

Smart Choices



in the Grocery Store

Pilot Project

Why this project is needed?

July 18, 2007 USDA memo titled “*High Volume FSP (Food Stamp Participation) Authorized Retailers as Venues for FSNE*” allowing:

“A retailer may be a venue for Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) if it has an average Food Stamp Participation (FSP) of \$50,000 or more over the course of 12 months as documented in waiver request when the waiver request is approved by Food and Nutrition Services (FNS).”

Implementation as Suggested

State(s) could initiate the process by contacting stores if it has good reason to believe they might meet the threshold for food stamp redemption levels, meeting the \$50,000 threshold.

Retailers need not reveal their actual redemption information . . . as long as they can attest averaging \$50,000 or more per month over a 12-month period.

High Volume Food Stamp Program, July 18, 2006

Partnering with Grocery Stores or Retailers

Do you have?

- ✿ An existing relationship with a grocery store or their personnel?
- ✿ An in-store Family and Consumer Sciences representative or Registered Dietitian that could help you begin the project?
- ✿ A charge account with a local grocery store?



Building Relationships

- ❁ A letter of intent was sent to each store manager. *See attachment “Grocery Store Letter.”*
- ❁ Trained paraprofessional food stamp educators went to their assigned stores to introduce themselves to the store management.
- ❁ Details about the display location and time were determined.



Virginia Cooperative Extension's Pilot

- ✿ Contacted a Consumer Affairs Director/ Home Economist from *Food City* Stores.
- ✿ She provided information about all Southwest VA Food City Stores on criteria for food stamp redemption.
- ✿ Pilot began in four stores in counties where poverty and food stamp recipients are prevalent.



