

Program promotes healthy, affordable food

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NEW BRITAIN — The Human Resources Agency of New Britain has recently received funding from the United Way to add a new component to its Foundations for Financial Independence (FFI) program.

The new component is called Money and Menus. The \$105,000 grant includes Money and Menus as part of the big picture of the project.

The goal of Money and Menus is to educate families about eating healthy without breaking the bank.

The program will include six monthly sessions to teach families and allow them to keep track of their progress.

Marlo Greponne, director of planning and programs of the New Britain HRA, says food insecurity is a prevalent issue in the community, which is why the organization decided to include the new component.

"We thought to incorporate into our model an approach that would help those families that are having the issue of food insecurity, and pair it with health, so that they can

be able to learn more about managing their budgets, setting aside the money that they might need to seek healthier, but also have the opportunity to work with a nutritionist on low-cost healthy meals," Greponne said.

FPI is about giving families the tools they need in order to become self-sufficient and to enable them to achieve their goals and increase

their assets, Greponne said.

The program is offering services such as volunteer income tax assistance, financial literacy education and nutrition education.

The program also offers an incentive; a gift certificate for the farmers market to encourage families to continue to participate in the education sessions.

Greponne said that the program is not necessarily only for recipients of SNAP, formerly known as food stamps. However, it is likely that the majority of the participants will fit into this category because of the program's ties to the food pantry consumer base, she said.

The program will not only focus on the value of food, but it will compare it to the value of life.

"Families will learn through making a comparison of the value of the food they currently purchase and eat dollar value as well as nutrition value," Greponne said. "The idea is for them to begin to compare on the benefits of return on investment. The food itself may be the same price or a little more, but other aspects of life - health, happiness - will be positively impacted."

"The journaling will help each individual person draw the conclusions that are right for them. Some may only learn about a new food and how they can prepare it, while others may learn that eating healthier can save their life Greponne said."

HRA New Britain has been serving the community since 1964 and it is located at 180 Clinton St.

This nonprofit organization has a mission of improving the quality of life by providing aid to residents in accomplishing social potential and economic achievement. The organization also responds to poverty and it focuses on building a stronger community.

To learn more about the organization and its programs call (860) 225-8601 or visit their website.

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MARLO GREPONNE

director of planning and programs at New Britain HRA



Photo by Karla Santos

The Human Resources Agency of New Britain provides programs and learning to help build a stronger community