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College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment

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# EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Changing Lives*



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When you support Extension, women organize their community to make healthy lifestyle choices and improve wellness of the community.

## Extension Empowers Breast Cancer Survivors to Become Leaders in Improving Health in Pendleton County

*Pendleton County Extension and community partners assisted breast cancer survivors in achieving wellness by organizing a dragon boat team and festival to promote healthy lifestyle choices for residents.*



**“Being a breast cancer survivor, you need encouragement and support following your treatment. Being a member of The Kentucky Thorough-Breasts Dragon Boat Team is a constant reminder of the battle I fought, as well as those who paddle in the boat with me. We relate to each other like sisters. We pray with and for each other ... When we compete, we are a wonderful example to others that the battle of fighting cancer can be won.” - Phyllis Kelsch, breast cancer survivor, Pendleton County Extension Homemaker and member of the Thorough-Breast Dragon Boat Team.**

Extension works to improve the wellness of Kentucky communities. Wellness includes emotional, social, spiritual, and physical health, as well as, intellectual, environmental and financial health (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012)

In 2008, breast cancer survivors in Pendleton County found wellness by forming a dragon boat team. The Pendleton County Extension Service, in collaboration with Three Rivers District Health Department and the Pendleton County Women’s Cancer Coalition, wrote a grant to the Susan G. Komen organization, which funded the purchase of a dragon boat. The boat was purchased and The Kentucky Thorough Breast Dragon Boat Racing Team was formed. For the members of the team, it created a support system of women as they gather at a lake to row a boat each week, giving them a sense of purpose in their lives. They employ their knowledge and skills to educate others about breast cancer and raise money to support research until a cure is found. The Paddling for Cancer Awareness, Inc., a 501(c)3 organization, was developed in 2010 with guidance from the Pendleton County Extension Service and community partners to orchestrate the first Dragon Boat Festival in Northern Kentucky. In 2014, over 1,000 breast cancer survivors and their supporters



*Every Saturday morning, teams of breast cancer survivors paddle together to maintain physical, social, emotional, environmental, and spiritual wellness.*



*Established in 2010, the Northern Kentucky Dragon Boat Festival has raised over \$200,000 for breast cancer research and awareness. In 2014, the over 1,000 survivors how participated raised over \$40,000. The festival is held the first Saturday in September.*

participated in the festival raising money to support women’s wellness and health and to promote breast cancer awareness.

Extension agents recognize the creative abilities of residents and support their efforts to enrich their lives and the lives of others through leadership training. In addition, Extension conducts programs to improve nutrition, and physical activity, and eases access to health screenings for early detection of chronic diseases.