



COMMUNITY GRANT OUTCOME REPORT

Family Table Project

Gathering Barron County around the Family Table

Pilot test demonstrates success of Family Table model in engaging low-income families in participatory nutrition education and shared cooking opportunities



Groups in Barron County receive lessons in preparing healthy family-friendly meals as part of the Family Table Project.

► **Description:** This pilot project tested a community-based model for engaging low-income families in Barron County in shared cooking and nutrition education sessions. The team designed a practical and replicable model for establishing a family meal preparation program offering tangible nutritional, economic and social benefits to families. In addition, it implemented a pilot demonstration phase, providing hands-on learning for participating families. Project activities were designed in cooperation with participants, and focused on providing opportunities for learning about and practicing bulk preparation of nutritious, family-friendly recipes.

► **Results:** The Family Table Project successfully demonstrated a model for engaging families in participatory nutrition education and shared cooking opportunities. The combination of shared learning, hands-on activities, mutual assistance, socialization, and direct economic benefit provides an effective mix of incentives to support continued engagement by participants. The

project model builds a strong community partnership based on the existing resources and established programs of local organizations. Local partners include: UW-Extension, Head Start, County Nutrition Education Programs, food pantries, and schools. The Family Table model can be easily adapted to meet local needs.

► **The Partnership:** The academic partner provided leadership and hands-on involvement with project development and implementation. She helped guide the project's formative research activities and played an active role in curriculum planning and evaluation.

► **Next Steps:** In 2010, the effort expanded to Polk and Dunn Counties, securing \$45,000 in additional local support beyond the initial grant. A special summer session has been incorporated into the program model to connect participant families with direct purchases from local farms and farmers markets.

GRANT FACTS

Grantee: West Central Wisconsin Community Action Agency, Inc. (West CAP)

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Grant Award: \$59,413 over two years