



ENERGIZE

a NEWSLETTER for NUTRITION EDUCATORS

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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* shares brief information about programs and materials that support healthful and enjoyable eating.

Energize is intended to...

- ☛ take just five minutes to read.
- ☛ focus on foods from five food groups.
- ☛ appear on the fifth of each month.

Tell Us What's New...

What's new with your organization? To submit news to *Energize*, call Martha Marino 206-817-1466, e-mail martha_marino@yahoo.com.

Deadline for submission is the last day of each month.

Subscription Information

Energize can be sent to you by fax or e-mail on the fifth day of each month. There is no charge.

To order or unsubscribe contact: Christa Albice, WSU Puyallup, 253-445-4541. Fax 253-445-4621, e-mail albice@wsu.edu.

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For more information about the *Nutrition Education Network of Washington* or to access past issues of this newsletter, see <http://nutrition.wsu.edu>.

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ENERGIZE YOUR LIFE!
EAT HEALTHY-BE ACTIVE

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE ENERGIZE SURVEY!
WE APPRECIATE YOUR FEEDBACK.

This Month's Focus:

Food, Nutrition Education, and the Military

For active military personnel and veterans, good nutrition is vitally important, but healthful food may be in short supply, particularly for some veterans and for newly enlisted personnel just starting their military career. In Washington State, we have good examples of successful nutrition education programs targeting these audiences. In this issue of the *Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators*, we focus on some of these shining examples of assisting those who have served our country.

USDA's Food Assistance for the Military – Active military, veterans, and their families may be eligible for federal programs to give them access to nutritious foods. A list geared for those who have served the country includes an overview of programs to help them eat right when the money is tight. Some qualifications may be different from the general population. One example is that base housing or housing payments provided to military personnel is not considered income in some programs. See www.fns.usda.gov/get-involved/military-and-veteran-families

Veterans on the MOVE! – For nearly ten years, a weight management health promotion program called Motivating Overweight/Obese Veterans Everywhere (MOVE!) has helped thousands of veterans achieve a healthier lifestyle. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA or VA) estimates that about 78% of veterans are overweight or obese, putting them at risk for chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. MOVE! encourages healthy eating behavior and physical activity in a multidisciplinary 12-week program. In Washington State, MOVE! classes are offered through the VHA in Mount Vernon, Medical Lake, Bremerton, and Seattle. Dori Omori, RDN at the VA in Seattle, has been involved with these classes for eight years. One of the great rewards in her view is seeing veterans take on a leadership capacity as they are paired with another vet, which gives them a valuable sense of purpose. The teaching team includes dietitians, nurses, physical

therapists, and psychologists. For information about the national MOVE! program, including handouts, videos, resources, videos, and success stories, see www.move.va.gov. (Contact: Dori Omori, RDN, Veterans Administration Nutrition Programs, Seattle, 206-764-2103.)

Eating Smart, Being Active with Veterans – In Renton, nutrition and physical activity classes have been well-received among veterans living in the Compass Veterans Center. Anna Kitchin, Extension Coordinator with *Food Sense*, credits a champion there who works with vets. He had started a weekly healthy living group that also functions as a support group, and reached out to *Food Sense*.

Anna says that *Food Sense* has been conducting an eight-part nutrition education series, *Eating Smart, Being Active*, for two years as part of that weekly group. The physical activity lessons require some adaptation with this audience because of the high instance of mobility issues due to injuries while on active duty. Veterans say they like the nutrition classes because they learn the reasons why some foods are healthier than others, rather than simply a set of rules. Anna suggests that since veterans had to rely on their physical health as part of their military experience, they are receptive to learning about nutrition and activity. Through a partnership with a local food bank, *Food Sense* has picked up many of the foods needed for the cooking classes. When the food bank had a large supply of a certain food– fresh tomatoes or a certain type of pepper, for instance – *Food Sense* staff has demonstrated how to cook with it. Compass Housing Alliance provides transitional housing for formerly homeless veterans and their families. For information about the evidence-based *Eating Smart, Being Active* curriculum, see <http://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/nutrition-food-safety-health/eating-smart-%E2%80%A2-being-active> (Contact: Anna Kitchin, Extension Coordinator, *Food Sense* Program, WSU King County Extension, 206-263-1907, anna.kitchin@wsu.edu)



Source: *Food Sense*, WSU King County Extension



Source: Facebook page, *Breastfeeding in Combat Boots*

WIC on the Naval Base – At the Naval Air Station on Whidbey Island, WIC staff have had broad success in increasing breastfeeding rates among military moms. According to Wende Dolstad, WIC Manager/Coordinator for Community Action of Skagit, the breastfeeding initiation rate among their families is a remarkable 95.7% (up from 95.4% in 2010). When infants are six months of age, 52.6% of moms continue to breastfeed (up from 43.0% in 2010). This exceeds the Surgeon General’s goals in Healthy People 2010 of 25.5%. What makes these rates particularly impressive is that these families are relocated primarily from Southeastern United States, where breastfeeding rates are generally far lower than they are in the Pacific Northwest. WIC on this base offers a breastfeeding peer counseling program, works with the Navy hospital’s lactation support staff person and visiting nurse, and coordinates with other military services.

