

# EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE

# *Changing Lives*

## IN MARTIN COUNTY

Extension provides practical education you can trust by helping individuals, families, businesses, and communities solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future.



### Heritage Days-County Wide

The Martin County Cooperative Extension Service participates in Heritage Days at each elementary school and the middle school every year. Volunteers from the Martin County Beekeepers Association also participated in each of the Heritage Days by offering lessons in beekeeping and the thrill of the students getting to see a live hive of honeybees through the use of our observation hive. Introducing beekeeping to students is vital because it has a long history of being one of the most important contributors to the production of many agricultural crops.

Along with the Beekeepers, several 4-H volunteers, district board members and county extension council members participate in the daylong events. Besides beekeeping, activities such as cooking on an open fire, taxidermy, quilting, home food preservation, making homemade ice cream, turkey calling were demonstrated. New to the agenda this year was showing kids to make apple butter.

The Extension Service was fortunate enough to come in contact with every elementary and middle school student during these Heritage Day events.

As a result of participating in these programs for a couple years, students are starting to embrace Martin County History. The program is showing an intermediate outcome because students have changed their attitudes about accepting their culture.

### Priority Program Efforts

- A total of 570 people are now involved in addressing significant community issues
- 90 youth made an impact in their community through service projects
- 28 local residents implemented practices that promote sustainable agriculture
- 170 Producers reported an economic impact (i.e., increase in agricultural productivity, increase in higher returns, decrease in expenses) in their agricultural operations
- 1020 youth indicated an increase in leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs
- 175 citizens (youth & adults) acknowledged utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming
- A total of 140 individuals reported making lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, healthy home practices, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health
- A total of 120 youth and adults demonstrated informed and effective decision-making skills
- 20 individuals incorporated new or additional conservation practices.



## Martin County Beekeepers

The concern for the loss of honeybees in Kentucky prompted the organization of the Martin County Beekeepers Association. The group is not only active in replenishing the honeybee population, but now has become very active in honeybee research.

The end results of this research prompted by NASA will not only affect the county but the state and nation as this information gathered will help discover the answer to the cause of the decline in honeybee population.

The Martin County Extension Service serves as sponsor to the Martin County Beekeepers Association and facilitates educational programs for the group.

The Beekeepers Association has over sixty members with average monthly attendance of forty-five. The Association has members from three surrounding counties and targets anyone interested in replenishing the honeybee population.

Each monthly meeting has educational activities ranging from local beekeepers as presenters to guest speakers from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife and representatives from beekeeping

supply companies.

As a result of the educational effort from the Extension Service and the results of the information gathered from research local beekeepers have changed the methods of keeping honeybees and are now more successful. The past two years the members of the Association have averaged producing over 2,000 pints of honey per year with a value of \$16,000.00.

## It's Your Reality

The Martin County Cooperative Extension Service and Links Youth Service Center hosted a financial simulation program, *It's Your Reality*, for freshmen at Sheldon Clark High School. 4-H has hosted *It's Your Reality* for 10 consecutive years now *It's Your Reality* introduced students to the "financial realities" associated with the adulthood-provision of food, clothing, shelter, etc. for a family and how these relate to career choices. Upon arrival at *It's Your Reality*, students received the equivalent of one month's salary for the career they intend to have after graduation. Participants went through each "store" purchasing housing, transportation, child care, etc. By the end of the simulation, students understand the correlation between career, lifestyle, and education.

The simulation is designed to help young women and men understand the impact of decisions made today or shortly after graduation on the course of their whole lives—decisions about educational paths, career options, lifetime mates and family living. They should make these critical decisions



with knowledge and a sophisticated attitude about the realities of and options for their futures.

