

COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION
SERVICE



College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment

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EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Changing Lives*



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When you support Extension, youth participate in hands-on garden activities that result in healthy eating patterns and physical activity.



Preschool and elementary classes from Son Light Preschool and Daycare tend to the garden each week.

Laurel County Extension and Master Gardeners Developed a Children's Garden to Teach Science and Change Eating Patterns

Extension staff conducted a Try-A-Thon to challenge youth to taste fruits and vegetables and encourage healthy eating habits. Students were encouraged to "go for the gold" by sampling all the recipes offered.



The children have learned about soil, plants, insects, food, and much more. They have really enjoyed bringing fresh vegetables back to school for snack time. Extension makes learning fun by using creative art and a lot of hands-on opportunities. Working with the Laurel County Extension Office has been a great experience. - Beth Johnston, Assistant Director, Son Light Preschool and Day Care

During a program review and planning meeting, the Laurel County Horticulture Advisory Council and the Laurel County Master Gardeners identified community needs to address in the upcoming year. The increasing childhood obesity rate and the lack of children's knowledge of agriculture and food production led to the volunteers designing and implementing a children's garden program.

The Son Light Preschool and Daycare was very excited to participate and sent two groups of students to the garden weekly. These groups consisted of twenty elementary school age children and twenty-four preschool students. During each visit, eight Master Gardener volunteers conducted educational activities, ranging from identifying parts of a seed to vermiculture, or worm composting. The students planted corn, beans, tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, watermelon, various herbs and flowers as well as spending time watering, weeding and looking for insects during each visit. Vegetables harvested from the garden were sent home with the children along with healthy recipes on how to prepare what they had grown. Despite a mostly unanimous dislike of vegetables, they enjoyed learning to grow and harvest the garden during the ten week program.

To encourage the children to taste the fresh vegetables, the Master Gardeners teamed up with the Family and Consumer Science Extension staff and hosted an event they call



Students rate the appeal as they eat their way to a gold medal. Watermelon Tomato Salad rates high on children's approval list.



Master Gardeners and Extension staff conduct hands on learning activities to support the healthy lifestyles.

the "Try-a-thon". Recipes featured in the Plate it Up Program were prepared, including salsa, corn cakes, watermelon tomato salsa, and squash casserole. Students who tried the recipes could earn medals and each were challenged to go for the gold. The medal ceremony was a great success with 19 students receiving gold medals, 5 receiving silver and 4 bronze.