

Fresh Ways to Mix It Up!

Moderator: Melinda R. Newport, MS, RD, LD, Director, Nutrition Services Department, Chickasaw Nation, Ada, OK

As we begin I would like to give you just a little bit of an orientation to the Chickasaw Nation, and to the scope of our nutrition services. For those of you that are unfamiliar, most tribes in Oklahoma are not in reservation settings. The tribe operates a variety of social, economic, cultural, and health programs with tribal, State, and Federal funding throughout a 13-county area. In that area, the population is about 250,000, of which about 10 percent are Native American. The Chickasaw Nation is in south-central Oklahoma.

Nutrition services for the Chickasaw Nation include a variety of programs. We began the WIC Program in 1978. We began the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations in 1984. In 1994, we began administering the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. In 2001, we were delighted to have the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. And in 2004, we got our first Food Stamp Nutrition Education grant. Also in 2004, we got the first WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program grants as well.

In addition to the FNS Programs that we administer, we also have a clinical portion to our department, which includes the Chickasaw Nation Health System Food and Nutrition Services, which the Chickasaw Nation has been administering since 1994. We have inpatient medical nutrition therapy, as well as outpatient nutrition counseling, and also operate a cafeteria. So that is the whole scope of nutrition services for the Chickasaw Nation.

As we heard Ms. Frost mention in the opening session, about the importance of having messages that were inescapable, pervasive, and relentless, certainly that has been a goal of ours for many years with Chickasaw Nation. We are hoping that at the many places that we serve a client—whether it be in the WIC Clinic, in a cooking class, at the Farmers Market, in a Youth Wellness Camp, in our inpatient hospital menu as well as in the cafeteria and cooking classes—they will be receiving the same messages everywhere that we encounter that person. So, we work very hard to make sure we are all on the same page, and that we are not confusing our clients in any way.

I have long asked myself what is worth doing professionally. It is a question that is tough to answer in our field, and one which I think is beginning to crystallize in recent years. When I attended this conference in 2003, I listened very carefully to my colleagues, and we got a lot of good ideas. I think we have taken our services to a new level in the last couple of years.

We are pretty much sticking with four or five primary key messages. The first is get moving; of course, increase fruits and vegetables; drink more water; and breastfeeding, a gift of love. Those are the four areas that we put all of our energies into across all of those programs.

You Had Me at Hello!

Debi Tipton, MS, RD, LD, WIC Program Manager, The Chickasaw Nation, Ada, OK

Melody Schrank, RD, LD, WIC Nutritionist, The Chickasaw Nation, Ada, OK

MS. TIPTON: As I was thinking about how to portray to you what I would like to say, this phrase from the popular movie, “Jerry McGuire,” those of you who have seen the movie know what I am talking about, where Tom Cruise is standing beside this lady, and she says, “You had me at hello.”

This is the wording that captures the passion that we have in the WIC Program. From the moment of “Hello,” whether it is by telephone or when they walk in the door, through the nutrition assessment that we do in the WIC Program, throughout the type of nutrition education we give them, even through the next appointment scheduling, we realize that we either have them or we lose them at the point of “Hello,” and that nutrition education can happen all the way through each of those phases.

What does that passion mean in the day-to-day life of the WIC Program? As we all move towards higher technology and computer assessment, does this passion mean that we rely on new technology to do the assessing? Does the computer automatically assign a nutrition risk, and then that is the end of the assessment? Does the clerk automatically assign them to a nutrition class, or robotically hand them those brochures that we have been hearing about throughout this conference? You all know the answer to that is no.

One of the things that we do in our Nutrition Services Department is to learn a new character trait at our monthly staff meeting. One of the things we want our paraprofessionals to be trained on is the character trait of attentiveness. What does attentiveness mean? The state of being mindful or observant to what you are doing, being heedful to the comfort of others, offering attention to. The character trait of attentiveness is defined as showing the worth of a person, object, or idea by giving my undivided concentration.

The deer is used as the symbol for the character trait because it uses all of its five senses—sight, smell, taste, touch, hearing—to do a good assessment, to be aware of everything around it. A computer cannot be attentive, so we try to train our paraprofessionals that the person behind the computer must be attentive.

I use this little illustration, which will seem kind of silly. I remember it from driver’s ed. Remember when you first start out driving, and everybody is looking at the little lines right in front of you, you don’t want to veer off. I had the personal experience of living with my grandmother after my grandfather passed away. At the age of about 70, she decided to get a driver’s license. She had never driven a car before in her life. Well, guess who got to be a licensed driver?

