4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Meet Our Newest Agent

We would like to welcome Matt Futrell to our extension staff. Matt joined the 4-H team as a Youth Development agent on June 17, 2014. Matt is a native of Christian County and was a member of 4-H growing up. He received his B.S. and M.S. in Soil Science from Western Kentucky University. Matt lives and works on his family’s farm which dates back to the 1790’s. Matt says, “Just as farming is a way of life, conservation is the life of agriculture. By practicing good stewardship and good agricultural practices, I hope my family will be on the same farm for another 200 plus years. I look forward to working with the youth of Christian County and hope that I can instill the 4-H traditions in another generation.”
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Jr. MANRRS Then and Now

“If you would have asked me 3 years ago what I was doing with this program I would have told you, I had no idea,” Mia Farrell said. Jr. Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences (Jr. MANRRS) has been a strong Christian County 4-H program for youth grades 7-12. The youth focus on personal and professional development, self-esteem, civic engagement, and life skills. The program started in 2011 with 11 youth and today the program serves over 85 youth in the 2 middle and high schools in Christian County. This year the students attended the JR. MANRRS national conference in Birmingham, Alabama. Seven youth attended the conference and 2 students placed in public speaking, impromptu speaking, and the written essay contest. 37 students attended the state conference in Lexington, KY and 4 students placed in public speaking, impromptu speaking, essay written contest, and our county won the quiz bowl. The students have developed over the last three years. The youth that I started the program with are graduating and have been accepted to the University of Louisville, the University of Kentucky, and Kentucky State University thus far. Over the summer one of my students had the opportunity to intern at the mayors office learning the functions of the city. Two youth are a part of youth leadership Hopkinsville Christian County through the Chamber of Commerce. These opportunities come through Jr. MANRRS. The youth have volunteered over 750 hours this year. This program has grown to new heights and will continue to develop the youth in the Christian County Community.

4-H Camp
This year’s annual 4-H Camp was held May 27-30, 2014 at the West Kentucky 4-H Camp in Dawson Springs. This relaxed week provided youth, both from Christian County and Fort Campbell, with opportunities to create new lifelong friendships and try new things of their interest. Classes offered included canoeing, pintrest crafts, teambuilding and leadership, cooking, archery, shooting sports and horseback riding. Camp holds true to the 4-H slogan of “learn by doing” because camp offers many hands-on activities for youth to experience, learn new skills and take back to their respective homes. We look forward to another great year at West KY 4-H Camp June 15-18, 2015. Camp host campers aged 9-15, teen counselors 16-17, and adults 18 and older. Please contact the Extension Office for camp registration and more information.

Military
The Fort Campbell 4-H partnership had a great ninth year as Christian County Extension continues to offer support to our military community. 4-H programming on and off the installation was able to service over 1500 youth this year. 4-H programs at Fort Campbell are helping build leaders of tomorrow in the areas of Natural Resources, Family & Consumer Sciences, Health, Communication, Leadership and Science, Engineering & Technology (SET). Support for all of these programs continues to be available through the award of the 4-H Military Partnership Grant, available to installations with an existing 4-H partnership. Highlights of the year’s 4-H program and partnership include Family Game Night and the Annual Thanksgiving and Christmas Basket Civic Engagement Project. Family Game Night provided an opportunity for military families to eat a meal together and bond through the playing of board games. Over 50 families and 224 family members participated in this year’s event, which
surpassed the original number of 50 families that participated last year. The annual civic engagement project was able to feed over 200 soldiers and their families for the holidays.

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES

MyPlate the Kentucky Way

According to Kentucky Health Facts, 71% of adults in Christian County are overweight and only 17% of adults in the county are getting the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables. In order to address this problem the Christian County Cooperative Extension Service Agent for Family and Consumer Science taught “MyPlate the Kentucky Way” in one of the local middle schools. The participants included 160 seventh and eighth grade students at North Drive Middle School. The students were taught the importance of eating a well-balanced diet in order to gain benefits from each of the five food groups. Each student was given handouts to take home and go over with their parents. According to pre and post evaluation results 75% of the students increased their knowledge of building healthy eating patterns according to MyPlate. Also, 82% of the students stated that they plan to make changes in their eating behaviors including adding more fruits and vegetables in their diet. Based on the success of this program MyPlate will be taught in at least one middle school again next year.

