

## **Plan for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Nutrition Education (SNAP-Ed) in Rock County during Fiscal Year 2010**

### **Brief overview of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Nutrition Education (SNAP-Ed) in Rock County**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Nutrition Education (SNAP-Ed) has been teaching about healthy eating habits to young, low-income families in Rock County since 1993. The need for healthy eating with limited food dollars will be greater in 2010. In 2009, due to layoffs at the Janesville General Motors, its supplier companies and other community businesses including those who employ low-income workers, more than 8,000 residents of Rock County lost their jobs. In March of 2009, the unemployment rate in the Rock county town of Beloit reached 15.1%, about double the state unemployment rate. During February of 2009, 8,451 county residents were granted federal Nutrition Assistance--a 34% increase over the same period last year. This figure is expected to climb much higher as the savings and unemployment benefits of the jobless run out.

The current unemployment crisis has accelerated an overall long-term increase in poverty and FoodShare program participation here. From 1999 to 2006, the number of Nutrition Assistance recipients in Rock County had already increased by 149%. According to the 2005-2007 Wisconsin Family Health Survey, an estimated 38,000 people, or 25% of the Rock population, live on incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. Increased poverty creates food insecurity. According to a Rock County WIC Program survey of 243 low-income parents, 60% say they have little food security and 19% say they have "very low" food security. Rock has the second highest food insecurity rate reported by WIC parents of any county in Wisconsin.

Paradoxically, a family that is struggling to pay for food is at greater risk for obesity. According to the Wisconsin Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, 36% of all adults in Rock County are overweight and 29% are obese. These rates are higher—40% and 31%, respectively—among adults with 12 years or fewer of formal education, who comprise the majority of the lower-income population. In 2007, only 24% of adults in this county ate the recommended five or more servings of fruits or vegetables a day.

Hispanics are more likely than other ethnic groups within the low-income population to be overweight, physically inactive, and at high risk for diabetes and heart disease. According to the Wisconsin Minority Health Report, 65% of Hispanic adults in this state are overweight or obese. In the WIC Program in Rock County, 18% of Hispanic children aged 2-4 years are overweight, compared to 11% of the white children and 10% of the African American children. In addition, overweight adults are more likely to pass on these health risks to their children, since the children of overweight parents are more than twice as likely to become overweight themselves—and at an earlier age. The Rock-Walworth Head Start has reported that 24% of enrolled preschoolers have a high body mass index. Furthermore, in a survey of Head Start parents, the majority said their top health concern was "being overweight."

In general, according to the National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH), an estimated 29.4% of all Wisconsin children aged 10-17 years are overweight or obese. Of those children whose family incomes fall near the federal poverty level, 54% are overweight or obese. Among 39

states with reliable data on income and childhood obesity, Wisconsin has the highest disparity in childhood obesity rates between low- and higher-income families.

According to the NSCH, only 23.4% of Wisconsin youth aged 6-17 years engage in vigorous physical activity for at least 20 minutes every day. According to the 2007 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey (WYRBS), only 25.8% of high school students get at least 20 minutes daily of vigorous physical activity. Physical inactivity is particularly prevalent among girls and African-American and Hispanic youth. Only 19% of high school students eat at least two fruits per day, 19.5% eat green salad at least four times a week, and 13% eat a carrot more often than three times a week. On the other hand, 44% of high school students report having soda pop at least four times a week, and 25% drink 1-4 cans of pop every day. Only 22% report drinking the recommended three cups of milk per day.

### **Description of new initiatives within SNAP-Ed in Rock County during FY10**

Increasing the fruit and vegetable consumption of low-income families is key to preventing diet-related diseases. For this reason, the USDA provides low-income parents who participate in the WIC program with special vouchers so that they may obtain free fruits and vegetables from local farmers markets. However, of all the Farmers Market Program vouchers given to WIC parents in Rock County each summer, only 60% are ever spent by the WIC participants. According to a survey done by the Rock SNAP-Ed and the Nutrition & Health Associates (NHA) WIC Program, many WIC parents are interested in the voucher program but have trouble accessing their local markets because of transportation or language barriers.