Terry Van Huss,
Consumer Affairs
Director



Locations of Food City Stores

Buchanan County - Food City 839

18765 Riverside Drive
Vansant, Va. 24656

Manager: Phyllis Scott

Store Telephone: 276-935-7578

Tazewell County- Food City 82

1135 Claypool Hill Mall Road
Cedar Bluff, Virginia 24609

Store Manager: Curtis Mullins

Store Telephone: 276-963-4558

Dickenson County - Food City 892

100 Chase Street
Clintwood, Va. 24228

Manager: John Duffy

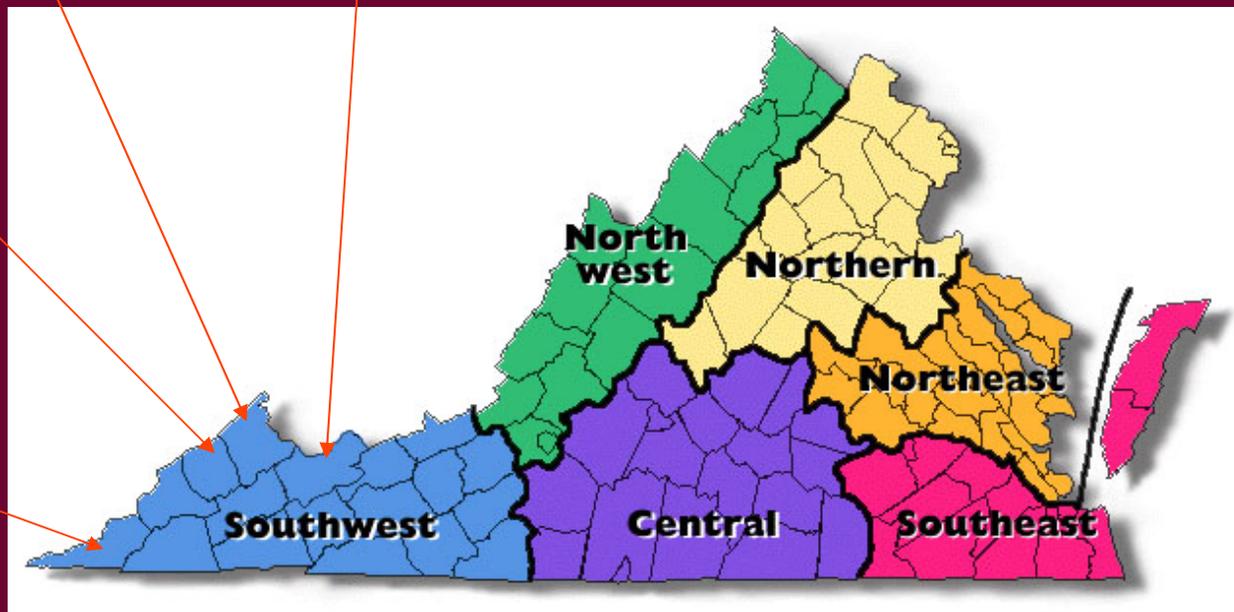
Store Telephone: 276-926-4747

Lee County - Food City 895

930 East Morgan Avenue
Pennington Gap, Va. 24277

Store Manager: Sherry Smyth

Store Telephone: 276-546-4186



Lee County Smart Choices



Lee County Paraprofessionals, Betty Bowen and Marsha Hounshell staff the interactive display on *Reducing Sodium*

Search for Grocery Store Campaigns

- ❁ Conducted a search for grocery store campaigns with nutrition education components.
- ❁ Reviewed Iowa's Social Marketing, *Pick a Better Snack*, aimed primarily at increasing fruit and vegetable intake. See PDF attachment.

<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/pickabetersnack/socialmarketing.asp>



- ❁ Reviewed Food Stamp Outreach Toolkit See PDF attachment.

Targeting Food Stamp Clients

- ❁ Talked with grocery store managers and reviewed food stamp redemption figures for previous months.
- ❁ Discussed peak time for food stamp redemption – first day of the month.
 - Electronic benefits redemption cards are renewed on the first day of the month.



Planning Team for Monthly Grocery Store Event

- ❁ **Food City Consumer Affairs
Director and Home Economist**
- ❁ **District Coordinator, Food
Stamp Nutrition Education, RD**
- ❁ **Seven trained and experienced
paraprofessionals**



**Members of the Planning Team
Dickenson County
paraprofessionals, Helen Rose
and Dorothy Owens at
Clintwood Food City Grocery
Store, Feb. 2007**

Goal of Smart Choices

To increase the likelihood of Food Stamp recipients, limited resource individuals, and other shoppers to make healthier food choices at the point of purchase and thereafter.



Smart Choices Components

- ❁ Thrifty, easy to prepare, healthy recipe is offered in bite-sized portions
- ❁ Educational display of the featured topic
- ❁ Educational handouts to reinforce main teaching points of the event
- ❁ Educational announcements played over the grocery store intercom reinforcing event topic

Smart Choices Components

- ❁ **Predetermined questions asked of event participants:**
 - ❁ to determine intent to change food selection behaviors
 - ❁ to measure an increase in nutrition skills
- ❁ **Paraprofessionals have logs to record responses**
- ❁ **If available, store coupons that discount foods featured in topic of the month**

Smart Choices Components

- ❁ Opportunities to promote enrollment into other food stamp nutrition education venues such as face-to-face lessons or newsletter enrollment
- ❁ Small posters that reinforce the topic message
- ❁ When available, take-home handouts for children, such as coloring sheets or games.

Topics for Smart Choices

- ✿ **Focus on Fruit – December 2006**
- ✿ **Think Your Drink – February 2007**
- ✿ **Increasing Whole Grains – March 07**
- ✿ **Vary Your Veggies – April 07**
- ✿ **Lowering Sodium in Meals and Snacks – May 07**
- ✿ **Getting Your Calcium - June 07**

Focus on Fruit Event

Objectives -

The customer will:

- 1. Taste a fruit or recipe they have never tried before,**
- 2. Become aware that eating a serving of fruit is no more costly than other commonly eaten snacks,**
- 3. Fruit is much more nutritious than many commonly eaten snack foods, and**
- 4. Gain knowledge about serving sizes of fruit.**

