



Socially Nutritious



CONNECTING ONLINE
THROUGH FOOD



East Tennessee State University
2021 INNU Grantee

Disclaimer

This project was supported, in part by grant number 90INNU0031, from the Administration for Community Living, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.

The Problem

- May 2021: COVID-19 Pandemic
 - Increased loneliness and isolation
 - Senior centers closed
 - Inconsistent nutrition education
 - Desire to create virtual “community” through “social supper club”



Partnerships



Goal and Objectives

Goal: Decrease food insecurity and risk for malnutrition among older adults participating in congregate meal programs in East Tennessee through an innovative and holistic virtual supper club program that extends Older Americans Act programs beyond senior center walls.

Objective 1: Develop and pilot-test a 6-7 week nutrition education program focused on fostering self-efficacy of participants to prepare and enjoy easy, budget-friendly, nutritious meals through a virtual social supper club program.

Objective 2: Develop and implement a training model to engage youth, such as 4-H volunteers, and graduate students, such as dietetic interns and public health students, to connect supper club participants with food resource management strategies and opportunities. These activities may include, but are not limited to, training participants to order groceries online, providing or connecting participants with grocery delivery services, aiding with SNAP benefits applications, and facilitating connections with other community resources.

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Objective 3: Enroll eight (8) cohorts with an average of 25 – 30 participants each (200 – 240 total participants) across Eastern Tennessee (13 counties total) for years 2 and 3 in the virtual supper club program, joining either at home or in a hybrid site, such as a senior center, with a goal of 80% completion of the program (attending 4 out of 6 sessions).

Objective 4: Assess change in SCREEN II scores (nutrition risk)¹, food security status², De Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale³ scores, and self-reported health⁴ after participating in the virtual supper club program.

Objective 5: Develop and disseminate an implementation guide for a virtual supper club program that includes recommendations for implementing a volunteer-led program and collaborating with local universities and colleges.

Curriculum

- Session 0: Getting to Know Each Other
- Session 1: Maximizing our Health through Food and Friendship
- Session 2: Maximizing our Brain Health
- Session 3: Maximizing our Muscle and Bone Health
- Session 4: Maximizing our Heart Health
- Session 5: Maximizing our Health through Hydration
- Session 6: Maximizing our Time Planning, Shopping, and Cooking

Curriculum (Recipes)

- Session 1: Black Bean & Corn Quesadilla (MyPlate)
- Session 2: White Bean, Tomato, & Spinach Pasta (Brain Health)
- Session 3: Egg & Veggie Dinner Muffins (Muscle and Bone Health)
- Session 4: Mediterranean Tuna Salad (Heart Health)
- Session 5: Fruit Salad (Hydration)
- Session 6: Beef & Vegetable Soup (Maximizing Time and Resources)