So this became reality to me as we are going down the road. I can remember her doing this in a car with no power steering. It is important to get the big picture, because you still can stay on course, you still can do your job and get where you need to go in the WIC certification process. By being observant and being attentive to everything around you, you still can see those stripes.

One of the things that I wanted to use this illustration for was this: they get so busy and can feel like saying “Get out of my way. I’ve got a hundred certs to do today, and it’s my job to tell you everything you need to know about Vitamin A. Whether you want to know it or not, I am going to tell you all about Vitamin A.” So this is the recognition, as I said, that drives our program, that we can also lose them at “Hello” for speeding through the process and not paying attention.

I have to give many thanks to Jennifer Hayes, of our staff, who comes up with all this fun stuff. The other part of the passion is that, because we have to do nutrition education throughout the entire process, it leads us to a few things that you are going to see next. I always had a desire to offer a kind of “dietitian class”—instead of covering Vitamin A and Vitamin C, etc., whether they wanted to know it or not—why not just have a class where they could come in and say, “What is it you’re interested in?” “What can I help you with?” “What is it you want to know?”

As I brought this thought to my coworkers, “I would really like to offer this and make this change,” they supported it. Melinda supports every idea that we have, and the wonderful ideas that the other coworkers have. They gave us the courage to begin revitalizing our nutrition education. Part of what we did was to hire a dynamic, energetic nutritionist, who had that passion when she came to us. We wanted to keep the job fun for staff. So we created a nutrition education team who began to brainstorm and to develop a new nutrition education schedule and plan for all our nutrition services programs. We have a number of nutrition educators that work together.

One of the first things that they did was devise this nutrition education schedule with some real catchy titles, some fun and innovative classes, and then we began. From the idea to offer an “Ask a Dietitian” class, came forth the idea of offering a menu selection of classes. Our participants can select the class they are interested in; not whether or not we think she needs to know about Vitamin A.

As Melinda said about the WIC Program, we have been reminded over and over again what is worth doing. I wanted to briefly mention that Melinda and I have, in the WIC Program, had an opportunity to sit on our Southwest Region FNS obesity prevention initiative, and listen to the experts and be apprised of their research about childhood obesity prevention. We landed on these main messages that we all utilize. They are the same as she mentioned for the WIC Program: breastfeed, move more, drink more water, and eat more fruits and vegetables.

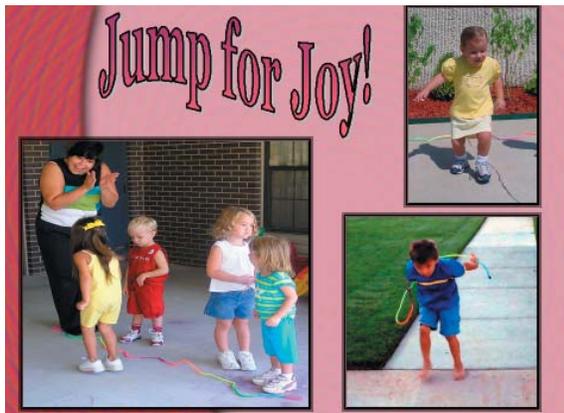
One of the things that we decided we needed to do was to put our money where our mouth is, so to speak. We have a WIC receptionist and a WIC paraprofessional who have been allowed to bring their breastfeeding babies to work with them. It worked really well up to about 6 months of age. By that time, it was sometimes hard to concentrate in the clinic. But, we decided we would support them in every way we could and it is kind of a team effort.

What a wonderful opportunity for clients to walk in and see Miranda nursing at the front desk, or to be with Nicole who can sit at the computer and nurse her baby and just do it all. What a great message that we have shown to clients. They kind of held our feet to the fire on that one—if that is going to be our message, well then, support us. We decided that we would.

MS. SCHRANK: I just want to briefly tell you about our WIC Program, because we are a small program, a total caseload about 3,500. Our clinics range in size from about a caseload of 120 to 1,200 at our largest clinic.

I got to work with the nutrition education team, a very creative group of WIC staff, and we designed different classes. I give credit to everybody, because I come to meetings like this to get ideas. We are a small program. We don't have the funding like the State of California or Florida to develop wonderful materials. I use their materials. You are welcome to use our materials.

We wanted to involve physical activity in getting the kids involved. One of the things we did was order jump ropes for the kids. Until we did this, I didn't know that kids that are WIC age can't jump rope. They can't. In the lower right-hand corner, that is my son, and he was barely five at the time, and that is him trying to jump rope.