## Health Matters

Martin County is included in a CDC-funded project to increase physical activity and improve nutrition in six Kentucky counties (Lewis, Letcher, Logan, Clinton, Martin and Elliott) through collaborative efforts of local community coalitions, existing Cooperative Extension and outreach services, and local public health departments, along with academic partners from the University of Kentucky's College of Agriculture, Food and Environment and College of Public Health. Throughout the three-year project, local community coalitions in each county will identify specific community needs and assets as well as proven intervention strategies to improve physical activity and nutrition, reduce obesity, and prevent and control diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. The community coalitions will work closely with extension, public health, and academic partners to implement and evaluate these efforts. If improvements are made and continued, then these programs can have long-term positive impacts on the health of residents in these counties. Obese youth are more likely to have risk factors for cardiovascular disease, such as high cholesterol or high blood pressure. In a population-based sample of 5- to 17-year-olds, 70% of obese youth had at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease (CDC.gov). Children and adolescents who are obese are likely to be obese as adults and are therefore more at risk for adult health problems such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, several types of cancer, and osteoarthritis (CDC.gov). Martin County FCS and SNAP partnered with Warfield Family Resource Center to offer a Fit Camp for children of Martin County. The goals of the camp were to focus on encouraging physical activity as well as health and nutrition to the



participants. On the first day of enrollment children were encouraged to focus on their health by participating in activities such as hand washing and reading a book about being active. On this first day 30 pedometers were given to the children and their purpose explained. The

children were immediately excited and began walking and running about the gym. Kids continued to come up to the FCS Agent and SNAP assistant and tell what number of steps they were at "I'm at 200," "I'm now at 375!" Each day of the camp more activities focused on health and physical activity were completed with the children, but the highlight of the day for the children was to record their number of steps from the previous day and reset their pedometers. Each day the children set a goal to do better than the previous day. One child had over 10,000 from one day to the next. 100% of the children in attendance increased the number of steps from one day to the next. Successes of this camp also included children increasing their knowledge of the proper way to wash hands, and increase their knowledge of health and nutrition. Activities usually focused on getting the children moving, such as jumping rope or playing parachute. Nutrition education involved trying new things and learning about vegetables; of 44 children and adults that tried a Kale smoothie, only 7 did not like it.



## Holiday Happenings

Traditions make holidays memorable, but they add much more to the individual that participates in the tradition. Traditions are important on the family and community levels. Traditions build a sense of stability.

Regardless of whatever else is happening during the holiday season, family members look forward to and count on participating in traditions. Traditions within a community can be just as important and actually help to keep a community strong. Holiday Happenings at the Martin County Extension office has become a tradition for the community of Martin County. When families take part in rituals, trust builds; so taking part in an event that takes place every year (such as Holiday Happenings) builds trust in the community with the Extension staff. Holiday Happenings brings community members together. When individuals within a community join together to take part in a ritual, they experience a sense of belonging to something bigger than themselves. For children, traditions are exceptionally important. When children are welcomed to take part in community traditions, it helps them to feel accepted within their family and the community unit. When they feel connected to and accepted by their family and their community, they are less likely to seek out the connection and acceptance they desperately need from other social groups. Holiday Happenings is a time

for families to gather with others from the community and create a wreath and/or an ornament for them to take back and use as a decoration for their home or give as a gift. Holiday Happenings creates a time for the community to come together in fun fellowship to make



something as well as spend time together remembering or dreaming about happy times.

## 4-H Sewing Club

In our life of technology, we lose track of how things are made and where things come from. A skill that is often looked over is sewing. Sewing provides the opportunity for young people to experience a sense of accomplishment associated with completing a project. It also provides an opportunity for youth to understand textiles, construction techniques, design principles as well as develop eye/hand coordination. "Sewing is a discipline that helps develop self-esteem, confidence, focus, patience, fine motor skills, problem solving, process thinking and visualization. Additionally, sewing encourages creative ability."

For the 7th consecutive year Martin County 4-H has teamed up with Connie Harless the Home Economics Department at Sheldon Clark High School to form sewing clubs. The clubs are leader led by the Home Economics teacher. 4-H provides all the teaching materials and supplies, while the teacher provides all the education. Students learn to use a sewing machine and do needle work by hand. Without this partnership, the high school would not have the funds or opportunities to have these educational experiences.

*"Sewing is a discipline that helps develop self-esteem.."*

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