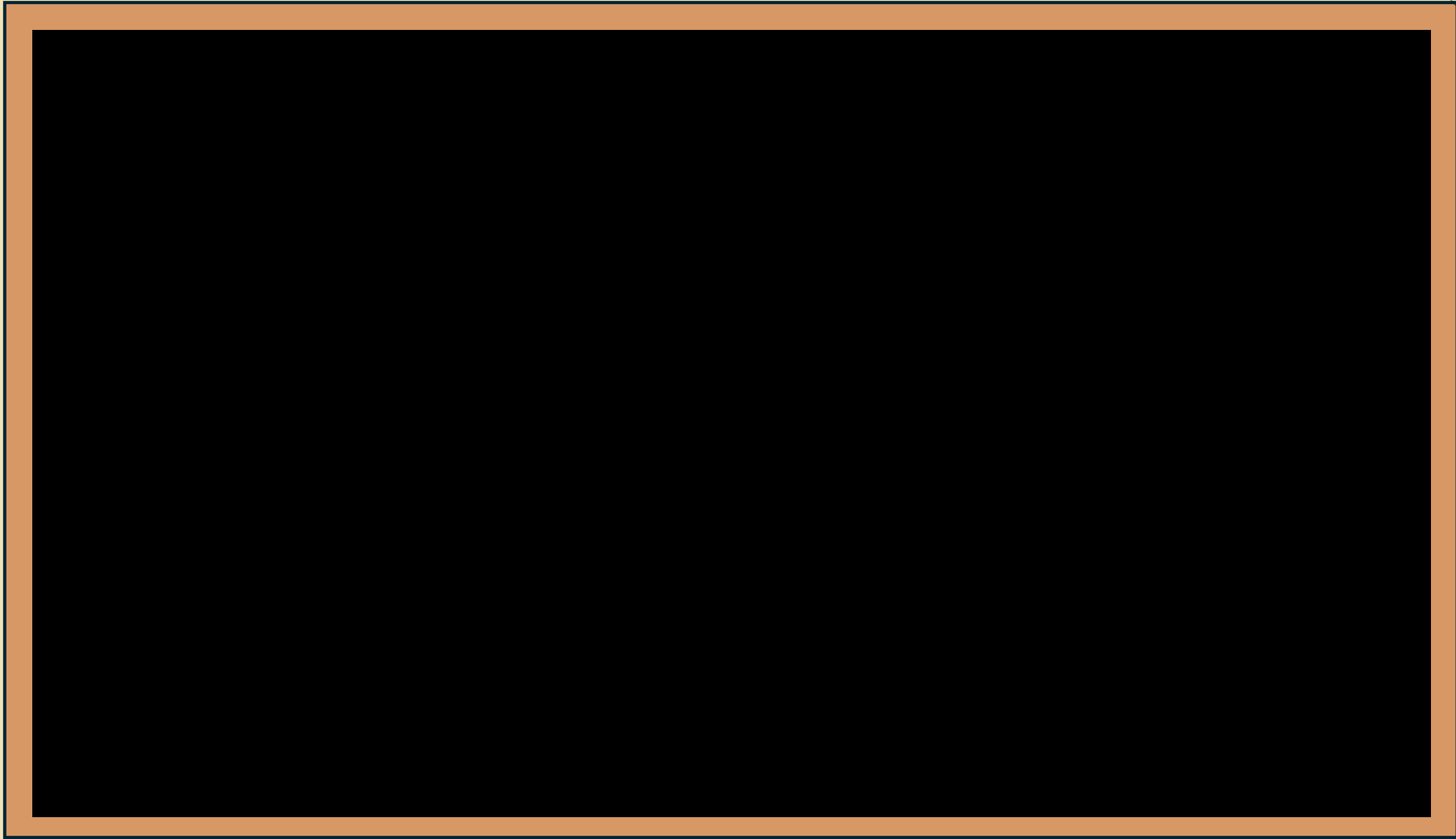
Program Components

Workshop

Nutrition
Ambassadors

Facebook
Group

D
E
M
O



Transitioning to Hybrid Format

- Desire for in-person programs post-pandemic
- Continued opinion that older adults experience challenges with technology
- Continued need to maximize resources in providing consistent nutrition education
- Solution: Hybrid sessions



White Pine Senior Center, White Pine, TN

Challenges

- Contracts between two universities/IRB
 - Advice: Start the process after submitting your proposal
- Recruitment
 - Advice: Find a champion, expand outreach if possible, think outside of the box, use your network
- Hybrid workshop facilitation
 - Advice: Train a staff member as a co-facilitator
- Evaluation
 - Advice: Incorporate pre-test/post-test time into first/last sessions; send reminder emails; offer to complete pre-test/post-test over the phone

Wins

- Positive feedback from participants
 - Achieving weekly goals
 - Trying new foods (i.e., yogurt)
 - Talking with facilitators, nutrition ambassadors, and other participants
- Connecting youth with older adults
 - Positive feedback from Johnson County high school students
- Two Master's theses examined changes in self-perceptions of aging and ageist attitudes
 - Higher aging anxiety and ageist attitudes at pre-test compared to post-test, especially among students (vs. Extension professionals)
 - Not statistically significant (few post-tests submitted)

Next Steps

- Create online training videos for replication
- Continue program evaluation – focusing on increasing pre- and post-test completion
- Offer dissemination conference for Tennessee Extension agents and Aging Services network

Thank You!!!

- Tracy Buckles, Health Promotion Specialist, FTAAAD
- Kathy Whitaker, Former Executive Director, FTAAAD
- Sarah Kelley, Program Coordinator
- Candi Craig, Recruitment Coordinator

Graduate Students

- Ashlyn Cobble
- Allison Cook
- Maddy Greenman
- Tangy Hollingsworth
- Katie Hooker
- Alfonso Monroy
- Reilly Price
- Julianne Truelove

References

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