



# Food & Nutrition *Insight*



Summer 2009

A quarterly newsletter for  
Washington State  
Food and Nutrition Council

## Eating Healthy on a Budget

By Rachel Mau, Bastyr Student

If it seems like the healthiest items in your grocery cart are also the most expensive you're not alone. A 2007 study published by UW Seattle researchers Pablo Monsivais, PhD, MPH, and Adam Drewnowski, PhD, followed grocery prices in the Seattle area and found that prices of low-calorie nutrient-dense foods (such as fruits and vegetables) continue to rise while high-calorie sweets and fats have remained steady. These findings also coincide with the USDA's research on the national level.

Given today's economy many people are looking for ways to stretch their grocery dollars while still consuming healthy foods. Some are eating out less, clipping coupons, shopping the perimeter of the grocery store, and buying bulk food items but still wonder how to get the most nutrients for their money, or even how to wrangle unfamiliar items like dried beans into something palatable. But can a limited budget provide food that is both

healthy and tastes good? For one perspective, a group of six local health professionals associated with the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, embarked on the Food Stamp Challenge earlier in the year to better understand the difficulties of eating healthy on a limited budget. Since the nation-

wide average Food Stamp Program allotment in 2005 breaks down to \$1 per meal, participants in this challenge were only allowed \$21 for their weekly food and beverage expenses. Challengers could not accept handouts but could forage or dumpster dive, using their own spices and condiments but no other foods currently in their homes. They were only allowed to drive to grocery stores twice: any subsequent trips were done with public transportation or on foot to better understand the difficulties low income individuals face just obtaining their food for the week.

For participant Acacia Larson, this experiment led to a closer scrutiny of which nutritious items were cheapest. Despite humble appearances, ingredients like canned tuna, lentils, frozen spinach, and peas were whipped into a lentil minestrone with spinach; stir fried rice with tuna, peas, and carrots; broccoli noodle casserole; and breakfast potatoes with fried eggs.

Similarly, Anne Lund planned her meals well in advance and was shocked at the time and energy it took to eat well (with little freedom to deviate from her meal plan), even though she once worked as a cook and is currently a nutrition professional.



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## Letter from our president



Betty Lucas, President



Happy summer to our WSFNC membership!

For those of you who are home gardeners, this is the time of year when we can start enjoying local produce. If your gardening is limited to basil and lettuce in pots, most of us can take advantage of farmers markets in our communities. According to the Washington State Farmers Market Association, there are over 125 farmers markets in the state - a huge increase from 10 years ago.

In Washington State, WIC participants and low-income seniors can enhance their diets by participating in the Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) from June through October. Our WIC FMNP was one of 10 national pilot projects developed in 1989 in 6 farmers markets. In 2008, approximately 56,000 WIC participants took advantage of the FMNP at 91 farmers markets. For low-income seniors, over 18,000 were served by the Senior FMNP last summer. Although the FMNP supports only part of

the cost of fresh fruits and vegetables needed for a healthy diet, it increases access to, and consumption of, fresh produce. To find a nearby farmers market go to the Washington State Farmers Market Association. [www.wafarmersmarkets.com](http://www.wafarmersmarkets.com) For those who prefer to pick their own produce, there are many U-pick farms where you can pick your own vegetables and fruits, or buy from roadside stands. Read about the South 47 Farm in this newsletter.

The other evening while I was working in my P-Patch, I met a young family with 2 preschool children who are new gardeners this year. I offered the kids each a sugar snap pea, telling them to eat the whole thing, pod and all. I noticed the boy was not as excited as his sister, but he ate the pea. His mother got a surprised look on her face, and she whispered to me "he never eats any green vegetables". Although there are many factors which influence food intake in young children, participating in gardening projects often result in a willingness to try new foods.

The economy and high unemployment rates have continued to stretch food programs and food banks, see page 1 for our "Eating Healthy on a Budget" article.

During his 2008 presidential campaign, Obama's priority for tackling domestic hunger included ending childhood hunger in the U.S. by 2015. The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) has set out 7 strategies to reach this goal:

**Restore** economic growth and create jobs with better wages for lower-income workers.

**Raise** the incomes of the lowest-income families.

**Strengthen** the SNAP/Food Stamp Program.

**Strengthen** Child Nutrition Programs.

**Engage** the entire federal government in ending childhood hunger.

**Work** with states, localities and nonprofits to expand and improve participation in federal nutrition programs.

**Make sure** all families have convenient access to reasonably priced, healthy food. For the entire report, see

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The Washington State Food and Nutrition Council is an organization which advocates for food, agriculture, and nutrition programs, services, and education. The Council enhances its members' and the general public's ability to discern nutrition issues and related public policy issues which impact the lives of Washington state residents.

