

Poe Center's *Health Wise* participants attend grocery store tour in Zebulon

By: Shannon Grainger and Ashton Mudd

In a community known by its citizens and the residents of surrounding areas as “the town of friendly people”, the local Food Lion in Zebulon, NC is living proof of the appropriateness of that phrase. On Friday, May 28th, thirteen members of the *Health Wise* class visited the Food Lion in Zebulon. The goal of the tour was to apply the nutrition lessons being taught in the *Health Wise* which is lead by Poe Center for Health Education program manager and registered dietitian, Natalie Taft, RD, LDN.

Health Wise is a comprehensive education program to promote healthy aging for older adults through the Zebulon Community Center. The 7-week series consists of 14 educational sessions designed to address issues important to older adults, such as nutrition, physical activity, meal planning, chronic disease awareness and prevention, communicating with healthcare providers and brain fitness. Participants will inspire friends, family and fellow community members to adopt healthier lifestyle habits. The Poe Center is proud to offer *Health Wise* and other health education programs with support from Wake County Human Services in collaboration with the Town of Zebulon Parks and Recreation Department.

Participants of the *Health Wise* class have been preparing for the grocery store tour through lessons on the USDA's Food Guide Pyramid, reading the nutrition facts label, identifying correct serving sizes, healthy shopping on a budget and spotting “food frauds” that can wreck your healthy eating plan. *Health Wise* members demonstrated their nutrition knowledge as they walked

down the canned vegetable aisle, immediately picking up a can of green beans and noting their sodium content. They were further surprised to learn that the value listed for sodium may have to be doubled or tripled, depending on the amount actually consumed, and could amount to over 1000mg of sodium. Participants then asked Taft about the differences between canned and frozen vegetables. Taft explained that frozen vegetables are oftentimes just as nutritious as fresh vegetables, though considerably lower in price and less perishable; they are also lower in sodium and other additives when compared to their canned counterparts.



Once on the cereal aisle, the participants could not be fooled by the clever marketing tactics of cereal companies. They ignored the eye-catching, sugar-laden cereals and instead looked for cereals that were good sources of fiber, as well as low in sugar. However, some were still shocked after reading the nutrition facts label of a

commonly consumed “orange” drink. Taft pointed out that, while the packaging illustrates fresh oranges and claims to be a good source of vitamin C, the main ingredients are actually water and high fructose corn syrup. One individual joked, “we might as well drink water mixed with Karo syrup.” As the class made their way to the cold case aisle, Taft directed their attention to the eggs, highlighting that while they have obtained a bad reputation over the years, eggs are versatile, affordable, and actually part of a healthy diet when consumed in accordance with recommendations.

As the *Health Wise* class wrapped up their tour, they were greeted in the deli by Food Lion team members with fresh vegetable and fruit trays, in addition to complementary reusable grocery totes for each participant to take home with them. As they enjoyed the healthful treats generously provided by the store, participants discussed the tour and all that they learned. Gloria stated, “I learned

that fortified orange juice is a good source of calcium for those who do not consume dairy products.” When asked about her thoughts on the tour, Veronica said, “Excellent. I really enjoyed it! This has been really helpful!” Once all was said and done, the whole group was in agreement and Ted summed it up as, “the whole experience was outstanding...very educational!”

The Alice Aycock Poe Center for Health Education is a non-profit organization dedicated to positively impacting the lives of North Carolina youth through health education. Visit www.poehealth.org learn more.

Health Wise will continue to meet every Tuesday from 10:00-11:00am and Friday from 12:00-1:00pm until June 25th at the Zebulon Community Center, 301 S. Arendell Ave. Zebulon, NC (*no class held on 6/15 and 6/18)*

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