

NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

Accomplishment Report – FY2015 | An In-Depth Review of the Year

ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM

AUBURN UNIVERSITY, ALABAMA

Executive Summary

SNAP-Ed Takes a Comprehensive, Multi-level Statewide Approach

Limited-resource individuals, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients, are disproportionately affected by obesity and obesity-related diseases. A key strategy for tackling obesity and health issues is reaching the SNAP population through SNAP-Ed. A successful program should be a comprehensive, multi-level, evidence-based intervention that impacts each level of the Social Ecological Model to shape individual food and physical activity choices, and ultimately, change a culture.

Alabama SNAP-Ed Reaches Individuals and Environments through Body Quest, a childhood obesity prevention program for third graders and parents. Pre and post data show Body Quest students eat more servings of fruits and vegetables through the School Lunch Program. For students at home, the Body Quest parent intervention increases child vegetable consumption using parental modeling of vegetable consumption and accessibility. Findings show parents: (1) made the home environment more “vegetable friendly” by increasing accessibility of vegetables and modeling vegetable consumption and (2) reported a significant increase in student daily vegetable consumption.

Alabama SNAP-Ed Impacts Sectors of Influence with a social marketing campaign promoting positive parental modeling of healthy behaviors. The campaign included 47 billboards strategically placed in low-income communities near Body Quest schools. A total of 36,595,920 impressions were made on individuals living in the communities during the 12-week campaign. Phone survey results of adults living in communities where billboards were posted showed that 66% recalled seeing at least one billboard and reported significant increases in intentions to eat more fruits and vegetables, be more physically active and eat more family meals in the next six months.

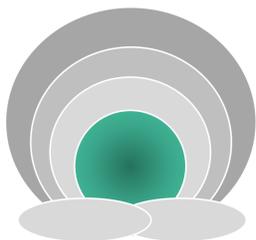
Alabama SNAP-Ed Partners for Changes in Cultural Norms with Alabama Preventing and Reducing Obesity: Helping to Engage Alabamians for Long-term Health (ALProHealth). SNAP-Ed is working with other Extension and community individuals to prevent and reduce obesity. Community Coalitions have been formed to increase healthy food and physical activity access in 14 Alabama counties with adult obesity rates of greater than 40%. The goal of ALProHealth is to increase healthy behaviors by igniting grass root behavioral, environmental, system and policy changes. SNAP-Ed educators are integral members of each of the 14 ALProHealth Community Coalitions.

In summary, “Alabama won’t look the same in three years.” Based on Body Quest and the partnership between SNAP-Ed and ALProHealth, it is possible to visualize a healthier Alabama. The accomplishments and successes detailed in this report would not be possible without the dedication of the NEP Team.

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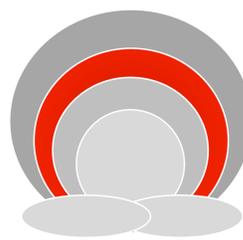
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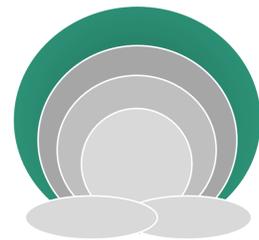
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ENVIRONMENTAL
SETTINGS



SECTORS OF
INFLUENCE



SOCIAL AND CULTURAL
NORMS AND VALUES

The Challenge

Alabama has among the highest obesity rates and obesity-related disease rates in the nation. Environmental barriers, such as limited access to healthy food and physical activity opportunities, make it difficult to achieve lasting change. Limited-resource individuals, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients, are disproportionately affected by these barriers. A key strategy for tackling obesity and health issues in Alabama is reaching the SNAP population through SNAP-Ed, locally known as the Nutrition Education Program.

The Solution

The Nutrition Education Program through Alabama Extension at Auburn University (AU) is reaching Alabama's vulnerable SNAP population. In fiscal year 2015 (FY15), 76,000 individuals were reached with direct contacts. Notably, approximately 9,000 of the contacts were reached with 15 classes through Body Quest, an evidence-based statewide intervention.

Two primary methods were used to impact lives of NEP clients. First, NEP used Policy, Systems and Environmental (PSE) strategies to increase access and appeal for healthy foods and physical activity in low income communities across the state. Second, Body Quest, a comprehensive, multi-level intervention, was implemented to reach beyond individual education to impact the cultural norms of Alabamians.

The Impacts

Policy, Systems and Environmental Changes

Policy, Systems and Environmental change is a new way of thinking about improving health in a community. It means expanding the vision beyond using direct education to influence an individual's food choice behavior. Nutrition and other Extension educators now work with community partners to make healthier food and physical activity more accessible, so that individuals are more likely to make healthier choices.

The ultimate goal is to improve the quality of life of the SNAP-Ed population by reducing and preventing obesity. This requires a culture shift and long-term intervention.

With the right solution, Alabama will not look the same in three years.



Examples of PSE changes are highlighted throughout this accomplishment report. Look for the PSE icon to quickly find these examples.



JOBS Individuals Receive Credit for Working in a Community Garden

Policy, Systems and Environmental change can start with one person, but requires a network of actively engaged partners to be successful. Mary Shewmaker, NEP educator in Cherokee County, saw an opportunity to increase healthy food access in her community by starting a demonstration garden. Mary's vision was realized by partnering with Cherokee County's JOBS program to classify working in the demonstration garden as a Community Employment Activity for recipients of Family Assistance benefits. This means that JOBS workers receive employment credit for hours worked in the garden. JOBS workers learned to grow and prepare their own vegetables, and even were allowed to take home food from the garden.

