

## EFNEP 35th Anniversary Celebration

Nominees in the Categories of [Adult Participants](#), [Youth Participants](#), [Professionals](#), [Paraprofessionals](#), [Volunteers](#), and [Champions](#)

### **Nominees in the Professional Category**

*Connie Aclin, DeSoto Parish, LA*

Connie Aclin has worked for the LSU Agricultural Center on the EFNEP program for more than 30 years. She has been responsible for EFNEP activities in DeSoto, Caddo, and Bossier parishes. She is now the EFNEP supervising agent in DeSoto Parish. During Connie's long career, she spearheaded the program in the school systems of these parishes. Considered by colleagues as an EFNEP trailblazer, she recruited teachers as volunteers to conduct the program in their schoolrooms. The children learn about nutrition and are introduced to unfamiliar foods to expose them to new and healthier diets, and they learn appropriate exercise for burning excess calories. Connie also brought the program to teen mothers in DeSoto Parish schools. These young mothers learn invaluable lessons about nutrition, feeding young children, financial management, and meal planning to ensure healthy lifestyles and a more secure financial future for themselves and their children.

*Ramona Adams, Augusta, GA*

Ramona Adams joined EFNEP as a paraprofessional in Augusta nearly 10 years ago. She immediately recognized EFNEP's relevance and embraced its concepts with enthusiasm that proved to be contagious to coworkers and clients alike! Determined to make EFNEP her life career choice, Ramona earned a bachelor's degree in May 2002, even while working full time. Shortly after graduation, she realized her career dreams by becoming the EFNEP agent. Almost immediately, her enthusiasm and belief in the program impressed Augusta's mayor, who asked her to chair the *2003 Take Charge of Your Health, Augusta* campaign, with the goal of decreasing childhood obesity. Ramona worked with local government, EFNEP, the Health Department, schools, and others to produce a media event promoting low-fat, high-fiber recipes prepared by area chefs. A brochure in English and Spanish was produced and distributed, and nutrition programs and weight control classes were brought to schools. Ramona Adams' wholehearted enthusiasm for EFNEP has brought greater program visibility to Augusta, benefiting both the EFNEP image and Augusta's less fortunate citizens.

*Harriett "Bunnie" Bennett, Berkeley County, SC*

Harriett "Bunny" Bennet has been called a "leader" and "innovator," "dedicated," "amazing," "compassionate," and "joyful." Perhaps her most treasured description, however, is simply "friend." She began her EFNEP career 24 years ago as a paraprofessional, becoming the county group leader. After working hard to obtain a B.S. degree in sociology/psychology, she marked the beginning of a new century with a new job and title  $\frac{3}{4}$  area coordinator/supervisor. Bunny's motto, *He who buries his talent is making a grave mistake*, is evident in her work. Her expertise in program design, development, delivery, evaluation; her teaching ability; and her level of integrity and ethics are significantly above others in her field. She developed and implemented a senior nutrition education program (SPINE) and now heads that program in her "spare time." She recently organized a community 4-H club, recruiting five volunteers for the club.

Throughout her career, Bunny has helped make EFNEP a success with her delivery of high-quality, cost-effective programs.

*Linda Berlin, Burlington, VT*

Since 1992, Linda Berlin has been the Vermont EFNEP coordinator and then state nutrition specialist. During this time, Linda purchased innovative programs and convinced other agencies serving the same audience to collaborate in their group presentations. In cooperation with the Department of Health, Linda developed and received funding for *Vermont Best Start*, a program to encourage and support breastfeeding among limited-income mothers; *Making Nutrition Compute*, which uses a laptop computer to teach nutrition and basic computer skills; *Step Into Health*, a program to increase physical activity among low-income women; and, *Making It Fit*, a six-session class with hands-on food preparation and nutrition lessons. Always looking for new challenges, Linda is working on her Ph.D. at Tufts University, focusing her dissertation on food systems issues.

*Inez Marquez Burcham, El Paso, TX*

Inez Marquez Burcham has spent her entire 13-year career in Texas Cooperative Extension with EFNEP. As an El Paso EFNEP youth agent, she conducted classes at El Paso housing projects, partnering with the youth-at-risk program, *Compadres*. She taught parents at Texas Workforce Commission's back-to-work projects for displaced employees, and she introduced nutritional improvements to El Paso Levi Strauss plant workers. Inez collaborated with the community Social Services Branch, teaching children of the Tigua Indian Community about nutrition and health. During summers, she continued to stay connected with schoolchildren through the National Youth Sports Program at the University of Texas at El Paso. As an agent for the adult EFNEP program, Inez worked with parents in Dallas, collaborating with the local Head Start program to bring lessons to students' parents. Through her leadership of inservice training for child protective services contractors, she was able to bring EFNEP information to families who were at nutritional risk and at risk of losing their children. Inez directed Dallas EFNEP staff as they took programs to pregnant teens and teen parents at magnet schools.

*Linda Burton, Chautauqua County, NY*

Linda Burton, a 27-year EFNEP veteran, promotes EFNEP and develops innovative approaches by networking with key community decisionmakers and administrators in such organizations as Public Health, WIC, DSS, Housing Authority, and the Youth Bureau. Her recruitment of 5 to 10 mothers each month from local hospitals has brought nutrition education to many mothers-to-be. A common challenge with EFNEP is finding local space to conduct programs. Undeterred by the challenge, Linda obtained EFNEP office space for food bank and inner city Hispanic EFNEP outreach programs and convinced the Housing Authority to donate an apartment for EFNEP use. Besides initiating a volunteer gleaning program for food bank recipients, Linda recognized the lack of emergency food services in the community and established a faith-based food pantry. She has worked diligently to connect with hard-to-reach audiences, including pregnant and breastfeeding women in isolated, rural communities and Amish settlements. Through the Department of Labor, she worked to establish free breast cancer screenings and provided bilingual information about ways to reduce cancer risks. Under her leadership, 40 percent of EFNEP graduates improved their resource management, nutrition, and food safety. She is credited with maintaining the lowest cost-per-graduate and highest benefit-to-cost ratio than any

other county in New York State, with a graduation rate of 81 percent. Last year 38 participants entered the workforce, 4 families bought cars, and 4 families became homeowners.

*Sandra Canales-Vazquez, Miami-Dade County Extension, FL*

For 20 years, Sandra Canales-Vazquez's major focus has been to bring the EFNEP program to Miami-Dade's Spanish-speaking population. Responsible for launching the Miami-Dade EFNEP program, she hired 12 EFNEP program assistants to work with adults and youth. Under Sandra's leadership, the Miami-Dade Hispanic EFNEP program has improved healthful eating habits of 40,240 low-income families in the county. She and her staff translate recruiting materials for adults and volunteers and at least one publication per lesson in the EFNEP curriculum. She has developed and adapted Spanish program materials and has helped develop the Florida EFNEP bilingual English-Spanish curriculum. Originally, program assistants recruited program participants by knocking on doors, offering EFNEP education for a maximum of 1 year. Today, the program outreach has grown from its beginning 55 families a year to more than 250 families annually, with a streamlined program that now takes only 6 months to complete.

*Sharman J. Charles, Baton Rouge, LA*

Sharman Charles' 5-plus-year EFNEP career has been at the LSU AgCenter, with responsibility for EFNEP activities in East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge, St. James, Assumption, and Iberville parishes. She spearheaded new programs in several of her parishes, a true trailblazer. For instance, Sharman approached the charity hospital in Baton Rouge about conducting EFNEP lessons for the eligible staff and clients, recruiting the Family Planning clinic doctors as volunteers. A weekly EFNEP clinic was set up in the hospital, with participants referred by staff doctors. Clients learn about nutrition and resource management during the 12-week course. Sharman also participates in a research project at Glenn Oaks Middle School in Baton Rouge, where she and the nutrition educators conduct classes twice a week for students.

*Monica Dawkins, Miami-Dade County, FL*

In her 25 years as an extension EFNEP educator, Monica Dawkins has always been motivated to care about and serve the less fortunate and at-risk population. Prior to working in the EFNEP adult program, she supervised a 4-H EFNEP unit. In both positions, she was very successful in pioneering extension nutrition programming in diverse Florida communities. She established Haitian/Creole community programming, engaged Creole-speaking program assistants, and coordinated literature translation for the Haitian-American audience. Monica is an enthusiastic networker who has developed effective leadership with major community coalitions, some at state and national levels. Her efforts have garnered partners such as the National Immunization Campaign, the Healthy Start Coalition, and the Governor's and Mayor's Early Childhood Initiatives. Recently, Monica partnered with the local chapter of the U.S. Tennis Association to increase nutrition knowledge and physical activity to inner-city children, with positive results that greatly enhanced her program productivity and the program's quality. In recognition of her long-term commitment to her community and the EFNEP program, she recently received the National Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agents' Distinguished Service Award.

*Janina Czajkowski Esselen, Storrs, CT*

Dr. Janina Czajkowski Esselen was more than an EFNEP professional; she was a pioneer in the EFNEP program. Early to recognize staff limitations as detrimental to the overall program, she documented in a 1967 annual report the successes of a 1965 exploratory program for training and using indigenous leaders as program assistants. In her report, she stated, “*There is a continued need to give high priority for extending effective programs to reach families with limited resources, especially families with young children in the inner cities...The need is urgent for paid indigenous program aides and assistants.*” Thus, she prepared Connecticut for EFNEP and shared her expertise by developing the national training manual, *Food and Nutrition Inservice Training for Extension Aides: A Problem-Centered Approach*. Throughout her career, she actively promoted interagency collaboration, multicultural/bilingual education, pictorial recipes, and other low-literacy educational materials, hands-on interactive programs, consumer education, mass media education, behavioral change evaluation, life-span education especially geared to youth and the elderly, and community nutrition degree programs. Even in her retirement, she and the work she did inspire those who continue this important work.

*Candace Gabel, Columbia, MO*

Candace Gabel has served the EFNEP program for 12 years. In that time, she served as a coordinator of the Southeast Ozark Foothills unit, bringing EFNEP to one of the most rural, sparsely populated areas of the state. In 2000, she became the state co-coordinator in charge of curriculum and staff training. Her staff continues to increase enrollment and graduation rates. She encourages staff to seek out the most underserved audiences and promotes outreach to them in their homes or through local agencies. Candace encourages her staff to be more than instructors, but also to become an additional community resource from which clients can draw needed skills and information. This position in the community allows paraprofessionals to provide information and referrals for food, medical, dental, housing, and personal assistance. As a state leader, Candace standardized statewide hiring practices, curriculum development, program delivery, and new staff orientation, and she also implemented an interactive television network to take subject-matter training statewide.

*Steven Garrett, Tacoma, WA*

Steven Garrett's 14-year EFNEP career has been marked by innovative project development that has had far-reaching impact on the entire Cooperative Extension System. He established an EFNEP Gleaning Project to help enrolled families glean foods and grains left after harvesting. It has contributed millions of pounds of otherwise wasted food to the local emergency food system. Taking his gleaning experience national, he made significant contributions to USDA's gleaning program. Steven saw a cannery project, where large raw food donations are canned for food pantries, as the perfect venue for EFNEP volunteers. He developed the Growing With Plants curriculum, used nationally by 4-H EFNEP. His many contributions to the Extension System's food security efforts have attracted national attention and acclaim.

*Carolyn Gilles, Meadville, PA*

Years ago, when Carolyn spotted an ad in the paper for a job with The Pennsylvania State University's Cooperative Extension, she couldn't believe that so many of the things she enjoyed doing in everyday life were listed in the job description. It was a perfect match. Apparently the Penn State staff felt the same way. Carolyn joined Penn State Cooperative Extension in 1976.

Over the next 25 years, this perfect match was evidenced by her affectionate nickname, “the EFNEP Sage.” Whenever there was an EFNEP question to be answered, one name sprang to mind, Carolyn Gilles. Her knowledge and wisdom came about because Carolyn didn't just *talk* EFNEP, she *lived* it daily. As her career progressed, she expanded her experience-based knowledge by working at every level of the EFNEP program, starting as a unit coordinator, then moving into an extension supervising agent position and ending her tenure as the acting state EFNEP program coordinator. Even now, in retirement, she enthusiastically supports EFNEP not just as a program, but as a way of life.

*Julie Gray, Indianapolis, IN*

Julie Gray is an enthusiastic, energetic, creative, and caring member of the Indiana EFNEP program. Her collaboration with Indianapolis agencies such as WIC keeps EFNEP on the forefront of community efforts. Her vision has taken EFNEP to the Hispanic/Latino and other socio-ethnic communities. Her work with the local and state Program Services committees of the March of Dimes and the state Folic Acid Council enhances EFNEP's visibility and ability to partner for grants. As a member of the Healthy Families Board, she is liaison to the Indiana Dietetic Association and co-chairs the Indianapolis Healthy Babies Consortium Nutrition Practice group. Julie is a preceptor for dietetic students from several universities, introducing and exploring the program with future EFNEP professionals. The Indiana Dietetic Association recognized her communication skills by presenting her its Media Award. Her collaborations and community involvement in Indianapolis have greatly enhanced EFNEP's visibility to legislators and stakeholders in Indiana's capital city.

*Cathy Harrington, Cambria County, PA*

There is no doubt that Cathy Harrington is one of Pennsylvania's best trainers of nutrition paraprofessionals. An EFNEP supervising agent for nearly 23 years, she has supervised EFNEP in 17 counties and 3 regions during her tenure, co-chaired a state committee for EFNEP Policy and Procedures, chaired state EFNEP training planning, and revised a training curriculum for new EFNEP and Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program (FSNEP) staff. High energy, enthusiasm, and creativity mark Cathy's workshops where she employs extensive hands-on involvement. Regular unit training sessions address timely issues, updating EFNEP paraprofessionals on nutrition information and EFNEP procedures. Cathy serves on a local Board of Directors with March of Dimes and was instrumental in getting valuable resources donated statewide. Her commitment and passion for EFNEP are evident in her dealings with stakeholders, external contacts, and her co-workers. Cathy consistently inspires cooperation and generates enthusiasm for EFNEP.

*Nellie Hedstrom, Orono, ME*

Nellie Hedstrom has been involved in administering EFNEP since 1968. Attending a Washington, D.C., conference that announced a new national program to meet the food and nutrition education needs of the neediest, she undertook its beginnings in Maine. During her years with this important program, the original EFNEP focus has changed. At the start, EFNEP's primary focus was teaching families who used bagged commodity foods to create more flavorful, nutritious meals. As the program has evolved, EFNEP has met many emerging challenges, such as obesity, diabetes control, and other health issues. In her role as nutrition specialist, Nellie stays abreast of changes, continuing her support of high-quality EFNEP nutrition education for

Maine's limited-income families. In 1999-2000, Nellie worked closely with Maine's Department of Human Service's Diabetes Control Program to develop a training program, *Diabetes Community Education: Roles and Resources*, for Health Department staff who work with EFNEP. Most recently, she recognized insufficient physical activity as an emerging nutrition and health issue. In collaboration with UMCE, she is piloting a program she developed, *Moving Matters!* Based on the *Stages of Change* model, *Moving Matters!* will enable EFNEP staff to better support clients suffering from physical conditions related to inactivity.

*Marion E. Hubbard, Wayne County, MI*

Marion Hubbard has exhibited her professionalism in her zeal and affection for her hardworking EFNEP staff and for the multicultural clients they serve. She provides extensive staff training to make staff comfortable with nutrition materials and encourages their creative ideas and input. Through Wayne County EFNEP promotion and marketing, Marion has developed an impressive list of community partners and collaborators, including WIC, local health departments, Head Start programs, faith-based institutions, community centers, rehabilitation programs, health and wellness centers, and other community agencies. Under her leadership, the annual EFNEP graduation has grown each year to become an exciting community event, often featuring inspirational and motivational speakers and local dignitaries. Community partners, including local businesses, have enthusiastically supported this graduation with support and donations of more than \$1,500. Marion has made EFNEP graduation not just a ritual, but a celebration of newfound knowledge and self-esteem and a memorable event for scores of EFNEP clients and the Wayne County EFNEP paraprofessional staff.

*Ruth C. Jackson, Tempe, AZ*

Ruth C. Jackson's contributions redefine the meaning of sustaining, expanding, and enhancing EFNEP. Ruth, who was a single-mother EFNEP participant, credits that experience as the basis for her EFNEP career choice. While working as an EFNEP educator, she earned bachelor's and master's degrees, resulting in promotion to EFNEP agent. Ruth has demonstrated excellence by exhibiting a high level of performance and work ethic and expecting the same from staff. The EFNEP staff's resultant excellent performances account for a participant increase from 700 to 2,000 a year and a rise in in-kind service contributions to \$10,000 a year. Encouraging new teaching approaches and effective time use led to innovative collaborations with Head Start programs, churches, and housing projects. Converting individual family visits into group classes with community collaborators saved time and resources for all partners. Through such partnering, she brought EFNEP diabetes prevention education to a local Indian reservation. Ruth created *Extension Connection*, a program she shares with potential and existing collaborators to demonstrate how EFNEP builds self-esteem and enhances job preparation for hard-to-place individuals.

