This newsletter is produced by the Nutrition Education Network of Washington to enhance communication and coordination among those who educate Washington families about nutrition and food. Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators shares brief information about programs and materials that support healthful and enjoyable eating.

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SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION
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SNAP-Ed
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

This material was funded by USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. SNAP. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact http://foodhelp.wa.gov or the Basic Food Program at: 1 877 501 2233.

We value your opinions!
Please fill out our short questionnaire.

Please take a few minutes to provide your input. We conduct a survey of our readers biennially to assure the Energize Newsletter is meeting both your needs and ours. Because the survey is required by the funder, all recipients need to complete it to continue receiving future issues.

All information is confidential.

To complete this short survey, please click here.

This Month’s Focus:

PSE Strategies in Retail Settings

Over the last six years, SNAP-Ed nutrition educators have been directed to use “Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change” (PSE) strategies to help reduce the risk for obesity and other chronic diseases. Also during that time, nutrition educators have expanded where they guide people to better health, beyond classrooms and clinics, to the places where they buy food. At supermarkets, corner stores, food pantries, and other retail settings, partnership relationships are essential to “make the healthy choice, the easy choice.” Because the use of PSE in retail is relatively new, some activities are in beginning stages while others have had the benefit of evaluation to know whether the intervention was effective. In this issue of the Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators, we will explore some promising PSE activities in retail settings here in Washington State, and highlight useful resources created in other states.

PSE Review – About two years ago the Energize Newsletter did a three-part series on PSE, which provide useful background reading:

- PSE Overview, October 2014
- PSE: Environmental Change, December 2014
- PSE: Policy and Systems Change, Late Winter 2015

An excellent overview of PSE in SNAP-Ed programming is provided by the Washington State Department of Health.

Access to Healthier Options at Corner Stores – Building relationships with corner store retailers is crucial before recommending any changes, says Linda Choi of the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department. Six individually owned stores in the Tacoma area have enrolled in a program to make healthy food choices easier for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program),
Shelf-Talkers Encourage Nutritious Foods – In Yakima, signage in both English and Spanish encourages supermarket shoppers to opt for healthier beverages and snacks. Laura Garcia of the Yakima Health District shares that in the aisles and near the pop section of the store, shelf-talkers suggest choosing fruits and vegetables. The initiative began in 2016 in Wray’s Marketfresh IGA and Fiesta Foods. The signs read “Simple Goodness Made Easy” and direct people to Arizona Nutrition Network’s Champions for Change, www.eatwellbewell.org. (Contact: Laura Garcia, Public Health Specialist, Yakima Health District, 509-249-6518, Laura.Garcia@co.yakima.wa.us.)

Receptive Retailer – Dana Bierman with Kitsap Public Health reached out to a local retail chain grocery store and found that the owners were very supportive of healthy eating promotions. She offered to do booth events on nutritious foods, and they set her up in the produce department on Wednesdays (the busiest day because of a 10% off promotion) and the first day of the month (a high-sales day for SNAP). She suggested making an environmental change by modifying one of the checkout lanes to feature healthy options. Signs read “Enjoy a healthy treat” and nutritious choices are placed right there, such as granola bars and dried fruit. In a survey of 12 grocery store staff, 100% of them noticed the signage and more than 90% had purchased a healthy snack from the display. They also reported that most of the customers liked the changes at that checkout lane. She found that nationally owned chain stores have a more difficult time making environmental changes because corporate headquarters often want a uniform look with product placement. A local retail grocery store could more easily implement environmental changes because, although part of a national chain, stores are owned and managed by local families. There has been positive movement in Bremerton to support people living healthier lives. Dana applauds locally owned stores that are willing to help make the healthy choice, the easy choice. (Contact: Dana Bierman, Healthy Communities Specialist, Chronic Disease Prevention Program, Kitsap Public Health District, 360-728-2206, dana.bierman@kitsappublichealth.org.)

Food Deserts in Washington State – Better access to supermarkets is often given as a reason for healthier diets and reduced risk for obesity, while living in food deserts (neighborhoods that have poor access to supermarkets) are associated with poor diets and higher risk for obesity. Local researchers found that this assumption may not necessarily be true. Brigit Igoe and
others with the Washington State Department of Health recently published a study that looked at food access. They used WIC retailers as the proxy for healthy food retailers. They characterized a “food environment” which would mesh with local intervention strategies, instead of USDA’s “Food Access Research and Food Environment Atlas,” which estimates that Washington State has vast food deserts. A problem with USDA’s Atlas is that our state has many large wilderness areas which have low access to food. The study found that the health disparities in nutrition and nutrition-related outcomes could not be attributed to the geographic distribution of healthy food retailers. The authors suggest looking at other harder to measure but important factors such as food cost, convenience, quality, store accommodations, and, importantly, barriers to transportation. (Source: D McDermot, B Igoe, M Stahre, “Assessment of healthy food availability in Washington State – Questioning the food desert paradigm.” Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior, 49(2):130-136, 2017.)

