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Extension nutrition programs recognized for high impact in Minnesota

University of Minnesota Extension is among the state's top three leaders in building access to healthy foods, according to newly released rankings by Philanthropedia.

A panel of experts convened by Philanthropedia, a leading advocate of transparency among nonprofits, cited Extension's "Simply Good Eating," "Cooking Matters," and "Farm to School" education as examples of effective programs and partnerships. Philanthropedia observed:

"University of Minnesota Extension serves as a programmatic arm of the University across many service areas, including access to healthy food. ... As a whole they offer quality programs and services that people can get excited about, engage in, and possibly even replicate, in some cases."

A group of 99 experts and researchers in non-profit administration, nutrition programming and policy offered further insights:

- "They have a rich research base and reliable information for agriculture production."
- "University of Minnesota Extension staff members ... are receptive to partnering with other organizations in their outreach efforts. They provide creative and innovative programs to groups of varying ages, income, and background. Staff members provide information in a useable format that is understandable by a diverse group or population."
- "The University of Minnesota Extension staff members are very friendly, approachable, and make participants feel comfortable. Another of their strength is that they are extremely knowledgeable and eagerly share that information with participants."

"We're very proud of our nutrition education and partnerships across Minnesota. Promoting good nutrition and sound decision-making around food has a positive impact on individuals, families and communities," said Bev Durgan, Extension dean. "For example, for every dollar spent on nutrition, there are savings of up to ten dollars. Well-nourished children have better school attendance and are more focused on learning."

Philanthropedia experts ranked more than 80 Minnesota organizations involved in nutritional programming, from which the top 15 were chosen. Extension's programming followed Emergency Foodshelf Network and Second Harvest Heartland, ranked first and second, respectively.

Philanthropedia is an arm of Guidestar, which describes its mission as seeking "to revolutionize philanthropy by providing information that advances transparency, enables users to make better decisions, and encourages charitable giving."

To learn more about Extension's nutritional programming, visit <http://www1.extension.umn.edu/food/>.

More about Philanthropedia's Minnesota ranking can be found here:

<http://www.myphilanthropedia.org/top-nonprofits/minnesota/access-to-healthy-food/2012#non-profits>

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