthly Healthy Lifestyle lessons at Flambeau Elementary School: Monthly classroom lessons grades Pre-K thru 5<sup>th</sup> on nutrition and physical activity. Six 1-hour session, one time per month, 9 sessions per year.

Classroom Lessons at Ladysmith Elementary School: Classroom lessons grades Pre-K thru 5<sup>th</sup> on food safety and the food guide pyramid. Two visits per classroom per year, including special education classrooms.

Classroom Lessons at Hawkins Elementary School: Classroom lessons grades Pre-K thru 5<sup>th</sup> on food safety and the food guide pyramid. Two visits per classroom per year, including special education classrooms.

Special Ed. Student Nutrition Displays at Ladysmith and Hawkins Schools: Special education staff working with special education youth with nutrition displays in the schools.

Summer Classroom Lessons at Ladysmith Elementary: Nutrition lessons taught at summer school.

Walk-by at Craft Fair at Weyerhaeuser Elementary School: Attended walk-bys on nutrition topics and physical activity craft fair.

Classroom lessons at Weyerhaeuser Elementary School: Classroom lessons grades Pre-K to 5 on food safety and the food guide pyramid. Two visits per classroom per year.

Classroom lessons at Weyerhaeuser Middle School: Classroom lessons grades 6 through 8 on food safety and the food guide pyramid. Two visits per classroom per year.

Reading Nights for Weyerhaeuser Elementary: Nutrition lessons taught to elementary-aged children at Reading Night. Two Sessions.

Special Ed. student nutrition displays: Special education staff working with special education youth with nutritional displays in the schools.

**After School:** Trail's End Camp for Bruce Middle School Students: Nutrition lessons for middle school children at Trail's End Camp.

Lessons for Math and Reading Night at Bruce Elementary School: Nutrition topics taught to elementary aged children at math and reading night

Summer Classroom lessons at Bruce Elementary School: Lessons for elementary-aged summer school participants on nutrition and physical activity.

Summer Classroom lessons at Flambeau Elementary School: Plan for content of lessons to be taught: Lessons for elementary-aged summer school participants on nutrition and physical activity.

Summer classroom lessons at Weyerhaeuser Elementary School: Nutrition lessons on dietary quality and physical activity at Weyerhaeuser summer school program.

**Senior Dining:** One-on-one lessons on Money for Food for Senior Adults: One-on-one lessons on stretching the food dollar for seniors.

Learn-While-You-Wait lessons for Seniors: Attended walk-by for Seniors when farmer market vouchers are distributed.

Nutrition and food safety information at senior meal sites: Two teachings per month at five Rusk County Senior meal sites on nutrition and food safety topics.

Senior Newspaper—The Source: ½ page article in *The Source* senior newspaper.

**Parents:** Strengthening Families--Lessons taught to parents and their children on topics ranging from nutrition and physical activity to stretching the food dollar

One-on-one lessons on Money For Food for Head start Parents: Lessons on stretching the food dollar for parents in their homes.

One on one lessons on Money for Food for families in collaboration with the family living agent Newsletters for Parents/Families at Bruce School: Monthly Newsletter—*Healthy Lifestyles* for parents/families

Walk-bys at Parent/Teacher Conferences at Bruce School: Walk-bys on nutrition topics and physical activity

Newsletter for Parents/Families at Flambeau School: Monthly Newsletter—*Healthy Lifestyles* for Parents/Families.

Walk-bys at Parent/Teacher Conferences at Flambeau School: Attended walk-bys on nutrition topics and physical activity. Two sessions per year.

Newsletter for Parents/Families at Ladysmith and Hawkins Schools: Monthly Newsletter—*Healthy Lifestyles* for parents/families.

Walk-bys at Parent/Teacher Conferences at Ladysmith and Hawkins Schools: Attended walk-bys on nutrition topics and physical activity.

Newsletters for Parents/Families at Weyerhaeuser Elementary School: Monthly Newsletter—*Healthy Choices* for parents and guardians.

Walk-by at Open House at Weyerhaeuser Elementary School: Attended walk-bys on nutrition topics and physical activity at two open houses.

Walk-by at Parent/Teacher Conferences at Weyerhaeuser Elementary School: Attended walk-bys on nutrition topics and physical activity.

**WIC:** WIC Unattended walk-by; monthly unattended walk-by for WIC participants

**Preschoolers:** Bruce and Ladysmith Center - Nutrition lessons taught to Head start youth on healthy snacks and nutrition lessons – one per month each site.