

# idea corner

## **Computers Help Improve Nutrition**

Computer-assisted instruction for southwest Virginia families was introduced through a "Food Buying for Good Nutrition" pilot project funded by Virginia State College 1890 funds. In 16 months, the program reached 450 families in target audiences of young marrieds, teenagers, senior citizens, and low-income people.

An evaluation revealed that 85% were new Extension audiences who gained knowledge of essential nutrients, source of nutrients, techniques of food buying with limited dollars, and meal preparation figured on cost per serving.

This positive response to computer-assisted instruction from low socioeconomic families with limited education influenced agents to use computer programs with Extension Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) families.

A survey of food buying habits of 44 EFNEP enrolled families receiving food stamps indicated the families developed food buying skill competencies faster in computer-assisted instruction than when involved in traditional methods of teaching. *The programs used were GROCR, TPGRO (food buying), and RCALL (analysis of 1-day food intake).*

In general, the menus planned and management of food stamps indicated that families had adequate competencies. The RCALL findings verified the need for continued education on milk and fruit and vegetable food groups.

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