Changing Lives

IN WHITLEY COUNTY

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

Priority Program Efforts

- A total of 206 people are now involved in addressing significant community issues
- 63 youth made an impact in their community through service projects
- 42 producers reported an economic impact (i.e., increase in agricultural productivity, increase in higher returns, decrease in expenses) in their agricultural operations
- 277 youth indicated an increase in leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs
- 577 citizens (youth & adults) acknowledged utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming
- A total of 662 individuals reported making lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, healthy home practices, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health
- A total of 275 youth and adults demonstrated informed and effective decision-making skills
- 10 individuals incorporated new or additional conservation practices.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Offering hay/feed and soil testing has help decrease expenses and increase profits on local farms. Soil testing specifies exactly what is needed to raise specific crops. Producers have been able to see what nutrients are needed and use only specific ingredients instead of general fertilizers. This has increased production as well as decreased input costs.

By testing hay and feed that is produced on the farm, farmers can be helped to balance rations for feeding their livestock.
Last fall a hay sample was tested for a producer that was not the quality that is required for the beef herd. By testing his hay, the Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent and producer worked together to determine ways to supplement his hay that was the most cost effective for production. On the other side, another producer had hay that far exceeded the standard quality that he had planned on supplementing. The farmer realized that this would have been a waste of money.

Both of these tests are frequently used to help the local farmers.

**Family and Consumer Sciences**

The Family and Consumer Sciences Homemakers Council expressed a concern about younger families learning simple cooking skills to incorporate into family mealtime. Studies have shown that those who eat family meals together tend to have lower obesity rates.

Because basic cooking skills were targeted as a need in Whitley County, the Family and Consumer Sciences Agent began a simple cooking series. The program consisted of three easy cooking projects: smoothies, homemade biscuits and slow cooking. Each lesson had a different emphasis including nutrition, baking and food safety.

The smoothies exemplified a way to get good nutrition in a fast and cheap way. The biscuit class helped participants overcome the fear they may have of baking from scratch. It also introduced measurements and incorporated cooking together.

The slow cooker helped them to understand food safety techniques when cooking meats, while keeping the food at a proper temperature.

In each class, there was an average of 12 people in attendance. It was interactive, and participants got to learn step-by-step preparation methods.

Samples were given after each lesson. According to the evaluations, it inspired many who attended to try new things. Some had used the smoothie recipes with children in their families. Others wanted to learn more cooking techniques to prepare for family events.

“I have learned the possibilities of what you can make in a crockpot are far greater than I realized.” – Quote from evaluation

**4-H Youth Development**

Utilizing the Cumberland River comprehensive Care Center staff as a resource, a “Bullying” prevention program was presented to 16 sixth grade 4-H clubs consisting of 373 members. The sixth grade was chosen for several reasons: 1) they are looked upon as leaders and role models for younger students in elementary schools; 2) they are increasingly using social media, but not fully understanding its impact; and 3) it is part of the character curriculum used by our local school systems. The program consisted of traditional scenarios of bullying in the school and neighborhoods, but also emphasized an increasing and alarming rate of cyber bullying via social media. Nationwide newscasts of bullying have made this a national issue which no community is isolated from; and youth need to be more aware of the serious consequences of bullying whether they are the bully, victim or bystander that allows it to go on.
Students were made aware of how harmless use of the internet social media can result in their character being damaged or scandalized, personal information used against them and how it can affect their personal wellbeing and safety. Students were told how any information they share on social media can go worldwide and is no longer private. Student dialogue was encouraged during the program, and several similar questions were asked in various classrooms.

Students were given a list of responses that can be utilized for various scenarios/types of bullying and given contact information for further assistance if needed. The counselor presenting this program responded afterwards that she had received several "anonymous" phone calls reporting various bullying situations from students that she feels were a part of this program. Utilizing teacher input, this program will be improved with before-and-after surveys and presented again for sixth grade 4-H club meetings next year.

A fifth grade "My Government" program was initiated with a trial program in the fall of 2012. In the fall 2013 and spring 2014 this program was fully implemented to include 390 fifth graders from 15 4-H clubs in the Williamsburg and Whitley County school districts. The program included a tour/presentation of local government offices conducted by community leaders which included the Whitley County Judge Executive, Williamsburg Mayor and Gary Barton, County Circuit Court Clerk, pictured above during his courtroom presentation.

Fine Arts

The Whitley Extension Fine Arts program reached 13,262 direct contacts in Whitley County by providing community education in positive life choices, visual arts, community pride and strengthening our community through the coordination, education and development of the arts. When repeated requests were received to create and implement an educational pottery and ceramics program, the Fine Arts team and Council set to work fulfilling the needs of the community.

The feature artist from our "Growing Grazing Green" exhibit last year, J. Don Faulkner, and local Arts Council supporter Jim Moss each donated a kiln for our use; and the UNITE program chipped in $1,500 for purchasing clay, glazes and brushes in order to get started. All the items were in place – now we just needed a qualified potter to teach all the specifics of pottery. Luckily for us, Rayford and June Watts, Extension Arts Council members, came to the rescue. The Watts are Kentucky Crafted, state-juried potters who live in Whitley County. June instructs in hand-building, a type of free-form sculpture with clay, while Rayford specializes in throwing on the potter's wheel.

Over the course of several months, the Watts held weekly evening classes with volunteers on the Fine Arts Council in order to expand instructor knowledge and skill in pottery. These classes covered all the basics of working with clay, both on the potter's wheel and free-form. Throughout the process, five new instructors have now received enough skill that they can instruct in community classes, assist in Open Pottery Studio workshops held every Thursday and provide youth with creative alternatives to keep them from experimenting with drug use.
Since launching the ceramics program this year, Fine Arts staff have provided pottery demonstration workshops in multiple schools across the county, at Farmers Market events, evening workshops and weekly studio hours open to all Whitley County residents. By offering accessible arts programming to residents of all ages, Whitley County Fine Arts is enhancing the quality of life in our county through arts education. Whitley County Fine Arts staff and council volunteers are meeting the needs of residents, providing creative outlets and providing youth with a positive hobby in order to strengthen our community through the arts.

“Thank you for providing these classes. I did not think I was a creative person, but I feel so proud of what I have made!”
– Quote from a class attendee

Horticulture

Through collaboration with Eastern Kentucky University’s (EKU) Corbin campus and the Whitley County Master Gardeners, a community garden has been established at the EKU Corbin campus. Over the past year, mushroom compost as well as leaf litter has amended the soil to improve conditions for a summer’s bounty. Soil tests were also taken so that the producers can identify exact needs for the specific crops produced.

The garden is split into eighteen plots – fourteen of them are ten feet by 20 feet, and four more are five feet by ten feet. More ground had been worked at the end of this year’s growing season expanding production ability by four-six plots. All of the plots, with the exception of a smaller one, were in use this past season.

As a result of the garden, 14 different individuals have been able to produce their own vegetables, keeping them in touch with the earth while saving money on their grocery bill and getting great exercise. The gardeners are made up of seven community members, one EKU faculty member, three EKU staff members and three EKU Students. A variety of crops are being produced such as tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, green beans, peppers, corn and even sunflowers.

Hopes for next year are an increase in programming giving students, faculty and members of the greater Whitley County community increased access to horticultural knowledge. It is hoped the new plots will be fully utilized increasing food production and adding annual cut flowers for attracting beneficial insects, adding beauty and assisting the University of Kentucky in researching which flowers grow well in our climate.

We at Extension see this community garden as a great partnership as well as educational opportunity and are looking forward to a wonderful year ahead of us!