**Grocery Store Tours for Good Nutrition** – SNAP and WIC recipients learn how to shop for healthy choices on a budget through “Cooking Matters at the Store” tours. Cooking Matters is open to anyone with an EBT card. For an example, see a description of a Seattle tour.

**SNAP and Online Food Shopping** – Amazon, Safeway, and five other retailers will start a two-year SNAP pilot program this summer enabling people to purchase their groceries online. The USDA views this as a great way for SNAP participants living in urban neighborhoods and rural communities to have greater access to healthy food. Washington is one of the seven states involved in the pilot.

**Policy Change For Healthier Choices** – The USDA published a rule requiring SNAP authorized retail stores to offer a larger inventory and greater variety of healthy food options. The delicate balance was requiring a broader array of nutritious foods (increasing from 12 in the previous rule to 84 in the new rule) while maintaining food access in underserved rural and urban areas.

**TOOLS OF THE TRADE**

**Food Pantry E-Scan** – A Washington State interagency collaboration used PSE principles to develop a food pantry assessment tool, and now is conducting formative evaluation of its food pantry e-scan. Utilizing the expertise from Washington State DOH, WSU, Washington State Department of Agriculture, and the Thurston County Food Bank, the group also created The Healthy Food Pantry Guide as a resource for environmental support in food pantries that serve SNAP clients.

**New Healthy Recipes to Feed a Crowd** – USDA’s Team Nutrition recently launched a website with standardized recipes to serve 25-50 and 50-100 people. Although intended for child nutrition programs, the recipes are great choices for congregate meal sites for seniors, soup kitchens, and other adult audiences. The recipes will appeal to a variety of ethnic flavor preferences. Each recipe includes nutrition information, a list of the amounts per serving of various food groups in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, and a photo.

**IN THE NEWS**

**Ten Foods Account for Nearly Half of Health-Related Deaths** – In a new study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, researchers found that eating the right kinds of foods can reduce the risk of death from heart disease, diabetes, and stroke. Instead of focusing on what to eat less of, the researchers promote eating more of the nutritious foods. These ten dietary components had the greatest impact: sodium, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, unprocessed red meats, processed meats, polyunsaturated fats, seafood omega-3 fats, and sugar sweetened beverages. Energize readers likely can figure out which are healthful and which are not!
WASHINGTON GROWN

Fresh This Month – With our seemingly never-ending snow and cold temperatures, it’s a bit early to think about locally available springtime fruits and vegetables, so what about local eggs? At six grams of protein in a large egg, they are an inexpensive source not just of protein but other healthful nutrients: selenium, riboflavin, choline, phosphorus, iron, lutein and zeaxanthin, and vitamins A and B12. Some consumers think that brown-shelled eggs are better for them than white-shelled eggs. The difference is only shell-deep. Nutritionally, they’re the same. Genetics determine the color of the shell, generally with white chickens producing white-shelled eggs, and brown or red chickens producing brown shells. Washington-based Wilcox Family Farms is one of the largest and oldest egg producers in the Pacific Northwest, going back four generations. Many smaller-scale egg producers sell their eggs to local grocers and at farmers’ markets. The Washington State Department of Health offers nutrition and food safety information about eggs.

DID YOU KNOW?
Mushrooms produce vitamin D when exposed to sunlight, just as people do! Although all mushrooms contain vitamin D, growers can increase that level simply by exposing them to sunlight or a sunlamp. Mushrooms’ plant sterol, ergosterol, converts to vitamin D when exposed to ultraviolet light. Just five minutes can significantly increase the amount of this important vitamin.

And speaking of mushrooms...schools that serve great mushroom recipes or blends can enter a contest to receive grant awards of $1,500 to $5,000 or 25 mushroom-growing kits. Details of the Mushroom Council’s “Blend the Rules” recipe contest are on the WSDA Farm to School grant and funding page. Deadline is April 20, 2017.

EAT TOGETHER EAT BETTER – Family Meals Focus
Because our readers have told us that Family Meals is a hot topic, in the May 2011 issue we began a small section on recent news relating to this topic and our long-standing signature program, Eat Together, Eat Better.

Our neighbors to the north are busy promoting family meals. In a touching video Canada’s Presidents’ Choice encourages people to eat together. They are running a social media campaign #EatTogether for Canadians to submit their own photos of people eating together.

OUR MISSION: The Nutrition Education Network coordinates nutrition education efforts to communicate consistent, positive and relevant messages to increase awareness of healthful and enjoyable eating among low-income families. Energize is one way that the Network shares information and resources to accomplish this mission.

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