ACTIVITY	What You Need	What You Do
Balance Beam	Masking tape	With masking tape, make a "balance beam" on the floor 6-8 feet long and 4 inches wide. Make sure you have good tape. Parents, make sure the children are safe. They have to be able to jump over the tape on their feet. They have to be able to jump over the tape on their feet. They have to be able to jump over the tape on their feet.
Go Shape	Masking tape (one roll for every 10 kids)	With masking tape, make circles, squares and triangles on the floor. Large enough for a child or adult to sit inside and use. Make sure the children are safe and have their feet on the tape. They have to be able to jump over the tape on their feet. They have to be able to jump over the tape on their feet.
Hopscotch	Masking tape	Make a path of squares large enough for children to jump on. Make sure the children are safe. They have to be able to jump over the tape on their feet. They have to be able to jump over the tape on their feet.
The Tin Toss	Masking tape	Make a path of squares large enough for children to jump on. Make sure the children are safe. They have to be able to jump over the tape on their feet. They have to be able to jump over the tape on their feet.
Food Maze	Masking tape	Make a path of squares large enough for children to jump on. Make sure the children are safe. They have to be able to jump over the tape on their feet. They have to be able to jump over the tape on their feet.

That is when I learned that kids in WIC can't jump rope. So I had to think of some other things that we could do.

We also did foam fliers. We ordered them in the 5-A-Day colors, because not only can we teach and promote physical activity that way, but also teach the five fruit and vegetable groups and teach kids their colors. In many of the things we do, there are hidden meanings behind everything and more than one way that you can use them.

I stole a wonderful handout from another State that goes with beach balls. Our beach balls are in the 5-A-Day colors. All age groups of kids love them. Even kids that are crawling age love to chase them, and you know they will get up to them and kind of hit them, and then they will chase them across the floor. It's a wonderful way to promote activity. Everybody loves the beach balls.

You don't have to have fancy things like foam fliers and beach balls to be active. You can make up games for kids with masking tape. I have done all of those games with kids, and they love them. You don't have to invest a lot of money and you can do them indoors. You use the masking tape on carpet like this. You can do some of these games outdoors if you have sidewalk chalk. They are some fun things for kids and fun things for parents to do with their kids.

We also discussed water bottles with the kids, talked about drinking water instead of juice between meals, and that was a very popular item. "Eat more fruits and vegetables" was another one of our messages. I absolutely love the book that the dietitian in Florida wrote, Give Me 5 A Day. It involves counting, physical activity, and fruits and vegetables, all in one book. This is the best book.

MS. KATHY REEVES: And another one is coming. The next book is going to be better.

MS. SCHRANK: Kids across the country should get Florida's book; it is that good. There are some other books about food that are really good, but not as exciting as that book, and it is in English and Spanish. Believe it or not we have a pretty large Spanish-speaking population at some of our clinics.

We did "Cooking With Kids" classes. That's across the spectrum with all of our services. A couple years ago, we did a class on seeds. We are really putting an investment in it this time. We are having special pots made for the kids, and they are going to start plants in the winter. We are going to teach them how to put them in their garden in the spring, so that is exciting.

Who Moved the Bacon?

Melanie Todd, MS, RD, LD, Food and Nutrition Services Manager, The Chickasaw Nation, Ada, OK

The Chickasaw Nation serves over 10,000 patients per month. That is a wide audience that we can reach through nutrition education. We provide 600 cafeteria meals and 100 inpatient meals per day.

We have a lot of cultural nutrition influences when we work with our patients. This is considered a traditional meal: wild game and pashofa, an unrefined corn product (they mix it with pork and heat it in a big pot, it has kind of a smoked flavor), poke salad, which is a wild green, and grape dumplings.

Southeastern Oklahoma is famous for fried foods. I am from Nebraska, and I didn't know that you could fry vegetables like you do in Oklahoma. Not only do they fry vegetables, but they fry them with bacon grease. Fried meats, beans, cornbread, fried vegetables, they make them in grease, and they drink sweetened tea. This is a traditional Southeastern Oklahoma menu.

Then, we have a menu that is served every Wednesday in our hospital on Bacon Day. Bacon Day is known throughout the community. We even have the garbage men pull up and park out back. Every Wednesday, they have bacon—90 pounds. Every Wednesday. For those of you in food service, you can relate to 72 sheet pans. I see people smiling, and they understand. Notice the cook isn't smiling.