## Legislative report



Carrie Pfab, Legislative Co-Chair (MCH)

It seems as though we have been talking about the fact that WIC will be getting new food packages for so long, it's hard to believe those new food packages are finally just around the corner! Starting this October-- just 3 short months away-- WIC families will see a huge change in the amount and types of foods they will be purchasing with their WIC checks.

For the first time, families will have the opportunity to purchase

whole grains and fresh fruits and vegetables in addition to the milk, cheese, eggs, cereal, juice, peanut butter, and beans they have been used to buying. The whole grain products they will be able to choose from include whole wheat bread, oatmeal, bulgur, brown rice, and whole corn tortillas. There will also be cash value vouchers, \$6/month for children, \$8/month for pregnant, post-partum, and partially breastfeeding women, and \$10/month for exclusively breastfeeding women to purchase any fresh fruits or vegetables (except white potatoes) that they choose. There will also be an opportunity to replace some of the dairy foods with soymilk and

tofu, canned salmon will be a choice for breastfeeding moms in addition to canned tuna, and infants will receive pureed baby foods for the first time in WIC history.

Washington WIC has always offered some organic choices for clients to choose from. Come October, clients may choose organic fruits and vegetables, oatmeal, brown rice, bulgur, and dried beans/peas.

The following table provides an overview of what WIC families can expect to purchase based on the client category:

## WIC Food Package

	Exclusively Breastfeeding Women	Pregnant & Partially Breastfeeding Women	Post-Partum Women	Children ages 1-5
Milk	X	X	X	X
Cheese	X			
Eggs	X	X	X	X
Juice	X	X	X	X
Peanut Butter and/or Dried Beans	both	both	choose one	Choose one
Cereal	X	X	X	X
Whole Grain products	X	X	X	X
Fresh Fruits & Vegetables	\$10/month	\$8/month	\$8/month	\$6/month
Canned salmon or tuna	X			



**Save the Date**  
**WA State Food and Nutrition Council**  
**Annual Conference**



**"The Right to Eat: Exploring Food Policy, Access and Equity"**

**Friday, September 25, 2009**  
**8:00 – 4:00**

**Blackriver Conference Center in Renton, WA**

What is food justice?  
How does nutrition play a role in urban planning?  
How do local and federal policies affect our food system?

Join us on Friday, September 25<sup>th</sup> to explore the issue of "food justice" and the ways that food policy—from the national to the local level—affects each of us.

Highlights include:

**Mark Winne** – National food policy expert and author of *Closing the Food Gap — Re-setting the Table in the Land of Plenty*

**Branden Born** – University of WA researcher exploring the role food access plays in creating healthy communities

***Food Justice: A Growing Movement***—Documentary film about California's community-led efforts to reinvent the food system

**Cathy Franklin** – Washington State's WIC Nutrition Coordinator rolling out the new WIC food package

We'll also be hearing from a panel of agricultural experts and local youth who have helped shape and move food policy forward in their communities.

*Stay tuned for details and registration information, coming soon!*

\*We are looking for volunteers the day of the conference. Volunteers will receive a discounted registration rate. If interested please contact Acacia Larson at [aca-cia@homegrownnutrition.com](mailto:aca-cia@homegrownnutrition.com) or Kirsten Leng at [kirsten.leng@yahoo.com](mailto:kirsten.leng@yahoo.com)

***The WSFNC thanks Access to Healthy Foods Coalition for Co-Sponsoring this event.***



**(President's Message** *continued from page 2)*

[frac.org/news/2015.htm](http://frac.org/news/2015.htm)

Recently, WSFNC members have participated in the annual Walk for Rice in June and the Food Policy Council Workshop in Tacoma, and will have the WSFNC display at the Community Alliance for Global Justice fair and dinner on July 18.

Be sure to save Friday, September 25, for our annual conference in Renton. Acacia Larson and Kirsten Leng, co-presidents-elect, and their planning committee are putting together a dynamic program, "The Right to Eat: Exploring Food Policy, Access and Equity". See the announcement in this newsletter for more details.

By the time you get this newsletter, you should have received the electronic ballot for the 2009-2010 WSFNC board. Please take the few minutes to vote. Besides the elected officers, the WSFNC board includes appointed positions, i.e. membership directory, membership recruitment, hunger, and fundraising.