Focus on Fruit Event

- ✿ **Display :** A variety of fruit serving sizes of varied types of fruit available in grocery stores
- ✿ **Fruit Samples:**
 - ½ cup canned fruit cocktail
 - Fresh medium apple
 - ¼ cup dried fruit
 - ½ cup of frozen fruit
- ✿ **Paraprofessionals verbally need to stress that most of us need daily:**
 - 1 ½ cups of fruit for women and children above age 2
 - 2 cups of fruit for men and active, older teens



Fruit Display



Vansant, Va., Food City Grocery Store, Buchanan County, December 2006

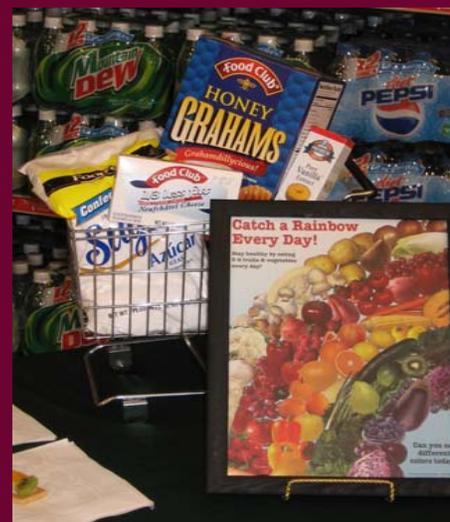
Featured Recipe: Fruit Pizza



(see PDF file of Fruit Pizza)

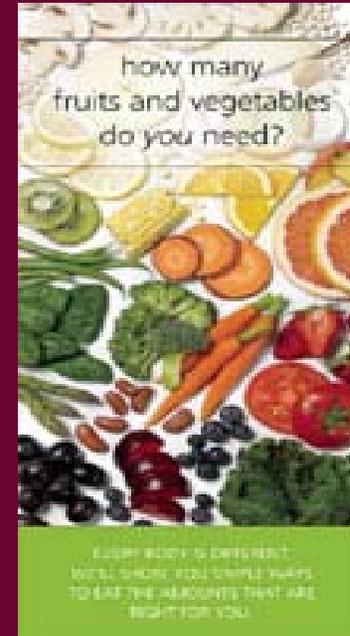
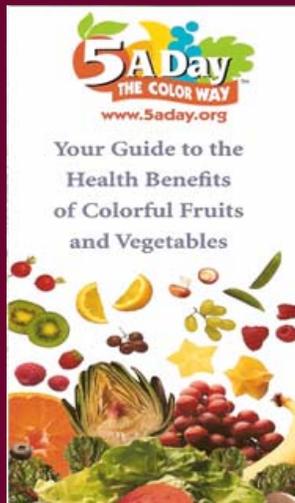
For easier transport and as a healthier option, recipe was made on graham crackers as a “crust” in store.

Ingredients for *Fruit Pizza* were displayed in a miniature shopping cart with 5-a-Day poster promoting eating a variety of colorful fruits.



Educational Handouts

The Color Way Guide
was used originally



Get More ...because More Matters” replaces *The Color Way Guide*. See PDF file attached and website link

<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/index.html>.

Brochures can be ordered from website.

Educational Brochure

Front



**WASH YOUR HANDS
BEFORE YOU EAT**

FOODS THAT ARE GOOD FOR YOU



Fruits contain
Vitamin A
Vitamin C
Fiber
Potassium
Folic Acid
and
other minerals
and
vitamins
that you need to be
healthy



Contact Information:

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Tazewell Extension Office
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Tazewell, VA 24651-0229
(276)-988-0405

Sonja Honaker

Virginia Cooperative Extension
Buchanan County Office
Youth Program Assistant
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Grundy, VA 24614
(276)-935-5093



developed by Sonja Honaker,
Program Assistant
and Mary Ann McFarland, MSRD
funded by Food Stamp Nutrition
Education Program
known in Virginia as SCNEP

Back



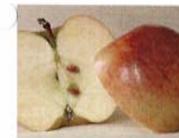
DRIED FRUIT

amounts per serving
cost: 50 cents
calories: 100
calories from fat: 0



CANNED PEACHES

amounts per serving
cost: 40 cents
calories: 50
calories from fat: 0



FRESH APPLES

amounts per serving
cost: 26 cents
calories: 80
calories from fat: 0



FROZEN STRAWBERRIES

amounts per serving
cost: 83 cents
calories: 50
calories from fat: 0

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.



