

Impact

Sharing the difference CSU Extension makes in people's lives and their communities.

Changing lives through family success in Adams County

An innovative family and consumer science grant-funded program is changing lives for the better while becoming a national model for assessing unique populations.

Issue

The construction boom that hit Colorado's Front Range in the late 1990s and early 2000s brought a wave of immigrant laborers and families to Adams County. The influx of newcomers shifted the county's demographics from an older, agricultural population to one that is younger and more culturally diverse. CSU Extension wondered if its programs were meeting the needs of Adams County citizens so it polled residents in 2006. We learned that food safety, health and wellness, financial management, and family and youth development were top community concerns.

Extension's Response

In 2007, Adams County Extension designed a collection of Family and Consumer Science programs to help county residents overcome many of the financial, parenting and relationship obstacles that challenged their lives. *Family Success in Adams County* (FSAC) emerged as a breakthrough effort that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded with a five-year grant.

Family Success in Adams County features eight free programs that are offered as a series of classes:

- For financial management: *Spend Some, Share Some, Save Some* and *Dollarworks2*
- For parenting: *Make Parenting a Pleasure* and *It's My Child, Too*
- For communication and relationships: *RETHINK Anger Management*, *Within My/Our Reach*, and *LoveU2*

Family Success in Adams County seeks to prove that prevention and intervention can improve the course of family lives. To show this, the FSAC project team evaluates immediate and long-term program outcomes through in-depth surveys taken by participants before and after programs and again at six, 12, 18, and 24 months. Program and follow-up evaluation measures broad concepts (e.g., stress and psychological well-being) as well as program-specific knowledge and skills (e.g., financial planning and management).



The Bottom Line

- FSAC fills a critical education gap by delivering life-changing programs in financial management, parenting and relationships.
- No other entity in Adams County has the resources and expertise to deliver programs of this nature to adults.
- Adams County Extension has become a national leader in demonstrating how family and consumer science programs can change people's lives.

By the Numbers

- 95% of participants would refer the program to a friend
- 97% of participants say the FSAC program they took was appropriate and useful
- 99% of participants say the quality of the instructors' work was excellent

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Preliminary data show that FSAC programming is helping participants make profound and successful personal change. They are learning to control spending, handle anger, and become better parents and partners. These outcomes are seen in both immediate (pre and post program) and long-term (follow-up at 6 and 12 months) evaluations. For instance, immediate program outcomes from *Spend Some, Share Some, Save Some* indicate that participants have increased their understanding of financial management concepts, including the role that choice plays in making financial decisions, how to develop strategies to save money, and how to protect personal information, by nearly 21 percent.

In addition to survey data, participant feedback tells how FSAC programs are making a difference and generating overwhelming satisfaction:

- “I have hope for my future, to make more positive changes toward starting a long-term career and for myself to support my girls in a healthy way.”
- “I have learned how to maintain lifestyles and finances so we never become homeless again no matter what happens things will be ok.”
- “I have learned how to be a better parent. Listening is going to help me in the future.”

2010 FSAC Report

The FSAC 2010 Semi-Annual Report is available by request. It highlights immediate and long-term outcomes and explains the different evaluation tools used to measure program success.

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