On the Move to Better Health: Kids Cooking School

The Situation
According to North Dakota statistics, only 3 percent of children meet the daily recommendation for fruits and vegetables. Adequate fruit and vegetable consumption is linked with preventing chronic diseases, including heart disease, cancer and diabetes. Research has shown that hands-on culinary nutrition education and gardening activities can improve skills and increase intake of fruits and vegetables.

Extension Response
The On the Move Cooking School curriculum consists of eight hands-on lessons that can be delivered in camp settings, after-school programs or as weekly lessons. Each lesson has specific objectives, key concepts, “energizers” (physical activities), worksheets, associated recipes, a parent newsletter and evaluation tools specific to the lessons. Each child received a cooking kit and cookbook at the conclusion of the program.

Impacts
455 children from 18 counties participated in the multisession programs. Children increased their knowledge of nutrition, food safety and health concepts through hands-on learning.

Feedback
“My son has been very interested in helping/doing things himself in the kitchen, getting his own snack, getting a knife and asking to cut his banana instead of just eating it so he can practice with the knife, and just being more aware/helpful in the kitchen overall (clearing his plates, etc.).”

Public Value Statement
Improving health behaviors can increase quality of life and save millions of dollars in collective health-care costs for North Dakotans throughout their lifetime.

Resources
www.ag.ndsu.edu/food

Primary Contact
Julie Garden-Robinson, Food and Nutrition Specialist
701-231-7187
julie.garden-robinson@ndsu.edu

Funded in part by the National 4-H Council/Walmart Foundation