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UNIVERSITY EXTENSION  
Kitsap County



# SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EDUCATION (SNAP-ED) 2024

## THE ISSUE

The rising cost of living has significantly impacted Washington children, adults, families and communities; making it difficult to access and afford nourishing meals. Equitable access to fresh nutritious foods and healthy activity is a public health concern locally as fresh food access is directly tied to overall health. The 2019 Washington State SNAP-Ed Needs Assessment results indicate SNAP Eligible youth and adults in Kitsap County were insufficient in their consumption of fruits and vegetables, yet local food benefit assistance redemption rates are low. According to the report, 33% of adults and 26% of youth in Kitsap County live below 185% of Federal Poverty level. In fact, a considerable number were worried about not having enough to eat by the end of the month and struggle with hunger. Many lack the skills to buy and prepare healthy foods for their families within their income. However, according to recent state-wide SNAP client interviews, SNAP-eligible individuals indicated they do want to learn about stretching their food dollars while cooking healthy foods for their families.

## THE RESPONSE

The goal of SNAP-Ed is to increase the chances that individuals eligible for SNAP will make healthy food choices on a limited budget and adopt physically active lifestyles in line with the current Dietary Guidelines and USDA guidance. WSU SNAP-Ed provides nutrition and physical activity resources and programming to the Bremerton School District, two food banks, a low-income senior housing center and the local Community Service Office.

## BY THE NUMBERS

- Reached 70,000 individuals with Health Promotions efforts (newsletters, tip sheets, recipes and websites)
- Over 14,000 participants served with our PSE (Policy, Systems & Environment) projects.
- Secured funding to support the Kitsap Harvest Gleaning program's hire of a Program Assistant. The program collected over 65,411 pounds of food and distributed it to 42 low income senior and family housing sites.

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## THE RESPONSE *continued*

Services include indirect education and policy, system, and environment change work in coordination with various community partners. We also provide funding and support for the Kitsap Harvest Gleaning program which increases access to fresh food to 42 low-income families and senior housing sites throughout Kitsap County.

## THE IMPACTS

**Schools:** The program enhanced the Bremerton School District's Fruit & Vegetable grant by providing essential weekly nutrition education. This included information on the food's origin, nutritional benefits, and preparation tips. Students enjoyed classroom snacks and received resources to take home, including Spanish translations and QR codes linked to recipes.

We continued our involvement with the Naval School Garden planning team. After parent and volunteer work parties revived the garden last winter, we focused on engaging students and teachers. In the spring, we organized an all-day, all-grade garden activity event with SNAP-Ed approved resources, involving parent volunteers, a community partner, and the PE teacher. One highlight was planting vegetable starts donated by the Kitsap Harvest Grow-A-Row program, coordinated by our SNAP-Ed program. We also planned and executed a garden family night.

During the summer, the garden was maintained by a community partner, parent volunteers, and the PE teacher. To sustain enthusiasm in fall 2024, we hosted monthly garden classroom events with a retired teacher and Master Gardener volunteer, who effectively incorporated the Clark County MG "Spider" lesson.

## QUOTES

“ SNAP-Ed provided valuable nutritional education and guidance throughout the transformation of our facility into a self-shopping, farmers market style food bank. From assisting our team in developing a classification system for goods based on their nutrition label, to training volunteers and staff; Snap-Ed played a critical role in our relocation. SNAP-Ed prioritized creating a welcoming and dignified client experience. SNAP-Ed continues to visit our organization providing guests with impactful educational materials and demonstrations. We are grateful for SNAP-Ed's continued partnership.  
- *Food Bank Director of Finance & Human Services*

“ Thank you again for an outstanding cooking demo of your delicious and nutritious potato soup! The residents were so happy with the experience - word is getting around that your visits are something special to attend. We so appreciate you bringing this opportunity to our community.  
- *Low-income Senior Housing Social Services Coordinator*





## THE IMPACTS *continued*

**Food Banks:** After permits were approved, SNAP-Ed played a crucial role in supporting St. Vincent De Paul Food Bank's transition to a grocery store model. We assisted in planning the store layout and developing a comprehensive "Welcome to the New Food Bank" packet, along with various resources to be displayed throughout the food bank. Additionally, we finalized the "Stretching Food Dollars" brochure with the help of the SNAP-Ed statewide Retail and CTW teams, ensuring it was ready for the June opening.

The program also assisted in ranking all canned goods at the original food bank using the SWAP (Supporting Wellness at Pantries) system and trained the assistant and volunteers on SWAP concepts. The grand opening was a success, with the board, volunteers, and clients expressing their excitement about the changes. We continue to offer volunteer training as needed and provide food demonstrations every other month.

**Community:** The Kitsap Harvest Gleaning program, partially funded by SNAP-Ed, provided gleaned produce and food rescue to over 42 low-income senior and family housing sites. SNAP-Ed contributed recipe and nutrition resources to accompany these donations. We observed that many sites set up their gleaned donations in a Farmer's Market style. Recognizing this, we approached The Pearl, one of the senior housing sites served by Kitsap Harvest, and offered to conduct quarterly "Shop Around the Market" presentations. We coordinated with the onsite manager to tailor food samples and discussions based on the gleaned produce received that week. Each presentation included recipes, handouts, and incentives.

## PARTNERS

*Bremerton School District, Kitsap Conservation District, Central Food Bank, St. Vincent De Paul Food Bank & Women Shelter, Community Service Office, Kitsap Harvest Gleaning Program, Kitsap Public Health, WSU Extension Food System program, Naval Ave Elementary, Washington Food Coalition, Healthy Living & Active Living Coalition, Kitsap Food Bank Coalition*