Based on post-survey data, JOBS workers had positive experiences working in the garden. Moreover, all participants demonstrated improvements in diet and physical activity. This year, 30% of Cherokee County JOBS workers and many community members benefited from working in the garden. Future plans include partnering with the local Housing Authority to start similar gardens at several public housing complexes.



NEP partnered with Master Gardeners, Alabama Department of Human Resources, Cherokee County JOBS Task Force, City of Centre, Cherokee County Detention Center and Cherokee County Public Library to secure donated land, water, gardening materials and volunteers to build and maintain the demonstration garden.



Friendship Opens the Door to New Possibilities in a Rural Convenience Store

Convenience stores may hold the key to improving healthy food access in rural Alabama. Washington County NEP educator, Gina Trosclair, approached her high school friend Holly Jordan, owner of 2 local convenience stores, with ideas for stocking shelves with more appealing and healthier options. Her goal was to make it easy for consumers to make good choices. Jordan's Mini Mart and Fillin' Station convenience stores are located in Wagarville (population 3,353) and Chatom (1,193); with more than 25% (1,150) of the population shopping at these stores each day. Gina completed food assessments for both stores and found only 8 items in either store met the Good Choice designation from the Alabama Department of Public Health. Holly shared Gina's vision for a healthier Alabama and they are now working together to provide healthier food and beverage options, plan promotional events and create appealing displays and signage. A friendship that started many years ago has developed into a key partnership for improving the health of a community.



This photo was taken during an initial food assessment at Jordan's Mini Mart. Gina and Holly have identified areas for significant improvement.



Boys & Girls Club Makes the Good Choice

NEP educator, Tawnya Kirkland, realizes that redesigning an environment can improve healthy food access and make the Good Choice the easy choice. Tawnya has been working with Shcaron Peters, director of Chattahoochee Courts Boys & Girls Club in Barbour County, and the vendors who stock machines to revamp the facility's vending machines to feature healthy items.

Tawnya is partnering with Alabama Department of Public Health to provide Good Choice signage and vending machine stickers that will indicate healthy choices to kids purchasing after school snacks. In the meantime, she provides a healthy food and beverage tasting twice a week for students to give an alternative to purchasing calorie-dense foods from the on-site snack and soda vending machines. According to Tawnya, "The kids get off the bus and run down the hall to see what we have to taste. We serve water, and provide a vegetable or fruit tasting. We serve snow peas and carrots with fat-free Ranch dressing, light popcorn, or apples and grapes with yogurt. About 26 kids come each time, **and most of them choose our foods.** It's exciting to see that when kids have a choice, they choose the healthy option."

Meagan Taylor harvests fresh okra from the community garden to donate to the food pantry.



Creating Healthy Food Access in a Time of Need

While 8,000 recipients of the Help Center food pantry in Lauderdale County benefit from emergency food, the opportunity to have fresh fruits and vegetables was minimal until recently. When NEP educator, Meagan Taylor, recognized this need, she immediately went to work to create access for fresh produce at the pantry. First, she recruited the local Farmers Market director to work with farmers to provide the pantry with any fresh produce surplus. Second, Meagan partnered with the Lauderdale Extension Community Garden to provide fresh produce to the pantry directly from the garden. In its first month, the garden donated **28 pounds of fresh vegetables** to those seeking emergency food. Meagan's actions have engaged stakeholders to create a sustainable and practical improvement at the food pantry in the form of more fresh food options.



Farm-tas-tic! Eat Local Foods

It was not surprising that NEP educator Chasity Little was asked by Melody Barton, Farmers Market manager, to help promote the first Farmers Market in the rural town of Section in Jackson County. Chasity's direct link to SNAP participants made her a logical choice for spreading the word about this new access point for healthy food. Through her relationship with the Farmers Market Authority, "Fresh Garden Produce" signage was provided free of charge. Each Friday, 9 vendors serve approximately 90 customers. For a town of only 769 people with a median income well below the state average, this is a "farm-tas-tic" turnout! Older patrons are given applications to the Senior Voucher Program. Chasity distributes reusable NEP fruit and vegetable shopping bags and encourages patrons to return and fill the bags again; thereby, promoting growth and sustainability of the Section Farmers Market for this season and many seasons to come.



Fresh Garden Produce signage for Jackson County Farmers Market



A Flourishing Partnership: Community Garden and Food Policy Council

Houston County NEP educator, Trina Walker, plays an active role in her community in her spare time as a volunteer at Aunt Katie's Community Garden. Michael Jackson, co-founder of the garden, has employed students from the Hawk Houston Boys & Girls Club to work in the garden as part of a 5-week summer program. Trina is now combining her passion with her profession by conducting weekly food demonstrations for 40-50 summer youth using fresh produce from the garden. Veggie Stir-Fry, using fresh okra and tomatoes from the garden, and Fresh Salsa, using fresh tomatoes and onions, are favorites.

Through Trina's efforts, children are repeatedly exposed to fresh vegetables, a technique used to increase vegetable consumption of youth. Michael and Trina are taking their partnership beyond the garden by building one of only a few Food Policy Councils in Alabama. Though still in its infancy, this Food Policy Council will match food producers with markets to support locally grown food and ultimately, advance community health and food security.



Trina Walker and a nutrition intern serve samples from the garden at the "Taste Table." A NEP recipe, Summer Chicken, features fresh tomatoes from Aunt Katie's Community Garden.



