Dear Mercer County residents and readers,

I am excited to introduce myself as your new Family and Community Health Sciences Educator and it is my pleasure to bring you the Fall 2009 edition of our County Visions newsletter.

Since my appointment in July, I have enjoyed meeting the residents and organizations that provide invaluable services to our community. I look forward to partnering with many of you and lending my skills as a health educator in the fields of nutrition, physical activity, disease prevention, and food safety. I also hope to share my experience as a teacher of developmentally disabled students to local organizations serving the special needs community. I encourage you to contact me if you have any educational needs in these areas, as I am available to present programs in a variety of settings such as schools, senior centers, community centers, and worksites.

County Visions includes Mercer County news as well as the state-wide newsletter which covers a broad range of topics relevant to your health and well-being. For those of you living or working with individuals with developmental disabilities, please be sure to read my article “Helping Children With Developmental Disabilities to Be Better Eaters” found on page 3.

Enjoy Visions, the beautiful colors of Fall and its bounty of healthy foods!

Wishing you a warm Thanksgiving,

Michelle F. Brill, M.P.H.
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Did you know that Rutgers Cooperative Extension has counterparts in universities across the country? Not only can we provide you with local, research-based programs, we can also connect you to the larger “eXtension” community of resources through the web site: www.extension.org. We encourage you to visit the eXtension web site and click on these particularly timely and important articles in the Family Resource section under Families, Food and Fitness and Personal Finance:

**Families, Food and Fitness:**

Childhood and adult obesity is a national problem, one that contributes to health problems, increased health expenses, and lost time from work or school. Lasting changes in eating and physical activity are necessary to help adults and youth to live a healthy, productive life. The Families, Food and Fitness website will help families to improve their diets, increase physical activity and maintain body weight in a healthy range. Learning healthy behaviors can provide lasting changes to improve health for a lifetime.

**Financial Security: Managing Money in Tough Times:**

More Americans feel added stress and anxiety about their financial future as talk of rising consumer debt, falling housing prices, rising costs of living, and declining retail sales bring up worries about the nation’s economic health.

Money is often on the minds of most Americans. In fact, according to the American Psychological Association’s 2007 Stress in America survey, money and work are two of the top sources of stress for almost 75 percent of Americans. Add to the mix headlines declaring a looming economic recession, and many begin to fear how they can handle any further financial crunch.

Learning positive money management techniques can help you and your family adapt to tough economic times.

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**Congratulations to Trenton Central High School**

Trenton Central High School, based on its dedication to school wellness, has been selected to participate in a four year Coordinated School Health Demonstration Project. This program is funded by the Centers for Disease Control, and is administered by the New Jersey Department of Education and the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services.

TCHS Wellness Team members receive training in fitness, team building, curriculum, and school wellness assessments. The goal is to improve wellness through nutrition and physical activity and to decrease at risk behaviors such as tobacco, alcohol and substance abuse. Rutgers Cooperative Extension faculty and staff are serving as advisors.

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**Susan Fountain**

Susan Fountain, Supervisor of SNAP-Ed and EFNEP nutrition education programs for limited resource families, reports great success in reaching students, teachers, parents, and senior citizens.

She collaborates with Trenton Public Schools, ISLES, Alliance for a Healthier Generation, shelters, faith-based organizations, health care providers, and state and local partnerships to deliver much needed training and education programs.

Susan’s staff of bilingual Community Assistants are trained by Rutgers University Department of Nutritional Sciences to deliver a high quality, research based curriculum in a variety of settings.