



ENERGIZE YOUR LIFE!
EAT HEALTHY-BE ACTIVE

This newsletter is produced by the *Nutrition Education Network of Washington* to enhance communication and coordination among those who educate Washington families about nutrition and food. *Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators* shares brief information about programs and materials that support healthful and enjoyable eating.

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SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators can be sent to you electronically each month. There is no charge. To subscribe or unsubscribe, contact Christa Albice, WSU Puyallup, 253-445-4541, e-mail albice@wsu.edu.

To access past issues, go to
<http://nutrition.wsu.edu/take5/index.html>.

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This Month's Focus- *Ethnic Groups in Washington State and Their Foodways*

Washington State has a rich cultural history with its many immigrant groups joining the Native American tribes who had already been here. With them came adaptation to the foods available in the area, and the attempts to retain some of their cultural foods while adapting to the local food environment. From the early Scandinavians, Germans, and British immigrants to the more recent people from Somalia, Russia, Ethiopia, and many other nations, we have deep and diverse food traditions. These traditions may be sustained at home, but they are also shared with others in restaurants and ethnic markets where we can enjoy the taste of another culture. In this issue of *Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators* we focus on some of the ethnic groups in Washington State and ways that nutrition educators have helped them retain their foodways in a country that may not have some of the same ingredients that they had in their native land.



Photo courtesy of Highline Schools School Nutrition Program

Ethnic Meals at School – Every month, children in Highline Public Schools gets a taste of foods from around the world and from the cultural traditions of their classmates. In Highline's student body, more than 125 countries of origin are represented. To expose students to interesting nutrient-rich global foods and to develop more cultural awareness, Highline and Steps to Health, King County have joined forces to create *Flavors of Diversity – An Ethnic Food and Culture Program*. Each month, an ethnic meal is highlighted during school lunch. During April the focus is on Africa with the menu African American Gumbo served over Rice with Cornbread, and in May the menu features foods from Mexico:

Enchiladas with Queso Blanco and Cinnamon Curros. Some of the other countries include Lebanon, Vietnam, Somalia, Ireland, and South Pacific Islands. The program goes beyond the cafeteria with information sheets for teachers to incorporate cultural learning with their core curricular areas, with the goal of making multicultural awareness and nutritional experiences part of their everyday learning. To read about the program, watch a video about it, and see photos of the ethnic meals, go to www.highlineschools.org/nutrition/Pages/ethnicfoodsproject.aspx (Wendy Barkley, Supervisor, School Nutrition Programs, OSPI Child Nutrition Services, 360-725-6220, wendy.barkley@k12.wa.us.)

Working with Spokane's Russian Population – In Spokane, the largest ethnic population group is Russian. These 30,000 people are sometimes called "the invisible minority" because they are white and blend in with the rest of the people there. To meet the challenge of adapting to foods available in that area compared to their homeland,

Terry Perry, *Food Sense* programs Manager, and her staff familiarize them with foods available to them now, how to prepare them, and how to keep them safe. Using the talents of Maria Pyankov, a local Russian educator who is a refugee as many Russians are, the program combines teaching the food groups with hands-on cooking classes. Terry mentions that when Russians arrive in the US, they have access to foods that had been reserved for special occasions, such as sour cream and butter, and Maria helps them transition from these foods from back home to more healthful options (such as low-fat sour cream). Russian grandmothers continue to prepare their traditional dishes such as cabbage rolls, borscht, and stuffed peppers that they enjoyed in their homeland, although the actual cabbage and pepper varieties here are different from what they used in their native country. Russians enjoy fermented foods, such as sauerkraut. Recent research demonstrates the health benefits of fermented foods, so this population is encouraged to retain those cultural foods. Cuban and Karen (Burmese) populations also receive nutrition education relevant to their ethnic heritage through the EFNEP *Food Sense* program, with the assistance of a translator from the grant-funded Refugee Connection. Terry says that Maria is helpful with these groups as well since she speaks English at a slower pace and at a lower level of complexity, making it easier for the translator. Not only do the nutrition educators teach about healthful foods, they also connect refugees with helpful local resources. When asked about some of the unique challenges facing all three groups, Terry commented that many American foods are completely unfamiliar. For example, when given produce at a food bank, they may not know whether a fruit is to be peeled, juiced or eaten whole, or which parts are edible. Refugees participated in a gleaning event picking plums to take home, however they did not know what they were or whether they were safe to eat. Terry emphasized the value of tapping into individuals within the local refugee community to ensure that nutrition education is understood and relevant to the needs of each unique population. (Contact: Terry Perry, Manager, WSU Spokane County Extension *Food Sense* programs, 509-477-2194, TPerry@spokanecounty.org.)