If you are interested in participating on any of these committees, please contact Acacia Larson [acacia@homegrownnutrition.com](mailto:acacia@homegrownnutrition.com) or Kirsten Leng [kirsten.leng@yahoo.com](mailto:kirsten.leng@yahoo.com)

Have a great summer, including relaxation and good, local food. And we look forward to seeing you at the September 25<sup>th</sup> annual conference.

### **(Eating Healthy on a Budget**

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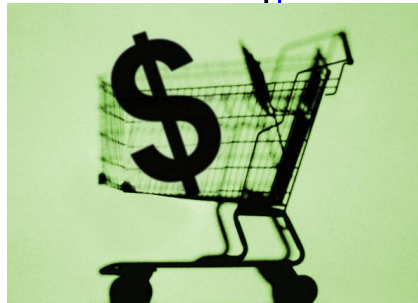
Since she and her husband were doing the challenge together they pooled their allotted money and made enough food for leftovers at each meal for efficiency.

In spite of the strict budget, Anne was surprised to find she had plenty of food. Breakfast was made simple with oatmeal, dumpster diving outside the Essential Bread Company provided bread, and the grocery store outlet she perused even offered some organic options like canned tomatoes. No food was wasted, including the curry she prepared using the entire cauliflower, leaves and all (typically considered refuse but high in calcium).

More than being a kitchen MacGyver this experiment taught Anne several things.

"Americans are really lucky about how little of their budget is spent on food," she said.

"Ultimately, people have to decide what is most important to them," she continued. Is it time or convenience (such as the choice between bulk and individual yogurt containers)? Do local and organic matter, or health costs down the road? Regardless of a person's actual budget, planning ahead can also cut costs. For instance, if you typically have a 3pm snack, she notes, pack a snack bar to save money:



How do you eat well on a budget? These resources and tips, with a little creativity, can eliminate the riddle and help you push your grocery cart in the right direction.

\* Dollar a Day Blog: [onedollarproject.wordpress.com/](http://onedollarproject.wordpress.com/)

\*99 Cent Chef: [the99centchef.blogspot.com/](http://the99centchef.blogspot.com/)

\*Another resource is the cookbook : [More-With-Less Cookbook : Suggestions By Mennonites on How to Eat Better and Consume Less of the World's Limited Food Resources](#) by Doris Janzen Longacre and Mary Emma Showalter.

"be aware of habits and needs and meet them in a cheaper way." Making large batches of food and freezing half also helps, as does mashing virtually any leftovers (like beans and rice) into patties for frying, and using time-saving tools like pressure cookers.

Nutritionists, public health officials, researchers, bloggers, and chefs are all interested in how to satisfy both the budget and the palate in nutritious ways. Besides the Food Stamp Challenge other experiments are surfacing on the internet in the form of the Dollar a Day Blog and the 99 Cent Chef. Incidentally, Adam Drewnowski is also helping develop a Nutrient Rich Food Index as a tool to pinpoint the intersection of nutrition and cost as a practical guide for Americans.

## Summer calendar

### Events of Local Interest

#### July 18, 2009

Community Alliance for Global Justice Annual Fair and Dinner

**3:00-11:00 PM**

St. Demetrios Church, 2100 Boyer Avenue E, in Montlake neighborhood

Fair, 3- 6pm (Free), Dinner 6 - 9pm, Dancing 9 -11pm

If you're planning to attend the dinner contact Claire Leamy [clairel@solid-ground.org](mailto:clairel@solid-ground.org)

#### July 30, 2009

Share our Strength Taste of the Nation Seattle *Top Chefs to Help Raise Funds to End Childhood Hunger in Seattle*

**6:00 to 9:00 pm\***

\*VIP Reception begins at 5:00 pm

Visit [www.tasteofthenation.org/seattle](http://www.tasteofthenation.org/seattle) for more information.

#### September 25, 2009

WSFNC Annual Conference

8:30-4:00 PM

Blackriver Conference Center

Renton WA

[www.wsfnc.org](http://www.wsfnc.org)

#### September–October

Harvest Celebration

This September and October, make a special effort to visit local farmers near you. Find out what is truly good about local food and farms, and the benefits of having these resources in our communities. There is no better place to learn about local agriculture than at the farm. To find out when and where your local harvest celebration is visit:

[www.cascadeharvest.org/community/harvest-celebrations](http://www.cascadeharvest.org/community/harvest-celebrations)

### WSFNC Supports Asian Counseling and Referral Services (ACRS)!

On Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup> Team WSFNC participated in the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual *Walk for Rice* – a walk-a-thon to raise money for the ACRS Food Bank. Thank you to WSFNC members who participated in the walk and/or made a donation in support of this important organization: Alanna Boyton, Karen Johnson, Gwyn Jones, Kirsten Leng, Betty Lucas and Beth Ogata!

