



Sunday Dispatch "Nutrition Corner"

A Newspaper Column

ATTN: The educator who designed the strategy to evaluate this program delivered through a newspaper column received the 2008 Excellence in Program Evaluation Award from the Extension Education Group of the American Evaluation Association at the AEA Conference in Denver.

TEAM MEMBERS

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PROGRAM

"Nutrition Corner" column, initially a bimonthly column, and now as a result of the evaluation a weekly column, is printed in the *Sunday Dispatch*, a community focused newspaper with a circulation of 8,000 of which over 4,800 subscribe to the newspaper. The column is now printed in the social section of the paper.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Healthy Heart Kid Smart, a school based Luzerne County 4-H program for 5th graders, designed and conducted in 1995 by Extension and the Department of Health, identified Pittston area youth to be at risk for heart disease! Clinical assessment as part of the program found that 5th graders as a whole had elevated cholesterol levels. Health officials surmise that intermarriage among long-time residents (a genetic factor), and poor eating habits (an environmental factor), lead to the high cholesterol levels among the children.

To respond to this serious health revelation and to attempt to reach all parents and caretakers of the children in the Pittston area, created a huge challenge for Extension staff in an urban county where the staff to resident ratio is already low.

The educator chose a newspaper column as the delivery method for this program, a delivery method long used by Extension to reach large audiences. This delivery method has rarely been evaluated because of the challenge in identifying the readers. With the collaboration of the Managing Editor of the newspaper, however, the educator developed a successful evaluation strategy. Use of the evaluation results led to policy changes at the newspaper in terms of increasing Extension's impact in the future!

The evaluation strategy has implications for three different stakeholders: Extension, the readers, and the newspaper. For the details, see an article in *Journal of Extension*, "How to Ascertain the Impact of Writing a Newspaper Column": <http://www.joe.org/joe/2008june/a7.php>

For further information about the evaluation, please contact Mary Ehret (mre2@psu.edu). This Web site is copyrighted by the Pennsylvania State University. The information may be used for educational purposes but not sold for profit.