



Extension Snapshot

WORKING WITH YOUTH

The Peoria County office employs eight EFNEP (Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program) Program Assistants who work with low income homemakers who have young children in the home and low income youth groups in agencies and schools. Last year EFNEP worked with a total of 1,373 youth in 57 groups.

How do youth groups work?

Most groups meet on a weekly basis after the end of the school day for about an hour at their agency or school. They have a short nutrition program, a discussion period, physical activity period, and a healthy snack. Once a month the Program Assistants cook a hands-on healthy recipe with the group.

Some of the topics for older youth (grades 5th-8th) include:

- Get Up & Move
- Helpings vs. Servings
- Are You Label Able?
- Tastes Great, Less Fat
- Make Drinks Count
- Snacks
- Your Fast Food Order



Why are these groups important for inner-city youth?

They give children a sense of belonging and of having a positive adult role model to interact with them. The groups also encourage children to try new foods and teach them basic nutrition, healthy lifestyles, and the importance of physical activity.

A Program Assistant recently received a handmade card from a student she had taught for over five years. It read, "Thank you for being like a mother to me and teaching me to cook."

For more information about the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program in the Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit, please contact Margaret Cover, Extension Educator, EFNEP, at mcover@illinois.edu or 309-685-3140.

