

## **Food Dehydration 101**

**Opportunities for Chenango, Inc. Head Start and Early Head Start have high standards when it comes to meeting the nutritional needs and interests of children and families. In 2017, Chenango County ranked #1 out of the 62 New York State counties for childhood obesity, and in 2018 we ranked #2. So, when 33 families indicated that they wanted to learn more about dehydrating fresh foods, our program took action.**

**We collaborated with our nutritional partner from Cornell Cooperative Extension to bring our vision of offering Food Dehydration 101 to life. With our facilitator intact, we reached out to local friends and foundations to fund the training. With the support of our community sponsors, we were able to purchase a quality food dehydrator, canning jars, fruits, vegetables, and herbs for each training participant to use at home.**

**Sixteen participants attended Food Dehydration 101. Of these, 3 families have a HS/EHS child who is considered to be obese, 6 have children who are considered over weight, and the remaining 7 with children at a healthy weight. The families learned how to safely preserve food while maintaining nutritional quality. They explored ways to save money, which included using the fruits and vegetables that many of them were able to secure through the Wholesome Wave Prescription Program; an initiative to increase the amounts of fruits and vegetable consumed by low income families with children.**

**Everyone enjoyed the wonderful sampling of dehydrated fruits, vegetables, and homemade fruit roll-ups as their refreshment!**

**We asked parents to give us feedback on how the Food Dehydration 101 training has impacted their nutrition. [Click here](#) to see what Fourteen parents offered said about the class...**

## **Food Dehydration 101 Training Outcomes**

- ❖ 100% of the families participating in the food dehydration survey are using their dehydrator. The frequency of use varies from daily to once a month.
  - Some of the foods that families are dehydrating include strawberries, blueberries, bananas, oranges, pineapple, grapes, apples, applesauce, kiwi, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, mushrooms, herbs, onions, and jerky.

*“My daughter asks me to make the green chips (kiwi) because they are her favorite!”*

- ❖ 86% of the participants indicate that their children are eating more fruits and vegetables as a result of dehydrating them.
- ❖ 100% of the participants indicate that the adults are eating more fruits and vegetables as a result of dehydrating them.

- ❖ 86% of the participants feel their children are eating healthier due to use of the dehydrator.
- ❖ 100% of the participants feel that the adults are eating healthier due to use of the dehydrator.

- ❖ 71% of the families are trying new foods as a result of using the dehydrator.

*“My kids get excited to eat new foods in new ways!”*

- ❖ 86% of families are saving money on their grocery bill by using the dehydrator, and indicate that they throw away less food because they can dehydrate it before it spoils.
- ❖ 71% of families participate in the Wholesome Wave Prescription Program and feel that has increase the use of their dehydrators.

*“I loved being able to buy lots of produce at once with the Wholesome Wave program because I didn’t have to worry about it going bad before we could eat it. I could just dehydrate it.”*