CHOCOLATE

amounts per serving
cost: 54 cents
calories: 230
calories from fat: 120



CHIPS

amounts per serving
cost: 38 cents
calories: 160
calories from fat: 90



ICE CREAM

amounts per serving
cost: 38 cents
calories: 190
calories from fat: 90



COOKIES

amounts per serving
cost: 24 cents
calories: 170
calories from fat: 60

Funded by the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program

Folded ¼ vertically

Developed by Virginia Cooperative
Extension Personnel

Food City Provided Coupons for Fruit with its Store Newsletter

FOOD CITY HEALTHY FOOD EXPERTS QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
 October - 2006

Fresh! Connection

The Healthy Food Experts. *peris.*

Back to Basics

Who hasn't heard about the growing obesity epidemic? You know it's a fact after just a little time spent watching people in any public place.

And, who hasn't heard one group shouting blame to the others about why this has happened. It's the fast food restaurants, it's no physical education classes in school, it's too much "screen time," it's super size everything and maybe it's even high fructose corn syrup. Maybe, just maybe, it's a combination of many factors; maybe "all of the above!" And, maybe the biggest blame should sit squarely on our own shoulders because we don't make good choices.

If you think everyone else has the problem, but not you, because you really do make good choices, try keeping a pen and pad handy for a few days and write down everything you put in your mouth. Include every piece of candy, gum, soft drinks and even samples you eat from the grocery store or while fixing dinner at home. Then, take a very close look at your food diary and honestly decide whether you have made smart food choices.

We've also heard about solutions like low carb foods, low glycemic index foods, super foods, dark chocolate, green tea, red wine, whole grains, more dairy foods, less dairy foods, etc., etc. No wonder we get confused when we are bombarded with nutrition advice from all corners...often getting conflicting advice from what appear to be credible sources. How about this advice? **EAT LESS, MOVE MORE, EAT LOTS OF FRUITS AND VEGGIES AND GO EASY ON JUNK FOOD.** How about "You can eat what you like as long as you don't eat too much?" That seems pretty basic and easy to follow, doesn't it?

Although we have been lectured to follow various versions of the federal Dietary Guidelines and My Food Pyramid for years, it sure doesn't seem to be working. Maybe there are just too many guidelines and too many rules so we just tend to ignore it all. Here are some easy things to put into practice if you want to eat a little healthier; no hard and fast rules, just a few easy adjustments.

- Instead of reaching for a bag of chips or candy bar when you need a snack, try a piece of fruit or HANDFUL of nuts.
- Instead of eating everything in that fast food combo meal, DON'T eat every morsel. You don't get extra points for being a member of the Clean Plate Club, just extra pounds.
- Instead of a large pizza with everything, try a medium with all veggie toppings.
- Instead of nursing one 20 oz. soft drink bottle after another, whether it's regular or diet, try bottled water.
- Instead of circling the parking lot to find the closest spot, park at the far end and count the walk to the store as an easy way to add steps to your daily routine.
- Instead of sitting in the break room at work munching on a doughnut, walk a few laps around the building.

