1. Full name of your Program Work Team (PWT):

   Family and Community Food Decision Making

2. Please list names, affiliations and e-mail addresses of the PWT Co-Chairs: (With an asterisk ***, please indicate the co-chair responsible for finalizing this report.)

   Kathy Dischner, Multi-Association Nutrition Team Coordinator, Onondaga and Cayuga Counties, kmd12@cornell.edu*

   Ardyth Gillespie, Division of Nutritional Sciences, Community Nutrition Program, ahg2@cornell.edu

   Holly Gump, Greater Finger Lakes Region Nutrition Coordinator, Food and Nutrition Education in Communities Program, hmg2@cornell.edu

3. Please identify your PWT’s activities, accomplishments, and, most importantly, outcomes and impacts over the past year.

   **ACTIVITIES and ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

   The following resources have been developed, enhanced and disseminated to partners within and across the local, county, university and state levels to enhance capacity among families and communities of learning to integrate effective strategies to enhance thoughtful family and community food decisions.

   1. The Leadership Team expanded on a Family and Community Food Decision Making Logic Model developed initially for a family-based, community engaged cooking program series, titled *Cooking Together for Family Meals*. A key premise of the program is that shared decision making among family/household members leads to better and more sustainable positive food-choice practices – a model designed to help people think differently about food and eating. An *Evaluation Pathway Model* was developed to demonstrate key connections between and among outputs and various levels of outcomes (short-medium-long term) captured in evaluation data collected since an earlier version of the pilot program. The logic and pathway models are available at www.evaluationnetway.net.

   2. A Discussion tool to assess “most memorable” and significant aspects of CTFM from the perspective of former family participants that included their suggestion for “scaling up” the CTFM program.

   3. Six “flexible” lesson plans were modified and updated. These include a *Parent Discussion* element during the youth “clean-up” time. Major foci involves: applying the *Nutrition Facts* label to inform food choice, meal planning using recipes as a basis (focus on preparation and use of “what’s on hand” vs. a meat or protein-centered focus), ideas to add more vegetables to meals, and mealtime discussion with families about how to include youth in family food decisions. These plans also include evaluation and feedback from facilitators for use in testing the outcomes of the program for scaling up CTFM.


   5. Pre-testing of the revised CTFM curriculum, methods, recipes and tools.

   6. Refinement and conceptualization of collaborative engaged research (CER) methods and approach for improving communication competence, engaging community partners, CTFM recruitment and support, and measuring family collective efficacy (development in process).

   Outputs and outcomes have been disseminated through links with the CCE county websites. Community partners also
showcase CTFM program information and outcomes on their sites, e.g. the Syracuse City School District and Syracuse City Parks Dept.

**OUTCOMES and IMPACTS**

The leadership team discovered that the structured yet flexible class routine was welcome in the chaotic (particularly as it related to food and eating practices) lives of most families. The idea of routine carried over to home environments, but the flexibility in the curriculum and teaching style was essential for engaging children and parents in their own learning and food decision-making changes.

The conditions created during the classes provided time and space for informal communication between children and their parents, with other families, and with class facilitators for analyzing and reflecting upon family food decision-making processes, and outcomes, innovative thinking about changing food and eating routines, and as a safe place for parents to share concerns about their child’s eating issues or weight/health concerns.

Families reported changes in knowledge and skills, actions (food and eating routines) and their home food and eating environment. Parents also remarked consistently that the program increased their confidence in letting their children help them prepare meals, use knives and kitchen equipment and have input into types of food/recipes prepared in the household. The following examples illustrate these changes.

- Learned a lot about food/vegetables, food handling, and food safety and used the information at home.
- Children have been cooking ever since the program and often initiate cooking at home. Kids contribute to family by cooking and cleaning around the house and started to eat fresh vegetables and fruits. Prepared on the counter for snacks for kids
- Learned healthy preparation such as no need to cook with oils and fats for food to taste good
- Gained food preparation skills including how to cut items properly and new recipes which made us more resourceful with food at home.
- Reintroduced vegetables into family meals and kids were receptive to eating more vegetables.
- Added new recipes to families’ routine like quesadillas, main dish soups, salads and chili; learned safe cutting techniques for a variety of vegetables that we never ate before.

Families reported aspects participating in the Cooking Together for Family Meals program that were most memorable and important:

- Cooking together as a family and working in a group during the classes;
- Parents were more confident about allowing kids to cook at home; children felt more empowered to sometimes corrects mom about safe cutting procedures (the claw, and the bridge).
- Families now cooked with friends and helped cook at home,
- Spending quality time with kids in learning how to prepare food and family trying new foods; helping child learn valuable life skills
- Using leftovers for vegetable soup, vegetarian chili, and broccoli burgers;
- Children are now interested in helping with shopping and trying new vegetables
- When kids go to the grocery store they pick vegetables and fruits to try at home.

**Funding was secured for FY 2012 to initiate or continue these initiatives in food decision-making collaborative engaged research:**

2. **Leveraging the Locavore Movement: Exploring Family and Community Food**


5. *Advancing Food Security and Viable Local Economies by Building Food-secure Family and Community Systems,* USDA NIFA, AFRI, $5mil, denied.

6. The findings from the F&CFDM program informed the development and approval of the 5-year multi-state research project NC-1196.

**Projects Completed in 2012**

1. Food systems, health, and well-being: understanding complex relationships and dynamics of change HATCH multi-state, 2011-2012, $30,000

2. *Cooking Together for Family Meals (CTFM) revised curriculum*

3. Family Food Discussion interview guide to assess changes in family dynamics around family Food choice and decision making post program.

4. Updated the CTFM Logic Model and draft of an Evaluation Pathway to demonstrate key Connections among and between outputs and various levels of program outcomes.

**Continuing Projects**


**Publications:**