

Success Story

Kids Club at Rockland Farmers' Market

SUMMARY

In 2015, the **Rockland Farmers' Market** was looking for ways to attract new families and add fun activities to help kids become familiar with local produce, healthy eating habits, and shopping at a farmers' market. **Maine SNAP-Ed** teamed up with the market manager and local businesses to offer **Kids Club**, an interactive summer nutrition education program for youth. In 2016, **72 children** participated in Kids Club, with the goal of increasing access to fruits and vegetables and encouraging interaction with local farmers—creating lifelong farmers' market customers in Knox County.



CHALLENGE

Obesity is a growing epidemic across the United States and is associated with increased risk for **chronic diseases** like diabetes. In Maine, 2 out of 3 Maine adults and 41% of Maine children are overweight or obese.

Eating more fruits and vegetables adds nutrients to diets, reduces the risk for chronic disease, and helps manage body weight when consumed as part of an overall healthy diet.

Maine SNAP-Ed works with local community coalitions to support sustainable changes that help **reduce the burden of obesity** across Maine.

MAINE



SNAP-Ed

Healthy Eating on a Budget

Maine SNAP-Ed

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education

Maine SNAP-Ed is a **USDA-funded program** that teaches low-income Mainers the knowledge and skills needed to make healthier lifestyle choices. In 2015, the program began implementing Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) change strategies in a variety of local community settings. By making sustainable changes to the environment, Nutrition Educators are fostering healthy behaviors that aim to **reduce the burden of obesity across Maine**.

In 2015, Maine SNAP-Ed PSE efforts reached 2,498 individuals eligible for SNAP and a total of 7,118 Mainers were reached.

In 2017, there are 23 Maine SNAP-Ed initiatives designed to increase access to fruits and vegetables from local farms and at farmers' markets.

SOLUTION

Kids Club was born out of a need to make the market a welcoming place for all shoppers in the Rockland area. The Rockland Farmers' Market was working hard to reach EBT/SNAP families. The market offered Harvest Bucks—a fruit and vegetable incentive program—and wanted to entice new shoppers to the market who could benefit from this program. The Nutrition Educator created a "Passport to Health." Children between the ages of 5 and 16 participate in a nutrition themed physical activity, sample a new recipe, and ask farmers an agricultural question of the day. Upon completing these activities, children receive a \$2 token to purchase a healthy snack from a market vendor.



SUSTAINING SUCCESS

In 2017, the Rockland Farmers' Market is considering updating its bylaws to include language and a budget line item for Kids Club to ensure ongoing youth programming. Local businesses have been fiscally supportive and the Nutrition Educator will be working with the market manager to solidify these relationships and provide the written resources for others to implement this program.

The hope is that the market will be able to run Kids Club for years to come to make the Rockland Farmers' Market a place that welcomes all community members to shop for fruits and vegetables, utilizing EBT/SNAP benefits and incentive programs like Maine Harvest Bucks. Maine SNAP-Ed will work with partners to replicate the model statewide.



PARTNERS IN SUCCESS

- Knox County Community Health Coalition
- Rockland Farmers' Market
- PenBay Healthcare
- 5210 Let's Go!
- Local Businesses

"These kids are the next generation of shoppers, and they love talking to the farmers."

—Nancy Wood,
Maine SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator

For more Success Stories from the Maine SNAP-Ed program, or to get in touch with your local Nutrition Educator, please visit www.mainesnap-ed.org.

Data sources are available upon request by emailing mainesnap-ed@une.edu.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. Maine SNAP-Ed is funded by the USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, which is administered by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and implemented statewide by the University of New England (UNE) through contracts with local community coalitions. Maine SNAP-Ed educates low-income families on low cost, healthy eating and active lifestyles.