*Marjorie Lafont, Peoria County, IL*

Marjorie Lafont personifies excellence in EFNEP. Since 1972, Marjorie has provided outstanding and innovative leadership to EFNEP in Peoria County. The Peoria EFNEP program reaches approximately 2,000 homemakers each year and conducts more than 30 4-H youth gardens each summer, teaching an average of 500 youth how to garden and harvest fresh vegetables. Marjorie's staff teaches group programs at more than 40 agency sites, including soup kitchens, food pantries, preschool parent sites, churches, housing complexes, and

libraries. EFNEP staff reach nearly 6,000 youth each year in after-school 4-H nutrition clubs, summer youth programs, and youth gardens and school enrichment programs. In her 30 years in the EFNEP program, Marjorie has secured more than \$1 million for additional programs in venues such as Welfare to Work, Homeless Shelters, Youth Gardening, and 4-H Junior Chef School. She serves on a variety of Peoria boards and committees. Thanks to Marjorie's outreach, Peoria agencies and organizations know that when they join efforts with EFNEP, the programs that result will be the very best.

*Diane Linder, Baton Rouge, LA*

Diane Linder served as EFNEP coordinator for Louisiana from 1969 until 1999. Under her management, the EFNEP program became very successful, bringing the knowledge and expertise of a well-trained staff to the people of Louisiana. In 1998, Diane, in collaboration with other specialists, developed a Web-based nutrition curriculum, *EatSmart*, as her sabbatical leave project. This interactive Internet nutrition curriculum is successfully used as a training tool for certifying nutrition educators in Louisiana and other states. In the past 5 years, 59 EFNEP paraprofessionals in Louisiana received nutrition training and certification. The certification program is a great accomplishment for the nutrition and health division, as well as for the EFNEP program. Participants benefit from a high-quality program delivered by a well-prepared staff.

*Valerie Long, Durham, NH*

Valerie Long exemplifies the EFNEP professional. Under Val's leadership, EFNEP expanded into all New Hampshire counties, with staff integrated into county Cooperative Extension teams. She secured funding from county governments and elevated classification status for program associates to that of "professional" staff. New Hampshire became one of the first states to seek funding from USDA Food and Nutrition Service, with the state's Food Stamp Program. Under Val's able guidance, the initial 1989 grant of \$8,000 has grown to \$1,569,851 for 2002-2004. An innovative social marketing campaign, including *Smart Choices* newsletters, brings nutrition education to all food stamp recipients. Val was principal investigator for *Great Beginnings*, research that showed significant reductions in the incidence of low birth weight babies to teenage mothers. Always in step with the times, Val has redirected EFNEP efforts whenever new health issues emerge. Under her management, EFNEP has taken on issues such as reducing cancer risk and the need for increased physical activity. She worked to form a statewide coalition to address obesity issues. Val also teaches *Community Nutrition* to University of New Hampshire students. Because of her 24-year dedication to EFNEP, her influence extends to all New England and beyond.

*Anna Martin, San Joaquin County, CA*

Anna Martin's career is a microcosm of the way EFNEP is supposed to function! Anna started her career with EFNEP in a clerical position, later becoming a paraprofessional. While working for EFNEP, she returned to college and completed her master's degree. She was then hired as a nutrition and family consumer science advisor. Anna's climb is a perfect example of how commitment and passion for EFNEP can change lives, not only for its clients, but also for those who do the work. Anna's excellent and innovative work comes from her intimate knowledge of the communities of San Joaquin County and her extraordinary ability to maintain an extensive network of agencies and people who serve limited-resource families. Through this connection,

EFNEP now reaches families participating in the Migrant Head Start program and a Welfare-to-Work special program. Anna took the lead in establishing the Children and Weight Coalition. Through this coalition EFNEP provides valuable education addressing preventive measures to curb the current obesity epidemic.

*Bertina M. McGhee, New Orleans, LA*

One of Bertina McGhee's accomplishments as EFNEP supervising agent in Orleans Parish was building one of the strongest volunteer programs in Louisiana. In 2002, 152 volunteers dedicated their time to the EFNEP program. About 77 percent were former EFNEP participants, and 30 of them served on the advisory committee. Nine volunteers delivered EFNEP lessons to youth groups. They also promoted EFNEP and assisted with outreach to nontraditional audiences. The incentive program for volunteers included a luncheon supported by community businesses (that are also recognized as EFNEP volunteers). Although Bertina is a registered and licensed dietitian, she has returned to school to enhance her academic and professional performance, and she still continues to carry out her current job responsibilities. Recently she successfully completed the nutrition specialization program. Now the EFNEP program can benefit further from her knowledge and expertise.

*Rita Mitchell, Berkeley, CA*

Rita Mitchell has provided excellent curriculum development, training, and program assistance to the EFNEP staff. Exercising a thorough knowledge of, and experience with, educational delivery methods and cultural diversity, Rita has been instrumental in adapting the Core Curriculum for California's multicultural audience. She has optimized EFNEP's effectiveness for hard-to-reach audiences by providing training to other EFNEP staff. As last year's president of the California Dietetic Association, she promoted EFNEP throughout California, obtaining several opportunities for EFNEP to provide education to a special program offered to low-income families by local supermarkets. Rita represents EFNEP at many state hearings, bringing to stakeholders and legislators her own passion and commitment to EFNEP and to those she and this program serve.

*Darlene Myatt, Fort Worth, TX*

During Darlene Myatt's 27 years of EFNEP leadership, 101,349 youth completed a six-lesson nutrition series. Her influence was summed up by one third-grader, who wrote, "*My mom doesn't read English, so I show her what to buy and we fix the recipes that we did at school. Now my family makes good choices to be more healthy.*" Darlene co-authored *Fight Foodborne Illness*, an innovative curriculum for teens that focuses on food safety, character education, and employability skills, and presented pre/post education results at USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service's 2002 National Conference. She was featured as a presenter and host for a site visit for International Federation of Home Economists at the Western Hemisphere Region of the America's 2002 conference. Each year, Darlene cooperates with more than 50 partners in schools, public housing, Head Start, colleges and universities, youth-serving organizations, and community shareholders. She readily shares her knowledge, experience, and skills, mentoring university students to help them over their first hurdles of working with ethnically diverse, limited-resource EFNEP youth. Each year, she somehow assembles a corps of more than 300 volunteers who do the work equal to three full-time, paid EFNEP staff. Over her long career, this



has brought 6,685 volunteers into the EFNEP fold, a budget boon to the local program and a blessing to underserved, low-income Fort Worth families.

*Robin D. Orr, Urbana, IL*

Robin Orr's exceptional creative and visionary leadership activities have helped shape the face of EFNEP through her participation in local and national EFNEP-related committees. She has trained EFNEP staff in multiple states, focusing on the importance and role of the facilitative education. On her home turf, Robin is quick to encourage staff supervisors to develop their own program styles that best reach the ethnically and regionally diverse populations in Illinois. Her passion for EFNEP principles is evident in her individualized training methods and her use of innovative teaching materials. She provides cross training with WIC and Head Start staff and is a strong EFNEP proponent with legislators and stakeholders using cost-benefit analysis to prove that every dollar invested in EFNEP saves \$4.67 in health care costs in Illinois alone.

*Kay J. Parnell, Richland Parish, LA*

Kay J. Parnell is a committed professional with a passion for reaching out to nontraditional audiences. For the past 34 years, she has exhibited sustained excellence in Richland Parish EFNEP programming, supervision, and service. Kay trains volunteers and nutrition educators to conduct group meetings, creating numerous lessons in nutrition topics and food preparation. She plans and supervises the teaching of simple lessons, such as measuring food, recipe modification, and incorporating the food guidelines into diets. Kay creates lesson plans, visuals, demonstrations, and trainings in two Louisiana State University AgCenter regions. For many years she has assumed full supervisory responsibility for a staff of four to six paraprofessionals. Kay's innovative programming for nontraditional audiences includes a three-day EFNEP camp, diabetes education, obesity programming, and portion control classes. She is generous with her time, helping state office nutrition staff apply EFNEP programs, assisting with state meeting plans, and revising and improving the EFNEP handbook.

*Cathryn Robinson, Caddo Parish, LA*

Cathryn Robinson served as nutrition educator in Caddo Parish for much of her 15 years in EFNEP and is now the coordinator of EFNEP youth programs in Caddo and Bossier parishes. At the same time, Cathryn continues her own education to enhance her academic and professional skills. At every possible occasion, she promotes the EFNEP program with heart and enthusiasm. She truly believes in changing the lives of her clients through nutrition education. Always eager to assist with EFNEP functions and provide support to anyone needing help, she uses her positive outlook and people skills to accomplish program goals. Cathryn's ability to work with children and adults is a true asset to the success of Louisiana's EFNEP program.

*Carol Sadowski, Westmoreland County, PA*

As an EFNEP supervising extension educator, Carol Sadowski has built an effective team of paraprofessionals in Southwest Pennsylvania. She demonstrates excellence in her ability to supervise, plan, implement, and evaluate high-quality educational EFNEP programs. She has earned the respect of those she supervises, her peers, and extension administration in her ability to teach, motivate, and mentor others. Great work often begins with exceptional commitment and passion, two qualities that Carol exemplifies. She has worked diligently to build partnerships with organizations such as WIC, community action agencies, food banks, Department of Welfare

personnel, churches, service clubs, and community leaders. In addition to managing EFNEP, Carol has developed an exceptional Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program initiative in Westmoreland County. Carol brings her own exceptional wisdom to several statewide program and administrative committees, enhancing the overall EFNEP image with other community-serving organizations.

*Barbara Sutherland, Davis, CA*

Since assuming responsibility for California EFNEP, Barbara Sutherland has provided effective leadership to ensure that the California program meets the changing needs of the state's increasingly diverse population. She identifies new audiences, using Extender Training for home-based Head Start programs and Learn-at-Home programs for individuals in rural areas to bring EFNEP information to people from previously underserved populations. Under her direction, the curriculum has been completely updated, both in content (so that it addresses current nutrition issues) and in delivery methods that bring about positive behavior changes. Revised handouts are now more appropriate for limited-literacy participants. Barbara funds projects and increases EFNEP awareness and outreach by collaborating with other agencies such as the Center for Environmental Health Services. Her caring, passionate belief in the EFNEP program's importance to the less fortunate has markedly increased the program's effectiveness statewide.

*Susan Uthoff, Johnson County, IA*

Susan (Susie) Uthoff is a tenacious, determined champion for programming that helps low-income families to improve their situations. Over the past 25 years, she has reached thousands of individuals and families, both through her direct teaching and her supervision of EFNEP in eastern Iowa. In spite of shrinking budgets and staff hours, she consistently maintains caseloads by cooperating with community partners, including classroom teachers, WIC, Madge Phillips Homeless Shelter, Aid to Women, and a substance recovery program. An early innovator of experiential learning, Susie has written more than 300 issues of the county EFNEP newsletter, worked with assistants to develop materials for Somali and other immigrant groups, and pursued and won grants to develop special educational materials. Believing strongly in experiential learning processes, she also encourages legislators to see for themselves the good this program is doing by accompanying EFNEP assistants as they make their home visits.

*Donna Vandergraff, West Lafayette, IN*

Peers, staff, and Purdue University administrators recognize Donna Vandergraff as an outstanding EFNEP coordinator. She earned that distinction through innovative programming, securing outside funding, and partnering with other agencies. Donna has made a strong commitment to staff development and effective program delivery strategies. She links emerging topics such as physical activity and food safety during pregnancy to ongoing programs, determining the best delivery method (video, CD, DVD, or print) and provides materials in multiple languages. She is especially known for two series of lessons, *Have A Healthy Baby* and *Professor Popcorn*. She won March of Dimes and Department of Agriculture grants to expand and enhance EFNEP programs. She negotiated partnerships with the March of Dimes, the Indiana Folic Acid Council, WIC, and the Indiana Interagency Nutrition Education Committee. Donna has brought her wisdom and experience to the national level by membership on both the

national Core Competency Committee and the Youth Evaluation Committee, contributing significantly to the overall excellence of the EFNEP program.

*Myrus Weaver, Jacksonville, AL*

Myrus Weaver's future was in its developmental stages in 1969 when she was selected to be part of the EFNEP 4-H DOT (Diet's Our Thing) program. After a few lessons, Myrus was on the way to being a permanent EFNEP participant. She was a volunteer for 2 years and later a part-time employee with 4-H DOT while she was in earning a degree in family and consumer sciences. Myrus has worked with more than 10,000 youth since 1991 and is still expanding that number. She credits 4-H DOT with helping her to develop her potential and pursue her ambition. The EFNEP program enabled Myrus to get a college degree and now, as an agent assistant, she is pursuing a master of science degree in early child development while continuing to teach youngsters in 4-H DOT. Myrus appreciates the joy and excitement of seeing youngsters develop, knowing that she has a small part in the success of those she teaches.

*Karen Wilken, Fort Collins, CO*

In her 22-year career as Colorado's EFNEP coordinator, Karen Wilken is considered the "mother" of EFNEP not just in her own state, but in the entire Western Region. Her unquestionable integrity and the high regard in which supervisors, peers, and staff hold her earned for her Colorado State's prestigious Distinguished Service Award. Her commitment to reaching less advantaged segments of society with nutrition and food-buying skills has promoted and provided improved health for thousands. Never content with the status quo, Karen has developed a curriculum that promotes critical thinking. She takes a personal interest in helping staff reach new career heights. She restructured Colorado's EFNEP program from a nearly unsupported program to a highly vibrant, adaptable, and county-focused program with strong local support. Perhaps one of her greatest accomplishments is found in the more cohesive and formal venue for Western Region EFNEP coordinators that has strengthened EFNEP programs across all states.

**Nominees for Paraprofessional Category**

*Kristi Abbott, Eugene, OR*

Kristi Abbott has provided EFNEP services for Lane County Extension Nutrition Programs since 1996. But it was in 1993 that Kristi began teaching EFNEP breastfeeding classes. Her relentless advocacy of the nutritional benefits of breastfeeding is just one example of how Kristi exceeds job expectations. Kristi's experience combined with her passion and dedication to the issue of the nutritional benefits of breastfeeding has given the program an opportunity to enhance staff knowledge through trainings and to improve teaching resources and outreach. Kristi remains current on research-based nutrition information related to breastfeeding. She has taken the lead in the development of a quality and down-to-earth presentation for this important, yet sensitive topic. Kristi has uniquely combined the nutritional benefits of breastfeeding infants and the benefits of a nutritionally balanced diet for mothers in her presentations. Additionally, attendance of her breastfeeding classes and the evaluation comments coming from these classes are exemplary.

*Fatima Afana, Riverside County, CA*

Fatima Afana has dedicated the past 23 years to EFNEP as a paraprofessional in Riverside County. Her strong belief in and commitment to EFNEP is widely recognized in the community. Fatima's strength is best described by her determination to bring EFNEP knowledge and practices to nontraditional and diverse audiences. Because of her innovative approaches, EFNEP practices have been brought to parents with disabled children, fathers or mothers in recovery from substance abuse, fathers with HIV virus, parents with dual-diagnosed substance abuse and mental illness, parents in homeless shelters, parents at low-income medical clinics, mothers in prenatal programs, home-school moms, teen mothers considering adoption, and more. Fatima's ability to find and reach unique groups has resulted in successful collaborative partnerships with numerous local groups and agencies over the years, a major factor in EFNEP program success in Riverside County.

*Margie Alvarez, Orange County, CA*

In her 21 years of faithful EFNEP Service, Margie Alvarez has made significant contributions to the program's success. She developed a great network of leaders in many community groups, increasing EFNEP outreach, effectiveness, and recognition in the community. In local radio and television appearances on Hispanic television, she not only presented nutrition information, she also explained the EFNEP program and encouraged participation. She translated and developed highly effective visual aids and instructional materials for low-income Hispanic participants. Margie's roles in research projects increased the number of parent volunteers for the youth program, increased low-income Hispanic EFNEP rolls in Santa Ana, developed new leadership in many communities, and brought dental health to low-income migrant families. Her willingness to share her skills and knowledge with others was evident as she facilitated the Family Community Leadership Trainer Training Institute in Southern California.

*Susan Armstrong, Spokane County, WA*

For 20 years, Susan Armstrong has been a strong, steady force in EFNEP education in Spokane County, increasing the number of EFNEP clients to more than 300 by the end of 2003. More than just an instructor, Sue takes great pleasure in teaching clients ways to save money on food, put nutritious food on the table, and use existing resources more efficiently. Her students report evidence of success through money saved and changes in eating habits through use of new recipes with familiar ingredients. One student saved enough money each month to help her purchase a home. Sue's success can also be measured by the long list of partners she has developed over the years. Thanks to Sue's efforts, EFNEP collaborates with food banks, WIC, EACAP, Head Start, Guardian of the Courts, and Alternative High School, yet she still finds time to continue her work with small family groups in their homes. In the words of one of Sue's participants, "Sue Armstrong is an excellent asset to the program; she shows that she truly cares about people, the program, and teaching others."

