District 1 Extension Nutrition Program: Ensuring Families are Food Secure

The Situation
In 2002, the Food Security Institute ranked Idaho 7th in states with the highest levels of food insecurity (13.10% of households). At 4.33% of households, Idaho ranks 6th amongst states with the highest hunger prevalence.

Food insecurity occurs whenever the availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, or the ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies), is limited or uncertain.

Hunger is the uneasy or painful sensation caused by a recurrent or involuntary lack of food and is a potential, although not necessary consequence of food insecurity. Over time, hunger may result in malnutrition.

Food insecurity and hunger are concentrated in low-income households living at 1 or below 130% of poverty.

Our Response
The Extension Nutrition Program, Idaho’s Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program, is a statewide program that targets low-income families and tries to increase the likelihood that the family can, on a limited budget, provide nutritious meals for their family each day of every month. The District 1 ENP program encompasses the 10 northern counties in Idaho. Nutrition Advisors, trained by UI Extension faculty, provide at least 10 home visits and/or one-on-one group sessions educating families and individuals in basic nutrition, stretching their food dollar, food resource management, and food safety.

Program Outcomes
FY2003 data reported District 1 ENP Nutrition Advisors worked with 211 families, taught 1,161 lessons, graduated 42 families, and distributed 37,109 educational handouts.

Seventy-three percent of families reported having enough to eat after receiving education from ENP.

Other behavior changes:
• 75% of families showed improvement in planning meal practices.
• 55% of families showed improvement in comparison-shopping practices.

• 63% of families showed improvement in making a grocery list before grocery shopping.

• 63% of families showed improvement in choosing to eat a lower fat diet.

• 55% of families showed improvement in increasing their vegetable and fruit intake.

• 61% of families showed improvement in keeping a written spending plan.

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