



**University of Wisconsin-
Extension Family Living
Programs provides
research-based
resources and education
to help families and
communities thrive.**

Promoting health & wellness in Wisconsin

Creating environments where families and communities can thrive

Eating well, staying active, and accessing preventive health care are keys to good health. Yet for many, putting these positive behaviors into action can be a challenge.

Studies show that only 23% of Wisconsin adults eat recommended servings of fruit and vegetables, while just 77% report engaging in any type of leisure-time physical activity. More than 1 in 9 people in Wisconsin lack assured access to enough food for an active, healthy life. And nearly 90% of US adults have difficulty understanding and obtaining basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions and access health care.

UW-Extension Family Living programs make a difference. Developed using university research, these educational programs promote health and wellness by helping individuals and

families eat well, stay active and make well-informed decisions about health behaviors.

Family Living educators also work alongside community partners to create and support community environments that promote health and wellness. Serving as a trusted resource, Family Living educators bring university-based research to community collaborators, working together on solutions. Leading community coalitions that create positive community change is a hallmark of University of Wisconsin-Extension programs.

When families and communities thrive, the entire state benefits through savings in health care costs, increased productivity of Wisconsin's workforce and improved quality of life for all Wisconsin residents.

Family Living programs make a difference

Helping families eat well

In 2014, Family Living programs reached more than 120,000 people with nutrition education in schools and at community sites. These successful programs helped families eat more fruits and vegetables and choose whole grains and healthier fats.



Results

After receiving Family Living's nutrition education lessons in schools, two-thirds of parents reported that their children were more willing to try new fruits and vegetables; 33% of parents said that their children more often asked them to buy fruits & vegetables; 50% said their children had been eating more fruit and 39% said they were eating more vegetables.

Adults were also motivated to eat well. Over 80% of adult program participants said they intended to eat more vegetables and whole grains based on what they learned.

In 2014, Family Living colleagues in 17 counties and nutrition programs in nearly every county across the state contributed to community change that supported healthy eating. In Brown County, Family Living helped facilitate the "double your bucks" program at local farmers markets, increasing buying power for fruits and vegetables. In Waushara County, Family Living partnered with a local school district to increase the availability of healthy food choices after school and at school athletic events.

Helping families stay active

In 2014, Family Living programs reached more than 4,100 individuals with programs that promoted physical activity in community settings.

Results

- In the last year, 1,045 people reported spending more time engaged in physical activity with their families after participating in Family Living education programs that promoted physical activity.
 - Since 2008, Family Living has trained over 560 leaders to conduct community-based strength training classes for older women. These trained leaders have in turn reached more than 15,000 participants in every corner of the state. Research documented positive changes for participants, including increases in strength and improved health and wellness, balance, and competence and confidence in ability to complete daily activities.
I credit this program with keeping me physically strong enough so I can help others.
- A quote from a program participant



- In 2014, ten Family Living educators in counties across the state contributed to community change that helped families stay active. In Kewaunee County, the Family Living educator worked with partners to combat lack of physical activity of children by promoting safe routes to school. Two school districts implemented Bike/Walk To School Day events, and neighborhood walkability and bikability assessments.

Helping families access affordable, healthy food

With more than 1 in 9 individuals (and 1 in 5 children) lacking access to affordable, healthy food, Family Living programs help families eat well on limited incomes. Approximately 15% of the state's population participates in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and chronic disease is prevalent among Wisconsin's low-income population. UW-Extension Family Living Programs help low-income families access affordable, healthy food.



Results

Family Living programs continue to assist families in accessing important nutrition safety net programs.

- Family Living nutrition education programs make it possible for low-income families to use their SNAP benefits at local farmers' markets, where they can access seasonal, local and healthy produce. Working with partners, UW-Extension contributed to a 46% increase in SNAP benefits redeemed at farmers markets in 2014, as compared to 2012. There are clear economic benefits for local farmers as well: SNAP redemptions at farmers' markets in Wisconsin in 2014 totaled \$249,282.
- Working with partners, Family Living has helped Wisconsin achieve consistent increases in school and student participation in the school breakfast program. The latest data indicates that 74% of schools in Wisconsin that serve school lunch also now offer breakfast. While still below the national average, Wisconsin has



achieved significant growth. In the years that Family Living has been helping to coordinate education efforts, Wisconsin was in the top six states in the nation to show greatest percent change in the number of schools with a school breakfast program. The number of students participating in school breakfast has increased, as well. Recently, the state achieved double-digit growth in the number of low-income students participating in the school breakfast program.

- Family Living also helps families plan, buy and prepare affordable food. In 2014, these programs reached nearly 15,000 adults and children with lessons designed to help them eat well on a limited income.
- While research highlights the benefits of eating breakfast, many children in Wisconsin miss breakfast daily. School breakfast can help children have a healthy start to their day and consistently demonstrate an increased ability to learn, as well as improved behavior and performance in the classroom.

Ensuring food safety

The resurgence of interest in home food preservation—and the growing awareness and concern about food safety—is drawing increased numbers of Wisconsin residents to Family Living food safety and preservation classes and resources. In 2013 and 2014, 53 Family Living educators reached more than 11,000 individuals across the state with educational programs on how to preserve food safely.

Results

- After participating in home food preservation programs, participants reported more confidence, understanding and intent to change behaviors with respect to home food preservation impact indicators. After a workshop, 91% of learners reported confidence in their ability to safely preserve food at home as compared to 46% of learners before the workshop.

Helping families access reliable healthcare information and affordable care

Virtually all individuals in Wisconsin are eligible for state or federally sponsored health insurance or receive health insurance through their workplace. However, many eligible individuals and families are not enrolled in a program for a variety of reasons, including misunderstanding of eligibility, stigma, or lack application assistance. Family Living programs conduct outreach and education to bridge the gap.

Results

- By the end of 2013 alone, Family Living reached over 4,400 individuals and families directly with education regarding health insurance reforms, including the Affordable Care Act. The majority of these individuals (78%) gained knowledge about public and private health insurance options in their communities.
- Family Living and partners used press releases and media to reach an audience of over 2,000,000 individuals and families with consistent, fact-based information about health care reform.

- Extension educators also serve as a crucial resource for other professionals, providing trusted, unbiased information, so that partner agency staff can help others. Through 2013 alone, Extension educators worked with partners from more than 250 different agencies and organizations to help them better understand changes underway and to coordinate local efforts. These groups in turn conducted 630 education and outreach activities reaching more than 12,500 individuals through the end of the first ACA enrollment period (March 2014). Over 11,500 individuals were subsequently referred for application assistance.

Family Living colleagues in all corners of the state help families eat well, stay active, and access preventive healthcare. Working together with community partners, Family Living creates and supports community environments that promote health and wellness.

To learn more about UW-Extension, Cooperative Extension, visit www.uwex.edu/ces.

For more information on Family Living Programs, go to <http://flp.ces.uwex.edu>

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