*Gloria Barragan, Los Angeles, CA*

Gloria Barragan has been a nutrition education assistant for the EFNEP program for the last 5 years. She has a strong sense of commitment to the program. As a result of Gloria's teaching, participants have made significant improvement in food behavior choices and practices. Gloria's dedication to making others aware of the program has resulted in repeated requests and awards of recognition from other agencies for her outstanding EFNEP nutrition education training.

Gloria is a great asset to the EFNEP program in spite of having to take care of a critically ill 16-year-old son as he waits for a heart transplant. She still remains enthusiastic and bubbly about her work.

*Debbie Barrett, Oklahoma*

Debbie Barrett has been described as “one of the most positive, cooperative, patient employees” in the Oklahoma EFNEP program. She has taught WIC breastfeeding classes and works with pregnant teens at Central Technology Center, Drumright School, Sapulpa School, Bartlett Academy, and Bathesda Girls Home for Alternative Education. In her quest for nontraditional audiences, Debbie formed alliances with and became a member of such groups as Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Child Abuse Prevention Task Force, Parents as Teachers, and Garfield Early Childhood Learning Center. Her “Shaken Baby” presentations at local schools in Tulsa have enlightened scores of young people to the real danger of damaging babies through frustration, anger, and hidden resentment. Additionally, she helps young mothers obtain insurance, food stamps, WIC enrollment, and other needed public assistance. Debbie's outreach to underserved clients speaks for itself in EFNEP records. Although 8 percent of Creek County is Native American, 15 percent of Debbie's participants last year were Native American. Likewise, 3 percent of the population is African American; yet African Americans account for 7 percent of Debbie's enrollments. The results of her diligent nutrition counseling are also apparent. Approximately 96 percent of Debbie's participants made positive nutrition behavior changes last year.

*Nicole Ramirez Bataille, Somerset County, MD*

Nicole Ramirez Bataille, a 4-H program assistant in Somerset County, has made a big difference in the lives of a large number of Central American migrants during the past decade. Somerset County is a small rural county. The Latino/Hispanic population on the lower eastern shore of Maryland has not been easily accepted into the mainstream of community activities. To help bridge the gap between the traditional residents and the newer Hispanic population, Nicole developed the *Food Smart Program* for the county's summer enrichment programs. This program, which teaches food and health concepts in Spanish and English to county youth, has lessened the communication gap between Spanish-speaking and non-Spanish-speaking youth. As an important side benefit, the program provides a conduit to impoverished, low-literacy parents. Using this program, which is now targeting Southeast Asian immigrants, Nicole has helped the EFNEP program reach more than 500 youth with nutrition concepts in the past 3 years. Her efforts have resulted in the eroding of some of the barriers through the universal equalizer, food. Beyond nutrition education, the rich interchange of languages and cultures experienced by program participants is one of the unique and beneficial aspects of Nicole's efforts.

*Mary Belanchik, West Pittston, PA*

Limited resources have affected the number of EFNEP paraprofessionals in the Northeast area of Pennsylvania over the last 15 years. As a result, Mary Belanchik assumed additional program areas with much vim and vigor. She maintained a client caseload of more than 100 clients, meeting educational objectives yearly with those showing dietary improvement averaging 99 percent. Mary recently enhanced her teaching methods with balls, stretch bands, and music to assist clients in meeting the Dietary Guidelines for physical activity. Thanks to Mary's efforts, parents of young children with severe mental depression were successful in obtaining county

funding to support memberships to the local YMCA to continue their activity efforts. Interest, a passion for her work, and caring for her clients drive this paraprofessional to make a difference in the lives of her clients.

*Charlotte Belfiore, Washington, PA*

For 22 years, Charlotte Belfiore has worked tirelessly to build the EFNEP Program in Washington County. Her efforts have developed very positive relationships with agencies that support homeless shelters, teen pregnancy support centers, drug and alcohol rehab residence programs, and family centers. These agencies annually budget dollars for food and supplies for Charlotte's classes. Charlotte also provides school enrichment projects under the 4-H program. EFNEP is continually expanding because of the networking among local agencies on Charlotte's reputation for excellence and the success of her programs. She continues to enhance the program by graduating twice the number of participants required. Charlotte is a real team player and works hard to support not only EFNEP, but the total Washington County Cooperative Extension Program. The county extension director writes, "Charlotte continues to be an exemplary paraprofessional in every way. We are extremely lucky to have her in our county."

*Tatyana Bistrevsky, Spokane, WA*

Tatyana Bistrevsky has exhibited an outstanding level of commitment and passion for reaching people. She is tireless in her quest to reach Spokane's growing Russian population. Focus groups with Russian immigrants were conducted to determine the needs of families living in a culture very different from their own. Food safety and balanced nutritional choices emerged as two issues to base educational programs on for this sector of the population. Recruiting has been one of Tatyana's greatest challenges. She went from church to church with fliers to advertise the nutrition programs, and she spent a lot of time in the first year calling families to recruit participants. She has also started a Russian newsletter that reaches more than 1,200 people. She has led events where Russian youth and adults cook traditional foods and share these foods and their culture with non-Russian participants of the county and district. Tatyana says, "I can work for 12 hours straight as long as I know I can help people with changes in their diet, health, and ability to connect with resources in our community. I love the hands-on cooking with adults that happens in EFNEP."

*Clara Blades, Tulsa, OK*

*You are our future.* These are the words that every young person hears at the beginning and ending of every one of Clara Blades' youth EFNEP classes. Clara says this because she so strongly *believes* this. An outstanding EFNEP educator for the past 17 years, she taught 2,564 children last year alone, so her message spreads far and wide. Clara collaborates with agency personnel at schools, parks, churches, housing complexes, feeding sites, Boys and Girls Clubs, Head Start schoolrooms, and Salvation Army centers. She was featured on an Oklahoma training video, *How to Teach Nutrition to 3rd Graders*, now marketed nationwide as a training tool. To Clara, though, the most important idea behind her work is getting to meet so many young people and giving them information they can use for a lifetime. Although Clara is a mother of 8 and grandmother of 16, she is an active community volunteer, preparing baskets for needy families in the area through her work with the Black Officers Coalition and serving as president of the Women's Missionary Society.

*Dawn Bowers, Tioga County, PA*

For 32 years, Dawn Bowers, a paraprofessional nutrition education advisor, has successfully brought the EFNEP program to clientele throughout Tioga County with a caseload that numbers approximately 100 families each year. Cooperating with local agencies such as Children and Youth, Partnership for Community Health, Fit For Life, the Assistance Office, WIC, Head Start, and Penn College's New Choices for Single Parents, Dawn has reached thousands of diverse, low-income clientele with up-to-date nutrition information. She was instrumental in organizing the first Super Cupboard program in Tioga County, which helps food pantry patrons use their food resources more wisely; and she obtained funding from agencies such as United Way to help continue it. Working with all three school districts in the county, Dawn provided nutrition programs to many elementary students as well as to pregnant teens in high schools. This sustained excellence demonstrates her commitment to education and her exemplary career with EFNEP.

*Michelle Brown, Alameda County, CA*

Michelle Brown is viewed by her peers as "the consummate EFNEP Ambassador." For 25 years, she has exhibited an ability to form excellent collaborations that have enabled her to serve high-risk, low-literacy, diverse families in Alameda County. Never deterred by tough assignments, she has taught nutrition to many of the under-reached members of the county's 13,000 families, working at shelters, teen programs, food banks, job training programs, low-income housing, churches, clinics, recovery centers, halfway homes, and more. Her skill and sensitivity with hard-to-reach, low-literacy families account for a documented 93 percent improvement in behavior changes by those she has worked so hard to reach. She nurtured and sustained relationships with community-based organizations for more than 15 years, and she is a leading EFNEP paraprofessional trainer. Michelle sees EFNEP as a mission, a gateway to her community's improvement through healthier, better-adjusted families.

*Guadalupe Lilia Cabrera, Costa Mesa, CA*

Guadalupe Cabrera is an ideal nutrition education assistant. She is always improving her knowledge and skills; her willingness to go that extra mile for her clientele and all the community organizations she works with has contributed to the success of the EFNEP program. Her outstanding enthusiasm, hard work, commitment, and dedication have made her exceed in all her assignments (teaching low-income Hispanic adults, children as well as pregnant and parenting teens). She has implemented the Learn at Home Program, a mail-in nutrition education program, reaching and graduating 400 participants in less than 7 months. Guadalupe's efforts are evident as she reaches out to the growing Hispanic population, resulting in improved nutrition for countless families and children through her 5-year tenure. Her excellent understanding and sensitivity to the needs of the community have gained her the respect of administrators, community groups, and families who have benefited from her efforts. It is a great honor to endorse Guadalupe Cabrera's nomination for the National Awards Program.

*Connie Strode Castor, Spokane, WA*

Connie Castor has worked with the EFNEP for 15 years, increasing her clientele from 37 to 265 in 2003. She is our food and nutrition bargain finder. In Connie's classes you get the basics from "Caring Families, Food Choices" and a whole lot more. Connie's knowledge base allows her to easily inform participants of where to find ingredients at the best price. She gives cost per

serving for many of the ingredients used in recipes. Connie is also our food preservation expert. She teaches preservation classes each year to regular clientele she has worked with and is on call for other assistants' class members. In the words of one agency representative, "Our parents love Connie. She is teaching them some real practical things and, as you can see, they use their books!" Connie is the assistant who has expanded our pool of tested recipes for the program. She says her greatest reward is when grandparents come back to the program because they are raising their grandchildren and want to get them involved in good nutrition choices.

*Linda Costich, Spokane, WA*

Linda Costich is short and small in stature but very big in heart and devotion to the EFNEP program. Boys and Girls Club students have enjoyed her teaching for years and named her Volunteer of Year in 2001. Linda works with developmentally disadvantaged students in the MAP class. They have an eclectic set of lessons each year and count each accomplishment as great personal successes for the students. Summer can be slower for some in EFNEP, but Linda gears up for Summer Nutrition Fun in the Park and Recreation program. This includes lessons in all food groups for 11 city parks in 5 weeks. Linda works in at least 2 parks each day and 10 each week. The kids love the nutrition lessons and snacks. For the young moms enrolled in Valley Alternative School and at Crosswalk, the cost-saving tips are the best. The moms used the recipes and ideas for shopping and were even telling others where to go to get good, reliable bargains.

*Rose Davis, Pueblo County, CO*

In Rose Davis' 32 years as an EFNEP educator in Pueblo, she increased program scope by addressing both nutritional aspects and daily challenges of low-resource families. She redefined EFNEP using educational programs for incarcerated women, teen mothers, and the YWCA Crisis Center clientele. Participant responses are always positive. Rose serves the community with membership on local advisory boards, including the YWCA Crisis Center, Boys Club and Head Start. She enhanced EFNEP resources with a grant focusing on heart disease prevention for Hispanic women, and she included physical activity curricula before it was considered a "mainstream" subject. She continually updates her subject knowledge. She has won awards for highest caseloads and enthusiastically accepted the opportunity to represent both local counties and the Hispanic population by serving on a search committee for a new state-level EFNEP coordinator. Rose is a mentor to new EFNEP educators, generously imparting her wisdom and passion for EFNEP to less experienced staff.

*Cathy Drew, Kalamazoo County, MI*

Cathy Drew, a former EFNEP homemaker, possesses a comprehensive knowledge of the program. She is the one assigned to difficult referrals because of her tremendous energy, her enthusiasm for working with a diverse audience, and her ability to remain respectful and nonjudgmental of participants. Undaunted by challenge, Cathy is famous for saying, "Just let me get my foot in the door" when she faces a court-appointed or reluctant participant. She continues to receive high evaluations from community partners and participants for her efforts with clientele. In spite of a busy schedule, Cathy finds time to distribute and explain information on accessing EFNEP services within the community. Cathy works each week with incarcerated women in the Kalamazoo Probation Enhancement Program (K-PEP), a very challenging assignment. Cathy often uses humor to "break the ice" in such uncomfortable situations by



telling personal stories, relaxing her audience with laughter. After being exposed to her enthusiasm and the good information she brings, EFNEP graduates look forward to release and reunion with their families so they can use Cathy's teachings to improve family budgets and health.

*Emogene Easterwood, AL*

Twenty-four years ago Emogene was a stay-at-home mom with a husband and five small children. She thought the tasks of feeding her family, managing the family budget, PTO, substitute teaching, and volunteering as a 4-H leader were plenty to fill her day -- until she became an EFNEP program assistant! Emogene has worked with more than 3,000 EFNEP families and worked as a supervising assistant, helping to train a staff of 10 program assistants in teaching methods, reports, and outreach. Emogene also served as a team teacher in role plays at two state conferences. One of her homemakers, Jackie Kelley, who became a program assistant, received national recognition in D.C. at the 30th EFNEP Anniversary. Emogene thought her life was over 14 years ago when her husband was murdered in a robbery. Co-workers helped her survive as she returned to work. Her family continues to benefit from the EFNEP information, and they, in effect, are volunteers for EFNEP because they share the information with their friends and families. All five of her children are now Auburn University graduates; they contribute their success in part to the knowledge gained and the influence of EFNEP and 4-H. Emogene's religious faith and her belief that her job really does make a difference in the lives of those she touches with EFNEP have been influential forces in her personal success and the program success.

*Mary Encinias, Colorado Springs, CO*

Mary Encinias is an EFNEP success story. Her family was enrolled in EFNEP 14 years ago. Shortly after, Mary was selected as an EFNEP educator in El Paso County. Her contributions to EFNEP are numerous and earned her an Outstanding Achievement Award. In 2003, program impacts exceeded state averages in 18 categories, despite high caseloads. Mary developed and maintained collaborative partnerships and served on the local Head Start Health Services Advisory Committee. She worked closely with the local school district and was regarded highly in the community. Mary reached out to new and nontraditional audiences and responded to their needs. She was team captain on projects with a local homeless shelter and took high-risk teens to the shelter to teach them nutrition.

*Rose Esquivel, Mesquite, TX*

Although Rose Esquivel's EFNEP career started more than 22 years ago, she began teaching nutrition lessons to refugees in Dallas County in January 2003. Rose started the lesson series with a group of Somali-Bantu refugees. The participants were unfamiliar with Western customs. They did not understand ovens, stoves, or refrigerators. They had never washed dishes, had no concept of time, and spoke no English. Rose used this as an opportunity to learn about another culture and chose to grow from the experience. She is now a welcome friend of the refugee communities in Dallas. She is making a difference in the lives of these EFNEP participants, in particular.

*Barbara Gill, Greeneville, TN*

Barbara Gill is often described as a creative, outside-the-box thinker, and a “people person” with a passion for teaching. She uses these attributes to enhance the EFNEP youth program. Working collaboratively with the school systems, she reaches more than 1,700 youth each year. She has worked with the area agent to develop and present an animated, high-tech curriculum, *The Blueprint to Healthy Eating*, on eight videotapes. Handouts, educational games, and food-tasting activities accompany the video lessons. This curriculum was presented in three counties of Upper East Tennessee, where school administrators and teachers evaluated Barbara as “an above-average presenter and educator.” Barbara continues to learn, completing a series of computer classes to enhance her work. She is now incorporating PowerPoint presentations with moveable figures and sound effects in program evaluations to amuse and involve youth in classroom presentations.

*Maxine Gonzales, Pocatello, ID*

Maxine Gonzales, a 20-year EFNEP paraprofessional veteran, is always ready and willing to take on new challenges. She recruited a group of four blind people for EFNEP classes, but she soon realized that she must adjust the curriculum to accommodate them. She obtained a Braille machine to record notes and copy recipes for each lesson. Lessons were *literally* hands-on as Maxine talked participants, step by step, through each experience. EFNEP staff contacted the Idaho Commission for the Blind to obtain kitchen equipment, such as a beeping measuring cup, designed especially for the blind. After the course, her four participants registered positive increases in behaviors from enrollment date to graduation. The local TV news station featured their EFNEP graduation. Maxine continues her EFNEP work through her dedication to giving limited-income families the opportunity to experience EFNEP's life-changing benefits.

*Rosetta Gray, Baton Rouge, LA*

Rosetta Gray's contribution to the EFNEP is considered essential. She has served as a mentor, advisor, and friend to past and present EFNEP nutrition educators in three parishes, as well as supervising extension agents. In January of 2000, Rosetta assumed responsibility of supervising the EFNEP in three parishes in the absence of an extension agent. During that time, it was her patience, guidance, and expertise that sustained the EFNEP program. Furthermore, it was those same character traits that she extended to the new supervising agent when the position was filled. Through times of uncertainty and change, Rosetta's passion and dedication for EFNEP provided direction and stability to the program. She continues to be the beacon of wisdom to the entire EFNEP staff.

