



UNIVERSITY OF SAINT JOSEPH

CONNECTICUT

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University of Saint Joseph Awarded USDA SNAP-Ed Grant for Nutrition Education

WEST HARTFORD, CONN. – **The Department of Nutrition at the University of Saint Joseph (USJ) has recently been awarded a three-year grant for 2012 - 2014 in the amount of \$599,133 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - Education.** SNAP-Ed provides education to individuals on a limited income, assisting them in making healthy choices to maximize food dollars (shopping, label-reading, food preparation, recipes, and safety in handling and storage), as well as choosing physically active lifestyles. Formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, SNAP is the largest of the federal nutritional assistance programs, ensuring that people have access to healthy and nutritious foods.

Funding awarded to the University of Saint Joseph from the USDA is administered by the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health - Division of Obesity and Physical Activity Programs. USJ’s Nutrition Education Team (NET) is a contractor of the CT-DPH; this collaboration benefits the state by greatly extending their nutrition education staff and eligibility for USDA funding. In turn, USJ benefits by implementing the funding to involve students in community nutrition education using state-of-the-art materials, and nationally tested models reflecting the current USDA “Choose My Plate” food messages for promoting healthy eating.

“Since the fall of 2009, more than 80 undergraduate, graduate and dietetic interns have received training through this project which offers an excellent opportunity for didactic students to participate in experiential learning earlier in their education,” said Margaret E. Gaughan, Ph.D., R.D., associate professor of Nutrition and director of the University of Saint Joseph’s SNAP-Ed Project. “In our model, students are initially trained in a workshop setting; they are then paired with registered dietitians or experienced bilingual nutrition educators to present healthy eating messages using interactive display boards, food demonstrations and tastings targeted to adults ages 18 - 65. Recipe cards, handouts, and incentive items are also offered to engage clients and tie into the educational activity. In addition, the current grant contract has expanded this year to include a portion of the preschool education project which will provide SNAP-Ed for parents of preschoolers enrolled in Head Start and School Readiness Programs.”

University of Saint Joseph President Pamela Trotman Reid, Ph.D. said, “This significant grant funding advances USJ’s commitment to supporting public health initiatives throughout Connecticut. By partnering with Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Programs; Mobile Foodshare; community health centers; food pantries; farmers’ markets; and other agencies we are continuing to address the critical health issues, such as balanced nutrition and physical activity, that will result in long-term benefits for our local communities.”

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The University of Saint Joseph (USJ) offers a wide range of graduate, undergraduate, and certificate programs that combine a professional and liberal arts education with a focus on service. Coeducational graduate master's and doctoral degree programs are taught on the University's two campuses in West Hartford and Hartford, Connecticut; at off-campus locations throughout the state; and online. Undergraduate programs for women and for coeducational adult students take place on our beautiful suburban campus and include more than 22 majors and six pre-professional programs, each of which provides personal attention in a caring environment. Founded in 1932 by the Sisters of Mercy, the University of Saint Joseph welcomes students from diverse backgrounds and religious traditions. To learn more, view our website at www.usj.edu.

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