

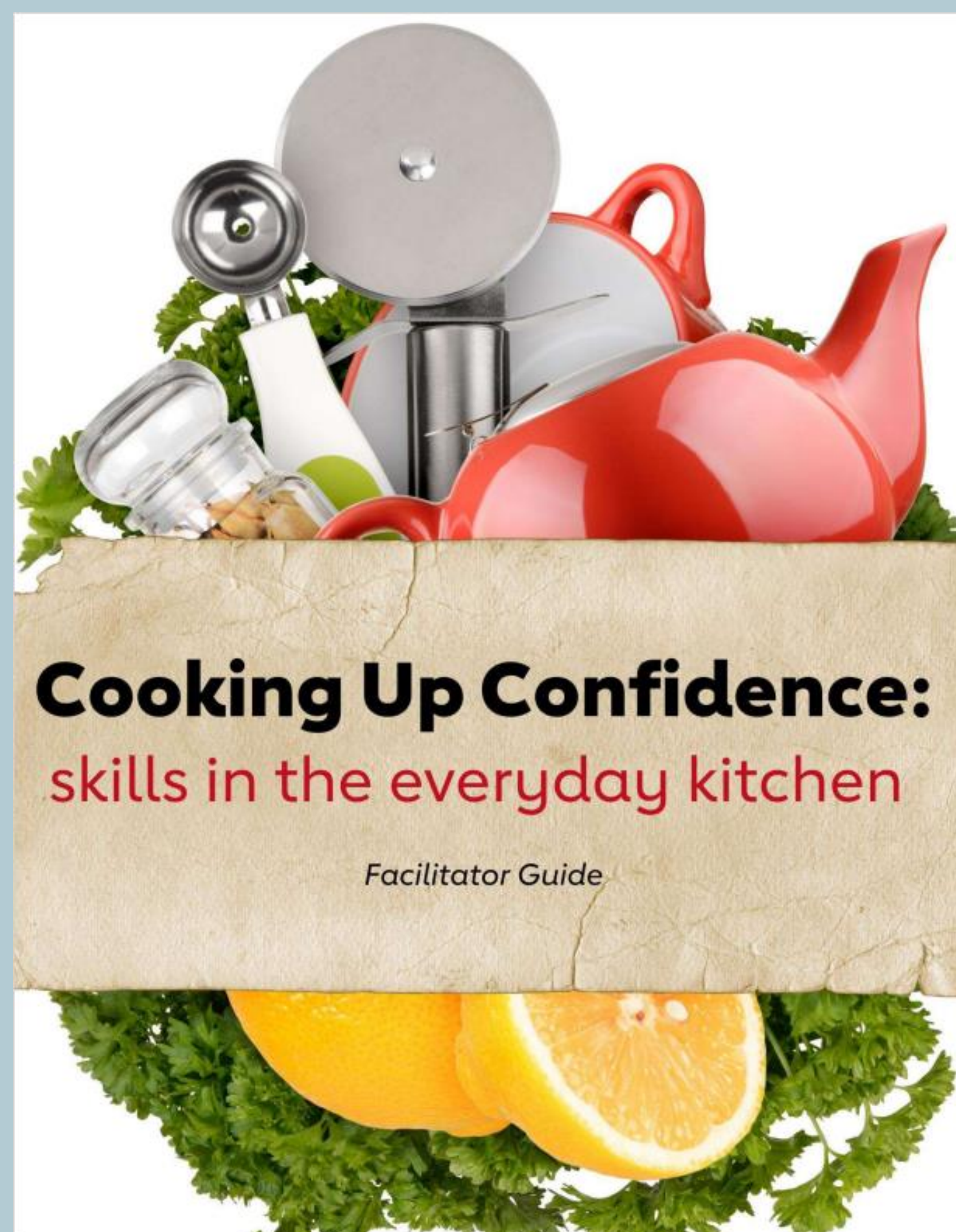
Partnering Healthcare Systems and Community-based Organizations to Improve Cooking Skills



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Purpose

Classes are designed to help participants gain confidence in basic culinary skills transforming produce into easy, affordable meals. Preparing meals at home leads to increased fruit and vegetable consumption, improving health outcomes, and less money spent eating out. Another purpose is to familiarize participants with purchasing, picking up, and utilizing locally sourced produce from FoodShare boxes, available with an EBT card and from multiple sites across the state.



Methodology

This project was created through hospital system and community-based collaboration. Participants are recruited through medical practices, employee, or community groups using on-site registration, email, flyers, social media and word of mouth. The curriculum was developed by the Spartanburg Food System Coalition (PAL Spartanburg, American Heart Association Upstate, Ruth's Gleanings, Foodshare Spartanburg, and Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System) and is tailored to the needs of unique groups participating. Classes are held every other week for 7 weeks, to correspond with FoodShare box delivery dates and to develop new healthy habits over time.