The needs of military families are different from the civilian population, according to Wende. Being displaced from their friends and family, they are far away from their former support systems, so WIC fulfills a valuable role on base. A new federal regulation may shut down WIC on the base, but Senator Patty Murray and Representative Rick Larsen are fighting to keep it open. The WIC office at NAS Whidbey Island serves about 700 people. (Contact: Wende Dolstad, RD, CD, WIC Manager/Coordinator, Community Action of Skagit, 360-416-7595, WendeD@communityactionskagit.org) Additional resource suggested by Wende: *Breastfeeding in Combat Boots*, www.facebook.com/BreastfeedinginCombatBoots.

Veterans and Farming – Many returning veterans are finding that a career in agriculture is a good fit, according to the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). They can be outside, get their hands in the dirt, and provide a service for the benefit of society. Recognizing the aging population of Washington’s farmers (the average age is 59), building a new generation of operators will be needed to sustain our state’s farms. Kim Eads, WSDA’s Food Assistance program Manager, shares that WSDA is working on several projects with veterans.

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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One example near Lynden is Growing Veterans, a program in which veterans work in a three-acre farm to grow produce for sale and to donate to a food bank. The gardening activities don't just provide valuable training in agricultural skills, they also connect the veterans to each other and to the local community. Some call it "dirt therapy." Kim says that the WSDA is in the process of partnering with the Washington State Soldiers Home



Source: Washington Department of Veterans Affairs

in the Puyallup Valley near Orting to create a farming program that will be self-sustainable. It just broke ground earlier this month. She suggests these valuable resources: WSDA's Veterans and Agriculture in Washington State <http://agr.wa.gov/aginwa/veterans/default.aspx>, Spokane Conservation District Vets on the Farms www.sccd.org/programs/vets-on-the-farms, USDA's outreach to vets and organic farming <http://blogs.usda.gov/2012/05/11/military-veterans-the-next-generation-of-organic-farmers>, and a social network community www.facebook.com/VetsOnTheFarm. (Sources: Kim Eads, Food Assistance Program Manager, WSDA, 360-725-5651, KEads@agr.wa.gov, and Growing Veterans www.grownorthwest.com/2013/11/growing-veterans and <http://growingveterans.org/overview/>.)

WASHINGTON GROWN

Fresh This Month – With dustings (or inches!) of snow already in various parts of Washington State, it's clear that the growing season is well behind us. Now is the time to enjoy local produce that has been stored such as roots or tubers (potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams) and squash or gourds (Delicata, Hubbard, acorn, and many other varieties). And, of course, Washington cranberries! For a fun field trip to learn about how cranberries are grown, visit the Cranberry Museum in Long Beach, <http://cranberrymuseum.com/>.

Spud Safety – Are green potatoes poisonous? It's rare, but some potatoes develop a green tint. That color is caused by high levels of chlorophyll, which by itself is harmless. But it is also a sign that levels of solanine, a toxin that is developed in the potato at the same time as chlorophyll, are present. Solanine can cause nausea, headaches, confusion, convulsions, and neurological problems. Potatoes naturally produce tiny but safe amounts of solanine, which functions as the potato's defense against insects. Levels increase when potatoes are exposed to light and warm temperatures over a prolonged period, preparing the potato to sprout. Most green potatoes never reach the market, but if they are stored improperly, solanine may develop. A green potato can be safe if all of the green area and sprouts are cut off and thrown away. When cutting a potato in half, if the potato's border has any green tone, it's best just to discard it. Once the potato is cooked, if it tastes bitter, it should be thrown away. To prevent the development of solanine, store potatoes in cool, dimly lit areas such as a brown paper bag in the bottom of a refrigerator. Storing potatoes in a dark place in a cool garage or basement would be another safe place, ideally 40 degrees or cooler but not actually freezing. If a person does consume green potatoes or sprouts, because a relatively small amount can be unsafe, it's best to call the National Poison Control Center at 800-222-1222 or 911. The technical term is solanum tuberosum poisoning. To read more, see <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002875.htm>, written by a physician at Virginia Mason Medical Center in Seattle.



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.

Walking the Talk – How do your parent clients talk to their children about food, health, exercise, and weight? In the current issue of the newsletter *Family Meals Focus*, author Jennifer Harris writes that prior to late adolescence, it isn't about *talking* at all, it's about *doing*. By talking about a weight rather than health, parents

may inadvertently create worry and anxiety among their kids. (Source: <http://ellysatterinstitute.org/cms-assets/documents/228548-861610.102-teach-conflict.pdf>.)

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