



Faithful Families Eating Smart and Moving More 2016 North Carolina Annual Report



About Faithful Families

Faith-based organizations offer particular resources to help implement and sustain community-level changes that can have long-term impact, particularly in communities affected by health disparities or lacking access to crucial public health resources. Faithful Families Eating Smart and Moving More (Faithful Families) is a practice-tested health promotion intervention that promotes healthy eating and physical activity in communities of faith through a nine-lesson curriculum. Additionally, Faithful Families facilitators work with each faith community to help them adopt environmental supports for healthy eating and physical activity.

Faithful Families is co-led by health educators from either NC Cooperative Extension (EFNEP Program Associates or Family and Consumer Science Agents) and/or health department staff and trained lay leaders (non-clergy members) in the congregation. Lay leaders from the faith community bring the spiritual elements, through discussion questions and activity prompts, into each lesson. Much of the work of Faithful Families has focused on African American churches. However the program materials have been translated into Spanish and have been piloted with successful intervention within a large mosque that represents numerous ethnic and racial minorities. The program is open to any faith tradition, but facilitators are encouraged to focus on communities that experience the greatest disparities in health, including minority and low-income communities.

The program was developed in 2007, and is a partnership between the North Carolina Division of Public Health and NC State University Extension. In addition to this state level partnership, the program offers a unique opportunity for partnership at the local level between health departments and local extension offices. In addition to being implemented in North Carolina, Faithful Families has been adopted as a recommended program in the SNAP-Ed Connection and has been implemented by the New Jersey and South Carolina Departments of Health, Extension at the Universities of Arkansas, Tennessee, and Florida, and health promotion programs at the University of Illinois at Chicago. In 2017, the program will expand to Auburn University and Michigan State University's Extension Programs.

Faithful Families has been certified as a practice-tested intervention by the Center for Training and Research Translation at UNC-Chapel Hill. Additionally, Faithful Families has been designated as the Signature Project for the Southern Regional Center for Excellence in Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention, leading to its adoption in Florida, Arkansas, and Tennessee. Faithful Families was also recognized nationally by an invitation to a *Let's Move Faith* and Community Partners Meeting at the White House on March 7, 2013. Evaluation tools include pre-and post-participant surveys and a faith community assessment that measures changes in the faith community environment at the beginning and end of the year of implementation.

Faithful Families includes a curriculum with nine-weeks of nutrition and physical activity educational classes for adults. Each lesson includes scripted social media prompts to help facilitators encourage recruitment, retention, and engagement. To facilitate the implementation of policy, systems, and environmental changes, there is also a Planning Guide for Faithful Families, which includes step-by-step guidance to create a health committee and implement and evaluate community-wide changes. Also, farmers' market and grocery store tour guides have been created to complement the nine-lesson series. Materials are available on our website: www.faithfulfamiliesesmm.org.



Fostering Community Change

Through our partnership with the NC Division of Public Health, we have tracked the implementation of policy, systems, and environmental changes in five regions of North Carolina resulting from Faithful Families. Twelve faith communities have participated in Faithful Families through this partnership. Of those:

100% (12 of 12) faith communities have implemented nutrition and beverage standards (ex: serve water, healthy food policies) affecting **2,031** individuals.

100% (12 of 12) faith communities now promote physical activity through signage, worksite policies and shared use/joint use agreements affecting **2,031** individuals.

33.3% (4 of 12) faith communities now provide space and time for nursing mothers to express breast milk affecting 635 individuals.

58.3% (7 of 12) faith communities now provide access to Diabetes Prevention Programs as a covered by the State Health Plan, affecting **1,235** individuals.

Since 2008, Faithful Families has also led to more than 200 policy and environmental changes in faith communities across North Carolina. These include changes like establishing policies to serve water at all events, creating a farmers' market on-site at the community of faith, establishing guidelines that all meals offered at the faith community must be healthy, establishing physical activity breaks for all meetings, opening up spaces for physical activity on faith community grounds for community usage ("shared use"), and establishing community gardens.

Improving Health

This reporting period, Faithful Families has been implemented by the North Carolina Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), local health department staff, and Family and Consumer Science Agents from NC Cooperative Extension. Combined, these facilitators have reached **124** families. **90%** of participants were African-American and the average age of participants was **53**.

