

EFNEP Champion Inspired to Model a Healthy Lifestyle

Marisa Neelon, MS, RD; Santos Lopez, MS

Background

Behavior change is facilitated by individual nutrition education along with environmental supports.

Organizations can create an environment that promotes and sustains healthy lifestyle choices for their clients and staff with the dedication of a champion.

EFNEP Delivers

EFNEP educators teach series-based lessons to youth and adults to promote healthy food choices, food budgeting, food safety, and physical activity. Through their work in low-resource communities, EFNEP educators build and maintain relationships with their community partners to promote environmental change in the organization.

Introducing Our Champion



Marta is one of our community champions that embodies a healthy lifestyle and spreads the message to her family, colleagues and clientele. She is the program coordinator at Verde Elementary School - ESL in Richmond. Marta began partnering with an EFNEP educator in 2013 and offers the Eating Smart Being Active series to her parents annually.



Impact

Through the EFNEP partnership, Marta adopted the healthy behaviors we hope to see in our parents. She shared that because of the EFNEP program, "I began to integrate fruits and vegetables into the foods I serve; the further away the parking is, the better; and I go to the parks to walk with my girls; me and my family are leading a healthier lifestyle." Marta participates in planning the classes by selecting which recipes to prepare in class to the type of music to play during exercise sessions.

To continue supporting healthy behaviors, she added 15 minutes of exercise during breaks and leads an exercise class for parents on her own time; incorporates healthier cooking classes; and connects parents with local community gardens for access to free or low-cost organic fruits and vegetables.

Marta embodies the change our educators strive to see in an individual, but also the healthy behaviors they hope program coordinators will model in their family and organization. Through the dedication of the educators, the EFNEP program promotes healthy people and communities to improve health for all and improve community health and wellness.