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Central Jersey's Suppers Programs: Just What the Doctor Ordered

Program Wins Award from American Diabetes Association,
Survey Reveals Participants Follow Healthier Lifestyles

PRINCETON, N.J. (Nov. x, 2015) — As the nation becomes increasingly focused on healthy lifestyles, hundreds of people in Central New Jersey are living healthier lives, thanks to The Suppers Programs, a grassroots organization promoting healthy cooking.

In honor of National Diabetes Month, The Suppers Programs were named a winner of the nationwide ADA Healthy Food Community Friends Award, nominated by the New Jersey ADA office. Suppers is featured in the November issue of *Diabetes Forecast* for "making a big difference in the fight for widespread access to healthy foods."

Founded in 2006, Suppers is a nonprofit Central Jersey organization whose mission is to provide safe and friendly settings where anyone — especially those with food-related health challenges — can develop and manage their own personal transitions to a healthier life. Suppers is guided by four principles:

- The active practice of non-judgment
- Whole food preparation
- No commercial messages
- Restoration of the family table

Participants gather in small groups — mostly private homes — to prepare delicious healthy meals together and conduct “food experiments” related to their particular health goals. Meetings are run by trained volunteer facilitators who create a nonjudgmental, warm and friendly environment. Participants share their personal approaches and experiences, and no experts or third-party testimony is permitted.

Participation in Suppers results in improved overall health, according to results of an independent survey. More than 200 people responded to the online survey, conducted this summer by Strategic Business Research. In addition to Suppers improving overall health, the survey also found that:

- Suppers serves as a motivational support group.
- Participants have lowered their blood pressure, cholesterol and blood glucose levels.

- People join Suppers for a variety of reasons, including to lose weight, minimize arthritis symptoms, deal with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), reduce cravings for carbohydrates and more.
- Almost half (46 percent) of participants attend a Suppers meeting at least once or twice a month.
- Participants on prescriptions were more likely to be more compliant with their medication after attending a Suppers program but were also able to either stop or lower the dose of certain medications.
- Consumption of processed foods decreased among participants

"I think one of the most telling findings of the survey is that nearly nine out of ten respondents have recommended The Suppers Programs to others," said founder Dorothy Mullen. Based on survey responses, Mullen said the Suppers board of trustees is looking to expand to Northern Jersey in the future. In addition to its board, Suppers relies on a team of medical advisers for program input.

At the Suppers website, thesuppersprograms.org, visitors will find a full schedule of activities and locations of Suppers meetings, more than 500 recipes for everything from almond butter brownies to zucchini hummus. The site also offers many resources including videos, publications, white papers and book reviews. For a full schedule of upcoming activities, see the Suppers Programs' [calendar](#).

For more information, visit thesuppersprograms.org or call 609-921-0441.

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