To increase the food security and local vegetable consumption of WIC families, SNAP-Ed educators will partner with the Janesville Farmers Market Commission, the Beloit Farmers Market Commission, and the Rock County RECAP (a community service program for jail inmates), to establish a weekly produce stand and vegetable education tent just yards away from the entrance of the WIC clinics during July through October. WIC Parents will be able to buy their vegetables just minutes after receiving their vouchers. While visiting the stand, they can discuss vegetable recipes and observe vegetable cooking and preparation techniques with a SNAP-Ed educator. The success of this program will be measured by the percentage of WIC parents who both request and use their Farmers Market vouchers.

### **Food Security Programming Efforts Planned**

Local food pantries are serving more people and more people they've never seen before. One of the larger pantries, ECHO (Everyone Cooperating to Help Others), provided groceries to 21,430 people or 7,174 households, from January through October of 2008. This was an increase of 1,450 people and 538 families over the same ten months in 2007. Many pantry users are eligible for FoodShare but have not applied or have been discouraged from applying because the Rock County FoodShare office is overwhelmed.

The Rock SNAP-Ed partners with the WIC Program, Head Start, Second Harvest, the FoodShare office and local hunger pantries to form the Rock County Hunger Coalition. The role of the SNAP-Ed in this coalition in 2010 is to:

- Update the Rock County hunger pantry directory and distribute it to our SNAP-Ed partners;
- Disseminate information about Wisconsin FoodShare and Wisconsin Access to pantries and other SNAP-Ed partners;

- And use press releases and special events to raise awareness about hunger and the need for SNAP-Ed programming in Rock County.

### **Educational Projects planned for FY10**

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Nutrition Education efforts during fiscal year 2010 will focus on the following Educational Projects:

- **In School.** *Teaching groups of children during the school day.*
- **After School/Summer Programs.** *Teaching groups of children after school, summer school, school or community gardens.*
- **HeadStart/Pre-K classes.** *Teaching groups of Preschool children (HeadStart, pre-Kindergarten, etc.).*
- **Parent meetings/Family Resource Centers.** *Teaching parents of infants and/or children (Head Start parents, Family Resource Centers, Healthy Families group meetings, school age parent groups, etc.).*
- **Job Centers/FoodShare.** *Teaching adults at Job Centers, Food stamp offices.*
- **WIC Clinics.** *Teaching learners at WIC.*
- **Food Pantries.** *Teaching at food pantries, commodity food sites, etc.*
- **Other:** Community Fairs

### **Descriptions of Selected Educational Projects**

- **In School.** *Teaching groups of children during the school day.*

The majority of respondents to the 2007 UW Extension Rock County needs assessment survey said that the poor quality of family life and health resulting from inactivity and the “fast food lifestyle” was a primary concern. Clearly, the mission of the SNAP-Ed in Rock County schools is to encourage children and their families to become more physically active, and to include more fruits, vegetables, and low-fat milk products in their diets. In the past five years, the Rock SNAP-Ed team has had success in promoting fruit and vegetable consumption among elementary school children. In 2008, after their children had completed six hours of in-school SNAP-Ed lessons, at least 50% of 491 Rock County parents surveyed reported that they had noticed their children were eating or requesting more fruits or vegetables at home. Most of these children participated in 6-12 SNAP-Ed lessons called “Pyramids through the Pages” (PTP), in which they listened to and discussed stories about healthy foods, or “Professor Popcorn,” (PP) in which they studied the basic U.S. Dietary Guidelines. In 2010, in order to promote physical activity as well as fruit and vegetable consumption, both the PTP and PP curricula will include at least one lesson on increasing physical activity. Children aged 8-17 will be asked to set goals with their parents to limit their TV and computer screen time and to increase physical activity, as well as to increase fruit and vegetable consumption. Among schoolchildren, the Rock team will focus on these two SNAP-Ed Dietary Quality Outcomes: “Participants will eat a variety of fruits and vegetables and balance food intake with physical activity.” Success will be measured with “Stepping Up to a Healthy Lifestyle” evaluation tools from the Wisconsin Nutrition Education Network, as well as continuing parent surveys. To further increase schoolchildren’s interest in fruits and vegetables, SNAP-Ed educators will link nutrition education and tasting fresh produce with growing vegetables in the classroom and at home. Whenever possible, SNAP-Ed educators will teach children during field trips to local produce farms, community gardens, farmers markets and the Janesville Rotary Gardens Learning Center. SNAP-Ed educators will also partner with schools to present “Family Fun Nights” centered on physically active games and healthy snacks.

