

# Food Supplement Nutrition Education • University of Maryland Extension FY 12 Annual Report

Maryland SNAP-Ed, known as the Food Supplement Nutrition Education (FSNE) program works to help low-income individuals and families develop healthy eating and physical activity habits. FSNE, a program through the University of Maryland Extension, collaborates with groups across Maryland to offer nutrition education programs to low-income children, adults, and families. Educators and collaborators create opportunities for participants to share nutrition education strategies with peers through a dialogue learning approach. Key nutrition education messages are reinforced through multiple nutrition education sessions. The average number of nutrition education sessions FSNE participants received doubled from three to six sessions over the past two years. Use of social media and technology has been expanded to reinforce messages in timely, relevant ways with participants.

**FSNE made 214,276 direct contacts reaching 20% more Marylanders with nutrition education this year**

FSNE reached over 8,000 low-income adults with healthy food budgeting, physical activity, and family meal planning workshops. Educators collaborated with food banks, farmers' markets, job preparation centers, senior centers, emergency food distribution centers, Judy Centers, and Head Start sites. To help begin healthy nutrition habits early, 82% of participants were youth reached through school, after school, summer, and family programs.

**92% of Maryland programs reach participants with multiple lessons**



**Maryland FSNE reached 43,879 low-income youth and adults in FY12**

**More than 150 partners across Maryland help FSNE reach people where they work and live**

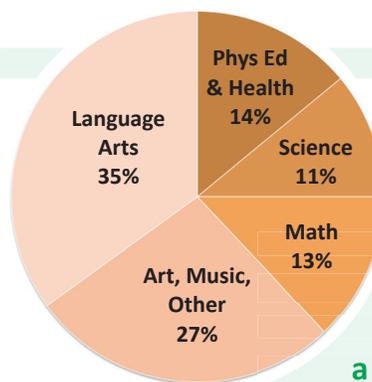


## Partnering with Maryland Schools for Healthy Kids

FSNE continues to offer a 2-credit Maryland State Department of Education approved nutrition education course for teachers. The course provides content and strategies to help teachers integrate nutrition education into school subjects while meeting core standards.



**5,453 students received nutrition education integrated into their curricula by trained teachers**



**Teachers integrate nutrition into a variety of school subjects**

Students receive 9 weekly nutrition education lessons as teachers practiced integrating nutrition into different subject areas during the course. Teachers surveyed for a year following course completion (n=54) continued to integrate nutrition into classroom learning. Most teachers observed their students trying more fruits and vegetables and speaking more positively about eating healthy foods after the integrated lessons.

**"This course has taught me that nutrition education is about being a positive role model and helping our students make choices that will affect the rest of their lives!"**

- Elementary School Teacher



**88% of teachers say their students are tasting more fruits and vegetables**

**"We're making physical activity in the classroom a daily habit!"**

- Elementary School Teacher



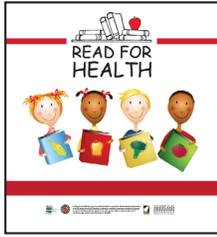
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## Read for Health

Read for Health was developed as a nutrition education curriculum to support a growing focus on Language Arts and reading. The curriculum is adaptable to schools, libraries, Head Start and Judy Centers. Maryland FSNE trained 208 new teachers in the use of Read for Health during FY12. FSNE educators and collaborating teachers reached 10,976 children in 10 Maryland jurisdictions. In this program, children read books on a variety of nutrition topics including farmers' markets, family meals and physical activity, and had the opportunity to taste new and healthy foods. Teachers surveyed (n=86) reported an increase in modeling healthy behaviors in class, making physical activity fun, providing more activity breaks, and providing students with more opportunities to taste healthy foods (Fig A). Teachers connected with parents more frequently by sending home newsletters and healthy recipes and sharing healthy eating information at parent and family events.