*Gloria Greiner, Austin, TX*

During her 33 EFNEP years, Gloria Greiner helped transition the program from individual, door-to-door contacts with homemakers to group classes through WIC and other agencies. This transition has enabled the Travis County Extension Nutrition Program to increase its client contact more than tenfold. Her bilingual skills have allowed her to reach Austin's Hispanic population and to team-teach with non-bilingual educators. Despite her long tenure, she has not become satisfied with *status quo*, but continues to look for ways to improve her teaching. Gloria consistently excels at her job, often exceeding her caseload and keeping meticulous records; yet she manages to balance her work with challenging family responsibilities. Clients are

enthusiastic in their praise of both Gloria and the EFNEP classes, recognizing the benefits of having been taught by this skilled and conscientious paraprofessional.

*Janet Gudino, Kent County, MI*

Janet Gudino is a successful educator, mentor, and promoter of nutrition programming. As an educator in Kent County EFNEP, Janet works skillfully with families from diverse cultures. Through Bethany Christian Services, she used nutrition education to help an Ethiopian family recently arrived in the United States adjust to a new culture. She has had similar successes with resettled Sudanese families. Janet, a compassionate and caring person, demonstrates enthusiasm for her work with each new family she teaches. Her passion for the program and her many skills help her mentor new staff successfully. Janet promotes EFNEP at WIC sites and is highly respected by the Kent County Health Department and other county agencies. She does not hesitate to contact legislative representatives to promote EFNEP, inviting them to accompany her on nutrition education home visits. Janet has been singled out in newspaper articles and received the Distinguished Service Award for her work with EFNEP families.

*Lupe Hernandez, Kansas City, MO*

Lupe Hernandez joined the University of Missouri EFNEP as a nutrition education assistant in June 1998. She has been a leader in Missouri's efforts to reach the underserved Hispanic population. Lupe has the ability to deliver educational programs in fluent English and Spanish languages. She provides programming to diverse audiences at locations such as the Kansas City Foreign Language Magnet School, Salvation Army, City Union Mission, the Tony Aguirre Center, and various WIC programs. Lupe and her sister, Juana, (also an EFNEP paraprofessional) worked with a WIC nutritionist from Colombia to translate the EFNEP adult curriculum into Spanish. This effort includes the translation of more than 120 guide sheets used statewide. Lupe has shared her cultural background not only with EFNEP and 4-H participants, but also with others in similar fields of interest through her conduct of workshops for national conferences such as the North Central Urban Conference and a Cultural Diversity Seminar.

*Frances Herrera, Yakima, WA*

Frances Herrera provides nutrition education to EFNEP families and youth in Yakima County. A favorite picture of Frances shows her sitting on a milk crate in a housing project park, teaching nutrition to a group of Hispanic boys. Frances takes to challenges whether it's doing radio spots in Spanish, getting involved with the diabetes awareness education program, or the queso fresco abuela (fresh cheese grandmother) project, in which she teams with Anna Zaragoza, another EFNEP paraprofessional. The queso fresco abuela project has received state and national recognition and began in 1997, when nearly 100 people in Yakima County became ill from eating cheese made with fresh, unpasteurized dairy milk. The abuela project consists of teaching respected community volunteers safer methods of making queso fresco. In 2003, they taught the program in Yakima County and Skagit County, where they were experiencing similar problems with queso fresco.

*Juanita Herron, Lebanon, KY*

Among Juanita Herron's many accomplishments is her success with the summer feeding program. Each year, 180 to 200 youth participate in the innovative programming. "SPARKS in the Park" encourages children to become physically active by using the community swimming

pool, playgrounds, and recreational facilities and to learn food safety and nutrition education while receiving a hot meal. Juanita and her volunteers demonstrate safe grilling techniques for the parents who attend. Juanita credits her success to the support from her many community partners including: Community Action Agency, Housing and Urban Development (housing authority), Kiwanis, Family Resource Centers, Marion County Schools, Heartland Coalition (migrant farm workers program) and the local police.

*Sharon Hopkins, Skowhegan, ME*

Sharon Hopkins is a loyal EFNEP supporter and has worked with the program for more than 16 years. Every day she gives 110 percent to her clients and is continually promoting the program. Her excitement for nutrition and her strong belief in life-long learning never weakens; so much so, Sharon has even enrolled in a special education course to better understand her special-needs clients. She recognizes the importance in understanding her clients, their needs, and their learning styles. Sharon has been a role model for many paraprofessionals, professionals, volunteers, and educators. She has trained more than a dozen nutrition aides and numerous volunteers. Sharon truly empowers people and is an inspiration to the many lives she has touched over the years.

*Cathy Howell, McKee, KY*

Cathy Howell has been an EFNEP assistant for 7 years in Jackson County, one of the poorest counties in the United States. Cathy's success is related to her ability to coordinate efforts with other community agencies such as the Christian Appalachian Project, a nonprofit faith-based group that provides seeds to low-income families who want to grow gardens. Cathy realized how difficult it was for her EFNEP families to grow gardens from seed and recruited the high school vocational agriculture class. The students grew the seeds and provided the EFNEP families with transplants in the spring. Ten of Cathy's families grew gardens this past year, preserving more than 700 quarts of fruits and vegetables. Cathy also volunteers at the local food pantry by distributing food. She recruits EFNEP participants at the pantry and provides nutrition education. When dried beans were distributed, the young women had no idea how to prepare them. Cathy showed the families how to make everything from soup to brownies using dried beans. Through the WIC Farmer's Market Nutrition Program, Cathy links the health department and local farmers market to encourage the mothers to include fresh produce in their diets. She prepares fliers for mailing and gets stamps donated for mailing.

*Josie James, Madison Parish, LA*

In the words of her nominator, Josie James has been an "invaluable asset" to the EFNEP program for 11 years. Recently, she collaborated with the Madison Parish School Based Center to sponsor health fairs in all parish schools. The fairs focused on fruit and vegetable consumption to prevent health problems associated with cancer, hypertension, and Type 2 diabetes. Josie was the team leader in organizing the 2003 annual EFNEP day camp, which focused on the importance of dairy foods to good health and nutrition. Young participants learned through hands-on activities and events, all coordinated by this outstanding paraprofessional. Josie's remarkable spirit was recently put to the test when she was diagnosed with cancer. True to form, her reaction was not despair, but immediate action! She sought out and worked with other cancer survivors to organize the *Madison Parish 1st Relay for Life*, raising \$30,000 for cancer research, a remarkable spirit indeed!

*Betty Jones, Tallahassee, FL*

For Betty Jones, being an EFNEP program assistant for 33 years isn't a job, but a "calling." Betty is committed to helping Florida's neediest families thrive. Betty says it's not the pay keeping her with EFNEP, but the lifelong impact EFNEP has on so many people. When students need information, she says call at any hour day or night. Betty believes that for some, late at night may be the only time they can call. Anticipating calls, she keeps files beside her bed. Mr. Jones reports that she jumps up, takes their calls, completes records or answers questions, all with a smile! Betty has spearheaded Leon County's collaboration with WIC, often reaching 1,000 people a month. For her exemplary work, she received University of Florida and State of Florida Davis Productivity Awards.

*Wilhelmenia Jones, Chesapeake, VA*

Wilhelmenia Jones began her career in 1969 with the Chesapeake City office of Virginia Cooperative Extension. She continues to work in a split EFNEP adult and youth position. Throughout her career Wilhelmenia has sustained excellence in all aspects of her work. She displays a professional manner with co-workers, colleagues, citizens, community agency partners, and program participants. Wilhelmenia continues to display a genuine concern for the overall health and well-being of her program participants. Her educational programs have resulted in improved health, increased self-esteem, and leadership development of participants. High energy and enthusiasm are an integral part of her teaching style. Wilhelmenia is creative and innovative in delivery strategies. Collaborative partnerships have been an integral part of Wilhelmenia's career. She has partnered with numerous agencies, including the Community Services Board, the health department, Redevelopment and Housing Authority, public schools, STOP Organization, homeless shelters, etc. Wilhelmenia has excelled in all aspects of her career with EFNEP. She has a unique ability to work well with all people.

*Argyro Kerr, Hugo, OK*

Argyro Kerr has been an outstanding EFNEP NEA for 17 years in Choctaw County and continues to believe in the program. Her clients with low self-esteem have been known to get their GEDs, obtain jobs, and become community leaders. Argy teaches by cooking with her clients, doing demonstrations for groups, and using the computer. Argy established a greenhouse and raises herbs that she uses in her lessons and in teaching gardening. She develops a lot of her own teaching aids. She started a new Spanish-speaking group that grew to 12 participants. She taught them how to use the ingredients they can buy in Oklahoma to prepare their favorite recipes. Argy has taught lessons at the district and state levels and helped provide training for her local unit of NEAs. She has collaborated with the schools, libraries, adult education, neighborhood centers, and senior citizen centers.

*Maria De Jesus Kramer, Idaho*

Maria Kramer began teaching EFNEP to female work release inmates 9 years ago, after another paraprofessional retired. Since then, EFNEP has expanded to three additional prison locations; two locations include young men. The prison system identifies eligible EFNEP participants, many of whom are parents. Although the prison system is a closed environment, Maria has earned the respect and admiration of prison staff in the four prisons involved in her work. Not only do the prisons print and assemble all recipes and lesson materials, they also allow kitchen use and provide ingredients for students to practice cooking EFNEP recipes. Maria uses her

bilingual skills to teach EFNEP lessons to Spanish-speaking inmates, an underserved prison population. During Maria's EFNEP career, funding has not always kept up with the increase in caseloads, yet the number of EFNEP graduates has risen, largely because of Maria's hard work and seemingly boundless energy. As funding improves, and hiring another paraprofessional becomes a reality, who knows how far and wide Maria's influence will be felt?

*Peggy J. "Heidi" Leeney, Anchorage, AK*

Heidi Leeney excels in outreach to nontraditional audiences. She developed a collaborative partnership with the Anchorage School District Alternative Vocational Academic Institute of Learning (AVAIL) to offer EFNEP education to their students. This program for high school dropouts emphasizes development of self-esteem, pre-employment skills, and individualized academic education. Most of these students are teens, living on their own; some are pregnant, and some already have children or are caring for siblings. Heidi received the prestigious *Friends of Education* award from the school district for her contributions to the AVAIL program and continues to receive accolades from the principal and staff for her efforts to help these young people and for the resultant growth in the AVAIL program.

*Yolanda Lopez, Clovis, CA*

As a young mother, Yolanda graduated from an EFNEP class in 1974. The class changed her family's health and led her to volunteer as a 4-H leader. After two years, she was hired to teach EFNEP classes. In 27 years, she has graduated more than 3,000 clients (teaching many one-on-one in their homes). In 1990 she enrolled at California State University Fresno and in 1999 received two bachelor's degrees (psychology and Latino studies). These degrees enhanced her ability to help people help themselves. Yolanda continues to teach EFNEP classes for she strongly believes that nutrition education means much to the physical and mental well-being of her families. Seeing their faces light up when they learn something makes her feel important to her community. Yolanda has continued to contribute through volunteering; in 1992 she was Volunteer of the Year for the court-appointed children's advocacy program in Fresno County. Yolanda is a leader among EFNEP staff regionally and has been involved in developing and implementing many innovative nutrition education delivery methods.

*Shawntey Lorenz-Sandoval*

Shawntey Lorenz-Sandoval has worked for the University of Wyoming EFNEP program as a nutrition educator since the fall of 1996 and in that time has demonstrated a sustained commitment to excellence. Shawntey was awarded the Outstanding Educator of the Year in 2001 and in 2003. Shawntey's determination and passion to make a difference in the lives of at-risk youth, especially pregnant teen-agers, led her to expand EFNEP efforts in the local high schools. Shawntey is able to connect with each student on a personal level by using an enthusiastic, innovative teaching style. One pregnant teen in Shawntey's class was not gaining enough weight; Shawntey helped her add healthy snacks to her diet. The soon-to-be mother began gaining adequate weight and gave birth to a healthy baby. In a state where the low birth weight rate is highest among teen-agers, Shawntey is truly making a difference!

*Helenmarie Matesi, Fairbanks, AK*

Helenmarie Matesi, nutrition assistant for the Tanana District, has developed and integrated a fitness lesson into the EFNEP curriculum for Alaska. Helen's background in exercise physiology

helped her see that the fitness was pivotal for establishing a healthy lifestyle. This curriculum filled that void to teach an all-inclusive educational experience. Exercise is not the easiest component of a healthy lifestyle to deliver in the home. There were considerations such as age, physical condition of the participant, and even liability issues to address before the lesson was up and running. The lesson details an entry level, benign exercise plan that is tailored to meet the individual's needs. The curriculum has evolved from a general guideline sheet drawn up by Helenmarie to a flipchart with a lesson that is delivered by EFNEP assistants throughout Alaska.

*Julie Mather, Cedar Rapids, IA*

Julie Mather doesn't just work with individual clients; she also reaches groups at the alternative high school, homeless shelters, Young Parents Network, neighborhood resource centers, and the Breastfeeding Coalition. Julie sets up EFNEP demonstration recipes at the local farmers market and encourages clients to use their WIC Farmers Market Checks for nutritious food. Her enthusiastic, encouraging teaching style seems to magically draw new clients to EFNEP. Part of Julie's "magic" is her hands-on approach to teaching. She doesn't *talk at* participants; she *involves* them. Language barriers don't exist for Julie. She routinely works with families who speak different languages, befriending families and finding ways to communicate with them. When Somalians moved to Cedar Rapids, Julie helped develop pictorial handouts and used gestures to get her nutrition and food safety information across. These clients then proudly shared their knowledge with others. Along the way, a mutual respect for cultural differences developed. The Somalians learned American ways, and Julie learned theirs.

*Ilanda McBeath, Chicago, IL*

Ilanda McBeath was hired as an EFNEP community worker after spending 2 years as a 4-H volunteer. A resident of the Chicago Housing Authority Robert Taylor Homes, she recruited other residents into programs that helped them change eating habits and improve their overall health. In her 24 years with EFNEP, she has taught nutrition education to more than 30,000 youth and homemakers, organized and led 4-H youth in community events promoting nutrition awareness, helped launch the first WIC Farmers Market in Chicago and her community, expanded EFNEP to include more male and special-needs clients, participated in blood pressure screening of more than 5,000 EFNEP participants, and taught hypertension and diabetes awareness. She has received numerous state level awards for her work in the community.

*Joan McEnrue, Lehigh County, PA*

Joan McEnrue's dedicated service has enhanced the EFNEP program for 27 years, thanks to her unwavering love of the program and its message. During her EFNEP career, Joan has helped thousands of clients gain skills necessary to feed their families healthy meals. She enjoys working with the diverse population, composed of many Hispanic and Afro-American clients, collaborating with more than 30 agencies to bring programming to new audiences. When a registered dietitian occasionally substitutes at EFNEP classes, Joan's excellence in teaching becomes readily apparent in the amount of knowledge her clients display. Always eager and interested, she seeks out professional development opportunities to be sure of staying current with emerging nutrition issues. Joan earns the greatest respect from clients and staff. She rates near-perfect scores in every aspect of job performance each year. Other paraprofessionals highly value her generosity in offering training and advice. Her innovative teaching strategies are often incorporated into their own programming.

*Freda McNair, Saginaw County, MI*

The Joining Forces Initiative, funded by the Frey, Skillman and Kellogg Foundations, was launched in Saginaw in 1996 to change the face of child care for low-income families. The initiative brought together parents, providers, and other partners using the relationships built through EFNEP, and, more specifically, Freda McNair. Freda organized a planning team of EFNEP participants to guide the project's direction. The team began to work on ways to help people realize their dreams. Out of that work, the Saginaw Family Child Care Network (SFCCN) was born. Several members of the original planning committee went on to become members of the SFCCN board of directors. Freda continues to teach nutrition to child care providers, as well as recruiting potential providers. Freda has proven to be a leader in EFNEP, empowering people to make positive changes in their lives.

*Tamyka Miles, Detroit, MI*

Tamyka Miles, with less than 2 years of experience, is already making her mark on Detroit's children. In her short time with Youth EFNEP, she has taken the initiative to further develop the program, increasing EFNEP visibility in the elementary schools. Tamyka displays a comfort level with adapting nutrition curricula to young children, using creative ideas to make children comfortable with the learning process. She has worked with after-school programs including the Hope Baptist Church and the 4-H Community Center facilities. Thanks to Tamyka's natural teaching abilities and commitment to children's health through EFNEP, more than 800 Wayne County students graduated from the EFNEP program in 2003. Her commitment, however, doesn't end at graduation time. Tamyka is very conscientious about program quality, paying special attention to feedback from students and applying professional evaluation to her work. She used her computer skills to develop an outstanding graduation program booklet for the adult classes. Tamyka accomplishes superior work in spite of the demands of single parenthood and her pursuit of a bachelor's degree in criminal justice.