NEP Educator Spotlight

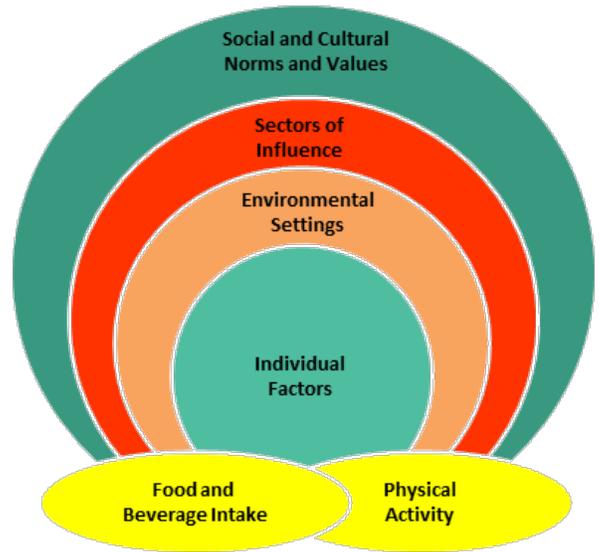
Tawnya Kirkland, NEP Educator in Henry and Barbour Counties, was chosen to receive a Super Citizen Hero Award at the Eufaula Elementary School for her Body Quest education with 3rd graders. She was selected by one of the teachers to be recognized as a hero for the Liberty Legacy Program at the elementary school. She was selected along with other heroes such as the Fire Marshall, Mayor, a retired war veteran and several school officials. Tawnya exemplifies what superior Extension work is all about, connecting with communities and families and improving lives.



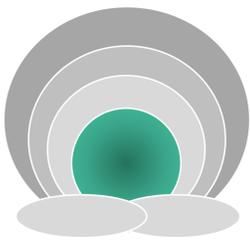
BODY QUEST

A COMPREHENSIVE, MULTI-LEVEL INTERVENTION

A perfect example of an evolution of a comprehensive multi-level intervention is Body Quest, a childhood obesity prevention initiative. NEP began implementing Body Quest six years ago as a school-based effort to prevent and reduce childhood obesity. As the federal FNS SNAP-Ed guidelines began to more strongly promote a comprehensive, societal approach to obesity prevention through the Social Ecological Model (SEM), Body Quest evolved to meet this challenge. During FY10 - FY15, Body Quest has grown into the comprehensive multi-level initiative that uses community and public health approaches to address all levels of the SEM.



Body Quest impacts each level of the Social Ecological Model to shape individual food and physical activity choices, and ultimately, change a culture.



ALABAMA SNAP-ED REACHES INDIVIDUALS

Body Quest positively impacts student's fruits and vegetables consumption through the School Lunch Program.

All corners of the state are touched with an innovative, youth initiative, Body Quest. This flagship initiative of NEP is a childhood obesity prevention program for third graders in schools with 50% or more of students receiving free or reduced lunches. Alabama's third graders are empowered to make healthier choices during a 15-week intervention.

The curriculum consists of a battery of interactive, colorful and animé-style materials including seven nutrition iPad apps that allow youth to be reached and energized in new ways. All materials are based on the Experiential Learning Theory, behaviorally-focused and developmentally appropriate. www.BodyQuest.aces.edu

The gold standard for determining the effectiveness of Body Quest in FY15 was to determine fruit and vegetable consumption of third graders at pre-assessment and 15 weeks later at post-assessment. Each SNAP-Ed Extension, full-time, nutrition educator (n=32) worked with a minimum of 10, third grade classes. As Body Quest used an impact evaluation design, classes were designated as treatment or control. Treatment students were in different schools from control students. Schools were randomly assigned with one to five classes per school. An Institutional Review Board approved this study.

CULTURE

Community Coalitions prevent obesity

INFLUENCE

Social marketing influences cultural norms

ENVIRONMENT

Parents improve nutrition at home

ENVIRONMENT

School Wellness Committees assess nutrition and physical activity needs

ENVIRONMENT

School gardens increase food and physical activity access

INDIVIDUAL

3rd graders eat more fruits and vegetables

Body Quest generated a high level of participation from third graders. Of the 325 classes in 55 Alabama counties, 6,233 students were in classes where BQ was offered. Of these students, 86% of students (n = 5,377) consented to participate in Body Quest. There were nearly equal numbers of males (51%) and females (49%). Students were predominately White (54%) or African American (42%).

During the 2014-2015 school year, educators provided 15 weekly, 45-minute Body Quest classes to treatment students. During intervention, six nutrition topics were sequentially taught: trying new foods, food groups, balanced meals, food nutrients, healthy snacks and extending the fruit and vegetable message to others. At every class, fruits and vegetables were emphasized. During the six, educator-led lessons, instruction included lectures and interactive activities. In the following week, a reinforcement lesson was taught via one of seven iPad apps. For treatment students only, tastings of six vegetables were provided at alternating classes and family members received weekly take-home activities. Control students completed the assessments, but had no intervention, fruit and vegetable tastings or family take-home messages until the post-assessment was completed.

Students completed What's for Lunch, a checklist for foods and beverages available through the School Lunch Program, immediately after lunch for five consecutive days during pre- and post-weekly assessments. Students' self-reported consumption was defined as eating the portion or serving of each food and beverage provided by the School Lunch Program.

