

SIMPLY GOOD FOOD BROCHURES 2002 HIGHLIGHTS

Food insecurity is a problem on the South Plains as well as across the entire state. In fact, according to an annual national survey of 45,000 U.S. households conducted by the Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Texas ranks as the third highest state of food insecure households at 13%. Additionally, eighteen of the twenty District 2 counties or 90% identified food issues related to limited-resource families or the elderly as an important Texas Community Futures Forum issue.

AN INNOVATIVE IDEA IS BORN TO FULFILL A COMMON NEED FOR AN UNDESERVED AUDIENCE:

So when in 1999, District 2 County Extension Agents-Family and Consumer Sciences in Lubbock, Floyd, Crosby, Hale and Swisher Counties were requested by the South Plains Food Bank of Lubbock to provide nutritional information to accompany the food given at distribution locations, those agents quickly responded. The agents agreed to write one-page easy-to-read nutritional brochures featuring a variety of foods.

AND SO THE WRITING BEGAN...

The six County Extension Agents, Linda Evans, Lubbock County Extension Agent-Family and Consumer Sciences; Kay Davis, Lubbock County Extension Agent-Family and Consumer Sciences; Deana Sageser, County Extension Agent-Family Consumer Sciences; Melissa Long, County Extension Agent-Family Consumer Sciences; Calley Runnels, Swisher County Extension Agent-Family and Consumer Sciences; and Amy Erwin, Terry County Extension Agent-Family and Consumer Sciences met to discuss the writing strategy and to make assignments for writing brochures on specific foods. Initially in 1999, 24 brochures were written; in 2000, 35 brochures were added; in 2001, 30 brochures completed, and in 2002 the final 16 were written, completing the series.

To date, there have been 137,552 total educational contacts in programs, meals on wheels deliveries and in food boxes distributed, food demonstrations, mail outs, and educational exhibit handouts.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES:

As a result of programming using the Simply Good Food brochures:

In Lubbock County: program participants indicated that 100% learned to plan menus, lower fat, sugar and salt, plan leftovers, create casseroles from food on hand and 64% use better sanitation. Improving the quality of nutrition, lifestyle and availability of food dollars of Lubbock County families will result in less work and school absences, lost productivity, lower medical bills and indigent health care costs.

In Crosby County: participants reported the following behavior changes: 27% eat fewer high-fat foods, 18% are more selective of what they eat by choosing healthier foods, 18% eat less fried food. By eating healthy and avoiding food borne illness, the participants improved their lifestyles, increased longevity and decreased health risks.

ULTIMATE RESULTS:

It is reasonable to suspect that the changes in dietary intake brought about by food insecurity might increase one's risk for the development of chronic disease. It is also possible that inadequate nutrition brought about by food insecurity and poverty might have an adverse effect on medical outcomes in selected populations. A 1997 study published in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* reported that elderly individuals living in a food insecure environment face hospital stays that are 100% longer and hospital costs that are up to \$10,000 higher than elderly who are food secure. The dollar savings in health care costs make the Simply Good Food brochures with their focus on healthful eating a good investment.