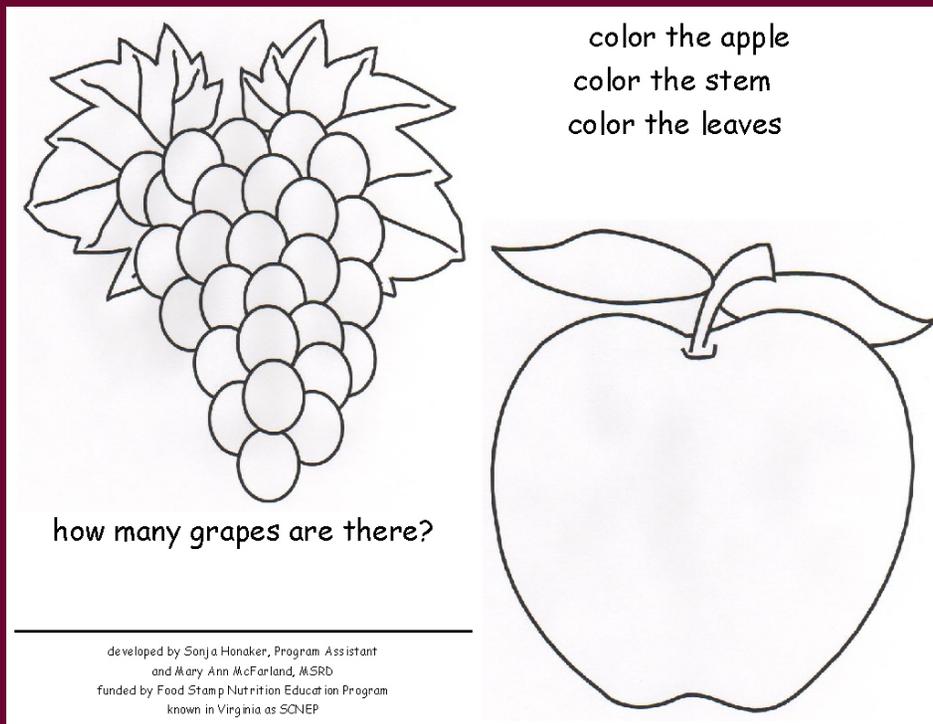


Delicious Apples

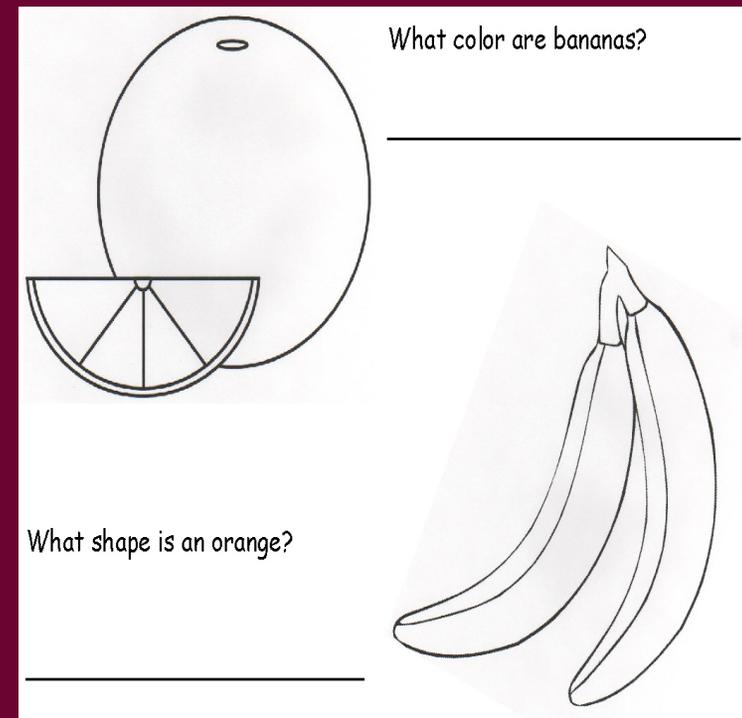
Cranberry or Pomegranate Juice

Take Home Items for Children

Coloring Brochures for Kids



Outside Cover of Brochure



Inside of Brochure

Files attached

Assessment Questions for *Focus on Fruit* Event

Pre-Experience

- 1. Have you eaten kiwi, grapes, or mandarin oranges before?**
- 2. Have you eaten Fruit Pizza previously?**

Post-Experience

- 1. Are you likely to prepare the recipe?**
- 2. Are you likely to eat more fruit in the future?**

Data were recorded on a *Smart Choices* log

Record Log for *Smart Picks at the Grocery Store*

Store Location: _____ Topic: _____

Program Assistant (s) or volunteer: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Customer Name <i>(volunteered only)</i>	Address <i>(volunteered)</i>	*Gender	*Race	Receive Food Stamps (Y or N) <i>volunteered</i>	Materials obtained (see back for code)	*Client tasted recipe?	Was it the first time tasted recipe or fruit offered?	Will try again? Y, N or M	Are you likely to eat more fruit in the future? Y, No or maybe

Intercom Announcements

PSA for Focus on Fruit. “Just Eat More Color!”