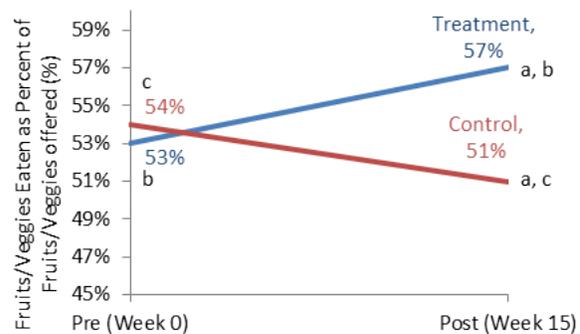
For statistical analyses of What's for Lunch, all fruits and vegetables were collapsed into one category. The percentage of fruits and vegetables eaten by students each week was calculated by dividing the sum of all fruits and vegetables students ate every day of the week (excluding those who hadn't eaten a school lunch on any given day) by the sum of fruits and vegetables offered by the school that week. Changes in fruit and vegetable consumption of students were analyzed within (t-test) and between (ANOVA) treatment and control groups.

At the end of Body Quest:

Treatment students consumed more fruits and vegetables offered through the School Lunch Program.

Without Body Quest intervention, control students ate less of the offered fruits and vegetables.

Table 1. School Lunch Program: Fruit and Vegetable Consumption of Body Quest Students at Pre- and Post-Assessments.



a) $F(1, 317) = 52.21, p < .001$, b) $t = -5.57, p < .001$; c) $t = 4.45, p < .0001$

As illustrated in Table 1, treatment students at pre-assessment ate 53% (10.01 servings per week) of the fruits and vegetables offered from the School Lunch Program; this increased to 57% (10.35 servings per week) after the intervention ($t = -5.57, p < .001$). Control students ate 54% (10.44 servings per week) of the fruits and vegetables offered from the School Lunch Program at pre-assessment; this decreased to 51% (9.95 servings per week) at post-assessment ($t = 4.45, p < .001$).

When compared to control students, treatment students consumed more fruits and vegetables offered through the School Lunch Program at the end of Body Quest.

At pre- and post-assessments, fruits and vegetables offered and consumed were not significantly different between treatment and control students. At pre-assessment, fruit and vegetable consumption was similar (nonsignificant) for treatment and control students (Table 1). At post-assessment, treatment students had a significantly ($F(1, 317) = 52.21, p < .0001$) greater consumption of fruits and vegetables compared to those of control students. In summary, just offering fruits and vegetables alone isn't enough to get students to eat them. Control students ate fewer fruits and vegetables throughout the course of the school year. In contrast, treatment students who participated in Body Quest consumed more fruits and vegetables at the end of the intervention compared to the beginning of the intervention.

Findings support that Body Quest is not only beneficial, but necessary, to motivate students to continue to eat more fruits and vegetables offered through the School Lunch Program.



ALABAMA SNAP-ED IMPROVES ENVIRONMENTS

Body Quest helps parents make the home environment more "vegetable-friendly" for their third-graders.

Alabama SNAP-Ed reaches beyond **individuals** (third graders) to positively change **environmental settings**. It is recognized that parents are the gatekeepers for good nutrition in the home. With a concentrated effort by parents, chances increase that children will consume vegetables at home. In general, in-depth school nutrition interventions for parents show limited results, partially because of parental time restrictions. The goal of Body Quest Parent was to determine the effectiveness of a streamlined parent intervention through the home on parental modeling of vegetable consumption and also home vegetable accessibility to increase child vegetable consumption at home.

In FY15, parents of Body Quest students were invited to simultaneously participate in Body Quest Parent (BQP) during a 4-month period. Only parents with treatment third graders could be treatment parents; similarly control parents matched control students.

Of the 3,567 parents who consented to participate in Body Quest Parent, a sample of treatment parents (n = 794) and control parents (n = 459) were evaluated using pre- and post-phone assessments. Control parents were involved in pre- and post-assessments, but received intervention education and materials after the post-assessment.

Treatment parents participated as "recipe testers." Parents received a series of 6 inexpensive, easy-to-prepare vegetable recipes to test with their children at home. The value of each kid-friendly recipe was the inclusion of methods of hiding or adding vegetables to kid-favorite dishes. Some examples include hiding cauliflower in mashed potatoes, adding small pieces of broccoli to macaroni and cheese and julienned zucchini into spaghetti.

NEP educators were an integral aspect of BQP. They engaged treatment students weekly on what BQP activities were occurring in the home. As part of Body Quest in the school, they demonstrated each recipe to treatment students to illustrate ease of recipe preparation. They instructed students to share this information with their parents and suggested ways that

students could help with recipe preparation. They provided students with all materials to take home such as recipes, interactive discussion prompts, family activities and educational teaching tools.

A BQP texting initiative for treatment parents disseminated additional information, nutrition tips and action prompts to increase vegetable consumption in the home. The texting program overcame typical time and transportation barriers that parents face with nutrition programs. Texting programs provide resources using a vehicle already integrated into daily lives, eliminating the need to attend classes or parent nights.

Treatment parents are actively engaged in making veggie-rich recipes and using text messaging prompts.

The combination of simple, fun and interactive home-based education was well-received by parents as indicated by continued involvement until the study ended. Recipes were sent home every other week over a 15-week period; however, no financial or food aid was provided for making the recipe at home. Using their own resources, more than 50% of parents reported making the recipes at home within 2 weeks of receiving each recipe (Table 2). Parents stayed engaged with the Recipe Tester model until the end.

