

Eating Well, Local, and Together Always in Season

As holiday time approaches, local organizers who spearheaded the Eat Well, Eat Local, Eat Together campaign remind everyone to use these simple concepts as they prepare for the holidays. “Eating well, locally and together is important all year long. I hope people will use these three simple concepts as they celebrate the upcoming holiday season”, according to Dr. Christine Olson , a professor in the Division of Nutritional Sciences at Cornell University.

In mid-September the Healthy Start Partnership launched the Eat Well, Eat Local and Eat Together Campaign (nicknamed Eat³ Campaign). The campaign lasted until the end of October in six counties in upstate New York. The campaign aimed to help families choose, prepare and enjoy healthy meals together using locally-grown produce. The campaign successfully promoted four different meals of the week. Each of the meals was healthful and included a fruit or vegetable that was available from local farms.

Local food retailers, newspapers, and radio stations promoted the Eat³ campaign via sharing information on the meals and goals of the campaign. Local events including harvest fairs, wellness expos and conferences distributed campaign materials. Recipes for a different “meal of the week” were featured in 17 grocery stores across the region. **(Note to county coordinators: please add a sentence here about the stores that participated in your paper’s coverage**

area) Over 4,000 recipe cards and colorful refrigerator magnets were distributed. Local agencies, including Cornell Cooperative Extension, Head Start, day care providers, WIC and many more conducted nutrition education related to the Eat³ campaign.

An “Eat Well, Eat Local, Eat Together” website (www.eat3.org) provides recipes, cooking and shopping tips, and interactive games about eating together and locally. Approximately 1700 individuals used the website since it was launched in mid-September. Almost one hundred people registered at www.eat3.org and thirteen lucky individuals were selected to receive prizes. Three people will receive \$50 gift certificates for a local grocery store, fitness center or local farm of their choice. Ten people will receive a seasonal foods calendar for 2009.

The Eat³ campaign was an initiative of the Healthy Start Partnership, a multi-county coalition working to promote healthy weights in childbearing women and their infants in Chenango, Delaware, Herkimer, Madison, Otsego, and Schoharie counties. “The Healthy Start Partnership envisions communities that promote and support healthy lifestyles for women, their children and all young families,” according to Dr. Olson, who leads the Healthy Start Partnership that is funded by a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture.