

2018 Leck & Mally Grant Final Report:

Cooking for Older Adults

Submitted by Jim Krueger and Ruth Hellenbrand

Three cooking classes, each funded in part by a \$3,674 Leck grant and a \$500 Mally grant, were held in the last quarter of 2018. Three Senior Focal Points (Colonial Club Senior Activity Center, DeForest Area Community & Senior Center, and North/Eastside Senior Coalition) recruited older adults for the classes.

A *Cooking for One or Two* class was held for twenty-four older adults in October 2018 at the UW Hospital-American Center's Learning Kitchen. Participants were charged \$10 to attend all four sessions of the class and the remaining cost was covered by the grants. All participants felt the class was priced well and not prohibitive for attendance. Free transportation was available for those who needed it. Twenty-four participants learned how to down-size nutritious recipes that included dishes like lasagna and salmon with squash. At the end of the class each participant completed an evaluation. When asked why they took the class, most participants responded they were used to cooking for large families and were wasting food trying to cook and store food for two. One person responded they were tired of eating frozen portions and wanted to learn to make small portions. One gentleman was newly widowed and didn't know how to cook good, healthy food. All of the 24 participants indicated the UW Health chef and the location were perfect and gave the class an excellent rating. All indicated they learned new techniques and recipes and felt they could now cook healthier, smaller portions at home.

In November and December two *Healthy Soul Food Cooking* classes were offered at the UW Health Learning Kitchen. 14 African American older adults participated in these three session classes. Scholarships were offered as well as free transportation to and from the class. Recipes included dishes like collard greens for two, a smoked mac and cheese, and a healthier way to make "fried" chicken. Participants reported that without the scholarship and transportation, they would not have been able to take the class. Each participant received a bag containing the three most used spices in Soul Food—smoked paprika, freeze dried garlic, and Cajun seasoning. At the end of the class each participant completed an evaluation. All participants gave the class an excellent rating and felt the instructor was great. They were surprised they could make healthier options. All said they would love another class related to healthy cooking or cooking for one or two and a number of the participants requested a class devoted to cooking for a diabetic diet. The class also received some publicity. The UW Health Chef and Jim Krueger from the North/Eastside Senior Coalition appeared on a NBC Channel 15 newscast to talk about the purpose of the program and the healthy recipes.

Three nutrition site catering companies were invited to attend the *Healthy Soul Food Cooking* class. The intent was for their cooks to learn the recipes and so that they could be incorporated in the meal rotation at the congregate nutrition meal sites. Unfortunately only one caterer (from Consolidated Food Services) attended due to the hour of the class. As a result of this class, several healthy soul food items (oven fried chicken, collard greens, sweet potato pie, and macaroni and cheese) are offered in the February 2019 meal rotation for CFS meal sites.