



# EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE

## *Changing Lives*

### IN SHELBY COUNTY

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



*Hee-haw, it's the Shelby County Good Neighbors Farm Tour!*

### GOOD NEIGHBORS FARM TOUR

The Shelby County Good Neighbors Farm Tour, currently in its fourth year, continues to stimulate the minds and attract the attention of both local and distant neighbors. Attendance climbed to more than 400 participants for the September, 2015 tour, with individual Facebook posts promoting the event engaging more than 2,500 users.

Cooperative Extension staff and a growing committee of Horticulture and Agriculture Council representatives and outside volunteers expanded the tour and collaborated with ten farms and three agribusinesses to provide unique learning experiences for the community. Each tour stop offered hands-on educational experiences on topics including beef and dairy cattle, bees, alpacas, maple syrup production, blueberries, rare horse breeds, tobacco, horticulture and grain.

One participant commented, "My husband and I have just returned home after an enjoyable day of visiting farms. Thank you so much for continuing this super day. Today we made it to seven of the 10 farms and enjoyed each one! All

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### Priority Program Efforts

- A total of **128** people are now involved in addressing significant community issues
- **42** youth made an impact in their community through service projects
- **800** local residents implemented practices that promote sustainable agriculture
- **95** Producers reported an economic impact (i.e., increase in agricultural productivity, increase in higher returns, decrease in expenses) in their agricultural operations
- **863** youth indicated an increase in leadership skills, knowledge or confidence through participation in Extension-related leadership programs
- **335** citizens (youth & adults) acknowledged utilizing the skills learned through Extension programming
- A total of **2,073** individuals reported making lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, managing stressors, healthy home practices, etc.) for the purpose of improving their health
- A total of **386** youth and adults demonstrated informed and effective decision-making skills
- **81** individuals incorporated new or additional conservation practices.

unique but equally friendly and informative. We look forward to visiting more of our friendly neighbors in the years to come. Thank you so much!"

The Good Neighbors Farm Tour is beneficial to the host farms as well, as they were able to increase their income during the Farm Tour and attract future customers. One farm had cash sales of more than \$600 on the day of the tour while another sold more than \$1,000 in products.

Survey responses reflect the enthusiasm being generated about local agriculture by the Farm Tour. By bringing non-farm citizens to the farm, relationships are built that will serve to strengthen agriculture's image and increase awareness of local agricultural products and services.

### OUTDOOR NATURALIST

In excess of 40 outdoor enthusiasts took part in the inaugural Outdoor Naturalist educational series. Modeled after Illinois Extension's Master Naturalist program, Shelby County agriculture and horticulture staff planned and piloted this 14-session series



*An up-close look at lake algae during an Outdoor Naturalist hands-on class.*

covering topics ranging from archaeology to native plants, geology to wildlife management, and water resources to parks and recreation. Participants took part in hands-on learning through courses in the field as well as in the classroom. Feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive and interest is high in developing a Master Naturalist certification program similar to that of Illinois.

As a result of using social media to promote the program, this series of courses has generated a new audience of users who add to the diversity of Shelby County Extension programming.

### LOCAL PRODUCTS TAKE ROOT

"Rooted" in Shelby continues to take shape as an organization that identifies and promotes the sale of items produced by Kentucky Proud enterprises in Shelby County. Membership representation includes anything grown or produced in Shelby

County including meat and dairy products, live animals, fruits, vegetables, grains, sod, hay, honey and artisanal products.

Membership has grown to include nearly 50 local farms over the past three years. Participants are provided with a farm gate sign, access to Rooted in Shelby logos and marketing materials, and promotion via the Shelby County Extension website as well as a dedicated Rooted in Shelby website. Members have been invited to participate in providing the meal for the local Farm-City banquet in November, as well as other local events, helping to increase awareness and increase sales of local products.

### PLANTING SEEDS OF A BETTER COMMUNITY

Extension Master Gardeners make a commitment to spend volunteer hours doing horticultural service for the community following their training. In 2015, Shelby County's active Master Gardeners logged almost 2,000 hours of community service, an average of almost 40 hours by each Master Gardener.

One high profile project was completing the landscaping for a newly-built Habitat for Humanity home in Shelbyville. On a fall morning, nearly 20 Master Gardeners descended upon the house to plant trees, shrubs donated by local businesses and perennials donated from their own yards. The new owners, a family of five, were delighted with the results.

When the housing director of a local women's shelter asked Extension for assistance with landscaping a sidewalk and shoring up a tilting concrete wall, Master Gardeners designed and

installed a low-maintenance sidewalk planting and put in a rain garden to slow the water flow, which was undermining the concrete wall.



*Shelby County Master Gardeners plant donated trees and shrubs at a Habitat for Humanity house in Shelbyville*

"I just asked for help because I was over my head, and the Master Gardeners just took over," said

Janevera Rothenburger, Operation Care's housing director.

## STAND UP TO FALLING

The chances of falling and of being seriously injured in a fall increase with age. Approximately one-third of seniors 65 years and older fall in Kentucky each year. After discussing recent falls, the Shelby Shape Ups exercise group expressed an interest in a Falls Prevention Program.

The Shelby County Cooperative Extension Service Family and Consumer Sciences Agent taught the Stand Up to Falling Program for twenty-five people. This program highlights ways in which the risk of falling can be reduced to help seniors maintain independence and quality of life.