*Sue Moman, Marshall County, AL*

Sue Moman has worked with the EFNEP program in Marshall County since the program's inception, dedicating herself to helping people with special needs. She is regarded as a leader in her community and as a dependable, caring source of information and inspiration for those in special circumstances. Sue teaches the *Today's Mom* program, partnering with the County Health Department to enroll and graduate Hispanic families. She has been the underpinning of the EFNEP program, serving as a resource to other colleagues, local government, community agencies, and professional staff alike. Sue understands that it is sometimes the small gestures that make the difference, so she works tirelessly with volunteers to gather donated graduation gifts for her clients, going beyond the usual to make each one feel important and special. Although her 30 years with EFNEP have made her eligible for retirement, the urgency she feels in serving EFNEP families has kept her "at her post" through two generations of clientele, a constant reminder of the positive long-term effect her teachings have provided.

*Rosa Morgan, Springfield, OH*

Until her November 2003 retirement, Rosa Morgan was an EFNEP nutrition educator with Ohio State University Extension in Clark County for 33 years. Rosa believes strongly that the EFNEP is needed just as much today as it was when she started in 1970. In Rosa's retirement letter, she wrote: "This has been a good working experience for me. I have truly enjoyed it. Some of my



families didn't speak English. I worked with them not as the down and out but as my brothers and sisters. I learned from them and they learned from me. I also had the privilege of working with leaders of many organizations in my community.” Jeff Johnson, director of the Family Service Center in Springfield, Ohio, said, "We will miss Rosa. She did a very good job helping people. She was definitely an asset to our program and yours as well. Rosa was able to show them how to make different foods and then teach them why they were important for the body."

*Beffie Morse, Clark County, GA*

Beffie Morse joined EFNEP as a paraprofessional 27 years ago, upon the recommendation of her own EFNEP nutrition educator. Beffie, an EFNEP client whose thirst for knowledge was quickly realized, had three little boys and very little money. As an EFNEP enrollee, Beffie learned to keep her family healthy and stretch her food dollar. EFNEP later provided her with an income when she went to work for the program she loved. This love for the program, and her unflagging enthusiasm, impressed her clients and the agencies with whom she worked. She readily shares with them her firsthand knowledge and is quick to identify the challenges they sometimes face. Now a grandmother, Beffie has spent her entire career helping clients make positive changes in their diets, reaching more than 2,000 families with nutrition information. Her positive influence has been felt by many youth in the Athens area. Beffie is a superb role model, sharing her knowledge and enthusiasm regularly with newer Georgia EFNEP program assistants.

*Delores Muhammad, Detroit, MI*

Although Delores Muhammad has been on the Detroit EFNEP for just over 2 years, she has developed into a very focused and conscientious staff person. She developed her programming to include all of the major ethnic groups in Wayne County: Arabic, Latino, African-American, and Caucasian. She engaged interpreters to get her message across to Latino and Arabic groups; she works across programs by participating in the Annual Parent Awareness Program, where she received a plaque and special recognition from the Renaissance Head Start Program for the programming she did with their clients. Delores goes beyond programming by adding special touches to her demonstrations, arranging beautiful table settings to pique and hold students' interest. She continuously seeks new methods to present EFNEP information, fine-tuning ideas from *EFNEP Enhanced* to fit individual program needs. Recently, 40 of Delores' EFNEP graduates were on hand to cheer when she was recognized at the annual EFNEP graduation ceremony for having the largest number of graduates at the ceremony.

*Marsha Munsell, Fairbanks, AK*

The Economic Research Service records for Alaska speak volumes about Marsha Munsell's outstanding performance as an EFNEP paraprofessional. Although much of her work has been focused on youth programs, she single-handedly initiated, developed, and implemented a statewide adult EFNEP correspondence curriculum. This comprehensive plan includes a lesson plan and lesson, testing, instructions for a self-administered 24-hour diet recall, an instructor evaluation sheet, and guidance for following administrative procedures. Marsha proposed her idea for this curriculum to extension administrators, and, once given the go-ahead, produced the completed program in record time. Now 4 years in operation, the program carries Alaska's EFNEP curriculum to widespread audiences who could not, largely because of budgetary constraints, have been reached in person. It also permits graduation of locally enrolled clients who are relocating, and opens the program to people who live within a 2-hour radius of

Fairbanks, but who travel to the city occasionally. There are plans to adapt this curriculum for the Web, thereby broadening even further the reach of the program to those in need of EFNEP information and training.

*Rosa C. Nell, Charleston, SC*

Rosa Nell is the epitome of a superior nutrition education assistant, as evidenced by her state award in 2003, "paraprofessional of the year." Rosa has recruited, enrolled, and worked with thousands of families and many agencies during her tenure. She has successfully worked with her county's Department of Social Services in implementing and teaching food and nutrition to their clients in their reorganizational classes for the past four years, and she works with at-risk groups such as pregnant and parenting teens, and groups struggling from addiction and drug abuse. She has graduated hundreds from the various audiences with which she has worked. Her clients call her Ms. Rosa, and their faces light up when they see her. Agencies in her county frequently ask for her participation in health fairs and special events. She sacrifices many Saturdays to do this. She truly manages and performs as a professional.

*Anna Olivares, Stockton, CA*

Anna Olivares models the ideal in commitment and passion as she works to develop and plan programs, conduct research projects, participate with local coalitions/councils, and mentor new staff and student interns. Anna delivers the EFNEP message to the neediest families in the county through user-friendly workshops. She motivates the clients to make behavior changes because she takes the time to explore their culturally diverse customs and needs. The most recent challenges Anna has accepted include expanding the EFNEP Extender Training program to include approximately 68 new in-home parent educators who outreach to families living in the highest need areas of our county and providing EFNEP workshops to developmentally disabled parents with young children. This has meant simplifying the core EFNEP lessons and providing hands-on cooking experiences so the participants feel comfortable trying their new nutrition knowledge and food preparation skills in their homes.

*Rosemary O'Neill, West Hartford, CT*

Rosemary O'Neill has dedicated her life to EFNEP in the greater Hartford community for 25 years. She has assisted in staff training and preparing reports, served as a mentor for new staff, and represented EFNEP on extension committees, all while keeping up her caseload, providing creative educational programs, and working extensively with youth. She truly cares about her families. Before it was fashionable, she encouraged EFNEP participants to increase physical activity by walking together as a family, helping to break down barriers to exercise and better nutrition. Rosemary is actively involved with the Hartford County Extension Council, helping to increase visibility and financial support for EFNEP and integrating EFNEP families into other extension programs, including recruiting homemakers to participate in leadership development. Each year, she provides portfolios of information and photographs about EFNEP for extension representatives to take to Washington when visiting their congressional delegation.

*Judiann Padilla, Long Beach, CA*

Judiann Padilla is a nutrition education assistant in Los Angeles County. Her performance has been excellent in every aspect of her job. She performs with energy and enthusiasm that has added vitality to the program and staff. The staff has been especially challenged with the

demographic and cultural changes. Many of these changes can be attributed to an influx of newly arrived immigrants to the area from Mexico, causing the areas targeted for EFNEP to continue to increase in population density and cultural diversity. Judiann's program includes basic nutrition and money management strategies to make the family budget last throughout the month. She promotes basic physical fitness that focuses on those activities that can be done at home inexpensively, such as walking, stretching, and using household items for weight training. She takes her class to farmers markets or on grocery store tours to increase their access to low-cost nutritious foods, especially fruits and vegetables, thereby increasing their consumption of more nutritious fresh produce. On many occasions she will have three different languages spoken by participants in one class. This is one of the reasons why she plans her lessons with specific objectives and adapts her visual aids to meet the needs of the families she serves.

*Cynthia Pardo, Dauphin, PA*

Years ago Cynthia Pardo was in the same situation as many of her clients. In fact, her first experience with EFNEP was as a client. She participated in a Super Cupboard advertised at a food bank. She enjoyed the Super Cupboard and felt honored to be part of EFNEP. The Super Cupboard served as a stepping-stone for bigger and better things. She felt she had accomplished something and had a Penn State certificate to prove it. She couldn't wait to achieve another goal. She attended GED classes and learned how to drive. After that she wanted to find a job. Cynthia has been working for Penn State's EFNEP for 6 years. She feels she has been transformed through the training and education that she received through Penn State. "Now I can hardly believe that I am that same shy, unskilled, and intimidated person who once walked through the doors of Penn State Cooperative Extension."

*Monica Patterson, Billings, MT*

Monica has blossomed into the model indigenous EFNEP paraprofessional. At hiring, Monica was a low-income mom with young children, little work experience or confidence. She has become a role model for participants, paraprofessionals throughout the state, and her community. Monica is effective with diverse groups, especially those with little confidence in their abilities. Monica teams effectively with co-workers to create opportunities. She promoted EFNEP on local television, teamed with Montana Cattlewomen to develop EFNEP slow cooker classes, served as a state trainer to other paraprofessionals, and was asked to reach out to adjoining counties because of her effective classes and partnering abilities. Her partners –include Head Start, food banks, the local school district, pregnancy centers, women's shelters, and the Salvation Army. Her extraordinary strength is the empathy and empowerment she provides for EFNEP participants. Community caseworkers attest to the difference Monica makes daily in the lives of low-income Montanans.

*Kim Phuong Bui, Sugar Land, TX*

Kim Bui's teaching mastery is awe inspiring. In a prison setting, 27 inmates serving short sentences in a low-security facility were fully engaged, questioning, sharing experiences, and chopping vegetables. Kim, in her element, handled the situation with warmth, intelligence, and humor. She loved hands-on teaching, especially with large, diverse groups. She inspired clients and colleagues with her passion for diverse cultures, cooking, good health, and life-long learning. Her personnel file bulged with accolades. For her, there were no barriers to reaching clients who needed EFNEP and no limits to her passion for the program. She learned Spanish to

reach her growing Hispanic clientele in their native language. She stretched EFNEP's budget by convincing agencies to provide class supplies. Last year she graduated 105 clients. None of them were consuming the 6-2-3-2-2 food pattern at entry; however, 65 percent did at exit.

*Joyce Pringle, Ridgeville, SC*

For the past 25 years, Joyce Pringle, nutrition educator assistant, has been a dynamic voice for EFNEP. As an educator, she is an empowering force for the families and groups she teaches. Her philosophy is to reach and teach as many as possible. Joyce began her career with EFNEP in the spring of 1977. She has consistently exceeded her job duties for years. She has one of the highest numbers for recruiting volunteer leaders to work with 4-H'ers in the state, for making and following up on referrals with other agencies, and for enrolling adults and youth in the program. She has produced state winners with the 4-H program. Joyce has had many challenges during her tenure, but she continues to remain steadfast in helping people with whatever they need. Sometimes this is not limited to the teaching of food and nutrition to her clients; she empowers them to do better and achieve balance in their lives. She has worked with other grant-funded programs within the community to enhance nutrition education and improve diets and help senior citizens to manage their resources efficiently. Recently she successfully implemented a program at two local Senior Citizen Centers to incorporate exercise activities. Additionally, she graduated about 30 Hispanic clients who participated in one of her groups two years ago when she recruited a bilingual volunteer.

*Tammy Pryor, Elkton, MD*

Tammy Pryor, single parent, head of household, is no stranger to the challenges of feeding and caring for a family in the context of limited resources. She has taken her own experiences, life skills, and knowledge and put them to use in empowering families to take control of their health and financial well-being. Tammy pursues many strategies and uses all available resources. Tammy pursues EFNEP work with a passion. She understands, because she has walked in their shoes. Tammy says, "Most of the families that I work with have needs that are more immediate and pressing than their concern for the nutritional well-being of their family. I have helped to fill out school free lunch applications, job applications, provided information on where to get their taxes done free of charge, and given out information on where to get free dental and medical care. The families are sometimes so preoccupied with problems other than nutrition that, once we can solve some of these other problems, they are more receptive to learning about nutrition and how to promote good health. And learn they do! I see such a dramatic change in their diet recalls and food safety habits that I am sure this program is having a positive impact on the health of the EFNEP clients and their families."

*Maureen T. Quinn, Beaverton, OR*

Since 1987, Maureen has worked as a nutrition education assistant with the EFNEP program in Oregon. She has excelled in teaching thousands of limited income homemakers and children the value of good nutrition as it relates to good health. She designs interactive nutrition education visuals, games, and group activities that involve participants in the learning process, and she readily shares these tools with other professional and paraprofessional staff. Maureen is a compassionate community worker, an expert at community relations, and continually searches out new ways to connect with families living in poverty. She markets EFNEP as well as other OSU Extension and cooperating agency programs, encouraging families to connect with

resources and access information they can use to make better, wiser choices. In one agency worker's words, "She [Maureen] has shown herself to be an individual of unique interactive and teaching skills for a community that many groups and agencies have found difficult to access."

*Shirley Redding, Big Horn County, MT*

Creative strategies in delivering EFNEP are Shirley Redding's strength, including commodity cook-off lessons turned into games with prizes and buffalo workshops. Crow and Northern Cheyenne participants relate well to the real-life examples and hands-on practices she has developed. The director of the Crow Tribe Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations is an EFNEP graduate who credits Shirley's classes for his job. She is a champion partnership establisher, team-teaching with the Indian Health Service's diabetes educator and Crow Parenting Program teachers. Her giving nature is not confined to her clientele, but also includes efforts to reduce hunger with a community garden and food bank, which resulted in increased recognition of EFNEP within the state and an award from the governor. Shirley radiates with passion for better eating on a tight budget, especially with commodity foods. One graduate summed it up by saying, "You changed my life."

*Ruth Rens, Sioux Falls, SD*

During her 16 years of service, EFNEP nutrition assistant Ruth Rens has established and enriched a burgeoning and dynamic youth EFNEP program. This growth can be largely attributed to Ruth's skill at establishing partnerships with community agencies such as Head Start, Multi-Cultural Center, the Salvation Army, alternative schools, youth centers, and after-school/summer child care sites. The "Cooking Lady," as Ruth is affectionately called, is in high demand for nutrition classes, where an average of 400 youth complete pre/post tests and 9 hours' instruction each year. Under Ruth's capable direction, youngsters learn such seemingly simple basics as the importance of washing hands before food preparation, choosing milk instead of sodas in fast-food restaurants, asking parents to purchase more vegetables, and undertaking cooking at home.

*Velma Riddle, Spokane, WA*

Velma Riddle began her 21-year EFNEP career in Spokane with only 35 participants. In those days, nutrition assistants worked with clientele for up to 2 years at a time. As the EFNEP program was refined and streamlined, enrollments grew. By 2001, Velma's clients numbered 150 and tallied the highest rate of completion for that year. One hundred percent of her participants showed positive change in food groups, 78 percent showed resource management improvement, and 88 percent showed improvement in nutrition practices. Velma has worked with an amazing variety of agencies. The Salvation Army, Head Start; Early Start, Transitional Living, Crisis Pregnancy Center, and Women's Drop-In Center clients have felt the positive impact of Velma's teaching. Success for both teacher and clients is measured by families who, after completing EFNEP classes, have not only learned money management skills to help them feed their families better, but have learned to serve nutritious meals to their family members. Velma believes her greatest challenges have been "just to reach the people who need us most." She delights in getting shy or withdrawn clients involved in simple cooking tasks to let them experience success. Velma's unique philosophy is that cooking can't happen without laughter and sharing and, that when laughter happens, people stick around to learn.

*Lynn Schocke, Anderson, IN*

Lynn Schocke is a creative, enthusiastic, and dedicated family nutrition advisor. She works with food pantries, homeless shelters, boys and girls clubs, individual youth, and prenatal clinics. With Lynn's encouragement, one pregnant teen went on to obtain a degree in social work. She brings her passion for the program to her classes by presenting vivid, interactive demonstrations to make participants eager to change their lifestyles and improve family health. Her teaching encourages social interaction, often a much-needed skill. Lynn also has a special gift of working with pregnant participants to motivate changes that lead to healthy babies. She keeps her program interesting and vital by involving new volunteers, extension program staff, and staff from other agencies. She has brought funds to the EFNEP program through donations, grants, and in-kind services. Lynn's enthusiasm and interest know no bounds. Besides her EFNEP work, she has gained recognition from a grateful community for her volunteer efforts as a 4-H member, Extension Homemaker, and Advanced Master Gardner.

*Rhonda Skelton, Ada, OK*

Rhonda Skelton taught 1,372 children in 2003, more than doubling the number of children she reached the year before. Having developed and mastered the presentations in her first two years' employment, she asked to be allowed to educate beyond Pontotoc County schools because "so many kids need to know this information." Her reputation as an excellent nutrition educator convinced administrators in 14 school districts to open doors to new EFNEP audiences. District administrators even agreed to coordinate schedules to enable her to reach the maximum number of students while remaining within her travel budget. Rhonda is extremely organized and is always looking for exciting and innovative ways to teach. She provides hands-on learning opportunities for her students by securing donations from many sources. She takes full advantage of potential opportunity for continuing education, counseling at a camp for children with diabetes, establishing membership on a statewide youth curriculum development team, and starting a 4-H nutrition club.

