

BETTER LIVING FOR TEXANS

In District 2 BLT counties, there were 459 educational programs reaching 7,720 (12% Black and 55% Hispanic) in group methods, 11,020 in individual contacts, 7,822 in newsletters and 270 trained volunteers reached 3,721. The 2002 approved BLT budget totaled \$128,992.64 in District 2. The 16 counties included: Bailey, Cochran, Crosby, Dawson, Floyd, Gaines, Garza, Hale, Hockley, Lamb, Lubbock, Lynn, Parmer, Scurry, Swisher and Yoakum.

Specific outcome results included:

Participants of the Eat Well for Less series of **Bailey County** Better Living for Texans program made the following changes as a result of attending the lessons:

- 100% will change their eating habits by including healthy foods for a more balanced diet.
- 80% know the serving amounts and will measure serving size to include in their diet.
- 60% have knowledge of the different types of fat and plan on lowering their intake of fat.
- 60% will include more grains in their diet.
- 40% will increase food safety by using separate cutting boards for meats and vegetables and use clean spoons for tasting as they prepare foods.
- 40% will make a list prior to shopping and shop alone to help save on the food dollar.
- 40% can distinguish between needs and wants and realize the importance of family members being involved in the budgeting process. Their plans are to begin keeping records and watching advertisements for sales.

A total of 66 BLT educational programs were presented in **Dawson County** during 2002 with 264 direct contacts and 208 individuals. Of these contacts, 152 were food stamp recipients under age 20.

For overall program evaluation, 20 of the 49 BLT program participants who attended more than one program were chosen randomly and a telephone interview was conducted. Results from the interview are:

1. 100% (20 of 20) learned more about the Food Guide Pyramid than they knew before attending the program.
2. 80% (16 of 20) increased their knowledge about Food Safety and 80% (16 of 20) increased their knowledge about Food Budgeting as a result of attending the program.
3. 65% (13 of 20) knew that the Food Guide Pyramid divides foods into food groups before attending the program. Of the 7 who were not, 100% (7 of 7) learned about at least one of the food groups in the Food Guide Pyramid at the program.
4. 40% (8 of 20) were aware of the recommended serving sizes in the Food Guide Pyramid before the program. After attending the program, 100% of the 12 who were not aware (12 of 12) have begun to use the recommended serving sizes.

Over 1.4 million dollars were distributed to 1,810 food stamp recipients in **Dawson County** in 2000. If divided equally, each food stamp recipient would have received about \$780.00 in food stamps annually. And, if each of the 20 survey recipients has improved their food buying and eating habits for a family of three due to attendance at Better Living for Texans programs, they will more efficiently spend \$46,800 in a year. And, if one person in each family avoids one trip

to the doctor by avoiding food borne illness, these 20 families will save a total of approximately \$1,500.00 in office visits alone.

There were 392 group contacts in **Crosby County**. Twenty individuals who participated in a 6-lesson nutrition education series were asked to complete evaluation questionnaires. A total of 13 individuals completed the evaluation questionnaires, which is a 65% response rate. As a result of taking part in the BLT nutrition education program, participants had a “better understanding” or a “somewhat better understanding” of the following topics: Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 92%; Using the Food Guide Pyramid to plan meals, 85%; Reading and understanding food labels; 85%; Importance of fiber in the diet; 85%; Importance of fruits and vegetable sin the diet, 92%; Importance of calcium in the diet, 100%; Importance of limiting fat in the diet, 92%; Importance of keeping food safe, 85%. Behavior changes as a result of participating in the 6-lesson nutrition education series included: Following the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 69%; Using the Food Guide Pyramid to plan meals, 77%; Including more whole grain products in their diet, 54%; Decreased or limited the amount of fate in their diet, 92%; Practice food safety rules, 92%; Developed healthier eating habits, 77%. By eating healthy and avoid food borne illness, the participants will improve their lifestyles, increase longevity and decrease health risks. This will ultimately save money by eliminating unnecessary doctor/hospital visits and other medical/health services and products, and decrease the amount of missed work days due to family illnesses. Additionally, by decreasing or eliminating non-nutrient dense food products, such as junk food and cola, and by using effective shopping strategies when buying groceries, families can save \$400-1000 annually on their grocery bills.



BLT program participants in Crosby County learn how to read and understand nutrition labels on food.

In **Lamb County**, 874 contacts were made through 50 group methods with food stamp recipients or wavered audiences. Participants developed knowledge and skills related to basic nutrition, food safety, and food budgeting. Statewide survey results (which included Lamb County) indicate that participants increased their daily consumption of vegetables, fruits, and dairy

products. They also reduced their use of solid fats that lead to heart disease, reduced their use of sugar, consumed more foods high in fiber, and were more careful to follow food safety habits. They indicated that they are becoming more food secure and more able to make their food resources last longer. Besides the results from the statewide survey, Lamb County participants also indicated that as a result of the programs, they planned to vary food choices and plan meals based on the Food Guide Pyramid, feed family members breakfast, make fewer trips to the grocery store, utilize food labels, choose whole grain foods, use less salt, and increase exercise.

