Extension Nutrition Programs Teach at the Summer USDA Lunch Programs

The Situation
The District IV Extension Nutrition Programs have been teaching limited income youth about healthy diets and food safety for many years. We have done food and nutrition 4-H clubs in homes, schools, and neighborhood gathering places. Because many limited income youth go to their local parks for the summer USDA sponsored school lunch programs, we collaborated with the schools to teach nutrition education at the lunch sites after the youth eat.

Our Response
In June of 2003, we piloted our first series of lessons at American Falls, Lava, and Downey and it worked out very well. Then we did programs in Shelley, Grace, Soda Springs, and two sites in Pocatello. We did at least five different activities for each of the food groups to teach youth about the food guide pyramid. Some examples of activities were coloring and cutting out fruit and vegetable puppets that had the nutrient data for that food printed on them. We discussed which fruits and vegetables the children liked and how often they should eat them. The children made a trail mix the day that they learned about grains. Again they tried some different grain products and talked about ways they could include breads and cereals in their meals. The day they learned about protein foods they made a collage picture and a bean bracelet using different colored beans. During the calcium lesson the children made a paper Holstein cow and a cheese puppet and they learned about the importance of calcium in their diets. At each class the children were given something to take home to remind them to tell their parents what they had learned at their nutrition lesson in the park.

Program Outcomes
Parents and school lunch personnel have expressed their gratitude for what we have taught the children this summer about nutrition. A total of 674 children participated in the classes.

The Future: We will continue to work with the same school USDA summer lunch programs next year and teach nutrition concepts to the youth. We would like to reach the children over a six week period of time so we can do a pre-test and post-test to measure impact better. We will be looking at new ideas and curriculum to help improve our teaching methods and will spend more time recruiting youth when we get to the parks.

For More Information
Audrey Liddil, EFNEP/ENP Extension Educator
130 N. 6th
Pocatello, Idaho 83201
208-236-7318
Fax: 208-236-7316
Email: aliddil@uidaho.edu

Karen Barron, EFNEP/ENP 4-H Program Coor.
130 N. 6th
Pocatello, Idaho 83201
Email: efnepiv@uidaho.edu

42-03aliddil-lunch.doc
12/03