

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

### **Overview of Food Stamp Nutrition Education in Lafayette County**

The Lafayette County Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program (WNEP) will begin in 2007 in response to cost-share financing as part of a Family Living Educator position approved by the County Board Extension Committee. Lafayette County will hire one person to act as Family Living Educator (70%) and Nutrition Program Coordinator (30%) in June 2007, with the start of WNEP in the county October 1, 2007. Community agencies in the county have been expressing their need for nutrition education for their limited income clients for years. Members of UW Extension staff have brought the idea of the Nutrition Program to the Extension Committee for five consecutive years. Despite a clear need for the program in the county, until the latest fiscal crisis and pending retirement of the Family Living Educator, the Nutrition Program was refused by the committee. The new Lafayette County Nutrition Program Coordinator will build the program from the ground up, including building relationships with appropriate agencies and organizations.

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

#### Demographics of Lafayette County

Lafayette County is a rural county with 16,149 people according to the 2000 census. Of the county's total population 15.8% are age 65 and over, and those age 5 and under are 5.9% of the population. Whites make up the majority of the population with 99%. Since 2000, the Hispanic or Latino population has increased dramatically, but count as only 0.6% of the 2000 census. The median family income is \$44,326. The median household income is \$37,220. Lafayette County's self-sufficiency wage is \$13.62 per hour which equates to \$28,330 annual income. Individuals living below the poverty line are 9.11%. Families living below the poverty line are 6.2%. There is no public transportation. And 5% of the county's households have no vehicle for transportation.

#### Food Insecurity in Lafayette County

There are 13.23% of renters paying at least 35% of their income in rent. This indicates the need for education on stretching food dollars. In 2005 the county had 1071 total participants in the Food Stamp Program. This is 6.63% of the county's population. Yet we know that in 2000 the county had a poverty rate of 9.11%.

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

Because of the discrepancy that we are seeing in the school surveys between those that appear to be eligible for Food Stamps and the free and reduced price school lunch program, participant's educational awareness of community programs to improve food security is needed. SWCAP Preschool Head Start curriculum includes a different food group being covered each month. The Head Start program has their parents complete a Parent Interest Survey. The items that scored high were menu planning, nutritious snacks and stretching food dollar ideas. The Needs Assessment Survey indicated one persisting problem – lack of food and they wanted to learn about nutrition. WNEP did a Tell Us What You Think survey in the COA News & Views monthly newsletter. Respondents to that survey indicated they wanted to learn more about

choosing a healthful diet. The participants at the nutrition centers were ask to check the topics of interest to them. Choosing/preparing food with less fat and sugar was the top choice. Choosing a healthful diet and eating plenty of fruits and vegetables were the next two choices. And shopping for food is the last of the top four topics.

**Educational Projects planned for FY08**

The new Nutrition Coordinator will build contacts and the Nutrition Program in Lafayette County.