

EFNEP Celebrates 25 years

MARGO McDONOUGH
University of Delaware
NEWARK, Del. — "You have to be able to look at the small successes," says Claudia Holden, when asked how she stays so visibly enthusiastic and fiercely committed to her work after 24 years with University of Delaware Cooperative Extension's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

Holden is state coordinator for EFNEP, which this year celebrates its 25th anniversary in Delaware and nationwide. EFNEP was conceived as a way to address the widespread hunger that existed — and continues to exist — throughout the United States. Its many programs are designed to help individuals learn to best use their limited resources so that they can adequately nourish their families.

EFNEP got under way in Wilmington in January 1969. Holden has been with the program almost since its inception. She knows firsthand how the little day-to-day accomplishments contribute to the program's long-term success.

"A paraprofessional will go into a house with unsanitary kitchen facilities and return on a second or third visit to find washed dishes

and clean counters. That's a success," says Holden.

"Or, you learn about a woman who directly credits EFNEP with helping her to better feed her children and overcome her drug addiction. That's a success.

"And you see that a welfare recipient whom you helped years ago is now a gainfully employed college graduate. That's a success, too." EFNEP achieves its goals in myriad ways, from one-on-one educational efforts in the home to small-group activities at community centers. EFNEP also has offered assistance to Brown Bag Clubs. The neighborhood-based Brown Bag Clubs are cooperatives that are eligible to purchase items at the Delaware Food Bank at greatly discounted prices. For many families, these discount foods may mean the difference between having enough to eat and going to bed hungry.

An important hallmark of EFNEP, says Holden, is the use of community-oriented paraprofessionals in all three counties. Some of the paraprofessionals are graduates of EFNEP programs, many of them still live in the communities they serve, and all have intimate knowledge of the particular needs of their clients.

For example, an EFNEP paraprofessional of Hispanic ancestry who works in Wilmington's Hispanic neighborhoods has been careful to design her programs around cultural practices and dietary habits. She is familiar with the food products that her clients are accustomed to, and is helping

them to use these foods in a variety of inexpensive, nutritious ways.

In the last 25 years EFNEP has directly assisted more than 60,000 Delawareans through a range of programs based in homes, community centers, Head Start facilities, camps and other sites. Of course, the number of Delawar-

eans helped in some way by EFNEP is probably double or triple that. There is simply no way of knowing how many EFNEP clients have spread the word and shared their new-found nutritional knowledge with friends, neighbors and relatives.

Families May Balk At Money Talk

NEWARK, Del. — Communicating about money can be a problem for many families, said Mary Wilcoxon, University of Delaware Cooperative extension home economics agent.

Conflicts can occur over whether to save or spend, to buy life insurance or a car, or to pay for college tuition or stereo equipment. Setting aside time to talk about financial goals can go a long way toward smoothing differences.

"When family members have different values and attitudes toward spending and saving money, or when families strive for unrealistic goals, there is potential for

conflict," Wilcoxon said. "Family members must learn to talk things out or even the most workable spending plan may fail."

Preventing and overcoming money problems takes honest and candid communication. Wilcoxon suggests that families arrange a specific time when all family members can talk about money. She offers the following guidelines to having a successful family money talk.

• Recognize that whoever earns the money does not also earn the right to dictate how it should be spent.

• Clearly identify the issue at hand and do not drag other points into the discussion.

• Let each family member freely state his or her wants, needs, and personal feelings.

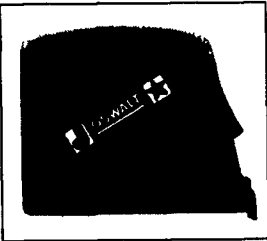
• Listen carefully to the other person.

• Be willing to negotiate for a realistic settlement of differences.

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