In middle schools and high schools, in addition to “Power of Choice” and “Stepping up to a Healthy Lifestyle” lessons that promote physical activity and fruit and vegetable consumption, SNAP-Ed educators will also present “Jump Start Your Bones” and “Fast Food” lessons to encourage students aged 12-17 years to eat or drink more high-calcium foods and to make wiser food and beverage choices when snacking and eating out. Again, success will be measured with “Stepping Up to a Healthy Lifestyle” evaluation tools from the Wisconsin Nutrition Education Network and with the SNAP-Ed fast food evaluation tool. Rock County plans to teach an average of 11, 45-minute lessons per classroom in approximately 100 classrooms in FY2010.

Anticipated number of Learners (unduplicated): 2,800

Anticipated number of Teaching Contacts (duplicated count): 30,000

- **After School/Summer Programs.** *Teaching groups of children after school, in summer school or community gardens.*

The objectives of the Rock SNAP-Ed in afterschool programs are to encourage children to be physically active and to eat more fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products, as well as to teach children practical skills tied to nutrition education such as cooking, gardening, and handling food safely. Rock SNAP-Ed educators will use interactive, “hands-on” curricula, such as WIN the Rockies for Kids and Cooking with Kids, with small groups of middle-school children in school kitchens and/or community gardens. Rock County plans to teach 5 to 8 lessons per afterschool/summer group. Educators will use the SNAP-Ed “Vegetable Election” evaluation tool to measure whether the afterschool programs were successful in increasing the number of different vegetables students are willing to eat.

Anticipated number of Learners (unduplicated): 100

Anticipated number of Teaching Contacts (duplicated count): 700

- **HeadStart/Pre-K classes.** *Teaching groups of Preschool children (HeadStart, pre-Kindergarten, etc.)*

The primary aim of SNAP-Ed programming in Head Start is to increase children’s willingness to try healthy new foods such as fruits and vegetables. Rock SNAP-Ed educators use a special researched-based curriculum for this purpose called “Food Friends,” developed by Colorado State University. Using stories, songs, puppets and food tastings, SNAP-Ed educators and the Rock-Walworth Head Start teachers introduce about 200 preschoolers to 16 unfamiliar foods. After 12 sessions, success is measured by how many of the new foods a preschool is willing to taste in a single “tasting feast.” (SNAP-Ed educators help conduct the first and last sessions, while HS teachers present the other 10 lessons on their own with materials provided by the SNAP-Ed.)

Anticipated number of Learners (unduplicated): 200

Anticipated number of Teaching Contacts (duplicated count): 400

- **Parent meetings/Family Resource Centers.** *Teaching parents of infants and/or children (Head Start parents, Family Resource Centers, Healthy Families group meetings, school age parent groups, etc.)*

The aim of the SNAP-Ed for parents in Rock County is to reduce their families’ risk of disease by helping them find low-cost ways to enjoy physical activity and to choose and prepare balanced meals and snacks. Over the years, the Rock SNAP-Ed staff has found that low-income parents are unlikely to commit to multi-session nutrition education programs, but a large number

can be reached through one-time special events that focus on a particular topic and that include an activity for children. Lessons and evaluations for parent events are usually drawn from the “Sisters in Health,” “Money for Food,” “Raising Healthy Eaters,” and “Stepping Up to a Healthy Lifestyle” curricula. At least six partner schools per year invite SNAP-Ed educators to present a program for one or more school parent nights. Head Start holds 2-3 SNAP-Ed parent classes per year. With shrinking resources for family recreation, more low-income families may be choosing to attend these free classes.

