

EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit

November 2023



Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Tazewell SNAP-Ed program creates special PJs & Pancakes event aimed to reach both youth and adults

By combining multiple programs into one event, University of Illinois Extension SNAP-Education staff have created a family-friendly event that quickly became a favorite activity for that youth and adults enjoyed together. PJs and Pancakes is just as it sounds...participants come dressed in their pajamas, enjoy a healthy pumpkin-pancake breakfast, and participate in lessons that focus on healthy living.

“The uniqueness of wearing pajamas to a class creates a sense of excitement, not only with the children, but also the adults,” explained Julie Dantone, SNAP-Ed instructor serving in Fulton, Mason, Peoria, and Tazewell counties. “As soon as people walk in the door, they are checking out all of the PJs and laughing with people. It gets everyone in good spirits.”

Julie and her SNAP-Ed colleagues coordinate to provide three different SNAP-Ed programs at the PJs and Pancakes event. Everyone has an encounter with the Eat.Move.Save (E.M.S.) booth that is set up near the registration table. The adults participate in a lesson from a curriculum called Healthy Cents. The kids enjoy a lesson and activities from the Catch curriculum. Throughout 2023, Extension has offered three PJs and Pancakes events that have impacted 43 youth and 31 adults.

Pekin First Church of God has hosted two of these events in their all-purpose room and provided food and supplies from their food pantry.

“The church is amazing to work with,” Julie continued. “They love the event too and have several volunteers who look forward to helping make and serve breakfast and have fun with all of the participants. I have been told that two volunteers have already purchased new, special pajamas in anticipation of the next event.”

The large open space at the church allows staff to incorporate lots of exercise and games that the kids love to do. A craft table is also a favorite spot for kids to create projects that reinforce lessons such as eating fruits and vegetables that are colors of the whole rainbow.

In addition to SNAP-Ed topics, participants also benefit from special guests who are invited to share about their own programs. Recently, Ameren Illinois Energy Efficacy Program was on hand to educate participants on their free program and offer sign ups.

“This is a nice social hour for everyone,” Julie said. “The families usually stay for a while. After the kids eat, some go back to the activities they were just doing. It is a great morning of fun and learning for all ages.”

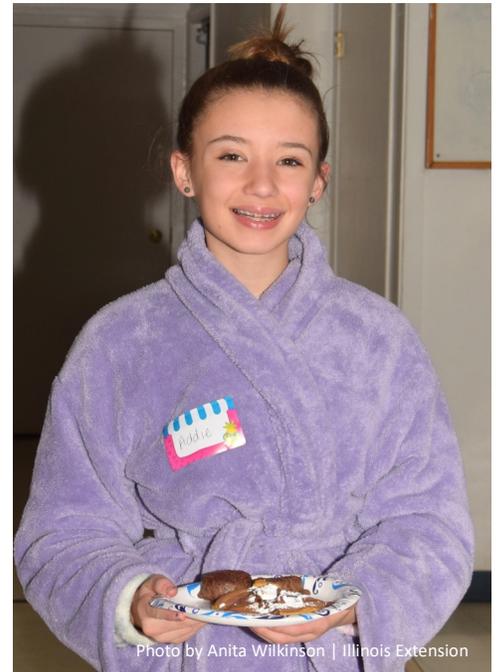


Photo by Anita Wilkinson | Illinois Extension

PJs and Pancakes is a special event, created by local U of I Extension SNAP-Ed staff designed to reach youth and adults. Families enjoy coming together, eat a fun breakfast together, and participate in their own age-appropriate lessons and activities related to healthy living.

Julie Dantone
SNAP-Ed Instructor
jfd@illinois.edu