WASHINGTON D.C — USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) recently celebrated 40 years of helping limited-resource families and youth make sound nutrition and health choices through the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

At the 40th anniversary celebration held at the University of California Washington Center in Washington, DC, Nimo Yusuf of Minneapolis was recognized for her integral support to the program.

"The community-based work which Nimo Yusuf and all our Nutrition Education paraprofessionals so skillfully do across the state of Minnesota is extremely important, especially now in these tough economic times," said Dr. Pat Tschida, State EFNEP Coordinator. EFNEP addresses national priorities, such as hunger, health and obesity. Participants learn to make food choices that can improve the nutritional quality of the meals they serve their families, gain new skills in food preparation and safety, and learn to better manage their food budgets and related resources from federal, state and local food assistance agencies and organizations. They also learn about related topics such as physical activity and health. EFNEP annually helps more than 500,000 individuals.

"Ms. Yusuf's ability to reach audiences is enhanced by how closely she pays attention to learners' needs and presents information in a manner they can easily understand," said Fay McLain, Community Program Specialist and Yusuf's supervisor at University of Minnesota Extension in Hennepin County.

"Yusuf teaches food and nutrition education to youth and adults. She uses USDA dietary guidelines in her lesson plans. She was nominated in the area of reaching new audiences, particularly the Somali immigrant communities of the Twin Cities," said McLain.

In 2008, 94 percent of adults graduating from EFNEP reported improved dietary intake, including an increase of about 0.8 cup equivalents of fruits and vegetables. Additionally, 73 percent of youth graduating from the program reported eating a variety of foods from all groups in their diets.
The hands-on, learn-by-doing approach allows participants to gain the practical skills necessary

to make positive behavior changes. Through EFNEP, participants also experience increased self-worth, as they recognize that they can improve the health of themselves and their families.

County Extension family and consumer science professionals provide training and supervise peer educators and volunteers who teach EFNEP in their local communities. Methods for program delivery include direct teaching in group or individual situations; mailings and telephone teaching to complement other teaching methods; mass media efforts to develop understanding, awareness and involvement in the educational program; and development and training of volunteers to assist with direct teaching of adults and youth.

CSREES distributes Congressionally-appropriated funds annually to support EFNEP at the state level through land-grant university cooperative extension programs. Through federal funding and leadership for research, education and extension programs, CSREES focuses on investing in science and solving critical issues impacting people's daily lives and the nation's future. For more information, visit www.csrees.usda.gov/efnep