Data from these Faithful Families classes shows that:

-  **79%** of participants now practice better **food resource management**.
-  **90%** of participants improved **dietary intake**.
-  **57%** of participants have improved their **daily physical activity**.
-  **69%** of participants have improved their **food safety practices**.
-  **45%** of participants now eat **more fruits**.
-  **39%** of participants now eat **more vegetables**.

Local Successes

The goal of Faithful Families Eating Smart and Moving More is to support healthy eating and physical activity by partnering with communities of faith. Numbers don't tell the whole story. Faithful Families facilitators and participants tell how Faithful Families has helped faith communities to improve their overall health by eating smart and moving more.

Edgecombe County

Yvonne Murphy, Program Associate with the NC Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) partnered with St. Luke Church of Christ in Princeville to carry out a vibrant Faithful Families program in partnership with the wellness committee at the church. Seventeen participants attended classes, co-facilitated by Murphy and a Lay Leader. In addition to the skill builders provided by the EFNEP program to all seventeen program graduates (shopping pads, walking DVDs, measuring cups and spoons), the wellness committee offered a healthy gift basket to the participant with the most savings on their grocery bills. St. Luke Church of Christ was hit hard by Hurricane Matthew. Their buildings experienced a great deal of damage, and however, they did not stop them from taking the program off-site. They are committed to continuing their wellness activities when back in their regular church facility, and are looking forward to working with Shayla Hayes, Obesity, Diabetes, Heart Disease, and Stroke Prevention (ODHDSP) Regional Faith Coordinator on implementing changes to their faith community environment. As one participant stated, "I attended all nine sessions and felt that the classes were really informative. I really enjoyed the tastings of healthy versions of the food provided...and now will use more care in preparing food for my family!"

Beaufort County

Beaufort County Public Health Education Specialist Kimberly Matthews partnered with St. John Church of Christ to implement Faithful Families in February of 2016. A diverse group of 20 individuals participated in the classes, ranging in age from teen to senior adult. Through a partnership with the local healthcare provider, Vidant Health Systems, participants at St. John Church of Christ received health screenings and were able to work with a personal trainer to develop and meet their fitness goals.

As a result of the Faithful Families program, St. John Church of Christ has implemented several changes to support healthy eating and physical activity in the faith community. These include:

- Serving water at all events
- Implementing a walking ministry at 5:45 am on weekdays
- Adding a Fitness Sunday on the third Sunday of the month, where members participate in fitness activities after worship

Johnston County

Melissa Rockett, ODHDSP Regional Faith Coordinator, partnered with Micro Freewill Baptist Church, Johnston County Cooperative Extension, and the Johnston County Health Department to implement big changes for this church community. In addition to carrying out the nine-lesson Faithful Families class series with twelve members of the congregation, the church has also committed to:

- Increasing healthy options at meetings and church gatherings
- Making water more readily available as a beverage option
- Increasing healthier options at Vacation Bible School this coming summer
- Conducting regular cooking demonstrations for senior adults who attend daily meals provided by the church

Additionally, Micro Freewill Baptist and their local partners are working to build a walking trail around the community outreach center and church. They hope that this trail can connect to a local elementary school, so that the community can improve access to places to be active. The group is planning to conduct regular cooking demonstrations for seniors that attend daily meals provided by the church. All of the partners on this project are excited about continuing to work together to encourage a culture of health in the their community.



Partnership and Training

On September 8, 2016, the NC Division of Public Health and NC State University Extension held the 2016 Faithful Families Summit, at the Crabtree Marriott in Raleigh, North Carolina. Nearly 200 North Carolina and national Faithful Families partners met that day with a shared goal of creating lasting changes to support healthy eating and physical activity in faith communities.

Dr. Annie Hardison-Moody, Faithful Families Director, delivered a heartfelt welcome. During an energizing opening session, presenters from several states across the country shared approaches they are utilizing to positively impact the health of the members and communities they serve. The energy remained high as participants attended breakout sessions where they heard innovative strategies to encourage shared use for physical activity, promote local foods, engage food pantries and increase diversity in faith-based programming.

The Summit ended with a dynamic keynote presentation by Acacia Bamberg Salatti, Director of the Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Ms. Salatti discussed how faith and community groups promote health equity, creating healthier congregations and communities. The 2016 Faithful Families Summit was a celebration of partnerships that support eating smart and moving more for members of faith communities.



For more information visit
FaithfulFamiliesESMM.org