So we have these regional and cultural and, I guess, hospital influences. When we work with our patients and with the community, we have to overcome those influences. I am not out here to change people or the menus. But at the same time, I want to offer some perspective on what we can do to help promote healthy choices.

We have our own social policy in the hospital and throughout our department. It is to prevent disease with the promotion of nutrition and wellness—not to take things away, but to promote nutrition. How do we do that in the cafeteria? We use social marketing. We create a fun and festive environment. We display fruits and vegetables first. When I first became the manager of Food Service, when you walked into the cafeteria line, they had the entrees first. You picked up your plate, and you got your lasagna; that was first. Then, the salad bar and then you paid. Guess what people chose? The entree. So, we had to flip that around and promote fruits and vegetables first.



We provide free and reduced nutrient-dense foods. We charge more for M&Ms and Nachos. We give away our vegetables. We added asparagus to the menu. Many of the people that I worked with in my department had never even heard of asparagus. I am sure most of you have. But these are the people that we deal with, and these are the changes we want to make.

What I feel is a personal goal is when somebody from my staff has asparagus for the first time, and goes home and serves it to their family; they try it. That is the success. It is a small success, but an important one.

We provide free milk. Anyone who comes into the cafeteria can have a serving of milk. Skim milk, low-fat, and 2- percent reduced milk are displayed first. This is another important thing to do—display your messages first at eye level, where people can see them.

We have many celebrations of National Nutrition Month. We offer a bonus item of a free fruit or vegetable with every lunch. We e-mail employees with quick nutrition tips. We also offer free bottled water. We offer the same messages that Debi and Melody mentioned—eat more fruits and vegetables; drink more water.

I learned very quickly that you have to have cooks behind you to get these messages across. We had 2 days of training where we brought the cooks in from across the Chickasaw Nation, and we gave them recipes, gave them sanitation lessons, and actually taught them how to prepare vegetables without using bacon grease. It was very popular, and I again encourage you to honor the people that deliver messages.

So take the opportunity, be daring, change menus, add asparagus to your menu. Remove the vending and pop machines, and replace them with bottled water and healthy snacks. Because the bottom line is, it is worth doing.

From the Harvest to Home

Jennifer Hayes, MA, Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs Manager, The Chickasaw Nation, Ada, OK

We have both the WIC and the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition programs. We have had the Senior Program since it began in 2001. We allow our participants to receive an additional nutrition benefit during the months of May through November of each year. They receive a one-time benefit. Our WIC participants get \$30, and currently our seniors receive \$100, which will change and they are not going to be real happy.

Both of our Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs allow us the opportunity to help our participants to increase their fruit and vegetable consumption, if nothing else, at least during the summer and the fall months. Sometimes, they will buy extra. They will can them, set them up, and preserve them for the winter, so that it will last them all year long. Through the Farmers' Market Program, you can also encourage your participants to move. Just by getting up one extra day a week, and taking yourself and your family to the Farmers' Market, and just walking around, mingling with the farmers, and seeing people and what is going on, you can add a few extra steps in your day.

We know that our Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs are a success because we have an average redemption rate of over 90 percent, combined, with all of our programs. The Farmers' Market Nutrition Program allows us the opportunity to impact the health of our participants in a variety of ways.

We do a lot of market promotion. We started this last year. This was really fun. We come to work a little early on Wednesdays and go to the market and purchase fresh fruits and vegetables from our farmers. We bring them back and display them for our participants to see. So, as this message reminds you, eat more fruits and vegetables, as well as go shop at your Farmers' Market today.



We also take the opportunity to have our dietitians occasionally come out to the Farmers' Market. They have samples, recipes, nutrition education, and they are there to answer questions and discuss any kinds of issues with anybody that stops by—not just our participants, but anybody who wants to see what is going on. If there's free food, they'll come.

We also do cooking demonstrations. Our Get Fresh Team has taken the initiative to go to the Farmers' Market. A chef has taken his own time to go to this market and prepare foods that he bought from the farmers at that market. So, he uses the fruits and vegetables for the recipes that he prepares and he provides nutrition education. He provides information on his program. He really gets in there with the people, they are just attracted to him, and they love him, and he is just a riot.

We also feel that it is important to offer samples. We love when our farmers offer samples to our participants, because the participants can taste what they are getting ready to buy. They can taste how fresh it is, how good it is, and how that watermelon just melts in your mouth. It also gives the kids the opportunity to try fresh fruits and vegetables.

