



AgEcon SEARCH
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search

<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>

aesearch@umn.edu

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*



CARIBBEAN FOOD CROPS SOCIETY

44

**Forty Fourth
Annual Meeting 2008**

Miami, Florida, USA

**Vol. XLIV – Number 2
Plenary Session and Oral Presentations**

MEETING HOST:

UF UNIVERSITY of
FLORIDA
IFAS

4-H Munchy Adventures Project Book

Nancy J. Gal¹, Natasha Masciarelli² and Norma Samuel³. ¹Family and Consumer Sciences, Extension Agent IV; ²Marketing and Public Relations Specialist and ³Urban Horticulture Agent II. University of Florida/IFAS Marion County Extension Service, 2232 NE Jacksonville Road, Ocala, Florida 34470-3615. nsamuel@ufl.edu

ABSTRACT.

The *4-H Munchy Adventures* project book is a healthy lifestyles curriculum for youth ages eight to ten. It teaches youth how to balance healthful eating with regular physical activity to support normal growth and development, prevent disease, and encourage a lifetime of wellness. Youth journey through fun and engaging activities promoting consumption of healthy snacks and participation in physical activity as part of an appropriate healthy lifestyle plan. The curriculum follows the experiential learning model and contains five eye-appealing chapters plus a creative pre/post test crossword puzzle. Chapters provide a logical flow of information supported by thought provoking and reflective written activities. Chef Nicky, the fruit and vegetable loving guinea pig mascot, guides youth through activities designed to be done individually as well as with family, club and community members. Activities can be easily adapted for use by all cultures and ethnic audiences. The Take Charge section focuses on goal setting and community involvement, encouraging youth to identify local needs to help others make healthy lifestyle changes. The final chapter, set up as a board game, is an additional tool reinforcing healthy lifestyle behaviors. It combines the concepts learned throughout the curriculum for the ultimate learning experience. The curriculum has been pilot tested and internally and externally reviewed by Extension curriculum specialists and agents. The *4-H Munchy Adventures* Project book will be available from the University of Florida/IFAS bookstore in early 2009.

KEYWORDS: youth, kid, children, nutrition, physical activity, exercise

INTRODUCTION

Youth are faced with many lifestyle choices which can impact their health throughout their lives. The key to health promotion and disease prevention is early intervention in adopting positive lifestyle behaviors which support normal growth and development, disease prevention, and wellness. Consuming healthy foods in appropriate amounts coupled with regular physical activity are foremost to a child's well-being. Overeating accompanied with a sedentary lifestyle can lead to overweight and related health problems that can follow children into their adult years. Health problems of concern include increased risk of type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, asthma, joint problems, and overall poor health status. The early acceptance and implementation of healthy eating and physical activity behaviors can have a positive impact on helping youth and their family's practice healthy living.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This project was initiated in 2005 and has been pilot tested three times to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum in relation to knowledge gain and practice change. Authors provided the subject matter instruction through groups and individual instruction in cooperation with trained adult Extension volunteers.

A total of forty-six youth ages eight to ten years participated. The pilot tests were conducted in one week intervals based on summer day camp schedules and school holiday intermissions. Youth received the project book at the start of the study and were returned for scoring at completion. Family involvement was encouraged by having youth take materials home each evening for return the next day.

The *4-H Munchy Adventures* project book is a comprehensive thirty-eight page multi-generational, multi-disciplined curriculum that follows the experiential learning model and contains five eye-appealing chapters including MyPyramid, Fuel Up, Fill Up Your Tank, Nutrition Facts, and the Ultimate Challenge, plus a creative pre/post test crossword puzzle. The chapters provide a logical flow of information supported by thought provoking and reflective written activities including refrigerator find, menu planning, label reading, time to get moving, and nutritious snack recipes. The three evaluation tools built into the curriculum include the pre/post crossword puzzle, the Ultimate Challenge board game and the pre/post Did You Take Charge? reflection activity. The crossword puzzle and board game serve to measure knowledge gain and the Did You Take Charge reflection activity serves to measure practice change.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

All forty-six youth who began in one of the three pilot tests completed the project book. All youth demonstrated an increase in knowledge (at-least-four-nutrition and one physical-activity item) and 91.3% reported intent to change at least two nutrition and/or physical activity behaviors.

The *4-H Munchy Adventures* project book supports an identified statewide curriculum need in childhood obesity, nutrition, and fitness. The outcome of these positive results, as well as supportive internal and external curriculum reviews, has led to the conclusion of the development stage and the beginning of project marketing and distribution.