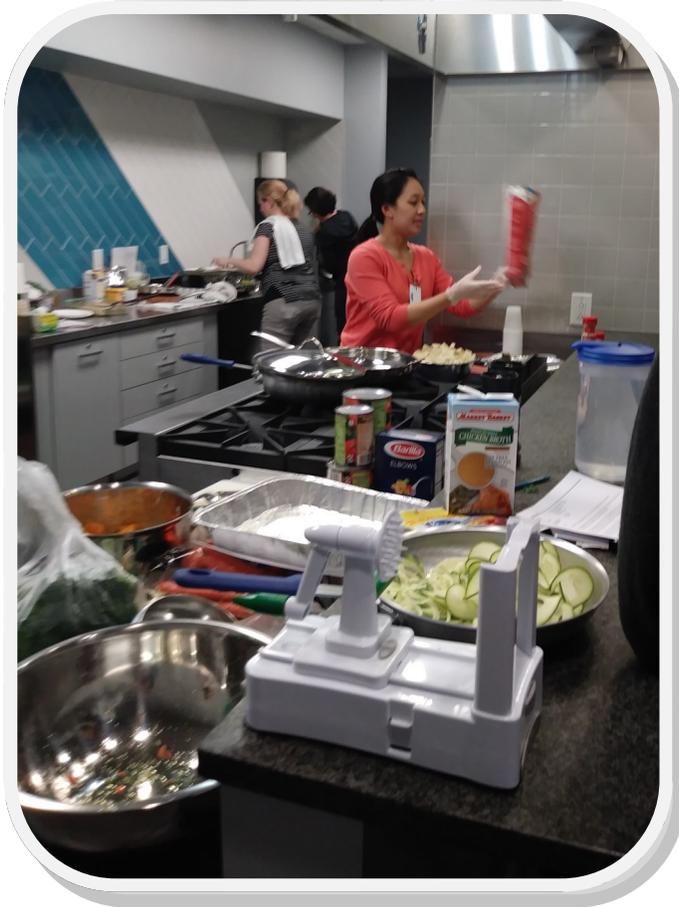


## YMCA/GLCAC Healthy Cooking Class



The Merrimack Valley YMCA teamed up with the Greater Lawrence Community Action Council (GLCAC) at the end of November to offer a cooking class for women and families served by the WIC program at the Andover/North Andover branch. Participants learned how to create delicious meals on a budget. The cooking demo featured healthy, seasonal, WIC-approved recipes for the whole family.

The demo was designed to give hands-on instruction for moms as well as their children. Participants made pasta, simple sautéed greens, kale, fennel and apple salad, butternut squash risotto, green bean casserole, and sautéed apple crisp with seasonal fruit and vegetables. Children were invited to help with cutting fruit and assembling the dishes.

The WIC office relocated to the Andover/North Andover YMCA last summer, with a goal of increasing participation in the program among eligible residents due to the more easily accessible location. The ANA YMCA's commercially-licensed teaching kitchen, added with the renovation and expansion of the facility last year, recently opened and already hosts a variety of classes for adults and children. Andover/North Andover YMCA Youth and Family Program Director Maria Furnari says this cooking class is a natural extension of the partnership between the two organizations.

"We are excited to offer this cooking class in partnership with the WIC office," Furnari said. "At the Y we strive to promote healthy living, social responsibility, and youth development. This class touches on all three and is a true example of living our cause."

WIC is a state- and federally-funded program that provides free, healthy food, nutrition counseling, and other services. The Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc. (GLCAC) operates the WIC program in Greater Lawrence, with offices in Lawrence, Methuen, and Andover. The GLCAC WIC program's active caseload is currently around 6,600 individuals; about 1,500 of those individuals are pregnant and post-partum women, and the remaining 5,100 are infants and children.