We also use samples in our nutrition centers. We will go to the market, grill the vegetables, slice them, and provide some low-fat dip for them, and walk around the store and hand out samples to the participants. It gives us the opportunity to interact with them in a way that we do not commonly get to interact with them.

It is amazing how a person will open up to you just because you give them a piece of grilled squash. Next thing you know, they are asking all kinds of questions. It just opens up the doors. They are in a relaxed environment. They don't feel like you are counseling them. They are just there enjoying it, and getting some really good food and some recipes to go along with it.

We love displays, probably because I love to make displays. We use our displays everywhere. We use them for a variety of reasons, e.g., to help remind people to shop at the Farmers' Market, and to remember to eat five to nine fruits and vegetables a day.

We did a display this year for National Farmers' Market Week. Our Ada Nutrition Center is the first thing that you see when you walk in the building. You can learn a lot from that one display. We also have samples in our stores with signs celebrating National Farmers' Market Week. We also have signs for people to remember to use their checks. We love to celebrate National Nutrition Month because they have such great themes each year, and Nutrition Services does so much with National Nutrition Month. We make it as fun as we can.

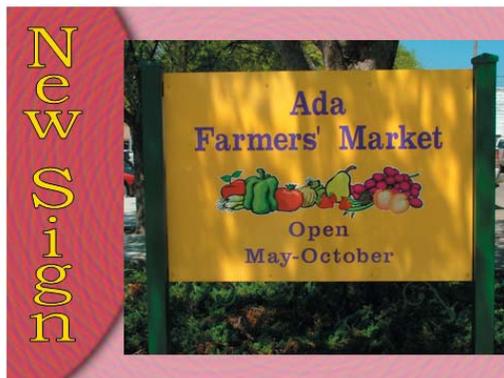
The Chickasaw Nation is extremely lucky to have a community garden. We have a very close working relationship with this community garden. They had two greenhouses and have raised beds and fruit trees. They grow fruits and vegetables, plants, and flowers. The community garden is an important piece of the Chickasaw Nation, as well as Nutrition Services, because it allows our youth the opportunity to interact with their elders. In the Native American culture, it is very important to interact with your elders. The elders can teach them how to plant and pick, and how to prepare a variety of things. You know, they probably even have a story to go with it.

Market development and maintenance is very important to keeping the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program running. Without our markets, we would not be as successful as we

are. We have farm stands in areas where we do not have Farmers' Markets, because the Chickasaw Nation is mostly in rural counties. But the markets that we do have, we take pride in them and we want people to shop at them.

This is a market that we developed in 2001, with a grant that we received. It was a very small grant. But, for under \$7,000 we did this. They have signs and banners, and they have five carports that go across this cement slab. They are located directly next to the Chickasaw National Regional Office, in Purcell. A group of farmers—they come on Tuesdays and Thursdays to this market, because our seniors come to the senior sites on Tuesdays and Thursday—decided, “Okay, we’re going to go there on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but now we are going to develop our own market.” So they went to another town, called Noble, Oklahoma, which is maybe 30 or 45 minutes from here, and developed their own market, based on the practices that we had for this market. They are open on Wednesdays and Saturdays. So if you don’t make it to Ada, you can go to Noble.

This is a new sign that we developed for our Ada Farmers Market.



The other sign was old and falling and you couldn’t read it, so through the Chamber of Commerce and the Main Street Program, the Chickasaw Nation designed, developed, and installed a new sign for our Ada Farmers’ Market. We have also started a media campaign to help reinforce our positive health messages that we spoke of earlier: “Take your kids to the Farmers’ Market.” “Take your grandkids to the Farmers’ Market.” “Let them try new fresh fruits and vegetables that they have never tried before.”

We developed, or are in the process of developing, a poster for the National Association of Farmers’ Market Nutrition Programs. This will be available in October at the meeting for purchase. We are using pictures from the media campaign in this poster as well. Finally, the above slide has “Drink more water,” and you have the little girl down here drinking water. And then, “Eat more fresh fruits and vegetables.” So you can do anything with this that you want to.

In conclusion, I want to say that the Chickasaw Nation Farmers Market Nutrition Program provides families with a fun way to get outdoors, to move around, and to expose them to new fresh fruits and vegetables.



