

Tarheel Footprints in Health Care

Recognizing unusual and often unsung contributions of individual citizens who have made health care for North Carolinians more accessible and of higher quality

Christine Smith, MS *Passion and Commitment to Excellence*



Passion and commitment to excellence. These are the words that colleagues have used to describe Christine Smith, family and consumer sciences agent with North Carolina Cooperative Extension in Wayne County. The North Carolina Cooperative Extension is a partnership between federal, state, and local government agencies and uses the resources of both NC State University and NC A&T State University. One of the Cooperative Extension's charges is to help county residents eat healthy foods and increase their physical activity through community outreach and educational programs. Mrs. Smith has been with North Carolina Cooperative Extension for over 26 years and is a vital part of the program's success.

Due to Mrs. Smith's experience and expertise in working with individuals, communities, agencies, and local government, she was asked to participate in the development team for the Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less program. Working at the state-level, she helped create a weight management program designed to use evidence-based strategies to encourage individuals to eat healthy and exercise more. This 15-week program is offered onsite to individuals and groups that are interested in taking control of what they eat and how much they exercise. Participants are encouraged to keep food journals and keep track of when they exercise.

As a family and consumer sciences agent for North Carolina Cooperative Extension in Wayne County, Mrs. Smith is committed to excellence in programming and to helping citizens improve their health and well-being. She develops and implements programs in nutrition, wellness, food preservation, and family resource management. She is very visible and active in the community providing educational opportunities, both informal and formal, for citizens to learn about incorporating healthy foods and physical activity into their daily lifestyle. Christine is a featured columnist for the *Goldsboro News-Argus* "Your Health" section and is a featured monthly columnist for the Eat Smart, Move More North Carolina electronic newsletter. Through this media she empowers and challenges citizens to take personal responsibility for their health. The columns have also brought high visibility to Cooperative Extension.

Mrs. Smith is a proponent of developing relationships with community partners to enhance programming opportunities. Most recently, she organized a team of professionals to provide nutrition education and fitness workouts twice a week to help citizens become "Fit & Fabulous in 2010." She truly understands that a team approach benefits all. In addition, she collaborates with local hospitals, faith-based organizations, and county government to change policies about the foods they serve and the environments they offer to their employees and customers. Recently she conducted Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less program for five different churches, county employees, and the general public. Her ultimate goal is to help these communities change their physical and social environments to be more conducive to healthy lifestyles.

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When asked about Christine Smith, close colleague and friend Carolyn Dunn says, "The first thing that comes to mind when you say Christine Smith is passion. She is passionate to help people eat smart and move more. She is tenacious and holds herself to a very high standard, so she expects that other people do the same. Everything she does is at full speed. If she can think of a way to make her messages more meaningful to her clients, or reach them in a way that might create a spark to help them eat smart and move more, even if it means more work for her, she will do it."

Christine Smith has a bachelors of science in Home Economics Education from Tennessee State University and a masters of science in Home Economics Education from Oregon State University; she is on the editorial board for *The Forum for Family and Consumer Issues* and a contributing author of the *Heart & Soul* cookbook, a collection of southern style heart healthy recipes (available online at <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/wayne/>). Additionally, she is the recipient of many awards, including the Distinguished Service Award in 2009, Continued Excellence Award 2008; Communications Award Newsletters, 2008; Communications Award for Written Press Release on Workplace Wellness, 2007; Graduate of the Leadership Seminar Series for New and Aspiring County Extension Directors, 2005; Communications Award for Outstanding Educational Curriculum Package in 2002; Marketing Package Award in 2002; and the 2002 Food Safety Award. She served as a dietetic assistant at Vanderbilt University Hospital and a graduating teaching assistant at Oregon State before starting her career as the Wayne County extension agent in 1983. She was recently named a Robert Wood Johnson Ladder to Leadership Fellow, which is a 16-month-long fellowship meant to groom future leaders in the health care and nonprofit organization fields.

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