Table 2. More Than Half of Treatment Parents Voluntarily Made Each Recipe

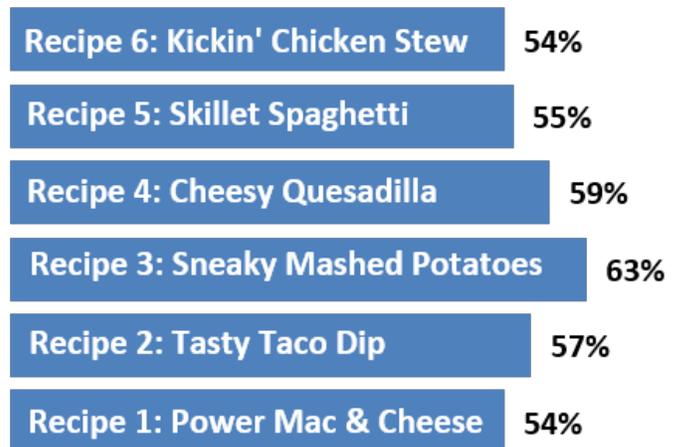
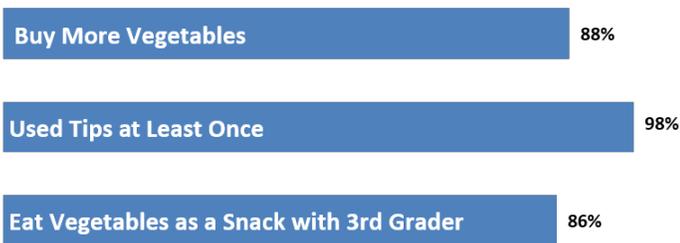


Table 3. Text Messages Motivated Parents to Make Positive Changes

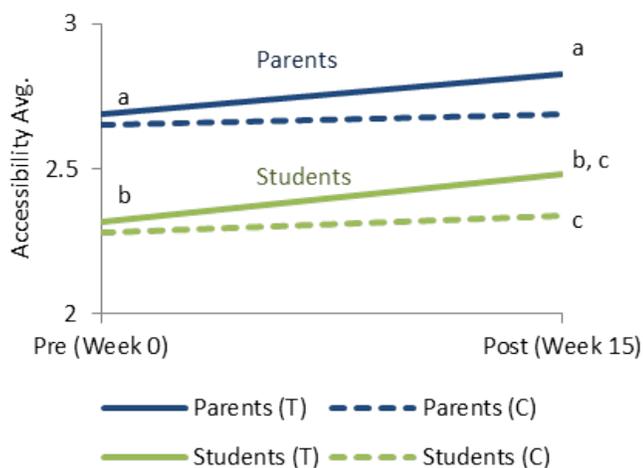


Treatment parents enjoyed receiving the text messages and were motivated to make positive changes. In a post-survey texting poll, 100% of parents said they enjoyed the Body Quest texts and 92% would recommend it to a friend. As shown in Table 3, a high percentage of parents reported buying more vegetables after Body Quest, using tips at least once and eating vegetables as a snack with their third-grader. Parents could voluntarily opt out of the texting program at any time, but 76% chose to continue receiving text messages for the entire course of the study. Even after 9 months, 33% of participants continue to receive texts.

At the end of Body Quest:

Treatment parents made the home environment more “vegetable friendly” by increasing accessibility of vegetables and modeling vegetable consumption for their third graders. As a result of these changes at home, treatment parents reported a significant increase in student daily vegetable consumption.

Table 4. Treatment Parents Make Vegetables More Accessible to Children.

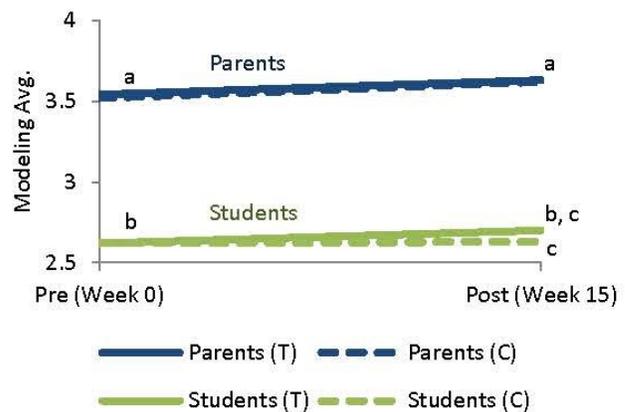


a) $t = -.22, p < .01$; b) $t = -8.31, p < .001$; c) $F(1, 310) = 22.93, p < .001$

As a result of Body Quest Parent, treatment parents made two changes that made the home environment more vegetable-friendly.

First, treatment parents increased accessibility of vegetables in the home for their third graders (Table 4). **Accessibility** of vegetables refers to storage in places children can easily reach and in forms children can easily eat. For example, cut-up fresh vegetables stored in a clear container on a lower shelf in the refrigerator are more accessible to children.

Table 5. Treatment Parents Ate Vegetables with Their Children.



a) $t = -3.10, p < .01$; b) $t = -5.84, p < .001$; c) $F(1, 310) = 1.74, p < .001$

Second, treatment parents modeled vegetable consumption by enjoying vegetables with their third graders (Table 5). **Parental Modeling** of vegetable consumption can help children develop a preference for vegetables. When parents enjoy eating vegetables with their children, it sends a positive message that influences children’s consumption habits.