Who Moved the Cheese

Roxanna Newsom, Food Distribution Program (FDPIR) Manager, The Chickasaw Nation, Ada, OK

We have traditionally served our clients at tailgates. A tailgate is where we load the food onto a truck, haul it out to a remote site, and then we kind of slide it off the back of the truck. Tailgates make it very difficult to be able to offer nutrition education at those sites. So we “moved the cheese.” Where we moved the cheese was into a whole new way of doing business.

We opened up our first nutrition center, and we felt like this would be an environment of dignity, respect, and choices. Our clients come into the store and then make the choices about what they would like to have.

When they come in, they are given a shopping list which is according to their household size. One side shows the items that they are eligible to get for the month. On the other side, we use the opportunity to provide some nutrition education information. If they are diabetic, there may be some information next to one of the foods showing them the better choice to make in a food category. It is all lumped into categories, like fruits, and then they decide which fruits they want. They decide whether they want fresh produce or canned produce, and what quantity they want.

The stores add convenience. We have three nutrition centers that are strategically located throughout the Chickasaw Nation. In the last several years, we developed a scanning system. Besides speeding up the processes, it allows our clients to pick up at whichever center they choose to go to. Our hospital, that Melanie mentioned earlier, is located in Ada. Often, someone who normally picks up in Purcell could find themselves in Ada and have some spare time. They are more than welcome to go to the Ada facility and do their shopping there. The other convenience it allows is that they can come in on the day that they choose to. We are closed the last three working days of every month, when we do inventory and staff trainings. We issue a calendar showing the service days and service hours, and the clients choose when they want to come in. So everybody gets involved in the

process. What kid doesn't love to put the food up on the conveyor belt? There is something about kids and conveyor belts; they just absolutely love them.

We introduced fresh produce into our program. One of the things that I love about the Fresh Produce Program is that it is procured through the Department of Defense, and we receive our fresh produce once a week. So, our clients know that every Tuesday we are going to have fresh produce in our facilities. Some of our clients now come back on a weekly basis on Tuesday or Wednesday and pick up the fresh produce. They know which store stocks faster. So they have kind of gauged it, where they can come back in and get fresh produce. With this, we have seen an increase in the consumption and the take rate on fresh produce. You keep hearing about Get Fresh. Our Get Fresh staff offers store tours, and she will take anybody that is interested in going through a tour. She teaches label reading and about sodium, and is more than willing to take the time to share with them. She also will offer a one-on-one if someone has specific health issues that they would like to discuss.

The store has also provided us the opportunity to provide nutrition education in ways that we didn't think of when we first got into it. We tuck little messages in different places on the store shelving. We will either use handouts, such as the one below, or we've got little notes that we put in little acrylic frames that might say, "Try using fruit on your pancakes and waffles rather than syrup." There are a number of opportunities to get little messages out to them as they are going through the shopping process.



We have cooking classes. I will tell you a bit about the Food Stamp Nutrition Education grant. Two years ago, we received the grant. When we wrote the grant, one of our main objectives was to increase fruit and vegetable consumption by our clients. So, that is the way we went at it. We wrote the grant to have cooking classes and cooking shows, to get people learning to use the products.

When they do a cooking show, they are actually just preparing the item. They will have recipes that they will hand out. Then, of course, there are always samples. Our clients love the cooking shows. They can enroll in the shows. Often, the attendees are either clients that are enrolled in the program, or they are just somebody that happened to come in and wants to sit in on that show.

In addition to the cooking shows, we did cooking classes. The cooking classes are hands-on, where the clients come in and actually do the preparation themselves. These are really fun with the interaction that you get, because you get people in a setting where they are doing the preparing, they are comfortable, and then they start sharing and asking questions. So, it provides a lot of good opportunities for interaction. We also do cooking classes for kids—the kids absolutely love to cook. We got some little 5-A-Day aprons, and they love to put on their aprons and go to cook.

In our centers, we could easily have Head Start children, WIC children, or Food Distribution clients. I think they have gone out in the community and worked with the Boys' and Girls' Clubs, and with some of the public schools. So, the opportunities are absolutely endless.

There is a wonderful little cookbook that we have been using this last year, the “Dole 5-A-Day Cookbook.” My granddaughter brings it to the house. If she knows she is going to be there for the weekend, she brings it because she wants to cook. She has her favorite recipes. Of course, when you cook, you get to eat—and she loves what she makes.