*Laurie Stearns, Rutland, VT*

Laurie Stearns always goes above and beyond her call of duty. From sponsoring families at the holidays to donating old computers to program graduates, Laurie is consistently one of the most valued staff. She demonstrates energy, commitment, and abilities in a variety of areas. She respects her participants. She is a great educator with individuals and groups. She can roll with the punches and make the best out of every situation. She gets referrals from all areas -- from health care professionals to knocking on doors -- and successfully reaches out to two new rural communities each year. Laurie has many participant success stories, but what is most valuable is that she knows how to tell a success story, and she knows how important it is to EFNEP that she tells them. Being an EFNEP paraprofessional is not just a job for Laurie. It's a career and a passion.

*Annie Stewart, Austin, TX*

Annie Stewart helped to transition EFNEP from individual door-to-door contacts with homemakers to group classes through WIC and other agencies. This transition has enabled Travis County EFNEP to increase its clientele more than tenfold. Annie is a true peer educator, having grown up in the neighborhood she serves. Despite her long tenure, she has not become satisfied with the status quo, but continues to look for ways to improve her teaching. Annie has

consistently excelled at her job while balancing challenging family responsibilities. In her more than 30 years, she has weathered many changes in EFNEP. She is now reaching more of the target population in Travis County than when the staff was much larger. Annie is a very dedicated employee. She receives many compliments from her clients. The office receives letters and phone calls from WIC clinics complimenting her teaching. Annie's unwavering devotion and passion for EFNEP make the Travis County Extension Unit the success that it is.

*Lillie Mae Stokes, New Orleans, LA*

Always an innovator, Lillie Mae Stokes, EFNEP nutrition educator, uses unique approaches to recruit, enrolling 100 low-income families and 200 youth in her assigned area in Orleans Parish. She consistently identifies, teaches, and reaches out to new and nontraditional audiences. For example, she teaches EFNEP lessons to a mixed audience of approximately 20 young African-American, Caucasian, and Hispanic women who are pregnant or who have young children. Lillie's delivery strategies include nutrition materials that focus on women of childbearing age, understanding and achieving good nutrition during pregnancy, and tips for feeding young children. During 34 years with the EFNEP program, Lillie has developed collaborative partnerships with local agencies, schools, and churches. Throughout her career, her energy, commitment, and passion for the program have remained very high. Her positive attitude and compassion for others have made her a local icon for EFNEP in her community.

*Pat Streeter, Spokane, WA*

Before being employed by the EFNEP program, Pat Streeter was a public assistance recipient and participant in EFNEP classes. Throughout her 13 years of teaching classes, Pat has been able to incorporate empathy for her clientele to successfully teach the lessons as well as assist the participants in increasing their self-esteem. She has increased her teaching load from 16 families in 1990 to 245 in 2003. Pat has witnessed dramatic changes in the lives of those in her classes. With the increase in knowledge of planning menus, preparing nutritional food, and being able to stretch food dollars, her clientele have greater self-esteem, which is reflected in all areas of their lives, including housekeeping, returning to school, and showing pride in being able to have food left at the end of the month.

*Chinesa Sunday, Escambia County, FL*

Chinesa Sunday has been teaching youth and volunteer leaders for the past 21 years. As an EFNEP paraprofessional, Chinesa has enrolled more than 18,000 youth and 1,500 leaders. Her dedication to the EFNEP program is evident in her enthusiasm and continued loyalty to EFNEP goals. Youth under her leadership excelled beyond 4-H EFNEP by winning numerous 4-H awards and participating in all areas of 4-H. Fondly known in her community as "the nutrition lady," Chinesa is a dedicated educator who has firmly established her county's 4-H EFNEP program as a stellar model for other counties to emulate. During her Escambia County tenure, Chinesa's excellence has been passed on to others. One of her volunteer leaders was chosen to attend the 20th EFNEP celebration, and two of her youth participants and a volunteer leader were selected to attend the 30th EFNEP celebration.

*Diane Swenddal, Tacoma, WA*

When Diane Swenddal retired from EFNEP after 32 years in 2003, she left behind a legacy of changes that have improved and broadened the program. The most dramatic change was a major

shift from individual home visits to group participation in class settings. Before this shift, enrollments usually numbered from 40 to 50 a year; in the last 3 years before her retirement, Diane enrolled from 290 to 319 participants each year, with a graduating rate of more than 60 percent. Of those surveyed in her classes, 95 percent showed positive dietary improvements. Even though her work took her to approximately 15 agency sites a year, there was always a waiting list of more organizations requesting her classes. She maintained excellent public relations between extension and other Pierce County agencies and promoted other extension programs (4-H, EFNEP Gleaning Project, and Master Gardener) to potential participants.

*Stella Taylor, San Diego, CA*

Stella Taylor, a bilingual educator, has contributed to San Diego County's youth EFNEP by expanding annual program enrollment from 599 youth to more than 11,300 in 7 years. She assisted in creating an effective teacher re-enrollment system that has been shared statewide; she has trained as many as 175 youth extenders per year. She helps train other San Diego educators and is on the planning committee for a statewide training effort. Stella enhances youth EFNEP through outreach efforts with other staff. She has led workshops at the annual San Diego County Science Teachers training, published an extender newsletter three times each year, and writes articles for newsletters published by physical education teachers, science teachers, and the county Department of Education. Her contagious enthusiasm, "go-for-it" attitude, and cheerful willingness to help as needed have endeared her to colleagues and clients alike.

*Luz Stella Valencia, Philadelphia, PA*

Luz Valencia has assisted in the expansion of the Philadelphia County EFNEP program. She maintained successful collaborations with Latino agencies offering services and programs to clients ranging from young mothers with babies to adults with developmental disabilities developing skills for independent living. To meet specific needs, Luz adapted the curriculum to deliver creative, successful programming as demonstrated through participant and staff feedback. Because of Luz's tireless efforts, requests for programming by the Latino community continue to increase, resulting in a waiting list of agencies. Luz has been instrumental in translating EFNEP materials and recipes into Spanish and the delivery of regional inservice training to educate other NEAs on Latino culture and nutrition. In addition to maintaining a full caseload, Luz maintains a full, rigorous college course load as a full-time student at LaSalle University. She is also the single mother of four children.

*Zoraida Velazquez, New Haven, CT*

Zoraida Velazquez spent her 25-year career in New London and New Haven counties. She quickly established rapport with Hispanic clients and connected both her clients and partnering agencies to other areas of extension programming as well. In partnership with a Hispanic community service agency, she provided nutrition and food resource management education to Hispanic women making the transition from welfare to work as family daycare providers. She also taught child nutrition and food safety for Hispanic adults to earn certification for careers in professional child care. In these two programs alone, more than 300 people have participated, many of whom graduated to work in daycare settings or start their own daycare businesses, improving their own lives and those of the children receiving professional and caring attention.



*Terry C Wade, Richland Parish, LA*

Terry Wade's major EFNEP focus is working with at-risk youths and adults to improve their diets and health. She not only challenges other EFNEP staff members to set professional goals, she personally helps them achieve them. As a result, several have received General Education Diplomas, and others have developed educational displays, puppet shows, and skits that greatly enhanced the Richland Parish EFNEP program. Terry's primary responsibilities are to oversee exhibits, conduct grocery store tours, participate in health fairs, and work closely with community agencies to recruit and educate EFNEP clientele. She also works with volunteers to develop their talents as they assist and promote EFNEP. In her more than 30 years with EFNEP, Terry has gone far beyond her assigned duties. She consistently volunteers to help others, promotes the LSU AgCenter, and encourages EFNEP clients to participate in other AgCenter-sponsored educational programs.

*Judith Wahl, Altoona, PA*

Judith's creativity and imagination help her develop new ways to reach the EFNEP audience. Her innovative programming ideas include hands-on activities, games, food-related crafts, "make-it-take-it" meal starters for busy homemakers, and other ideas to show parents how to interact with their children to promote healthy eating. A few examples of her multidimensional program efforts include: "Sprouts," a parent-child gardening experience to show intercity children how foods grow; produce was donated to a local soup kitchen; "ABC's in Meals," literacy-based programs to help low-literate families prepare more nutritious meals and relate the importance of reading to their children; the local literacy program donated books related to the program; "Let us Whine and Dine You," a collaborative community program for first-time moms; a 4-week program featuring food planning, preparation, food safety, budgeting, and parenting skills. Judy partners with community agencies and extension staff to enhance her programming efforts.

*Betty Waters, Bennington, VT*

Betty Waters consistently averages one of the highest caseloads in Vermont. Time and time again, collaborating agencies have singled her out for praise for her excellent teaching skills with both individuals and groups. She has garnered years of referrals to the breastfeeding program, long after special funding for the collaborative referral process ended. Although Betty works in a remote area, new EFNEP employees are frequently asked to make the long drive to observe her in her work because EFNEP administrators consider her the best example of EFNEP spirit and expertise. For Betty, the long road runs both ways. She makes the lengthy drive to the University of Vermont to take advantage of professional development opportunities such as distance nutrition courses, and she travels to a neighboring state to attend extension workshops. She is the only Vermont paraprofessional to maintain a long-standing collaboration with a local homeless shelter—one of the more challenging arenas in which participants are reached. Betty exemplifies the principle that the best way to build EFNEP clientele is to be a top-notch EFNEP educator.

*Sherry Welsh, Fayette, AL*

Sixteen years ago, Sherry Welsh began as an EFNEP paraprofessional. She now works with EFNEP's *Today's MOM* program, aided by her 7 years of experience in the *MOM's Helper* program for breastfeeding moms. Sherry works with approximately 150 moms and moms-to-be each year, and she has tallied a near-perfect record with a rate of 90 to 100 graduates. Compounding the official numbers are the many clients' family members affected by nutrition

and good health information shared by the clients. Sherry exhibits great creativity in reaching hard-to-reach clientele. She arranged for space to conduct EFNEP classes for poverty-level patients in an obstetrician-gynecologist's office, bringing dietary improvement to mothers who would be unlikely to learn such information elsewhere. Sherry also conducts classes in the extension office and at community centers. She displays exhibits at health fairs, county and area fairs and events, the Farmers Market, and in stores. She cooperates with all the agencies in Fayette County and, on her own time, sponsors a table at the Pregnancy Crisis Center's annual banquet. School guidance counselors, Department of Human Resources, the local Health Department, and the Pregnancy Crisis Center frequently refer clients to Sherry and alert her to potential clients. Sherry derives great satisfaction from her work with people in need. She strongly believes that what we do for others is what really counts in our own lives.

*Mariellen Woodward-DeFelice, Batavia, NY*

Mariellen Woodward-DeFelice began as an EFNEP participant in 1995. She had a special-needs child who was not gaining weight because of limited food preferences. Mariellen enrolled in EFNEP, learned skills to improve her family's diet, and the child achieved normal weight. She refers to her paraprofessional as "her savior." Mariellen was impressed with EFNEP, stayed in touch with staff, and was later hired as a paraprofessional. At that time, the county EFNEP was in trouble because goals were not being met and guidelines were not being followed. Mariellen was committed to saving the program that had saved her, and she turned it around, exceeding requirements and goals. Graduation rate doubled her first year, reaching 88 percent the next. She maintains community contacts that facilitate recruitment. Her personality allows her to work effectively with the audience. Her dedication is apparent in the quality of programming she provides and that results in positive behavior change among participants.

*Annie Wyatt, Shreveport, LA*

Annie Wyatt has served as an EFNEP nutrition educator in Caddo Parish for more than 15 years. Her professionalism and commitment are vital to the success of the program. Annie takes on additional responsibilities along with her regular job duties. She works extremely well with children and takes the success of her programs very seriously. Her ability to organize groups and manage her time wisely allows her to be very active in the community. Annie has received compliments and letters of gratitude from several agencies. She is well known and respected by all of the influential individuals in our area. Her tireless efforts to promote the EFNEP program deserve recognition.

*Anna Zaragoza, Yakima, WA*

Anna Zaragoza and EFNEP team member Frances Herrera work on the Abuela Project: a community-based food safety program that has involved the Washington State Department of Health and Washington State University. In 1997, salmonella food poisoning was linked to consumption of queso fresco, a homemade cheese made with raw, unpasteurized milk. Anna and Frances were involved with the pilot project in Yakima County and have continued to teach others how to prepare queso fresco safely. In 2003, they expanded the program to include Skagit County. Here are comments from Skagit County. "The Queso Fresco program was a big success! Anna and Frances are passionate about what they do, and it comes through. They truly inspired our ten new volunteers. The evening program for the general public was a surprise because only

eight people registered, but 26 people showed up! Anna and Frances are pros and handled it with ease."

### **Nominations for EFNEP Champion Category**

*Julie Assercq, Baton Rouge, LA*

Dr. Julie Assercq's support of the EFNEP program can only be described as invaluable. Long a strong advocate for making EFNEP a part of the family practice clinic at Earl K. Long Medical Center in Baton Rouge, she also saw the need for nutrition education for limited-resource patients. Never one to sit back and wait, Dr. Assercq initiated the EFNEP clinic to provide information to the less fortunate of Baton Rouge. She encourages other clinic physicians to take an active role in EFNEP programs and provides all available resources to clinic participants. A firm believer in the EFNEP role and mission, she frequently takes the EFNEP message to Baton Rouge groups, increasing community-wide program visibility and support. Her passion for improving the lives of her patients is evident in her ongoing devotion to the EFNEP clinic and by the gratitude of the people whose lives have been changed for the better because they were lucky enough to walk through the clinic's doors!

*Jo Britt-Rankin, Columbia, MO*

Jo Britt-Rankin has served with distinction for 5 years as administrative director of Family Nutrition Education at the University of Missouri-Columbia. In this role, she has administered more than \$1.4 million in annual Missouri EFNEP funding in the past 5 years and is responsible for supplementing EFNEP professional staff with more than 40 paraprofessional instructors. When budgets required belt-tightening, Jo managed to retain paraprofessional positions by cutting costs not directly affecting the program's efficacy. She encouraged community in-kind and cash contributions to cut program costs. Even with such budget constraints, Jo successfully reclassified all paraprofessional positions to better define their educational roles and set a marketable salary structure. Her efforts at the local level are aimed at expanding EFNEP to meet the needs of the growing Hispanic population in Missouri. Jo quietly works behind the scenes with groups seeking to enhance U.S. Congressional EFNEP funding, and she provides regular EFNEP legislative updates for Missouri legislators. Heavy administrative workload notwithstanding, she has somehow made time to edit 12 food safety publications for EFNEP educational programs and provide annual 3-day training conferences for Missouri EFNEP paraprofessionals.

*Katherine Covington, OK*

Katherine Covington, principal of the Antler, Oklahoma Early Childhood Center, has supported the EFNEP program by including the EFNEP program in her weekly curriculum for more than 14 years. Katherine was convinced that knowledge of good nutrition would help her students throughout their lives. She provided financial support for supplies for the nutrition education assistants as well as pencils, books, and other supplies as incentives to help the children persuade their parents to participate in parent nutrition groups. Although Katherine retired from her principal's position last year, she continues to work in the Adult Education Program, where she still insists that the adults participate in the EFNEP program. An ardent EFNEP spokesperson, Katherine frequently speaks out or writes letters that increase program visibility and longevity in the county.

*Enterprise for Progress in the Community (EPIC), Yakima, WA*

Enterprise for Progress in the Community (EPIC) has been a partnership agency in extending EFNEP to the Hispanic community in Yakima, Washington, for more than 15 years. It has collaborated in adult and youth programming, aiding with nutrition classes, summer day camps and health fairs; the *queso fresco abuela* project; and the diabetes awareness education program. The agency continues to help recruit program participants and volunteers to assist with programs, provides locations for classes free of charge, and provides needed program supplies. The 15-year EFNEP connection has enabled EFNEP to reach and affect the lives of thousands of Hispanic adults and youth, increasing their nutrition knowledge base and instilling improved food safety practices.

*Eligio "Kika" de la Garza, McAllen, TX*

For 32 years, Congressman Kika de la Garza, in his many political roles, championed the value of EFNEP to constituents, peers, and the general public. Not satisfied with just talking about EFNEP, Congressman de la Garza attended many EFNEP events in his district, including an achievement event honoring 75 homemakers in 1973 that, in his own words, "touched my heart," bringing home the many positive effects EFNEP makes on participants' lives. He supported EFNEP funding through many fiscal crises, making public and personal pleas and offering up his own district's program as proof of EFNEP support; he sang its praises in large gatherings and quiet Capitol corridors. "It's the best federal program," he often said. "Anything I can do for this program, I am going to do it." For his entire, distinguished 32-year political career, he was a vocal, emotional, and unwavering EFNEP supporter, a man of his word and a hero to us all.

*Kentucky Area Health Education Centers (AHEC), (Brad Hall, Director, Mt. Vernon Center)*

Kentucky's Area Health Education Centers (AHEC), an outreach program for the University of Kentucky's College of Medicine, tackle the health issues by placing doctors in underserved regions, providing continuing education for nurses and doctors, and sponsoring special health programs such as baby showers for new moms and the tooth fairy dental education program for youth. The AHEC have been true partners with Kentucky EFNEP by sponsoring baby showers and health fairs in approximately 25 counties, conducting inservice training for EFNEP paraprofessionals, and providing Spanish translation services for nutrition education programs. AHEC representatives also serve on EFNEP focus groups, advisory councils, and program planning committees.