Results

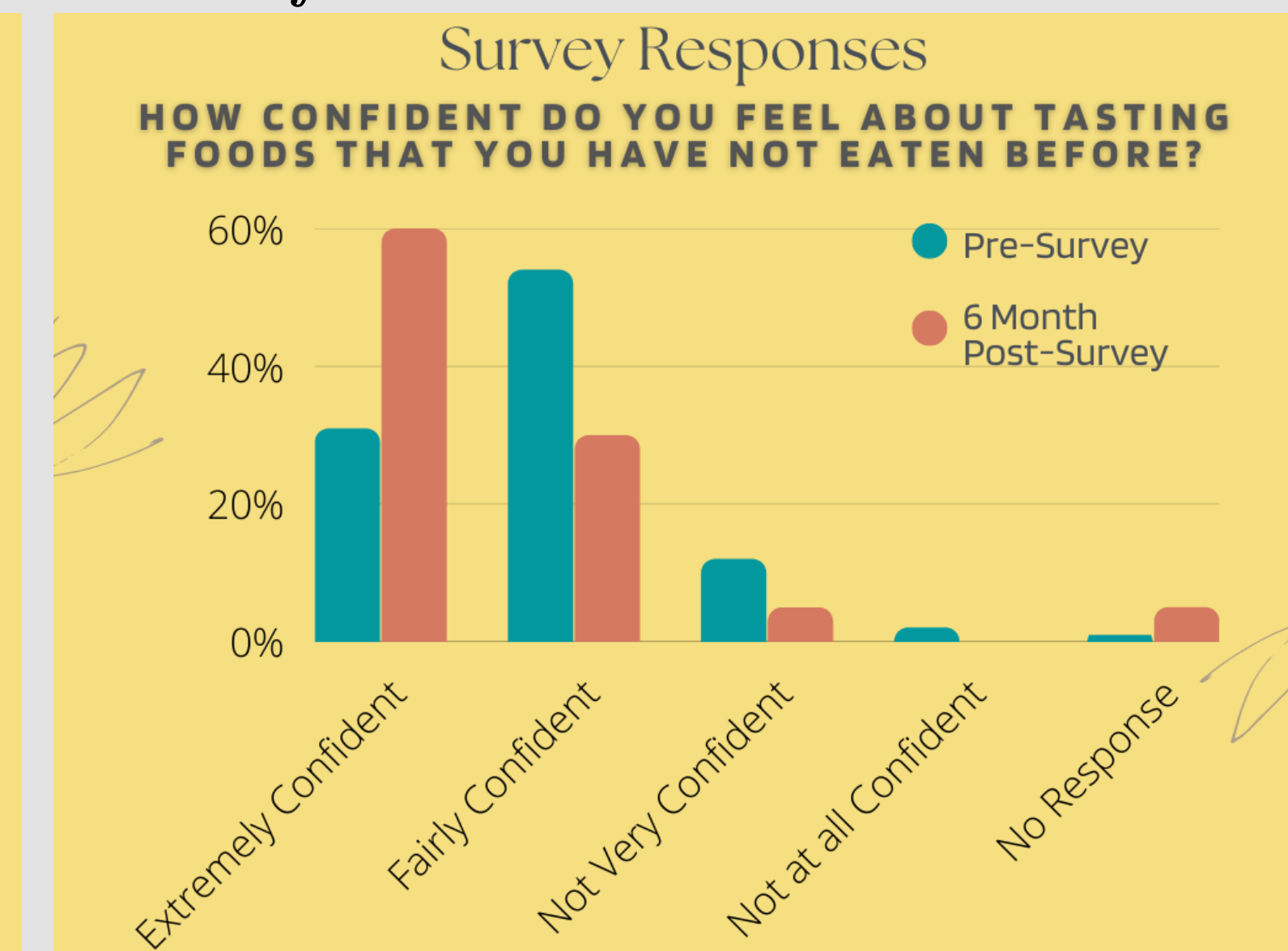
Participants are asked to complete a pre, post, and 6-month post-survey. Initial data is showing participants self-reporting weight loss, lower total cholesterol, and 1 person reported a decrease in insulin. Participants are still utilizing culinary skills learned in class 6 months later. While they may not continue using FoodShare boxes for various reasons they are now aware of this nontraditional way to access affordable food.

Participant Feedback

These are great classes. Thank you for the opportunity to try new things.

I greatly enjoyed the class. It brought so much joy and unity. I had no idea I loved cooking so much. It was nice to fellowship with my colleagues after work via the online Cooking Courses. I constantly looked forward to each and every class. I learned so much! I gained new techniques on cooking/roasting vegetables to make them taste delicious. I can't thank you all enough!

I enjoyed the cooking classes they helped me to eat more green leafy vegetables and I learned how to substitute unhealthy cooking ingredients to healthy ones.



Conclusion

Participants in Cooking Up Confidence enjoy camaraderie with other participants despite cooking virtually. Families participating emphasized improved skills and knowledge among children. Health outcomes vary according to individuals, especially considering medical conditions of targeted groups. Participants continue to use learned skills, benefit from the 7-week time-frame and repetition, enjoy the break in-between classes, try new produce dishes, and are more knowledgeable about community programs, therefore impacting quality of life positively.



Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our staff members and partners who advocate every day for improved food access and healthier lives in our community.