## Students Eat Fresh with ReFresh

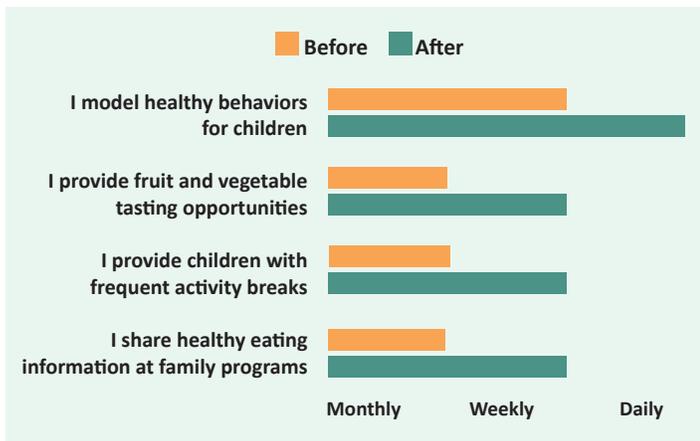
Partnering with Maryland schools and University of Maryland Extension on a Team Nutrition grant helped expand the use of a new Maryland FSNE youth curriculum. The ReFresh curriculum reached 35 teachers and 902 students in low-income schools in its first year of use with FSNE. The lessons are based on the time of year and each month includes a food tasting, journal activity, book reading and hands-on activities.



Evaluation results from a Team Nutrition study of 34 schools in six counties showed that

**schools providing both nutrition education and cafeteria changes showed more consistent and stronger increases in the number of students eating fruits and vegetables during their lunch when compared to schools making changes only to the cafeteria.**

**Figure A. Read for Health teachers change classroom practices (n=86).**



**"Kids were asking parents to buy the new things they had tried in the classroom. The lessons and messages were clearly translating to home."**

- ReFresh Teacher

**"My kids were so much more knowledgeable about what they were eating. They enjoyed learning from Project ReFresh."**

- ReFresh Teacher

**"We made food from Read for Health recipes every day this week to stay healthy!"**

- Head Start Student



**"I now pay attention to what I eat because I know my students notice it."**

- Read for Health Teacher



**"During Read for Health lessons we made a healthy foods grocery list, collages of MyPlate, a seed suitcase, and our own Berry Tale! My students really look forward to our reading time, now!"**

- Read for Health Teacher



## FSNE Helps Marylanders Stretch Food Dollars

FSNE introduced a new curriculum, Healthy Cents, to help individuals make healthy food purchases on limited incomes. Participants learn about ways to include more fruits and vegetables for less, how to save money when eating away from home, how to grow foods to save money, and how to buy healthy snacks on a budget. Twelve Healthy Cents lessons can be delivered individually or as a series. Educators are teaching the curriculum at emergency shelters, food distribution sites, community centers, and Judy Centers. Collaborators are thrilled to help audience members find ways to make their limited dollars go farther while improving their diets.

By collaborating with Share Our Strength, FSNE escorted hundreds of adult program participants to grocery stores for hands-on shopping tours. Participants stated that these trips helped them put healthy shopping strategies they learned about in programs to the test. Grants provided through Share Our Strength enabled participants to purchase \$10 worth of healthy foods as part of a culminating activity.

## Gardening for Nutrition Education



Growing Healthy Habits, a Maryland FSNE gardening and nutrition education curriculum, reached over 2,000 students in FY12. The curriculum emphasizes tasting fruits and vegetables that can be grown in Maryland, and provides students with nutrition information as they learn about growing Maryland produce. Results from nearly 700 student surveys (n=696) show that about half the students try a new fruit or vegetable for the first time through the program. Most teachers surveyed observed their students carrying positive behavioral changes from school to home.

### Eight vegetables youth preferred more after participating in Growing Healthy Habits



**78% of Growing Healthy Habits teachers say their students eat more fruits and vegetables!**



**FSNE helped create 80 school and community gardens**



**150 youth from low-income schools visited farms to see how foods are grown**



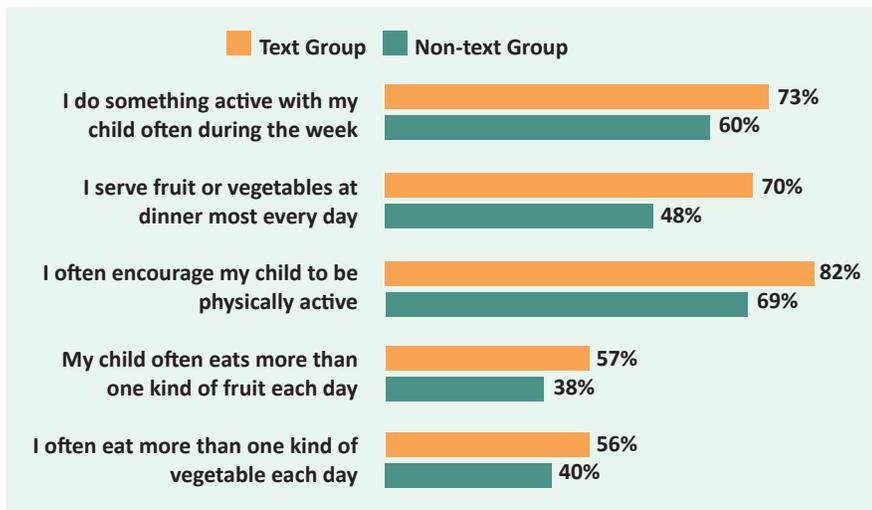
## Social Media Reaching Maryland FSNE Households