*Kentucky Department of Public Health WIC Program (Fran Hawkins), Frankfort, KY*

The Kentucky Department of Public Health's WIC program has been a valuable EFNEP partner. In 2003, the WIC program obtained a grant for the Loving Support program to increase the rate and duration of breastfeeding among Kentucky mothers. Until this program was in place, Kentucky's standing in that area was among the lowest in the nation. Since both agencies serve the same limited-resource families, it seemed a natural pairing of the two organizations to produce a product that would continually present the same message to these clients. The Health Department's WIC program used funds from the grant to collaborate with EFNEP to produce the EFNEP calendar, which is used as a teaching tool for EFNEP families in the state. Now both agencies distribute the calendar, which contains tips on the importance of eating fresh fruits and vegetables; recipes for quick, nutritious meals; "best product buys" and WIC products; and

encouragement for new mothers to breastfeed. The Health Department staff is also active in training EFNEP paraprofessionals about the importance and basic techniques of breastfeeding.

*Samantha Castle Kirstein, Fairbanks, AK*

Samantha Castle Kirsten, manager of the Fairbanks Food Bank, has been an outstanding champion of EFNEP, providing food for demonstrations, kitchen facilities, and baby food grinders and food boxes for new mothers in *Making Baby Food* classes. Inside every food box is an EFNEP promotional brochure and EFNEP-produced educational materials about foods commonly included in the boxes. On the outside of the boxes is an EFNEP promotional message. To meet EFNEP funding needs, Samantha worked with EFNEP staff to create a supplemental food program for WIC recipients, arranging donations of 11,229 pounds of foods for program participants and finding space where classes could be held. Samantha's support and commitment to EFNEP have created a blueprint for other food banks and agencies to partner with EFNEP in locations throughout the state, improving the health and well-being of Alaskan citizens far beyond local boundaries.

*Karen Martinek, Oklahoma City, OK*

Karen Martinek, a fourth-grade teacher, consistently uses EFNEP services to teach her students how to lead healthier lives by eating right. Karen's diverse classroom includes 9- and 10-year-old students of all races. Because of her belief in this program, these young people, as well as many parents, now share her EFNEP convictions and will champion them always. The youth EFNEP program cannot work unless public school teachers open their doors to EFNEP educators. Karen not only welcomed EFNEP into her classroom, but also stressed the importance of these lessons to her students and promoted them to other teachers. Karen's commitment to, and championing of, the EFNEP program have given her students a strong foundation to build sound health and nutrition habits for life!

*Linda Melcher, Laramie, WY*

Linda Melcher's creative, dynamic leadership extends far beyond Wyoming's borders. The unique ideas and approaches she developed to create EFNEP and *Cent\$ible Nutrition* programs are also a part of programs in several more states. Nationally recognized for the *Cent\$ible Nutrition* videos, home study course, cookbook, and marketing package, she received a much-coveted award from the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. Linda inspires those who work with her. As described by one of her outreach staff, she "stretches my talents, education, and creativity. She values her employees and strives to reduce the barriers in our jobs, and create challenging, but fair, promotion opportunities." As a single mother of three, Linda has learned through her own life experiences how even small changes can improve our lives, a lesson imbedded in every EFNEP tenet.

*Deidre Osborn, Shreveport, LA*

Deidre Osborn, coordinator for the *Kid's Café* (Northwest Louisiana Food Bank) in Shreveport, works tirelessly to promote health and well-being among children. Her insightful programs accurately assess the needs of children and community. She constantly strives to "go one step above" the required duty to promote health and well-being among those she serves. Deidre has formed a wonderful friendship between *Kid's Café* and the EFNEP program in Caddo Parish, actively involving EFNEP in all her projects. She attends every local advisory meeting, parish

review, and other public-venue functions, contributing comments and suggestions about the EFNEP program to ensure its continuing success in meeting community needs. Without her diligent efforts, the EFNEP program would not possess the support and visibility Deidre has exemplified and led in Caddo Parish.

*Margaret (Peg) Randall, Amherst, MA*

For 27 years, Peg Randall championed EFNEP in her work as Massachusetts' EFNEP state program leader. Now in retirement, her support of, and enthusiasm for, the program continue. Peg, like many in this great educational system, is a perfect example of the "Once-in-Extension-always-in-Extension" mindset common to this career path. As a 4-H Club volunteer for 10 years, 4-H agent, county home agent, and in leadership positions in Massachusetts Cooperative Extension, Peg personified the Extension Spirit as she mentored EFNEP staff and paraprofessionals through their career beginnings. Those who came under her nurturing and professionalism are proof of her important contribution to EFNEP, the Cooperative Extension System, and the health and well-being of untold numbers of EFNEP participants, past, present, and future. She possesses a commitment and appreciation of diversity and truly worked with the spirit of the clientele in mind.

*Robyn Renner, Director, Christian Appalachian Project (CAP), Mt. Vernon, KY*

Christian Appalachian Project (CAP) is a nonprofit organization operated in Eastern Kentucky. Director Robyn Renner and her volunteers partner with EFNEP to help low-income families who are willing to help themselves. Last year CAP provided seeds to 10 EFNEP families in Jackson County, enabling them to grow gardens and preserve more than 700 quarts of food. Robyn and her volunteer "troops" also distribute school supplies and clothes to 125 EFNEP children, make needed home repairs, and ensure that the 35 EFNEP families who represent a total of 140 people have food and necessities for holiday celebrations. Robyn's 5-year CAP partnership with EFNEP epitomizes the tenets upon which EFNEP was founded: improving the health, well-being, and independence of adults and children in need.

*Lois Rockhill, Anderson, IN*

Lois Rockhill, director of the Second Harvest Bank, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's commodity program, is a champion of Indiana EFNEP. She obtained a 4-year partnership grant from United Way to provide EFNEP education and food preparation skills to participants and to support food pantry services to meet the needs of the hungry. Lois was responsible for helping to convert four Madison County food pantries into the "client choice" food distribution mode. She obtained funds for a summer Kids Café program to provide nutrition education to EFNEP youth. When quantities of salmon were donated to Second Harvest, Lois was instrumental in bringing in a local chef to teach EFNEP staff how to prepare salmon recipes. She supports EFNEP as a county extension board member. She sees the value of bringing education from Purdue University to the local level, enhancing lives and improving the community, not just for low-income EFNEP clients, but for all residents.

*Jan Scholl, University Park, PA*

Twenty-four years have passed since Jan Scholl began her EFNEP career in Montana. Her first decision with EFNEP was whether or not to keep the program in Hill County, MT. Fortunately for Jan and EFNEP, her decision was "YES!" Commenting on this decision later, Jan said, "It

was the most satisfying thing I did in my life." In Pennsylvania, Jan helps EFNEP youth succeed in 4-H projects, fair exhibits, and contests, and she involves them in public television broadcasts. Always inventive, she developed the "Portable Kitchen" brochure, helping nutrition education assistants assemble "kitchens" that can be transported to sites with no cooking facilities. This year, Jan developed a food practices video that won a National Association of Communications Excellence award. The video and brochure are now used in many state EFNEP programs and in food demonstration training.

*Linda Scott, Cincinnati, OH*

Linda Scott is an administrator with Talbert House Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Program in Cincinnati. This facility houses women mandated by the court system to undergo rehabilitation. Most are low-income mothers. Linda has partnered with EFNEP for her *Adapt For Women* program for 5 years, believing strongly that nutrition is a vital part of the recovery process. The EFNEP classes are an integral part of the overall curriculum during each woman's stay at the Talbert House. Linda duplicates all EFNEP handouts used at her facility, and she shares food demonstration costs. To encourage participation, Linda urges all to enroll, explaining how the information they receive can be invaluable to their recovery after release and how vital EFNEP knowledge is to family health. For these women, graduation certificates are tangible evidence of having set and reached a goal of personal success. Thanks to her enthusiastic recommendations, other Talbert House facilities have established EFNEP courses for their populations.

*Jaci Williams, Frankfort, KY*

Children attending school in Kentucky sometimes get their only nutritionally balanced, plentiful meals at school; but what happens when the final bell rings each summer? The Kentucky Department of Education and the EFNEP program collaborate to answer this perplexing question by working together each year to feed hungry children during the summer. While school food service managers know how to plan and prepare meals, they frequently need help "selling" the summer feeding program in their communities. Jaci Williams, director, Summer Feeding Program, encourages the school systems and sponsors to turn to local EFNEP assistants to locate sites, recruit volunteers, and help communities feed hungry children when school is not in session. Largely because of this collaboration, Kentucky saw a 23 percent increase in food distribution sites and a 7 percent increase in the number of children served statewide. That same year, Pulaski County alone increased summer feeding sites by 42 percent. Jaci credits that county's success to EFNEP assistant Brenda Williamson and EFNEP coordinator Louise Moore. Jaci Williams and the Kentucky Department of Education are champions for the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, not only in getting food to hungry children, but encouraging youth and families to improve their nutrition knowledge and eating habits.

**Nominees for Youth Participants Category**

*Backpacks for the Hungry, Burksville, KY*

Cumberland County 4-H EFNEP and the Family Resource Program have created *Backpacks for the Hungry*, adapted from a project in Arizona. Although Kentucky schools provide plentiful, nutritious meals for students, many low-income children eat little or nothing on weekends. A grant from Phillip Morris allowed the youth to purchase 25 used backpacks and food that was then distributed to hungry children. Local contributions allowed the youth to refill each backpack

twice during the year. This program has been replicated and adapted in more than 10 Kentucky counties.

*Chris Clark, Pensacola, FL*

Ask 15 year-old Chris Clark about his 4-H experience, and he will quickly tell you he got his start in 4-H EFNEP 8 years ago in a small community club. He soon realized that EFNEP could take him places while he learned about things he loved; nutrition, food, helping others, and giving service to his community were inspirational to this unique young man. His first State 4-H Congress instilled in him a strong desire to go all the way to National 4-H Congress. His dedication and enthusiasm have helped him serve as a role model to members of his local 4-H Club and brought him to his dream when he was selected as a delegate to National 4-H Congress in 2003. Chris credits his life successes to his EFNEP participation. "4-H EFNEP has provided the base for me to build my leadership skills, self-confidence, and learn about others... [It] has prepared me to set goals and to achieve what I have set out to do."

*John David Franz, Hidalgo, TX*

In 1973, John David Franz's 7th grade class was enrolled in EFNEP in Hidalgo, near the Mexican border. Grandson of an EFNEP program aide, John showed an extraordinary interest in nutrition, so much so that his school teacher recommended that he be a youth representative on Information Day, when Congressman "Kika" de la Garza and other elected officials would be on hand to learn about EFNEP. After John's presentation, Congressman de la Garza was so impressed with his poise and delivery that he vowed to have John serve in his Washington, D.C., Congressional office as soon as he became old enough to do so. Later John became a legislative aide for the congressman, and told everyone how they had participated in Information Day for EFNEP. Today, he is a successful lawyer and has been Hidalgo's mayor for the past 14 years. With all his success, he has never forgotten, nor hesitated to declare, how EFNEP helped not only his life, but brought great improvement to his grandmother's life as well, giving her greater confidence and the courage to seek personal independence.

*Debra Glenn, Lakeview, AL*

Debra Glenn is a community activist who credits much of her success in life to the inspiration and educational instructions she gained from EFNEP. As a resident of the Birmingham Housing Project, she attended 4-H EFNEP courses taught by retired extension educator Helen Wilson, opening doors to a lifetime of self-mastery and empowerment. An enthusiastic learner, Debra returned home from weekly lessons and prepared nutritious and tasty recipes brought from her classes. These experiences instilled in Debra the lifelong desire to help the less fortunate. Her successes with EFNEP also inspired her to further her education, obtaining a degree from the University of Alabama, Birmingham, and to take her determination and knowledge into the world of work as an administrator with the Birmingham VA Medical Center. She continues her community involvement with efforts at Children's Hospital, Prison Fellowship Ministries, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and other local organizations.

*Clinton Miller, New York, NY*

Clinton Miller first participated in 4-H when he was 13, working in beach cleanups, conducting environmental workshops, and creating a video on lead poisoning prevention. His 4-H experiences helped shape his growing-up years, both in his family and community. He has been



active in 4-H Youth Council, garnering a first prize in Public Presentation; he participated in career development workshops and trips, and he served as a youth representative on the planning committee and spoke at the closing ceremony of the CYFAR National Conference. Last Spring, Clinton graduated from 4-H EFNEP. Because of his exemplary work, he was recommended as an educator for the Farmer's Market Nutrition Education Program; the youngest ever hired, and one of the few males. Now a prospective university freshman, he is also being considered for a position in a youth development and abstinence program. Clinton is a true EFNEP success!

*Sonia Rodriguez, Eagle Pass, TX*

Sonia Rodriguez became involved with extension as a member of the 4-H EFNEP day camp at Golding Farm labor camp in the 1970s when a 4-H program assistant recruited her. These day camps introduced youth to the 4-H program and used EFNEP to teach nutrition basics. Over the years, Sonia's 4-H experience involved her participation in setting up many subsequent summer day camps. With the assistance of her 4-H agent, Sonia was instrumental in starting and leading a Golding Farm 4-H Club. That 4-H Club, begun in 1982, has involved more than 115 youth in 4-H and EFNEP activities. In 2001, she was named Yakima County Volunteer Leader of the Year and was honored for her 20-year 4-H leadership.

*Dexter Stewart, Delhi, LA*

Dexter Stewart, a Delhi high school student, seeks to be active and scholastically involved in his school and community. During his two-year involvement with EFNEP, Dexter served as a volunteer and mentor to other youth in his community. He continues to assist at youth meetings, cheerfully taking on even the less attractive jobs like cleaning up. The EFNEP program taught Dexter that lifelong health choices should begin at an early age. A less-than-enthusiastic milk drinker (he even ate his cereal dry), he learned the importance of milk in young people's diets. He now makes a conscious effort to increase his milk intake not just with cereal, but also during the rest of his day. He also uses himself as an example to other youth by demonstrating his newfound willingness to try new foods

*Myrus Weaver, Jacksonville, AL*

Myrus Weaver's future was in its developmental stages in 1969 when she was selected to be part of the EFNEP 4-H DOT (Diet's Our Thing) program. After a few lessons, Myrus was on the way to being a permanent EFNEP participant. She was a volunteer for 2 years and later a part-time employee with 4-H DOT while she was in college earning a degree in family and consumer sciences. Myrus has worked with more than 10,000 youth since 1991 and is still expanding that number. She credits the 4-H DOT with helping her develop her potential and pursue her ambition. The EFNEP program enabled Myrus to get a college degree and now she is pursuing an M.S. degree in early child development while continuing to teach youngsters in 4-H DOT. Myrus appreciates the joy and excitement of seeing youngsters develop, knowing that she has a small part in the success of those she teaches.

**Nominees of Adult Participants Category**

*Vella Adkins, Mckee, KY*

When Vella Adkins was encouraged to grow a garden by her EFNEP instructor, Cathy Howell, she turned the seeds and seedlings donated by the Christian Appalachian Project and Chain of Life into food that her family could eat and preserve. The next year her skills improved, and she

grew more than her family could use. Rather than waste the surplus, Cathy encouraged Vella to take her vegetables to the local farmers market, where she sold enough to buy new schoolclothes for her children. The following year, Vella's thumb turned even greener, and sales profits helped purchase a used van, overcoming a major barrier in rural Kentucky - transportation. EFNEP not only helped establish healthier family eating habits, and a reduced likelihood of running out of food, but also helped her gain access to medical care and provided extra income. While selling her vegetables at the farmers market, Vella developed confidence and enhanced her self-esteem, enabling her to obtain a job in a local factory.

*Jennifer Danford, Cedar Rapids, IA*

Jennifer Danford's original goal in joining EFNEP was to learn how to prepare meals that did not come from a box. Once enrolled in the program, however, she was enthusiastic about what she had learned through EFNEP and recruited four others for the classes. The group learned how to make a variety of nutritious, economical meals. The nutrition education she received inspired her to take greater control of her children's nutrition. Her success in improving her own family's diet exponentially raised her own self-esteem, making it possible for her to find a job and get out of an abusive marriage. Jennifer sums up her EFNEP experience in a sentence: "*It only took one person (the EFNEP assistant) to be consistent and truly care about me for me to make these changes.*" The Young Parents Network (YPN) Program has asked Jennifer to appear before all YPN participants to speak about how EFNEP has changed her life. Jennifer is very excited at the prospect of being able to get the EFNEP message to so many people at once. She wants everyone to know what a good program EFNEP is.