We also bring our staff together—the WIC, Food Distribution, and Get Fresh staff. We try to get together on a monthly basis. When we all come together at every monthly meeting, we try to have, if possible, an opportunity to provide nutrition education to the staff, because, most often, it is the frontline staff who really interact with our clients, and they are the ones that get the questions. We go and work with whoever will allow us to come. We often work with our senior sites; they invite us. Sometimes one of the nutritionists will go and share with them on a specific topic, or we visit the health fairs. At every opportunity, we love to go to the senior sites.

Chickasaw Nation also hosts a Children's Fair every year. We set up a booth there, and let the kids make their own snack. We call them little snack stations. Since the cook's training was going to be fairly close to the time we were doing the Children's Fair, she made arrangements to get the Fight Bac costume. Actually, the Fight Bac character is our warehouse supervisor for the Food Distribution Program. He loves to get into these suits, and he is so good to just say, “Yeah, I'll put it on.” So, the kids get to move through the little stations.

One of the other initiatives that we got to be involved with is Camp Survivor. The Youth and Family Services had a camp but had run out of funds to continue, and they had identified that there was a need for the 9- to 13-year-old age group. So, they approached the Health System, the Wellness Program, and said, “Yes, we've got some money we can put into it. Our Health System Administration wants a nutrition component in it.” So they called us and we got involved in it. Melody took the camp's menu and revised it, and worked with their contact that provides their meals. Even the staff at the Camp said, “You know, we're used to eating hot dogs and basically junk.” So, they were thrilled with the menu.

I won't tell you what some of these are called. The picture on the right of the little girl is “Poop on a Stick” and they absolutely loved it. You would hear them coming out of the

dining hall saying, “What did your poop look like?” And I was like, “Oh, my gosh.” Then I realized they had been with Sarah.



MS. MIRACLE: To make “Poop on a Stick,” you basically take caramels, squish them up, roll them in chocolate, and then roll them in Rice Krispies.

MS. NEWSOM: She got their attention. One of the nutritionists from the hospital did a class with them. I think they made smoothies for one of their snacks and the guys really got into the smoothies.

One of the things that was most pleasing to us was when we did the evaluations after the camp. When they brought them to us, they were separated by the boys’ cabins and the girls’ cabins. We were amazed by how many of the boys would make their own snack. We are talking about a camp where they went swimming, had a climbing wall, had archery, had the Blob, where you go off of this big tower into the water. They had some really cool stuff that they got to do. We were just blown away.

The boys were the most interested in the cooking. It has been really fun hearing back from a lot of the parents saying that their kids are still making those snacks at home, because we used that “Dole 5-A-Day Cookbook” again, and we sent that home with every one of the kids so that they had their own cookbook. We tried new experiences. We exposed them to new fruits and vegetables. The fun never ends.

I am really excited that you are going to have the opportunity to get to see a little bit of what our clients experience in our nutrition centers from the Get Fresh Program.

As Fresh as It Gets

Sarah J. Miracle, MBA, RD, LD, Food Stamp Nutrition Education Manager, The Chickasaw Nation, Ada, OK

I am a Registered Dietitian, and I worked at a hospital in Ada for almost 15 years. I heard about the Nutrition Education Program for people on food stamps that Cooperative Extension

had at Oklahoma State University. I worked for them about 5 years. They did in-home visits. I absolutely loved working with Cooperative Extension and doing the in-home visits. Then Melinda and this bunch got a grant. It was like, “Oh, my gosh,” to get a chance to work with this crew? You saw this crew up here laughing at each other as much as they were doing anything else. It is a lot of hard work.

They were doing thinking classes before I came around. I really can't take any credit. This recipe for fried peaches was developed by Nick, the chef. It is really simple. In southern Oklahoma, we grow lots of peaches. While he was out at the Farmers Market, he had this idea.

This recipe starts by taking a little bit of olive oil—now who would have thought about putting a little bit of olive oil in with peaches? Has anybody ever had that before? No. Well, I hadn't either. I was telling a story about how we try to get people to try new things. What I have here is fresh yellow peaches. Any kind of peach will work. One of the new things that Nick tried is this recipe with watermelon.



Then, he tried it with cantaloupe and that was wonderful. Basically, this is something really simple.

How many of you provide nutrition education and are looking for that teachable moment? You have the classes all the time, but you know, you saw Alicson in the commodity stores. That's the beautiful thing about the Chickasaw Nation, is that Melinda has had the vision to have us all together. It is all working together toward one goal. Alicson is there in the commodity stores and Nick is there in the commodity stores. People can choose food stamps or commodities. Is everyone familiar with the Native American commodities? They can choose one or the other.