At the end of BQ, treatment parents indicated that they felt the demand for vegetables in the home from family, including the student, had significantly increased compared to before BQ ($t = -5.87, p < .001$) and compared to control parents ($F(1, 861) = 28.18, p < .001$). Treatment parents reported that family members thought they should serve vegetables more often at home. Student data supported this increased demand for vegetables reported by parents. Treatment students reported significant increases in behaviors related to vegetable consumption, including not only eating vegetables at snack, lunch and supper, but also asking their parents to buy their favorite vegetables and to have vegetables within reach in the home compared to before BQ ($t = -10.11, p < .001$) and compared to control students ($F(1,310) = 55.66, p < .001$).

Student overall daily vegetable consumption was evaluated by asking parents to report on child intake. Treatment parents reported a significant increase from 2 to 2.22 servings of vegetables in their third grader's daily vegetable intake after BQ compared to before BQ ($t = -3.43, p < 0.001$).

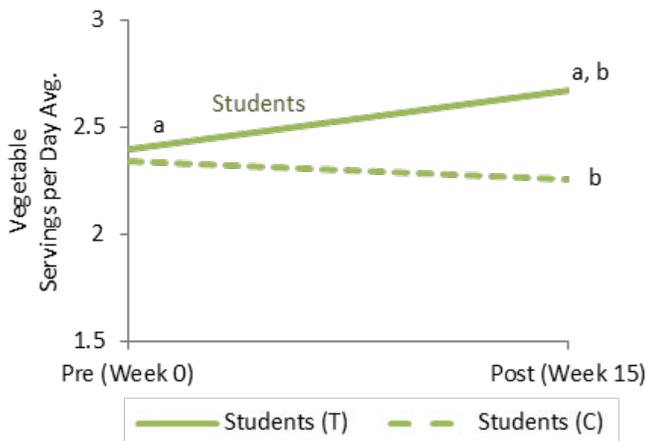
At the end of Body Quest:

Treatment parents reported a significant increase in the amount of daily vegetable servings their child consumed at home.

Students also were asked to report on daily vegetable intake. Treatment students reported a significant increase in daily vegetable intake after BQ compared to before BQ and compared to control students (Table 6).

Treatment students also reported eating more vegetables in a day at home and school.

Table 6. Treatment Students Ate More Vegetables in a Day.



a) $t = -5.72, p < .001$; b) $F(1, 310) = 47.34, p < .0001$

Policy, Systems and Environmental Strategies Impact Environmental Changes in NEP

The comprehensive, multi-level Body Quest approach incorporated PSE changes through collaboration with school leaders, parents and students, which allowed individuals to make healthy choices for diet and physical activity. Two examples of PSE activities coupled with Body Quest are provided in this section.



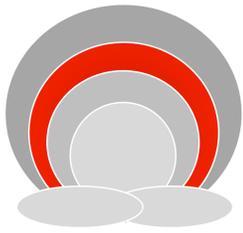
Serving Up a Platter of Love

Wilcox County has the highest food insecurity rate in Alabama (32%). All students in the five public schools in Wilcox County receive a free lunch from the School Lunch Program. Wilcox County is one of the top 10 poorest counties in the US. Of the adults, 48.9% are obese. In school year 2014-2015, NEP educator and community champion Carolyn Rothschild knew she could make a difference by forming a School Wellness Committee at her Body Quest school, F.S. Ervin Elementary. During monthly meetings, one of Carolyn's roles is engaging limited-resource parents to think of quick, low-cost ways to prepare family favorites in more nutritious ways. One of her recipes puts a healthy twist on an Alabama favorite: fried catfish. Carolyn equips parents with healthy cooking skills using cost-effective, local food. For example, she teaches them to prepare Alabama farm-raised catfish fillets by seasoning with Accent and lemon juice instead of salt and batter, and then bakes the filets instead of frying them. Carolyn's food demonstrations are always a huge hit with parents, teachers and school administrators. Carolyn also invites committee members and other community citizens to glean fruits and vegetables on her farm that produces year-round. Carolyn is a community champion who works tirelessly to improve healthy food access in this impoverished area.



Growing Collards in a Novel School Garden Increases Vegetable Accessibility

School gardens can be a great way to improve access to fresh, locally grown produce for students. In Macon County, NEP educator, Dominguez Hurry, partnered with the Alabama Agricultural Development Authority (AADA) to reach the 145 students at the DC Wolfe Elementary School through a school garden. At DC Wolfe, 100% of students receive free lunch from the School Lunch Program. AADA installed plasticulture, a horticultural practice that reduces water loss, insects and weeds, making the garden much easier to maintain. Mr. Hurry taught nutrition to the third graders who worked in the garden using the obesity prevention curriculum, Body Quest. This initiative has been shown to successfully increase vegetable consumption at school lunch, where collards from the garden will be served after harvest. NEP also provided technical assistance through the evaluation of students' gardening and nutrition behavior changes. This partnership has since expanded to growing strawberries at another Body Quest School, George Washington Carver Elementary, which also has 100% of students receiving free lunch.

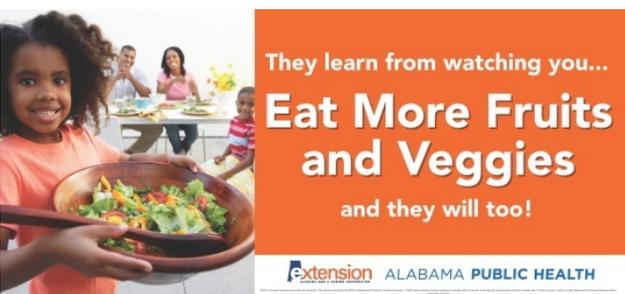


ALABAMA SNAP-ED IMPACTS SECTORS OF INFLUENCE

A social marketing campaign extends Body Quest messaging to promote positive parent modeling to eat more fruits and vegetables, be active and eat meals together.