Maryland FSNE's Text2BHealthy program complements in-school programming by reaching parents with timely text messages. Messages sent to parents are targeted, actionable "nudges" describing ways they can be positive role models. They are also sent practical ideas for implementing healthy eating behaviors in ways that connect to nutrition education their children have experienced at school. The program has over 1,100 participants after just one year. A parent survey showed 73% of parents in the program take action on messages most of the time. Parents receiving text messages reported more positive health behaviors than those not receiving messages (Figure B).

**"Text2BHealthy gave me tips for new foods and how to prepare them."**

**"Text2BHealthy keeps me informed about healthy ideas and community events."**

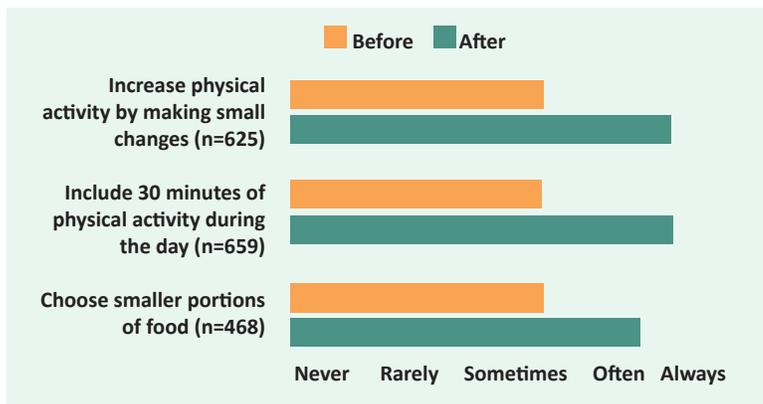
Figure B. Text2BHealthy survey responses about health behaviors at home.



## ACTIVE-ating Marylanders

WalkWays, an 8-week FSNE physical activity and nutrition education curriculum, has reached nearly 900 adult participants. The curriculum is designed to help low-income adult participants increase their physical activity and develop healthy eating habits. As part of the program, participants track how many steps they walk each week. Nudges, rewards, and participant-developed strategies are designed to increase daily walking. Results show that staying in the program works! Participants significantly increased their average number of daily steps. Respondents who remained in the program at least five weeks increased their steps 2½ times more than participants who left the program earlier (Figure C). Participants also reported increasing physical activity, and reducing food portion sizes (Figure D).

**Figure D. Average increase in daily number of steps participants take based on time spent in WalkWays program.**



## Whole-School Nutrition Education

In collaboration with school boards, school administrators and teachers, FSNE is integrating nutrition education into schools using a whole school model. Two examples of FSNE schools using this approach are in Montgomery and Baltimore counties.

In Montgomery County, students engage in multi-year direct nutrition education and whole-school events:

- 1st and 2nd graders participate in Read for Health and are introduced to gardening.
- 3rd graders learn about gardening for nutrition with Growing Healthy Habits.
- 4th graders receive ReFresh lessons that teach about fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- 5th graders are encouraged to do a service project, such as constructing salad tables for 1st graders.

Parents receive weekly text messages and monthly newsletters. The entire school community experiences nutrition education and tastings at school-sponsored family events. FSNE educators support and advise the school Wellness committee.



**Figure C. Average increase in daily number of steps participants take based on time spent in WalkWays program.**



In just two years, Baltimore County's Lansdowne Elementary has made a transformative shift toward integrating nutrition education into the school. Starting with only two teachers, now half of the school's classroom teachers are either integrating nutrition education into their classrooms or are signed up to be trained in FSNE's Integrating Nutrition into the School Curriculum course. Teachers now design their own school-wide nutrition nights, bringing parents and students together around healthy eating and physical activity.

The school principal initiated monthly Read for Health lessons for all kindergarten through third grade classrooms. Classrooms make healthy recipe books and send them home to parents along with the monthly Read for Health parent newsletters. The school encourages students to be physically active by opening the gym before school for lap-running and incorporating running opportunities at recess. The principal has become a strong advocate for nutrition education as a result of positive teacher, student, and parent engagement.