After the program the twenty-five participants completed a questionnaire indicating that 100% had increased their knowledge to reduce their risk of falling; 100% increased their knowledge to how to safely get up from a fall; 100% expressed aspirations to reduce fall risk and make a positive behavioral change toward independent and quality aging.

A Falls Prevention Program has the potential to save an estimated \$18k-\$21k in health care costs per person, in cases involving a fatality or hospitalization.

## SEWING SUCCESS

Learning to sew is a wonderful skill that youth can use throughout their life. They gain self-confidence and a sense of pride when they wear a garment that they made themselves. Shelby County had two volunteer-led, after-school 4-H sewing series and a sewing workshop on project days. As a result, 33 youth completed garments and other items. All of the participants were proud of their accomplishments and couldn't wait to wear their outfits to school.

Due to the continued success of the 4-H sewing project, a new 4-H club was established. Fifteen youth have attended the 4-H sewing club where they have completed additional sewing projects for their home and families. A testimonial from one parent was overwhelmingly positive after her child made a purse in the sewing club and presented the purse to her on Mother's Day. The lessons and life skills learned in sewing will help these young people as they grow into adults and become productive citizens in our community.

Many of Shelby County's eight Master Clothing

Volunteers led the 4-H sewing projects. The MCVs also shared their sewing expertise with others by leading nine adult Sewing Circles and Summer Sit and Sew Days. Eighty-five (85) people completed sewing projects during these sewing sessions.

## EMBRACING HEALTH



*Children enjoy making food items from scratch with the Shelby County Extension Volunteers at Kids In The Kitchen*

Participants in Get Moving Kentucky, Community Health Fairs, Shelby Shape Ups, First Saturday Walk Aabouts, and nutrition and cooking programs adopted new lifestyle habits to improve their health. They realized that nutrition is important and movement is essential for strong bodies and minds.

## HEALTHY EATING = HEALTHY YOU

The prevalence of obesity in America is an increasing issue. In Shelby County 30.9% of adults are obese and 21.3% of children are overweight or obese. To encourage healthier eating at a younger age, the Shelby County Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent presented the "Healthy Eating = Healthy You" nutrition program in 26 4-H school clubs for 645 children in March 2016. Two months later 203 students completed a survey that revealed 48% of students ate five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily, 71% of the group ate breakfast each morning, 59% ate healthy snacks to help get the nutrition they need and 71% chose nutritious drinks such as water, milk and 100% fruit juice.

## GO RED FOR HEART HEALTH

The Family and Consumer Sciences Advisory Council planned the February 2016 "Go Red for Heart Health" event. Over 100 women learned about heart attack and stroke warning signs and lifestyle changes that can decrease the risk of heart disease. The Council provided educational booths and recruited community partners for the mini-health fair where attendees could receive free blood

pressure checks and glucose tests. Seven other community partners contributed over \$800 to provide the free heart healthy lunch and program materials for all participants.

## 4-H COUNTRY HAM PROJECT

The ability to speak in public is an important life skill that young people need to acquire. However, getting them to prepare speeches and participate in Communication Events is sometimes difficult. The 4-H Country Ham Project has successfully enticed hundreds of youth into giving speeches through the



*4-H members put cure on their hams. Over 750 Kentucky youth participated, including 19 from Shelby County.*

process of curing country hams. Using a fun hands-on project to tie into the speech provides incentive for 4-Hers to get involved in this project.

The 4-H Country Ham project provides youth two green hams to start the process. During the cold season, 4-Hers rub cure on the hams and place them into

the ham houses to begin the curing process. They return in late spring to wash and rehang their hams to finish the aging process. The culmination of the project is the Kentucky State Fair, where the participants' hams are judged, and the youth give a speech on a country ham related topic. Not only are the 4-Hers practicing their communications skills, they have a sense of accomplishment from producing two country hams.

Nineteen youth from Shelby County participated in the contest, including one who won her age division. As a result of this contest, many youth gave a speech for the first time or improved their communication skills. Most youth join the project for the hands-on activity of learning to cure a country ham, but reap the benefit of improving their communication skills through the speech component of the project.

## SCIENCE, ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY

Science, Engineering, and Technology (SET) is one

of the core areas of focus for the Kentucky 4-H Program. Shelby County 4-H provided several opportunities for youth to experience science in a fun, hands-on environment. Elementary and middle school-aged youth participated in projects related to aerospace and rocketry, energy, and robotics.

Some of the sessions for youth included: building and setting off rockets, designing straw rockets, learning about force and motion as part of the National 4-H Youth Science Day Experiment, designing robots to help with environmental clean-up (Eco-Bots), and building spool cars to study energy transformation. An evaluation following the programs revealed that the kids had fun but also gained important exposure to the fields of SET. All the students reported learning how to apply scientific principles to real world situations and that the experiments required them to think critically and problem solve. The 4-Hers also felt the experiments reinforced what they were learning in the classroom. The 4-H program is helping youth build a strong foundation in the fields of SET.



*Shelby County 4-H members prepare to launch rockets during a Science, Engineering & Technology workshop.*



**University of Kentucky**  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment  
Cooperative Extension Service

Shelby County

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For more information,  
Please contact us at:  
1117 Frankfort Road  
Shelbyville, KY 40065-9447  
(502) 633-4593  
Fax: (502) 633-6713  
[www.ca.uky.edu](http://www.ca.uky.edu)