Body Quest extends **individual** (youth) and **environmental** (parent) strategies by positively changing **sectors of influence** using a statewide social marketing campaign. In FY15, the campaign included 47 billboards strategically placed in low-income communities near Body Quest schools and other SNAP-Ed eligible schools in 30 Alabama counties. Billboards displayed three different messages over 12 weeks. A total of **36,595,920 impressions** were made on individuals living in the communities during the 12-week campaign. The campaign was supported by two NEP implementing agencies: Auburn University NEP and Alabama Department of Public Health.

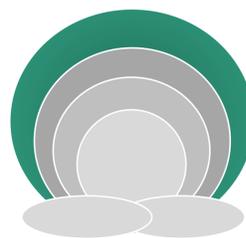
Billboards reinforced messages of modeling fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity and cooking meals together. The three consumer-tested messages were:



A cross-sectional phone survey was conducted with adults (n = 4,928) living in communities where billboards were posted. Of these individuals, 66% recall seeing at least one billboard and 34% did not recall seeing any billboards. For all three messages, respondents who recalled seeing the billboards reported significant increases in intentions to eat more fruits and vegetables, be more physically active and eat more family meals in the next six months compared to respondents who did not recall seeing the billboards (Table 7).

Table 7. Intentions of 4,928 Respondents in a Social Marketing Phone Survey

Intended Behavioral Change	Recall	No Recall	Statistical Significance
Eat more fruits and vegetables	69%	62%	t= -2.03, p <0.05
Engage in more physical activity	58%	49%	t= -2.48, p =0.01
Eat more family meals together	42%	33%	t= -2.55, p= 0.01



ALABAMA SNAP-ED PARTNERS FOR CHANGES IN CULTURAL NORMS

Alabama Preventing and Reducing Obesity: Helping to Engage Alabamians for Long-term Health (ALProHealth)

Making positive changes within the final level of Social Ecological Model, **cultural norms**, is the hardest to achieve. The Nutrition Education Program, mainly through Body Quest, is working with other Extension and community individuals on a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) grant to implement evidence-based PSE strategies. The initiative, Alabama Preventing and Reducing Obesity: Helping to Engage Alabamians for Long-term Health (ALProHealth), aims to prevent and reduce obesity by supporting Community Coalitions that focus on health and wellness in 14 Alabama counties with adult obesity rates of greater than 40 percent. The 3-year goal of ALProHealth is to increase healthy behaviors by igniting grass root behavioral, environmental, system and policy changes.

Not only does Body Quest fulfill some of the Extension educational efforts of ALProHealth, but NEP educators are integral members of the 14 ALProHealth Community Coalitions. Educators serve two technical assistance roles. First, educators are school liaisons to Community Coalitions due to existing relationships, expertise and past working history. Second, they act as SNAP Champions to insure SNAP-related concerns and disparities are addressed.

ALProHealth is conducted in 14 Alabama counties as defined by CDC. They include **Barbour**, Bibb, **Bullock**, Chambers, Coosa, Crenshaw, Cullman, **Escambia**, **Greene**, **Lowndes**, **Macon**, **Pickens**, **Sumter** and **Wilcox**. The nine counties in bold print also are classified as persistently poor. All of the ALProHealth counties are rural; rural areas have greater obesity rates compared to urban areas.

ALProHealth targeted adults and youth at the community level. The total reach of the CDC grant for FY15 was 15% of the total population for the 14 counties. Total population of the 14 rural counties is 326,646. The 14 selected communities within each of the 14 counties have a combined population of 118,819; 61% White, 37% Black; and 50% female. The percent of families in poverty ranged from 15.1 to 32.8, average = 26.7%. The percent of individuals in poverty ranged from 18.1 to 39.2, average = 34.5%.

After an extensive community needs assessment for most of Year 1, Community Coalitions self-determined at least one research-based strategy for each of the following areas. Accomplishments and PSE changes are reported after each strategy.

1. Provide education and promotional support to environmental approaches.

Of the 14 counties:

- 3 Coalitions established a new community garden.
- 3 Coalitions enhanced an existing community garden to improve healthy food access.
- 4 Coalitions conducted a tour of local farms to educate community members on growing techniques.
- All counties participated in Body Quest for third graders (n=926) in the schools and Body Quest Parent (n=747) as Recipe Testers. There were 64 classes in 22 schools in the 14 rural counties.
- 6 counties had a series of 3 billboard messages for a 12-week period for a total of 4,732,144 impressions.

2. Implement evidence- or practice-based strategies to increase consumption of healthy food and beverages.

Of the 14 counties:

- 6 Coalitions began work to establish a new Farmers Market.
- 3 Coalitions enhanced and provided support to an existing Farmers Market.
- 2 Coalitions produced a guide for buying produce directly from local farmers.
- 1 Coalition provided refrigerators and freezers to two food banks that combined, serve 700 families per month. This allowed them to take in large quantities of donated fresh produce to process and store.

3. Implement evidence- or practice-based strategies to increase physical activity.

Of the 14 counties:

- 12 Coalitions initiated strategies to develop or enhance physical activity sites by purchasing individual fitness equipment.
- 3 Coalitions created safe environments for physical activity by purchasing lights, fencing and security systems.
- 4 Coalitions promoted or established a community fitness group.
- 1 Coalition developed a playground.