Anticipated number of Learners (unduplicated): 200

Anticipated number of Teaching Contacts (duplicated count): 200

- **Job Centers/FoodShare.** *Teaching adults at Job Centers, Food stamp offices.*

The newly unemployed may need to adjust their shopping and eating habits to fit their newly reduced budgets. Adults enrolled in the W2 Program at the Rock County Job Center are required to choose a self-improvement class to attend once a month at the center. A SNAP-Ed nutrition education class is offered twice a month as one of their class options. Attendance at SNAP-Ed Job Center classes has usually been only 1-2 persons per class. However, with the upsurge of newly jobless residents, the SNAP-Ed may have a better chance of reaching W2 participants. The SNAP-Ed will partner with the Rock Food Share office to send fliers to Nutrition Assistance recipients advertising our money-saving cooking and meal preparation classes. Lessons and evaluations will be drawn from “Money for Food” and “Sisters in Health.”

Anticipated number of Learners (unduplicated): 100

Anticipated number of Teaching Contacts (duplicated count): 100

- **WIC Clinics.** *Teaching learners at WIC.*

The Rock SNAP-Ed seeks to help WIC parents reduce their children’s risk of obesity by encouraging at-home preparation of meals rich in fruits, vegetables and low-fat dairy products and by providing suggestions for active family fun. In 2010, SNAP-Ed educators will present weekly interactive walk-bys at the WIC clinic that focus on buying and using fruits and vegetables, preparing meals with WIC foods, and the advantages of switching to low-fat milk and whole-grain products. To measure whether or not parents are motivated by these walk-by education events, the SNAP-Ed educators will use the SNAP-Ed WIC evaluation tools on fruits, vegetables, whole grains and WIC foods.

Anticipated number of Learners (unduplicated): 600

Anticipated number of Teaching Contacts (duplicated count): 1,800

- **Food Pantries.** *Teaching at food pantries, commodity food sites, etc.*

Once a month, SNAP-Ed educators will visit the two largest food pantries, ECHO in Janesville and Caritas in Beloit, to provide walk-by education on how to prepare commodity foods and other items that food pantry managers find hard to give away. To measure success, educators will ask pantry clients “Have you learned something today that will make it easier to use (this food) in your family’s meals and snacks?”

Anticipated number of Learners (unduplicated): 100

Anticipated number of Teaching Contacts (duplicated count): 100

- **Other**

**Rock County Latino Community Health Fair**

Once a year, the Rock SNAP-Ed partners with Head Start, WIC, the Rock County Health Department and local ESL programs, libraries, and non-profit agencies to organize the Rock County Latino Fair at the Beloit Memorial High School auditorium. The purpose of the fair is to encourage healthy eating, regular medical care, and increased physical activity. The role of SNAP-Ed in the fair is to send outreach mailings to Hispanic families about the fair, provide nutrition education at the fair, and recruit parents to the EFNEP program from among the fair visitors. Success is measured by the number of people who report having learned something from the SNAP-ED display and by the number of parents who sign up for EFNEP lessons.

Anticipated number of Learners (unduplicated): 200

### **Rock County Community Baby Shower**

Once a year, the Rock SNAP-Ed partners with WIC, Early Head Start, the Rock County Health Department and many other local agencies concerned with maternal-child health to organize the Rock County Community Baby Shower, which is held in a different part of the county each year. The role of SNAP-Ed in this fair is to invite low-income pregnant women and new mothers, by mail and by phone, to this shower. During the shower, SNAP-Ed staff present 20-minute small-group workshops on breastfeeding and healthy weight during pregnancy. The impact of the workshops is evaluated with brief questionnaires about the attendees' intent to breastfeed or make dietary changes. Baby shower attendees are also given the opportunity to sign up for EFNEP lessons and to discover money-saving community resources offered by the 24 participating agencies. The overall success of the fair is measured by a survey asking the invitees what they thought was valuable about the experience.

Anticipated number of Learners (unduplicated): 80