

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-Ed)

Serving Jo Daviess, Stephenson, & Winnebago Counties



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SNAP-Ed Educator

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Carol Erickson is an Extension Educator with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed). As the SNAP-Ed Educator, she works with local organizations to promote healthier settings and food choices. This work complements nutrition education provided by SNAP-Ed Community Workers. By focusing on improving food access and increasing the likelihood of healthy choices, the SNAP-Ed program is making a difference in the lives of families in our community.

Erickson believes that healthy food should be accessible, affordable, and plentiful to all people. Through community engagement and collaboration, Erickson is working on making environmental and systems changes that make choosing healthy food the “easy” option. She works with community agencies, schools, youth programs, food pantries, grocery stores, farmer’s markets and faith-based institutions to assess, develop, and implement changes that lead toward making healthy food choices.

SNAP Comes to Rockford Midtown Market

SNAP is now accepted at the Rockford Midtown Market, through the joint efforts of Erickson and Reverend Mike Thomas, chairperson of the organizing committee. While applying for the SNAP benefits, Erickson and Reverend Thomas also applied to Link Up Illinois for the produce incentive program. Shoppers were thrilled when they found out they could use their SNAP/EBT cards as well as get double bucks to buy fresh produce. This was a win for the shopper and a win for market vendors!



Youth Garden Provides Food Pantry with Produce

A school garden was a brainstorm idea of the Social Emotional Learning team at West Middle School in Rockford, IL. The teachers were looking for a project that would help their students feel connected to each other and their community—especially after many of their students had been learning remotely.

Erickson met with co-leaders to assess the school needs and ability to start a garden. She then led them to an unused community garden site a few blocks away in the Mercy Hospital parking lot. The community was thrilled that the garden could be re-purposed and used by a school in the neighborhood. The garden was prepared and planted after school was out for the summer. Students and their families along with the local YMCA’s youth leadership camp, helped tend to the garden. Vegetables harvested were donated to local church pop-up pantries. They donated over 300 pounds of food grown from the garden. The teachers are already creating future lesson plans to incorporate the garden more.

Check out the website for helpful information, go.illinois.edu/jsw, click on Illinois Nutrition Education Programs

- Food Assistance Information
- Find a new favorite recipe
- Smart shopping tips to save you money
- Fun activities to keep the whole family moving



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