

# COOKING MATTERS AT THE STORE

## Program Impact Report



In 2015, the Racine/Kenosha Nutrition Education Program (RKNEP) started to use the "Cooking Matters at the Store" curriculum through Share Our Strength with school-age parents enrolled in Nutrition Education programming.

Developed by Share Our Strength, a national organization to end child hunger in America, the goal of "Cooking Matters" is for participants to learn how they can make healthy eating choices on a limited budget by:

- Learning how to use tools such as MyPlate to make healthy choices
- Understanding how unit prices and other price comparisons can help determine food affordability

RKNEP Educator Alana Perez-Valliere worked with Walmart in Racine and Pick n' Save in Kenosha to coordinate the "Cooking Matters" program for a total of nine teen parents.

The great majority of these parents have very little experience with food shopping, so the initial tours of the grocery store gave them many new insights. Exploring each store's produce, dairy, frozen food and canned food sections led to discussions about whole grains, sodium content, nutrition labels, the differences between name brands and store brands, and other nutrition issues.

Both Walmart and Pick n' Save also generously sponsored a "Cooking Matters Challenge," providing free gift cards for participants to put into practice what they had learned.

Within their card limit, the Racine cohort was challenged to identify and buy an item from each of the five food groups. The Kenosha cohort was challenged to purchase as many WIC-approved fruits and vegetables as they could. Eight of the nine participants were able to complete the challenge successfully.



**"I didn't realize there was a difference between brands and prices before... Now I know how to save money by looking at the unit prices."**

**"I don't usually eat many vegetables and I used to eat a lot of ramen noodles before but now I can't, now I can buy more vegetables and eat better for my baby."**



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