EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE
Changing Lives
IN MCCREARY COUNTY

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

The McCreary County Extension Service strives to improve the lives of all McCreary County residents by providing research-based information and educational programming to meet the needs of the community. Over the past year, we have continued to provide quality programming for all individuals across the lifespan and strengthen Kentucky families through these efforts. This report serves to highlight our work and bring attention to all the ways extension is making a difference here in McCreary County.

**Priority Program Efforts**

- **29** youth indicated an increase in leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs
- A total of **170** individuals reported making lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, healthy home practices, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health
- **143** Total number of families/caregivers reached with Extension-related information on the importance of a physically active lifestyle
- **10** individuals incorporated new or additional conservation practices.
- **105** Number of youth demonstrating skills learned from participation in 4-H science projects (related to natural resource and the environment)

**Nutrition Education Program**

The obesity rate in the state of Kentucky has increased by 90% over the last 15 years. Individuals report lack of healthy dietary knowledge as a leading factor in the increased pandemic of unhealthy weight gain in our state. To address this need of dietary knowledge, Extension staff provided more than 500 hours of nutrition education over the past year in McCreary County.

Educational outreach and classes have been offered throughout the county including Eagle and Heritage Community Centers, the public library, Senior Citizens Center, Pine Knot Job Corp, local churches, and the McCreary County School System.

Our staff focused to improve the nutrition and health of residents by teaching how to stretch their food dollars and making better choices.
Hike McCreary County

Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent, Greg Whitis, developed the hiking program in McCreary County to address the lack of physical activity in adults and youth.

35 youth from the 7th and 8th grade Gifted and Talented in Science were enrolled in the kids hiking group over the past year. They completed 9 hikes for a total of 42 miles. Educational programs presented along the hikes included healthy snacking, dining on the trail, trail survival, hiking safety, along with history and folklore of hiking areas. Enrolled youth reported feeling healthier, improved physical condition, improved self-esteem, improved dietary choices and an increase in physical activity as a result of the program.

The Adult hiking program consisted of 11 hikes, totaling 54.5 miles with 84 unique individuals participating throughout the past year. In addition to serving the residents of McCreary County, the hikes also promote tourism and attract many people from outside of the county. These guided hikes allow participants to explore new places, make new friends, lower stress, increase physical activity and even improve health through lowering their blood pressure and weight loss as reported by a written survey.

According to survey data over 90% of participants in the hiking program feel healthier after their hike, and over 80% surveyed will continue to use hiking in their fitness routine.

Kathy Brannon Memorial Craft Days

The McCreary County Extension Staff in collaboration with community leaders serving on the planning committee held the third annual craft camp, a priority indicated by the Extension Council and held in memory of the Family and Consumer Sciences Agent in the county from 1976-2009. The event was a two-day program that offered 17 classes in an effort to pass on heritage skills for community members wishing to learn for self-enjoyment or those wishing to explore entrepreneurial opportunities. A silent auction was held in conjunction with this event to benefit the local food bank and provide scholarships to extend learning experiences of individuals interested in attending regional craft camps. The Extension Agents with committee members worked to select classes, recruit teachers, and facilitate the event. As part of the post-evaluation, all participants of this event reported an increase in knowledge and skill level, 95% learned a new skill, and 50% have plans to teach a newly learned skill to others. The silent auction raised $527.00 and 95% rated their experience as “Great.”

Environmental Camp

Greg Whitis collaborated with numerous community partners to offer a three-day, two-night camping experience focused on providing environmental education to seventh grade students from McCreary Middle School. He worked to recruit leaders and instructors, assist in planning and secured funding from grants totaling $1,750.00 to assist with expenses of the program. 69 youth and 10 adult leaders attended the program. 98% of participants reported an increase in knowledge and awareness of their environment at the completion of the program. When asked what participants learned while attending camp, one student responded, “That it is important to recycle.”
**4-H Project Week**

4-H Project Week, a summer day camp program, offered youth a safe environment to learn new skills, make new friends, develop a sense of accomplishment through completion of projects, and help develop positive self-esteem. The four-day program this summer allowed youth to choose from 10 classes including woodworking, photography, cooking, sewing, basket making, beaded jewelry, ceramics, and oil painting. Through the involvement of nine volunteer instructors, the camp had 21 youth participants in project week, completing 79 projects. These projects were then entered into the 4-H Division of the County Fair. Total 4-H County Entries was 161 this year, up from 95 in 2012. Many of the projects went on to compete in the State Fair 4-H Competition.

**Get Moving McCreary County**

Amy Singleton, FCS Agent, collaborated with the county health department to provide an eight-week series focused on creating healthy lifestyle habits and gradual weight loss. The program was designed to help participants increase physical activity, increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables, and decrease the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages. Nutrition topics covered during the program include portion control, MyPlate, and reading nutrition labels. Physical activities during this program highlighted ways to become physically active in the local community (examples include a Tai Chi Self Defense class, kickboxing group fitness, and Zumba). The “biggest loser” reported a 6.1% weight loss during the eight-week program and 65% of overall participants reported a decrease in body weight at the completion of the program.

"In the future, I will substitute healthier choices in my own cooking"

- Holiday Healthy Cooking School Participant

**Holiday Healthy Cooking School**

Extension staff developed and implemented the first annual Healthy Holiday Cooking School over the past year. The program served to assist in providing practical knowledge in the areas of healthy ingredient substitutions for traditional holiday recipes, food safety to combat food borne illness, as well as replacement of traditional holiday foods with more nutritious (although just at satisfying) alternatives. Participants in this program watched food demonstrations, tasted samples, and participated in an interactive game to address food safety concerns. Of the community members that participated in the program 77% of participants reported increased knowledge in preparation of healthy holiday recipes, and 96% reported they would use one of the recipes they sampled within the next 3 months following the program.