The Sharing of Nutrition Information Increases the Impact

The Situation
Diet related chronic diseases affect many Native Americans on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. High levels of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease decrease the quality and quantity of life for many residents.

Our Response
The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) has had at least one program assistant on the reservation for the last 8 years teaching basic nutrition, meal planning, and food buying, preparation and safety. Gardening has been taught with support from the Extension Educator at the Fort Hall Extension Office. Program managers wonder if the lessons are getting to enough people to make a difference. A true sign of understanding new knowledge is the ability to share it with other people. EFNEP achieves this by clients teaching their families and friends.

Achievements
One young client taking EFNEP lessons said her mother was a cook at a nursing home. After the lessons each week she told her mother about the new things she had learned. The mother was surprised at what she was learning from her daughter. She began applying the information at her work cooking for the nursing home patients.

Another young teen mother said she was sharing her knowledge with the men at the Fire Station where she volunteers. Some of the men were trying to lose weight. They couldn't figure out why they weren't losing weight with all the physical "working out" that they were doing. She found out what they were eating, which turned out to be a lot of meat and extra large portions. She took her serving size lesson handouts to the station and showed them what a normal serving size was. This helped them get their diets in check with balanced meals and smaller serving sizes. Several men lost weight as a result.

After taking the EFNEP nutrition classes at the Chemical Dependency Program, one man announced to his wife that they were changing their eating habits. He wanted his stepchildren to eat better than they had been. One young woman at first appeared quite disturbed with the lessons. She later told the EFNEP Assistant away from the group, that the lessons were interesting, and that she was going to keep all the handouts and information she had received during the lessons to share. Several young men thanked the EFNEP Assistant and announced that they were going the share the information with their wives and girlfriends.

EFNEP has a wide reaching effect in the broader community as clients and their families share the information they have learned.
The Future

EFNEP will continue to reach and teach as many clients on the reservation as funds will permit.

For More Information:

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