Team WSFNC raised \$250 helping ACRS to raise over \$130,000!



WSFNC Walk for Rice Team



## News From the Farm

By Kristen Rezabek

The [South 47 farm](http://www.south47farm.com) is a rare bit of agricultural land nestled in the heart of a sprawling urban area. This farm is a lone holdout in an area that ranks in the top 10% of the most fertile farmland in America. The farm began in 1999 when some longtime members of the Root Connection pooled their resources and bought several parcels of land to prevent it from being developed. They formed a business, Farm LLC, and put the farm into the Farmland Preservation program.

Located on NE 124th St and Woodinville-Redmond Road, the farm is a 47 acre tract that provides a seasonal farm stand, U-pick fruits and vegetables, a corn maze/pumpkin patch in the fall and a host of educational programs and activities. The farm is open from May 13 through Halloween.

Our family was introduced to the South 47 Farm through the Farm Tot program. This program started in 2005 and has quickly become a popular learning activity for youngsters under the age of 5. Christine Dubois, the Communications Director for the South 47 Farm, described the purpose behind these programs are, "to help kids understand where food comes from, see the different growing stages of plants, and learn why it's important to preserve and protect farmland."

The South 47 Farm offers Farm Tot classes 3 days a week (**Wed, Thurs, and Fri, 10:30-11:30 a.m., and Fri, 3:30-4:30 p.m., through Oct. 30**). Each class lasts an hour and includes a tractor-wagon ride, farm learning activity, and a U-pick of one of their crops. The South 47 also offers **Farm Kids**, designed for elementary aged children who want to experience the farm. This class meets on **THURSDAYS ONLY from 10:30-11:30 a.m.**

All classes cost \$7 per child.



Photo by [www.south47farm.com](http://www.south47farm.com)

There are over 200 varieties of fruits, vegetables, and flowers on the farm and you have the opportunity to U-pick just about anything, from digging your own potatoes to picking chamomile for tea. While they are not certified organic, they do, according to Dubois, "practice and believe in organic farming and protecting the health of their customers and the health of the land." They have a number of heirloom varieties of produce from Rattlesnake pole beans to Zebra tomatoes.

New this year is a CSA program that allows customers to purchase a share of the farm and receive farm bucks to spend on any produce items or classes. The South 47 also rents out some of its land to local restaurants such as the Herbfarm and Trellis. They also rent out land to the Root Connection, which provides fresh, organically grown produce to more than 500 families

All produce they sell at the farm stand and at the Lake Forest Park Farmer's Market is from their own farm. Dubois invites people to "come down to the farm" and experience some of their local events including the Lavender Celebration and Basil Bash. To learn more sign up for their free [newsletter](#).

## 2008-2009 WSNFNC Board

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Carrie Pfab

### Legislative Co-Chair (Agriculture)

Open

### Fund-Raising (Chinook Books)

Shawn Peterson

### Hunger Committee Chair

Open

## Energize: A Resource for Nutrition Educators

If you haven't signed up to receive **Energize**, a Newsletter for Nutrition Educators put out by the Nutrition Education Network of Washington (NEN), you are missing out on a great resource. Formerly *Take 5*, this newsletter has a new look to help to promote nutrition and physical activity through the NEN program *Energize Your Life! Eat Healthy – Be Active*. The newsletter is designed to enhance communication and coordination among those who educate Washington families about nutrition and food. *Energize* shares brief information about programs and materials that support healthful and enjoyable eating.. Past issues are available at <http://nutrition.wsu.edu/take5/index.html>



## Seasonal Recipe: Grilled Summer Squash

\*Ingredients grown or produced locally, Recipe provided by the South 47 Farm

This recipe will have even folks who think they don't like squash coming back for more.

### Ingredients:

1 lb. zucchini\*  
 1 lb. yellow summer squash\*  
 2 onions\*  
 1/2 C olive oil  
 1 T fresh oregano, minced\*  
 Salt and pepper to taste

### Instructions:

Cut ends off zucchini and yellow squash. Cut in half lengthwise. Cut onions into thin slices. Brush vegetables with olive oil and sprinkle with oregano, salt, and pepper. Let sit at room temperature to absorb flavor for 30 to 60 minutes. Preheat barbecue grill to medium. Grill vegetables, turning once, until tender-crisp and browned, about 8 to 10 minutes. Serve hot.