“Red, Yellow, Orange, White, Green, Purple and Blue...All these Colors are good for you.”

What’s with the chant? It’s all about eating more fruits with a variety of colors. Eating more servings daily will improve your health. Fruits are loaded with vitamins, minerals, fiber, and protective plant chemicals. These natural chemicals give fruits their distinctive colors. They also help us maintain eye health, preserve memory and mental function, prevent certain cancers, and protect our hearts. They are delicious and fill you up - not out!



Intercom Announcements

Announcement made by store staff for
Focus on Fruit event:

“Today, we have staff from Virginia Cooperative Extension and the *Smart Choices* program to provide ways and recipes to fit fruit into your meals and snacks. Stop by their display table to receive a free sample of Fruit Pizza. *Focus on Fruit* to eat and be well.”

Results of *Focus on Fruit* for Stores

In four grocery stores:

- ❁ 592 people were reached**
- ❁ 484 people tasted the Fruit Pizza samples**
- ❁ Nearly all indicated that they would prepare the recipe again. They were excited for their families to taste it.**

Results of *Focus on Fruit* for Stores

- ✿ Some customers bought Fruit Pizza ingredients that same day.
- ✿ Five customers tried kiwi for the first time.
- ✿ Some customers indicated that they were likely to eat more fruit.
- ✿ Most customers picked up a copy of the Fruit Pizza recipe.

Results of *Focus on Fruit* for Stores

- ✿ Coupons were appreciated.
- ✿ Ten customers were interested in receiving face-to-face lessons.
- ✿ Eighteen customers were enrolled in the *Smart Choices for Young Family* newsletter series.

Results of *Focus on Fruit* for Stores

- ❁ **The Paraprofessionals expressed that it was a “positive experience” for the FSNE program, VCE, and the store.**
- ❁ **The event began at 10 am. Some customers felt it was too early to eat sample.**
- ❁ **The Paraprofessionals and the store management felt that we would reach more Food Stamp participants on the first day of month and later in the day.**

Factors Influencing Participation

- ❁ **Weather**
- ❁ **Display location**
- ❁ **Time of day**
- ❁ **Time of month**
- ❁ **Store management support**

Tips for Managing Events

- ✿ **Have easy-to-prepare recipes that can be fixed on site or ahead of time.**
- ✿ **Check with food store policies about bringing outside foods into the store.**
- ✿ **Do not forget trash containment during and after the event.**

Tips for Managing Events

- ✿ **Remind store management of upcoming events several days in advance.**
- ✿ **Use store brands when possible in displays.**
- ✿ **The location of the display is important. There needs to be adequate display space in a place where all shoppers can see and participate, but not impede traffic flow.**

Smart Picks Signs



At the request of Virginia Department of Social Services,
Smart Picks was later renamed ***Smart Choices in Grocery Stores.***

Vary your Veggies Display



Whole Grain Items



Notice that many Store Brands are used in displays. Most of the time, these items are less expensive than brand names. See Whole Grain Handouts.

Future Planning

- ❁ Provide flyers to the Department of Social Services and WIC clinics to announce *Smart Choices* events
- ❁ Work with Evaluator to evaluate “intent to change” question

Future Planning

- ❁ Promote enrollment into traditional face-to-face lessons
- ❁ Develop event materials into curriculum template format
- ❁ Translate materials into Spanish

Smart Picks Results

- ❖ Over 4,000 people reached at the events
- ❖ Results indicate that approximately 20 to 25% of customers are returning to participate in Smart Choices events
- ❖ *Food City* store management remains very positive

Smart Picks Results

- ✿ Increased marketing and visibility of FSNE and VCE
- ✿ *Smart Choices* encourages food preparation and eating at home

Questions

- ✿ Contact Mary Ann McFarland, MS, RD at mamcfar@vt.edu
- ✿ Or Mary McFerren, Ed. D. at mmcferre@vt.edu

Thank You!