Healthy Kids Need a Safe Playground

During ALProHealth Year 1 (FY15), extensive needs assessments for healthy food and physical activity access were conducted. One area of need identified was the playground at FS Ervin Elementary School in Wilcox County, one of the 10 poorest counties in the USA. The playground received a low score of 2 out of 10. NEP Educator, Carolyn Rothschild, teaches Body Quest to students and parents at FS Ervin. Of the students, 100% receive a free school lunch. Carolyn saw the need for a School Wellness Committee and was instrumental in its formation. Because Carolyn is active in both the School Wellness Committee and the ALProHealth Coalition, she provides a vital link in the partnership necessary to address the need to improve physical activity access.



Union Springs Mayor Saint Thomas, an ALProHealth Bullock County Coalition member, erects the Body Quest "Be Active" banner as part of renovations to the walking trail.



The playground received a low score of 2 out of 10. The playground equipment is dilapidated and would not be usable on rainy days until the ground dried due to poor ground drainage.

Getting Healthy Bibb County

When a local high school senior in Brent, Alabama wanted to start a community walking group, the ALProHealth Community Coalition for Bibb County was excited to get on board. Of the 4,947 Brent residents, 40% of adults are classified as obese and 18% are SNAP recipients. NEP educator and ALProHealth coalition member, Lisa McCullough, encouraged SNAP recipients to join the social support initiative, Getting Healthy Bibb County. Every Tuesday and Thursday evenings for 6 weeks, 25 people signed in to walk. Lisa set up a hydration station to promote water using the Rethink Your Drink campaign. Through newspaper and social media promotions, the word spread and the number of participants grew each week. Much of the growth was youth at the high school who encouraged the initiative and brought family members to walk. Walkers agree that having a safe nearby place to congregate has made physical activity more fun and sustainable.

Be Active on an ALProHealth Walking Trail

The ALProHealth Coalition partnered with NEP to extend the Body Quest social marketing campaign. The Coalition wanted to place signage near an under-utilized walking trail in the city park to create appeal for physical activity. Dominguez Hurry, NEP educator and ALProHealth Coalition member in Bullock County, felt that one of the Body Quest billboard messages would be perfect. The sign displays the message, "They learn from watching you: Be active and your kids will too." This message encourages family physical activity while drawing attention to the newly renovated walking trail equipped with individual fitness equipment.



A Body Quest banner is displayed at a busy intersection.

In Summary

FY15 has been a very successful and impactful year for AU NEP. Two major types of activities have been implemented by NEP state staff and county professionals. First PSE changes have been an exciting addition to the educational efforts of NEP. Policy, Systems and Environmental changes offer nutrition educators a new way to conduct the business of improving community health. Although NEP education has always taken place in community settings (schools, community gardens, Farmers Markets, JOBS programs, Boys & Girls Clubs and housing authorities), PSE changes provide the necessary supports for true, sustainable culture change to occur.

FY15 was the first year that Body Quest addressed all levels of the SEM. Each level of the SEM framework is important, but the framework is most effective when combined together. Body Quest strengthens individual skills and changes behaviors by providing direct nutrition and physical activity education to youth and adults. Coupled with these “Individual Factors,” it addresses PSE efforts in the “Environmental Settings” such as in homes (Body Quest Parent) and schools (school gardens and School Wellness Committees). Continuing the outward movement into “Sectors of Influence,” a statewide social marketing outdoor campaign that reinforces youth and parent strategies by using three focus group-tested parent modeling messages was implemented. Finally, the outermost sphere, “Social and Cultural Norms and Values,” has become a reality through NEP’s partnership with ALProHealth, an obesity prevention grant to implement PSE changes through CDC and Alabama Extension.

Alabama will not look the same in three years.



Meet the Auburn University Nutrition Education Program Team

As a NEP educator, successes come in many different ways. A young person can talk about how much they enjoy nutrition classes. Parents may share testimonials that children are insisting the family eats a certain vegetable instead of chips. However, some successes are so long term that the impact is beyond our generation. But any successes, however small or large, are the ones that bring about the culture change that NEP is striving to achieve.

Aisha Martin, St. Clair
Angie Woods, Randolph and Chambers
Annette Casteel, Winston and Franklin
Bernadine Ransom-McCaskill, Mobile
Carolyn Rothschild, Monroe and Wilcox
Chasity Little, Jackson and DeKalb
Cheri Huff, Tuscaloosa
Debbie Beverly, Conecuh and Covington
Demetrius Scott, Butler and Lowndes
Desiree Hutcherson-Bates, Jefferson
Dominguez Hurry, Bullock and Macon
Emma Thornton, Cullman and Marshall
Emily Hines, Marion and Walker
Erin Reznicek, Pickens and Sumter
Gina Trosclair, Washington and Clarke
Gladys Blythe, Dallas and Perry

Helen Melton, Hale and Greene
Kathleen Sharp, Mobile
Kathy Johnson, Lamar and Fayette
Lea Huddleston, Calhoun
Lisa McCullough, Chilton and Bibb
Lisa Wood, Pike and Crenshaw
Mary Shewmaker, Cherokee and Cleburne
Meagan Taylor, Lauderdale
Meaghan Robertson, Clay and Talladega
Sheila Dorriety, Geneva and Coffee
Sue Pemberton, Tallapoosa and Coosa
Tammy Glass, Marengo and Choctaw
Tawnya Kirkland, Henry and Barbour
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