We are also there with the WIC people. We have “simmer and serve” days. The smell of cooking is in the commodity store. And you know what we've got? We've got data on the people who come to our shows showing that almost all of them have tried fruits and vegetables they have never tried before. I used mangos in a show the other day. I had a leftover mango, and the custodian at our building had never tried mangos. I let her try it,

discussed how to select mangos, and she said she was going to start buying mangos when they were on sale. Teachable moments are everywhere!

What do you find are the biggest barriers to people trying produce? What does the research show us? Availability is one of the biggest barriers to trying produce. We make it available to them and let them try it. We let them try it in an environment they are used to coming into. And, we show them how simple it is. This recipe is really simple.

We have hands-on cooking classes. We do a variety of things. We do health fairs. We have had a Food Museum at a health fair where we had 500 fifth and sixth graders. At the Food Museum, we taught them label reading.

We look for those moments where we can teach and get people to understand the importance of just making a few changes. We try not to shake our fingers at them too much. When Melanie kind of shook her finger over the bacon grease, she can't help it; she is not used to using bacon because she did not grow up in Oklahoma. To me, you cook stuff in bacon. All things can fit.

But, I don't cook in bacon grease at home anymore, because I choose not to. For most of the people in my family, if you are overweight, you get diabetes. So you know, I have that choice, I have that education. But you know what? Other people that we work with, as you well know, they don't have that education. They are just trying to feed their family. They are just trying to get their stomachs full.

The wonderful thing is that we can try to show them how to make some simple things. A lot of people have peaches and cantaloupe. They can even grow some watermelons, or they have some friends with gardens. Or they can pick it up at the commodity store, because Roxanna orders it.

The next thing I am going to do to the peaches is to add two teaspoons of cinnamon. That really gets the smells going. If you use your spices, as you well know, you can cut down on some of the sugar. But all things can fit, so I am going to put a little bit of brown sugar in here. We also have a little bit of oil in this recipe.

Now, when you are talking about the brown sugar, or about the oil, those are teachable moments. We could have spoken about monounsaturated oils. What are some things that you talk about when you talk about oils or when you are doing nutrition education? It is really hard to get people to keep coming back, unless you make it fun and try to make it entertaining. If you give samples that taste good, they will like it. That is one of the best things.

The next area that you can go into is encouraging whole grains as a dietary guideline. So we have made low-fat granola. At this point in the cooking show, we would talk about whole grains and how you need more of those in your diet now.

Our Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program is finding that clients are cooking these dishes at home. Almost everybody has cooked at least one of these dishes at home. Most of them cook several, because they list out the dishes that they have tried on our post tests.

You could imagine walking into the commodity store. People are coming to select food and we have food cooking to sample and the smells bring the folks over to see what we are preparing. We did these peaches for a Native American Senior Regional Conference in Oklahoma City last week, and I had just picked the peaches out of the commodity store and cooked with them. You could put pears in here.

It is a wonderful opportunity, and that is one of the things that you have to look for--the simple things that you can do, the blessings that are all around us. Hopefully, while you are having a good time and enjoying doing things for others, you get rewarded because people are feeling better. And, what if we prevent some diseases? We do a lot with the "Choose Your Colors." People in all the color ranges, they are choosing more at posttests, and at pretests.

Are any of you finding that, in your cooking classes, they are really choosing more colorful foods? Doesn't it make you feel good? I mean, you go there and say, "Gosh, you mean blue purple." They have never had any blue purple foods, but if we make muffins with lots of blueberries and low-fat blueberry yogurt, they have had something blue. They will know that they can try that, because sometimes things go on sale, and so the new food will fit in their budget.

The simple things seem to really make a difference in people's lives. Even if they buy food at a fast food place, they can put this simple recipe on the table with the fast food. They have the knowledge that they can prepare something at home--they can prepare something simple, no matter what, even if they have leftover bananas, or apples that are about to go, they can prepare a dish and add it to whatever--that helps them feel successful. That is what we are all about, trying to show people how to do things simply and beautifully, and honor folks.

I made the homemade granola because that is another approach you can take with this lesson. This is very simple, very easy, a few ingredients. You know, you can buy the granola. But even at the best buy, it is three-something dollars a box, even though it will go a long way. But, you can make the whole grain granola out of a lot of the things that are in the commodity store.

We also do hands-on with kids, with the Chickasaw Nation youth camps. We have a beautiful kitchen facility in our Wellness Center. We have kids come in for after-school programs, and we show them once a week how to prepare some really healthy foods.