Nutrition Education with Local Native American Tribes – An important aspect of developing a familiarity with the foodways of another ethnic group is developing an understanding the people themselves, their history, and the cultural context of those foods. Lee Anne Riddle, *Food Sense* Program Coordinator, works with the Lummi Tribe in Whatcom County and has been trained by Native American nutritionists, and offers these useful resources:



Photo courtesy of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Traditional Foods Project

- Northwest Indian College has *Traditional Plants and Foods Programs* to promote wellness among Western Washington indigenous people with classes on native foods and healing medicinal plants. One of these programs is a curriculum on traditional plants that reduce the risk for diabetes. Since the program began in 2005, more than 16 tribes have held gatherings about creating community healing gardens, harvesting traditional foods throughout the year, and cooking with native foods. See www.nwic.edu/content/traditional-plants.
- To understand tribal history, particularly tribal sovereignty in Washington State, Lee Anne recommends *Since Time Immemorial* (STI) at www.indian-ed.org. STI developed a school curriculum through a partnership with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), 29 tribes, and others with the aim of educating youth in concert with local tribes about their proud history and traditions.
- OYATE, a Native organization that evaluates books and curricula with Indian themes, particularly those for children, includes its recommendations at <http://oyate.org>.
- As part of its diabetes prevention efforts, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a series of books for children that convey the joy of physical activity, eating healthy foods, and learning from their elders about traditional ways of being healthy. See www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/eagle.

Lee Anne comments that nutrition educators in predominantly white organizations cannot presume to be experts in traditional tribal foods and it is not their role to share traditional food knowledge. “We must always remember that there is a history ‘on the table’ that we cannot completely understand.” (Contact: Lee Anne Riddle, Project Coordinator, WSU Whatcom County Extension *Food Sense* program, 360-676-6707 x 50299, LRiddle@wsu.edu.)

Seattle Children’s Obesity Prevention by the Numbers 7-5-2-1-0 and in 3 Languages – Seattle Children’s Hospital Research Center offers a simple code to unlock a healthy childhood: 7-5-2-1-0. Called “Small Steps to Health,” the tips are available in English, Vietnamese, Somali, and Spanish. Here are the numbered steps:

- 7 – Feed kids 7 days a week.
- 5 – Serve 5 helpings of fruit and vegetables each day.
- 2 – Keep screen time under 2 hours a day.
- 1 – Encourage 1 full hour of active play each day.
- 0 – Aim for 0 soda and sugar-sweetened drinks.

(For more information and downloadable handouts, go to <http://www.seattlechildrens.org/classes-community/community-programs/obesity-program/education-for-healthcare-providers/> and scroll down to “Small Steps to Health Pediatric Obesity Toolkit.”)

OUR MISSION: *The Nutrition Education Network* coordinates nutrition education efforts to communicate consistent, positive and relevant messages to increase awareness of healthful and enjoyable eating among low-income families. *Energize* is one way that *the Network* shares information and resources to accomplish this mission.