In **Hale County**, there were 33 programs reaching. 100% reported they learned more about the Food Guide Pyramid than they knew before they attended the program. 100% were aware of the Food Guide Pyramid divisions of foods into food groups. In the areas of food safety, menu planning, food budgeting and shopping strategies, 100% increased their knowledge in these areas. 100% reported that the hand outs provided at the program were helpful. 83% were not aware of the recommended serving sizes in the Food Guide Pyramid before the program, of this group 80% began to use the recommended serving size after they attended the program. As a result of this program, participants expanded their knowledge of the Food Guide Pyramid, food safety, how to use their food dollars to save on the family food budget. Comments: Now aware of how much was an actual serving size, expanded knowledge on the division of food groups, food safety was the most important, learned a lot from the program, cheaper is sometimes the best product, cheaper the more you can buy, amazed at how informative the program was, learned she left food out too long to cool, liked the menu planning the best (colors) and all good.

Twenty seven BLT programs were presented for 454 persons in **Floyd County**. In addition, 48 other food and nutrition programs were presented for another 1,053 people. Bulletin boards and individual contacts impacted 3,595 county residents. Fourteen volunteers were trained to help reach those program participants. BLT partnered with Caprock Community Action (Energy Assistance Participants) who are required to attend meetings to receive benefits toward utilities. Two Impact Groups resulted from these programs and one of the groups extended their training to twelve lessons rather than the six. All program participants were invited to a covered dish recognition luncheon. A presentation reemphasizing food safety during the holidays was given and participants were shown gifts you could make from the kitchen saving money and recycling. Caprock Community Action Association donated energy saving items and a \$25 gift certificate as door prizes for those in attendance. Twenty eight persons attended. Twelve persons were given certificates for completing the six lesson series. Those in attendance indicated that they would be interested in other areas of Extension programming. Many indicated that they would be interested in learning clothing constructions skills.

BLT evaluation results: Twenty-nine participants were asked to take part in a questionnaire regarding their dietary practices as they relate to their overall well-being. From the Intact group members, 7 of 11 or 64% said they usually make a menu and grocery list after BLT programming. Twenty-four or 83% responded that they always wash utensils and kitchen surfaces. As a result of educational programs 20 of 29 or 69% said they try to make low fat, low sugar and low sodium food choices. Eight of 11 or 73% have improved their selections. In the area of food safety, 14 of the 29 or 48% listed proper hand washing. Of the Intact group, 10 out of 11 or 90% listed proper hand washing as the main thing learned.

Sixty-three participants were involved in the **Gaines County** BLT Program. They were engaged in learning about different types of grains, calcium, Vitamin A&C, protein, food guide

pyramid and nutrients, and food safety. Of those who were evaluated 100% stated they wanted to change their habits in the areas of their current food diet and practice more safety procedures when preparing their meal. The clients stated they wanted to eat more vegetables and fruits. Overall, the clients have a deeper understanding of the importance of eating healthier so that their bodies will be healthier as they age and protecting them and their family for possible food borne illnesses. Participants shared that they wanted to save more money by choosing more sensibly on the products they bought and by not buying as much non-nutritional items. There were 1,029 participants in **Lubbock County**. Evaluation results indicate: 100% of those completing evaluation reported learning to plan menus, lower fat, sugar, & salt, plan left overs, create casseroles from food on hand, use all food groups in menus, shop with a list & snack healthier, 64% use better sanitation, 55% learned about needs vs wants and developing a spending plan. 50% planned to change how they planned meals, include more fruits & vegetables as snacks, use a list to shop, shop alone & not when hungry, learn store layout, shop less often & use store discount cards & coupons for regularly purchased items. 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, and more state funding for schools, thereby extending school, city, county, and state tax dollars.

In **Cochran County**, there were 579 participants in the BLT and nutrition programs with twelve meetings in the areas of food preparation, food safety, nutrition and food security and nutrition. Fourteen participants took part in an evaluation questionnaire regarding their dietary practices as related to their overall dietary health. Ten total (71.4%) completed the evaluation with useable information. As a result of participating in the BLT nutrition education program, participants had a “somewhat better understanding” of the following: using the food guide pyramid for different age groups, 80%; keeping preparation area clean, 60%; storing foods in refrigerator/freezer after shopping or preparation, 40%; reading food labels, 40%. The changes made after learning series were: 50% learned to use better food safety methods; 40% tried to plan meals using food guide pyramid; 20% tried to serve more fruits and vegetables; and 10% tried to serve leaner meat choices to their families. Most, rarely tried new foods, because of cost restraints, they generally stayed with what they knew.

In **Swisher County**, 29 participants reported: 67% said they learned to cook meals that don't cost a lot of money, 67% said they learned how to make quick and easy meals, 67% said they made a shopping list before going to the store, 61% said they learned how to cook meals safely so their family does not get sick, 61% said they buy store brand or generic foods, 56% said they learned how to cook meals with less fat, sugar and salt, and 56% said they learned how to keep food from spoiling.

In **Scurry County**, 30 youth (children of food stamp recipients) participated in 7 workshops emphasizing the food groups, daily requirements, and important to body. Parents of youth received a take home newsletter weekly. Parents evaluated with take home written questionnaire. Results: 100% learned importance of hand washing; 85% recalled Breads/Grains group; 85% recalled importance of Breads; 82% recalled importance of milk; 78% recalled importance of meat; 75% recalled fruits. Teachers reported that 100% of youth became aware of food pyramid, learned new foods, and remembered to wash before eating.