Green Cleaning

People spend an average of 90% of their time indoors. Studies conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) show levels of several common organic pollutants to be 2 to 5 times higher inside homes than outside. Many of these pollutants come from the volatile organic compounds (VOC’s) release from household cleaning products. Indoor pollutants can be reduced by limited the number of chemicals used indoors.

The Christian County Cooperative Extension Service Agent for Family & Consumer Sciences taught “Green Cleaning” to 162 consumers in Christian County. During the class participants were given the opportunity to make a batch of their own laundry detergent to take home. At the conclusion of the class 100% of the participants reported an increase in their knowledge and understanding of green cleaning products and practices. Of those verbally surveyed several weeks after the class 95% said that they tried the detergent, liked it and plan to make more green cleaning products at home.

By following guidelines for green cleaning, consumers can improve their indoor air quality, avoid mixing harmful substances, save money and help conserve natural resources.

EXPANDED FOOD & NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP) teaches small groups, limited resource families, and youth groups how to improve their diets and health. Nutrition, food preparation, meal planning and food shopping skills (including reading labels and price comparison) are taught to participants. The EFNEP program assistant Norma Taylor has worked with 102 limited resource families (meeting monthly for 6-12 months) and 2,885 youth. These include families and youth at the Trilogy Center, Housing Authority, Sanctuary House, school classrooms and preschools. Demonstrations of healthy foods and food preparation are also done at the local Farmer’s Market.

AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES
To address issues identified by the local Ag Advisory Council, programming efforts have been directed towards aiding producers to be more efficient in their use of herbicides, fertilizer management, land rental rates and seeding rates. These issues would be addressed through both educational programming and local cost share programs.

Educational meetings held in Christian county to address the issues included an Early Bird management seminar, Precision ag seminar, Flex lease land rental meeting, and 14 pesticide applicator trainings.

Funding in the amount of $215,000 was utilized by 50 producers to change their existing herbicide application practices to make use of precision application techniques. This practice change has resulted in an average savings of $21 dollars per acre, which equates to a total average savings per producer of $28,000. Producers who have adopted this practice change report an overall reduction in herbicide use of 16%.

**HORTICULTURE**

**The Incredible Edible Landscape**

With an increasing interest in home grown fruits and vegetable and a decrease in lot sizes for new home construction, it can be a challenge for home gardeners to find the space to grow edible plants, especially fruit trees and shrubs. In an effort to encourage home gardeners to think differently about how to incorporate edible plants into their existing landscape, the Christian County horticulture agent developed and taught two classes on how to landscape with edibles successfully. One class was held for a Christian County garden club and the other was held at a regional Cooperative Extension event in Maysville called Spring into Green. A total of 93 participants attended the classes. As a result of the class, 70% of participants stated they plan to incorporate edibles into their landscape. And one person indicated they would eat more fresh foods because of the information they received.

**Master Gardeners Make It Happen**

Master Gardeners is a program run by the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service to train citizens in many areas of horticulture. Upon completion of the Master Gardener education program, participants are expected to return 30 hours of community volunteer service through organized projects within one year to earn the title Master Gardener and 15 hours annually to maintain their volunteer status. During the 2012 program year Master Gardeners volunteered:

- 289 hours of service in planting and maintaining demonstration gardens at the Extension office and Jeffers Bend Botanical Center and Arboretum;
- 81 hours by serving as advisors and members of two community committees;
- 125 hours of service to youth education of natural sciences.

A total of 918 hours of volunteer service has been reported from 26 volunteers. At the Independent Sector’s 2013 dollar value of hourly volunteer time ($19.68), the value of Master Gardener volunteer service equates to $18,066.24 in value to Christian County Extension and the county. Additionally, these volunteer attained 4,632 public contacts.