*Anna Lucia Gibbs, Moncks Corner, SC*

Anna Lucia Gibbs was enrolled in the EFNEP Program from 1982 through 1984. At the time of her enrollment, the native Nicaraguan had recently moved to South Carolina. Anna, a very conscientious mother and wife, immediately exhibited an extremely strong desire to learn. Her first EFNEP experience focused on basic nutrition lessons (food groups, servings, nutritive values). As she quickly grasped and used what she was learning, she began to spread the EFNEP word to her family, neighbors, and friends. Progressing through the program, she next concentrated on careful food shopping and meal planning. Imaginative and creative, Anna incorporated many of her homeland vegetables and fruits into her meal plans, soon reversing roles with her EFNEP assistant, "teaching the teacher" about Nicaraguan culture and foods. Her new knowledge of saving and using her resources to the fullest excited her to new efforts. Anna planted a vegetable garden and fruit trees and happily anticipated the harvest each spring and fall. After harvest, she concentrated on food preservation, becoming a Master Food Preserver. With her youngest child close to school age, and Anna graduating from the program, EFNEP seized the opportunity to ask her to continue in the program as a volunteer for EFNEP's youth phase. She continues to be one of the best volunteers in the county, indeed, in the state.

*Tom Hayden, Los Angeles, CA*

Tom Hayden was a parent/participant at Manhattan Place Elementary School, Los Angeles County. After receiving the 6-week series of nutrition training, he changed his own food behavior and shopping practices. He feels he has greatly improved his understanding of good nutrition practices, favorably benefiting not just himself, but his family. As a result of the nutrition classes, Tom now prepares a shopping list that better reflects his family's needs,

refusing to purchase unnecessary, or “frivolous,” food. He has learned that buying nutritious foods can often save money. Food safety knowledge has increased the care with which Tom handles the food he brings into his home, taking steps to avoid cross contamination. At every opportunity, Tom promotes the goals and objectives of the EFNEP Program with the school, family, and community. He praises the EFNEP Program for the excellent nutrition information and the opportunity to increase his nutrition knowledge.

*Carol Ali Jenkins, Orleans Parish, LA*

In 1972, Carol Ali Jenkins was a homemaker with two young children struggling to make ends meet. That year, her life began to change with her family's enrollment in EFNEP. Carol learned the basics: using coupons and cost-cutting EFNEP recipes, and learning that healthful foods were frequently cheaper than less healthful, packaged ones. Because the children were also EFNEP participants, their new knowledge helped the family begin to incorporate and enjoy vegetables in every meal. As an EFNEP graduate, Carol was asked if she'd like to become an EFNEP nutrition aide, and she completed the training successfully. Now, 29 years later, she works in that role in her home parish.

*Annie Kelly, Rayville, LA*

Annie Kelly, EFNEP participant, demonstrates her gratitude for EFNEP's positive influence on her eating habits by becoming a frequent youth group volunteer. Ask Annie for an example, and she will proudly tell you how she learned to reduce the fat and sodium content even in sandwiches. Her generous, sharing spirit has never been limited to volunteering with groups. After her own children were grown, Annie adopted three abused girls, continuing to juggle family activities in church and basketball so she can still make time for sharing with others in her community. As an EFNEP volunteer, Annie serves refreshments, assists with leading group discussions and activities, and, in short, does whatever is asked of her. She has built a strong foundation of honor and respect from those who attend her EFNEP meetings. Building on her own knowledge of the life-changing impact EFNEP can have, she champions the program by referring scores of eligible people from her community to EFNEP.

*Tanya Martin, Indianapolis, IN*

Tanya Martin, a single mother of six, had just moved from a shelter for battered women when she began her relationship with EFNEP. She enrolled in and successfully completed the program, later applying for and winning a job as an EFNEP paraprofessional. Because of her personal experiences, Tanya became a positive role model for the families she taught, helping them save money on food, try new recipes, and improve eating habits. Still, Tanya felt, there was more she could do with her life and her EFNEP knowledge and experience. Enrolling in college courses, she eventually earned an A.A.S. in behavior sciences, a B.S. in addictions counseling, and an M.S. in urban ministry. Tanya attributes much of her personal success to her skills learned as an EFNEP educator -- public speaking, listening, and tenacity. She continues to support EFNEP by referring families to the program.

*April E. Morse, Bomoseen, VT*

April Morse enrolled in Vermont's EFNEP-supported *Cooking For Life* 6-week adult nutrition class in fall 2001. She worked part time as a substitute junior high teacher assistant. An enthusiastic participant, April quickly learned new cooking techniques and recipe ideas. This 29-

year-old married mother of three young children has put her knowledge into practice by preparing more healthful meals for her family. While April was not at first comfortable trying new recipe ideas, she now enjoys stir-frying vegetables for her family, often inventing new flavor combinations. After completing her classes, April requested additional home visits to learn economical shopping and food safety practices. Eight more lessons later, April had increased her nutrient intakes, reduced her fat and calorie intakes, prepared more cost- saving family menus, and reduced her weight. She not only showed she was learning about good health, she was practicing her newfound knowledge to register positive behavioral changes in her eating habits. Since April completed her EFNEP training, she has enrolled in college, using her EFNEP learning experiences to document completion of course requirements. The associate's degree she earns will lead to a teaching career, a clear indicator of the kind of empowerment and improved self-esteem EFNEP can instill in its clientele. April gives EFNEP all credit for inspiring her to greater personal levels.

*Lisa Mullins, Madison County, IN*

Lisa Mullins was an unemployed, single, pregnant mother when she was attending an EFNEP nutrition class at the local food pantry. She enrolled in the EFNEP and *Have a Healthy Baby* programs, graduating from both in August 2002. Lisa learned vital nutrition and prenatal information that helped her to deliver a healthy baby boy. Shortly after this birth, Lisa applied and was chosen for a Madison County family nutrition advisor position. Lisa gained enough confidence to enable her to teach EFNEP information to others in her community. Through her EFNEP experience, she also learned employment skills, successfully completing her first year as a family nutrition advisor. Lisa's ability to make a difference in her community has built her own self-esteem to levels she never imagined possible before EFNEP changed her life.

*Josefina Nieves, Lancaster, PA*

As a single mother of six, Josefina Nieves immediately found much-needed help for her family's health and well-being when she was referred to EFNEP by the local school district 23 years ago. She did not let her lack of ability to write in either English or Spanish discourage her from learning to cook new and different meals; she memorized every recipe presented by her EFNEP educator. Her educator took her one step further, encouraging her to go to school to learn to speak and write in English. Once her confidence was bolstered by her newly learned language skills, Josefina began to venture further, getting a driver's license and job and eventually buying her own home! She is now married, and, thanks to the EFNEP program and her caring educator, is no longer on public assistance.

*Virginia 'Ginny' Reifke, Casper, WY*

"I knew my family needed to eat healthy, but I never knew how to go about it," says Ginny Reifke, an EFNEP graduate just completing her fifth year as a nutrition educator with the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension *Cent\$ible Nutrition* program, which encompasses both EFNEP and FNP. *I'd see pictures of the Food Guide Pyramid (FGP)*, she recalls, *but it didn't mean a hill of beans*. Now, Ginny teaches the FGP and everything else with a passion that sprang from her own experience. Because she knows the power of change in her own life, she is relentless in bringing this message to her students in the program. Two of the main curriculum lessons, Menu Planning and Food Safety, struck such a chord with Ginny, and so improved her own situation, that she makes sure her own graduates are well-versed in these

areas. As a result, 74 percent of last year's participants more often planned meals in advance, and 89 percent demonstrated acceptable food safety practices. Increasing fruit and vegetable intake is a perennial theme in Ginny's teaching, regardless of the lesson of the day. This results in another dramatic positive change in students' eating habits. Always seeking more families to help, Ginny integrates group lessons with one-on-one sessions and home-study courses, amassing an astounding 96 percent graduation rate. In the words of one of her graduates, *"Ginny is an excellent educator. Not only is she knowledgeable about the subject of the day, she made it fun and easy to learn, along with offering a great deal of support and enthusiasm."* Ginny truly exemplifies the spirit of EFNEP: continually making a difference in the lives of others.

*Rose Whitman, Meadville, PA*

Rose Whitman, an EFNEP client in 1982, was newly married, expecting her first child, and scared. She was referred to Frances Spinnato, a pioneering EFNEP paraprofessional in Crawford County. Frances taught Rose to read labels, comparison shop, and manage her budget, preparing Rose for her new life and unwittingly becoming her role model. Rose struggled in the early years, living on welfare and food stamps. She is sure that without EFNEP she and her family would never have won the struggle to succeed. Yet today, after three children and a marriage of more than 20 years, Rose reports that they are doing fine. *"To this day,"* says Rose, *"I am a very thrifty shopper ... I think twice about what I put in my shopping cart."* Rose believes that EFNEP is even more valuable in today's economy when it's harder than ever for low-income families to make ends meet. She declares, *"I...am eternally grateful to [EFNEP and] Frances Spinnato for taking the time for me."*

### **Nominees for Volunteer Category**

*Barb Bennett, Spokane, WA*

When Barb Bennett, director of the Valley Food Bank, was approached with the idea of having nutrition classes at the food bank, she embraced the idea enthusiastically, providing the necessary support for developing the program. She took an active role, not only personally helping to introduce food bank recipients to recipe samples, but making the bold decision to make nutrition classes mandatory for those receiving the benefits. From these beginnings, Barb became a significant player in these classes by arranging for the needed food ingredients to be available for the four weekly nutrition classes and finding a donor to support program costs. This food bank is the first in Spokane to develop an experiential cooking class for its recipients. In the past 6 years, Barb's involvement in the EFNEP program has touched the lives and well-being of more than 1,000 people.

*Beth K. Cothran, Camden, SC*

Beth Cothran, a 22-year veteran of the South Carolina Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, is the career planning and employment specialist for that facility. As such, she identifies eligible South Carolinians with nutrition-related disabilities and refers them to an appropriate educational program. For the past 6 years, she has referred more than 150 clients to the EFNEP program to learn how to understand and cope with symptoms resulting from their disabilities. Participants have dramatically changed lifestyles, with several receiving "Homemaker of the Year" awards. Beth reinforces the information from EFNEP with her clients. As chair of the EFNEP Advisory Committee, she meets with the Kershaw County Advisory board, expressing the concerns and accomplishments of EFNEP and helping to forge new partnerships within the community.

*Antonio Brown Cruz, Lakewood, CA*

Antonio Brown Cruz has been a program facilitator for Jefferson Elementary School in Long Beach for the last 12 years. A proponent of good nutrition is the key to academic success, Antonio makes every effort to keep EFNEP classes a major part of the center's activities. With obesity being a threat to children, early nutrition education is the only way to avoid it. The classes are especially beneficial to the parents because they learn the importance of increasing servings of fruits and vegetables.

*Brenda Dart, Manheim PA*

Brenda graduated from an EFNEP Super Cupboard in 1994 and has matured into a reliable volunteer for EFNEP and Penn State Cooperative Extension as a Family Living Board member. She has filled the role of babysitter, bag packer, shopper, and teacher at dozens of Super Cupboards. Working in the city has taught this country girl how to partner with women from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Because of her skills and the relationship she developed with the EFNEP program, the EFNEP paraprofessional felt confident in writing a letter of recommendation that helped Brenda obtain a job she has always wanted. Her sons are enrolled in 4-H and, because of Brenda's enthusiasm, have developed an interest in making and tasting new foods, especially foods from different cultures.

*Emma Fritz, Rayville, LA*

Emma Fritz is a graduate of the EFNEP program in Richland Parish. As a participant, Emma learned the benefits of eating a variety of foods. Having high blood pressure, she also learned how to prepare healthier foods and use less salt. Emma then became an EFNEP volunteer for 2 years. In addition to hosting the meetings, she actively participates in teaching lessons and other activities, as well as serving refreshments. Emma thoroughly enjoys her time with the youth through the EFNEP program. She works well with other program participants and volunteers, and she understands how important it is for youth learn the connection between healthy eating and disease prevention.

*Mildred Harris, Mangham, LA*

Mildred Harris is a recent EFNEP graduate who now serves as a volunteer with the EFNEP youth program in Richland Parish. She has diabetes and, through EFNEP, has learned the value of proper eating to control her disease; therefore, she wants to share this knowledge with the youth in her rural community. Mildred offers her home as a meeting place, contacts youth to ensure they know the date and time of the meeting, and assists with preparation of healthy snacks for the youth. Through EFNEP, Mildred learned the importance of modifying recipes, especially her favorites, to lower sugar and fat content. Through her involvement with EFNEP, she has learned of other educational opportunities and attends other LSU AgCenter-sponsored programs such as diabetes lessons.

*Ruth Jackson, Delhi, LA*

Ruth Jackson is a young 80-plus mother of 12 children, a grandmother, Sunday school teacher, and a leader in her community. Healthy eating is a top priority for her, and she recognizes the value of teaching it to youth. Ruth has been a volunteer with the EFNEP youth program for more than 2 years and has loved every minute of it. She has not missed an EFNEP youth meeting since assuming this role. She is always on time and greets each child by name and with enthusiasm and

joy in her voice. She enjoys sharing her knowledge and life's experiences. More important, the youth enjoy spending time with her. Her encouragement to try new foods is a big reason many are acquiring new tastes and enjoying new foods.

*Fran Johnson, Bellport, NY*

Fran Johnson is a nurse at the Bellport Outreach Center, where EFNEP provides education to women in substance abuse recovery. A firm believer in how EFNEP can change lives, she has assisted an EFNEP paraprofessional in 8 to 10 sessions each for 36 groups, reaching more than 400 participants. She coordinates the groups, recruits participants, orders food, observes classes, and encourages and motivates participants during and between classes. Described by the paraprofessional as a person willing to tackle any job, she demonstrates her support of and respect for these EFNEP participants by being a great source of strength and hope for these women who are struggling with large and difficult life changes. Fran believes in EFNEP and sees the changes it makes in lives.

*Gail Jones, Baton Rouge, LA*

Gail has made a tremendous contribution to the EFNEP program in East Baton Rouge Parish. Gail served as the coordinator for the Home Instruction for Preschool Parents and Youngsters (HIPPI) program for many years. In 2001 Gail required that HIPPI paraprofessionals recruit at least five families to participate in EFNEP. She allowed the EFNEP staff to conduct nutrition lessons at the HIPPI group meetings, and she advocated for EFNEP by setting up displays and disseminating materials at HIPPI state conferences. She has also nominated the local extension agent to present at the national HIPPI conference on collaborations between the two programs. Gail has also served on the local EFNEP advisory council. As an educator, Gail realizes the importance of good nutrition and academic readiness, and she is committed to the collaboration of the EFNEP and HIPPI.

*Gladys O'Brien, New Haven, CT*

Gladys is the program director for the after-school program at Farnam Neighborhood House in New Haven. For the past 5 years, Gladys has been very committed to EFNEP and, through EFNEP, has reached out to hundreds of youth. She has reinforced EFNEP also to the families of the youth. Many of the parents have put into practice what their own children have taught them from EFNEP.

*Lola Peoples, Shreveport, LA*

Lola Peoples has been a dedicated EFNEP employee for more than 18 years. She is very flexible, exercises good judgment, and demonstrates initiative in the completion of her duties. Above and beyond her duties as a secretary, she helps create a cooperative work atmosphere and is never too busy to encourage others and build morale within the office. She also serves as a volunteer leader for the EFNEP summer activity camps. Lola's positive and friendly personality is a vital quality. Her positive outlook on her personal and professional life is not only a welcome characteristic, it has on many occasions been the driving force behind the success of the staff. Ms. Peoples always performs her duties in a manner that displays her strong work ethic and professionalism. She is a positive role model and a true asset to the EFNEP program.

*Julio Ramos, Los Angeles, CA*

Julio Ramos is a teacher/parent coordinator and Healthy Start coordinator at San Pedro Elementary School in Los Angeles. For 5 years he has provided tremendous support as a volunteer and liaison person for EFNEP at San Pedro Elementary School. He has been an excellent cheerleader and encourager for the EFNEP program. As a result of his commitment and concern for the health and well-being of the parents, repeated classes have been presented at the school. He has learned to eat more nutritious foods and has passed the knowledge on to his family. Before learning about the EFNEP program and receiving nutrition information, he was not involving his children in helping to prepare meals and eating together. Now by participating together in meal planning and preparation as a family, his family has noticed a tremendous difference in their lives. With the ever-increasing prevalence of obesity in his community, he prides himself in the fact that he has lost 30 pounds in 2 years after receiving and following EFNEP training. He is a role model for EFNEP and encourages others in his family and community to do the same.

*Carmen Rodriguez, Bridgeport, CT*

Carmen Rodriguez is a long-time EFNEP supporter, taking part in EFNEP programming since the 1960s, when, as director of Social Services for the Head Start program in Milwaukee, WI, she incorporated EFNEP programming for healthy eating and promoted hands-on activities for the Head Start families. Now coordinator at the Walkersville Family Resource Center in Bridgeport, CT, Carmen has brought her strong EFNEP commitment to center participants. Families report positive lifestyle changes such as lower food costs; maintenance of healthy body weight; increased consumption of fruits, vegetables, fiber, and protein; and decreased use of fat, sugars, and salt.