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Children's Books About Cultural Foods – The *Eat Together, Eat Better* (ETEB) campaign includes a whole host of teaching materials, including suggestions for kids' books about foods eaten by various cultural groups. These newly launched materials were developed/produced by WSU Extension *Food \$ense* in partnership with Washington State Dairy Council. You can read more about this exciting program at the end of this newsletter. ETEB includes "borrow boxes" used by educators, with kids and families, and inside them are selected children's books about food. The titles of the books also appear on ETEB bookmarks, which make a good take-home reminder for parents and children to eat together. In the book *Yoko* by Rosemary Wells, a girl brings sushi in her lunch to school, a food unfamiliar to her classmates. A young girl makes tortillas the way her grandmother did in *Magda's Tortillas* by Becky Chasvarria-Chairez. Fun to read aloud because of the rhyming text, *Bee-Bim Bop!* By Linda Sue Park shows a family enjoying a Korean dish. For information about the books or to order a set of bookmarks with book titles, go to http://nutrition.wsu.edu/eteb/new_Incentives.html and click on *Eat Together, Eat Better* bookmarks, or contact Kathleen Manenica, State Coordinator, *Food \$ense*, WSU Extension, 253-445-4598, Manenica@wsu.edu.)

Useful Cultural Foods Resources

- For ethnic recipes on a budget, see the collection compiled by Oregon State University Extension. By clicking on the name of a cultural group, the user finds low-cost recipes with photos. Go to www.foodhero.org/recipes/recipe-categories/featured-cultures.
- *MyPlate: Do It Your Way!* Is a colorful-low-literacy handout that includes simple adaptations for people who enjoy Mexican food, Indian food, Southern Cooking, and Asian food. Brochure can be imprinted with your agency's contact information; one single complimentary review copy can be requested. (Source: Journeyworks Publishing, www.journeyworks.com, 800-775-1998.
- *Cultural Food Practices* by the American Dietetic Association's Diabetes Care and Education DPG, and by Cynthia M. Goody and Lorena Drago, 2010.
- *Food and Culture* by Pamela Kittler, Kathryn Sucher, and Marcia Nelms, 2011.
- *You Eat What You Are: People, Culture, and Food Traditions* by Thelma Baer-Stein, 1999.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Learning Connection – Washington's Action for Healthy Kids, with support from a dozen organizations, is holding a *Learning Connection Summit* on May 16. The focus of this year's conference is on how nutrition, physical activity, and physical education support learning. Formerly called the Healthy Schools Summit, the conference is designed for school staff, coming as teams, and about 300 people are anticipated to come. For an agenda and registration information, see <http://wlearningconnection.org>.

Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior Annual Conference – This year the SNEB convention is in Portland, Oregon, and the line-up of presenters looks good. Because it is almost in our backyard, travel costs more reasonable for Washington nutrition educators than they have been in many years. For more information about the August 9-12 conference, see www.sneb.org/events/conference.html.

DID YOU KNOW?

Children living in states with stringent nutritional standards for school meals had lower rates of obesity than those living in states with more lax regulations. For children who received free and reduced-price meals, the difference in obesity rates was even greater. What this means is that schools that follow or exceed +USDA nutritional standards can have a positive impact on children's weight. (Source: DR Taber et al, "Association between state laws governing school meal nutrition content and student weight status: Implications for new USDA school meal standards." *Journal of the American Medical Association Pediatrics*, April 2013)



EAT TOGETHER, EAT BETTER – Family Meals Focus

Because our readers have told us that Family Meals is an area of ongoing interest, we provide recent news relating to this topic and our long-standing signature program Eat Together, Eat Better.

NEW!! Eat Together, Eat Better Educational Materials and Incentives! – After many months of development, pilot testing, and revisions, a comprehensive set of resources are available for nutrition, parent, and youth educators to teach the importance of family meals in setting roots for a lifetime. Through three related themes – *Celebrate Together, Cook Together, and Talk Together* – youth and parents discuss the benefits of family meals, discover new ways to enjoy more family meals, and increase their motivation to incorporate family meals into their routine. Resources include instructional materials, recipes, a leader's guide, background paper, and ancillary materials to promote the event. Individual activities can be downloaded for various age levels from kindergarten through grade 6. These materials were developed in partnership with the USDA FNS SNAP-Ed, WSU Extension *Food \$ense*, and the Washington State Dairy Council. To access these materials, go to <http://nutrition.wsu.edu/eteb/index2.html> and click on *ETEB Lessons, ETEB Borrow Box, and Leader's Materials and Incentives*.

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