



PHOTO COURTESY OF KIM DAVIDSON

CLASS — Students learn how to cook at Campus Kitchen as part of the Healthy Options program.

Healthy options

Program helps many more people lead healthy lives

BY JESSICA HAINES
Times Night Editor

A special program bringing together different segments of the community will operate for the third time this summer and ensure families and households in Adams County are eating well.

Healthy Options, developed by the Adams County Food Policy Council, will kick off around June 8 at Adams County Farmers' Market Association (ACFMA) locations.

Kim Davidson is interim director of the Center for Public Service at Gettysburg College and is involved with Healthy Options both as a board member at ACFMA

and as a member of the Adams County Food Policy Council.

She explained Healthy Options was developed in early 2011 in an effort to assist families living in "the food gap" in Adams County.

Those families and households, explained Davidson, are making too much money to qualify for assistance, but aren't making enough to be completely self-sufficient when it comes to buying food like fruits and vegetables, which can sometimes be expensive.

"They're working families" says Kathy Glahn, presi-



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALICIA GARCIA

GREENS — The Farmers' Markets are full of locally-grown vegetables.

(See **HEALTHY**
on Page A6)

Healthy

(Continued from Page A1)

dent of the ACFMA. "They're working very hard but they're having a hard time making ends meet. They do not qualify for any food assistance."

In 2011, the pilot program launched with 25 households participating, receiving \$40 a month in vouchers to spend with vendors at the Adams County Farmers Market.

"We had a number of educational sessions associated with it," said Davidson. "There were 44 families that participated last year."

Many members of the community participate in the educational sessions, according to Davidson.

Camille Horton is an AmeriCorps VISTA worker who is working closely with the Adams County Food Policy Council this year to organize the 2013 healthy options program.

She says the educational sessions foster community amongst the participants, and result in everyone learning something new.

"A lot of the families are really interested in their families

and their children being health," said Horton. "(They are) trying to get their kids really engaged in the cooking piece of things, and maybe learning how to garden."

Programs for the 44 households that participated in 2012 included cooking lessons highlighting the use of different items at the farmers market, and gardening classes.

Also last year, families participated in Photovoice. During the program, they documented their experiences with food and shared their observations and goals with each other.

"People took pictures... of their experiences with food," said Horton. Images included pictures of grocery shopping, highlighting low prices at big box chains, or packages of ramen noodles.

"When you have kids and are in a hurry, the easiest and most time efficient thing to cook is a package of ramen noodles," said Horton.

She continued: "What was also exciting about these conversations is it was cross-cultural."

Horton explained two-thirds of 2012 households were native Spanish speakers in the process of learning English. The meeting of multiple cultures proved educational and successful according to Horton.

In addition to workshops and educational opportunities, the Adams County Food Policy Council in 2012 also conducted research on the program.

Dr. Amy Dailey, a professor of Health Sciences at Gettysburg College, submitted "Healthy Options: A Community-Based Program to Address Food Insecurity," to the peer reviewed *Journal of Prevention and Intervention* over the winter and was accepted.

She, in conjunction with Audrey Hess, who is working on her master's degree in public health, worked with students, the Adams County Food Policy Council and Healthy Options participants to track to program's success and effects.

Horton says research continues this year.

"The purpose of the research we want to do is really kind of delve into the issues with food we have in our community," she explains. "What are those access issues? What are some of those things we can aim to make some change with."

Davidson says participants in Healthy Options are heavily involved with the process.

"They have been active in saying this is something our community needs," said Davidson. "They're not ... passive participants that need help with food. They're ... being the voice of community change (and) guiding the change they want to see in their families."

Much of the funding for the project comes through Raise the Dough, a fundraising campaign conducted by Campus Kitchen, of which Gettysburg College is a part.

According to Davidson, who advises Campus Kitchen, the recent fundraising campaign raised \$7,586, which will be guided toward Healthy Options.

Additionally, farms have do-

nated Community Support Agriculture (CSA) shares the program, which Healthy Options then re-sells to eat money.

Grants have also come from the Adams County Community Foundation, and through grant writing by Healthy Adams County. The Adams County Food Policy Council is under Healthy Adams County's umbrella.

Funds raised pay for food vouchers for participating families and workshops and field trips to farms taken by participants.

Horton expects many participants from the past two years will return to the program this year.

"We'll probably be able to add 10 or 15 more families this year," she projects.

According to Glahn, the Adams County Farmers' Market will open at the Gettysburg Rec Park during the first week of May, as well as at the Outlet Shoppes at Gettysburg. The Rec Park market is held Wednesdays, and the market at the outlets is Saturdays. By the end of May, a Friday market will be added at the outlets.

Glahn added the Saturday morning Gettysburg Farmers Market will soon open on Lincoln Square.

Preservation

(Continued from Page A1)

Commissioner Randy Phiel said preserving rural vistas and the agricultural way of life is important to the whole economy and character of the county.

"Tourism and agriculture are the two biggest industries in Adams County," said Phiel, who spent much of his youth on a fruit orchard, where, he said, he was "the slowest fruit picker in Adams County."

Ellen Dayhoff, who runs the county's Agricultural Land Preservation program, said her agency has about 20,000 acres under easement. The Conservancy has 123 properties under easement, for a total of 7855 acres.

The Boyer properties are part of 14,000 acres of land in western Adams County known as the Fruit Belt. It has been called the most productive orchard land east of the Mississippi River.

He also praised those involved in conservation efforts for their "vision, passion, and love of this land," adding that "There are more moving parts to make this kind of thing happen, you wouldn't believe it."

In addition to Phiel and Lower, speakers at the event included Land Conservancy President Norma Calhoun, US EPA Regional Administrator Shawn M. Garvin, U.S. Congressman Scott Perry, and (R-4th) American Rivers Vice President Christopher Williams.

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