

Berkeley County Annual Report | 2016

Putting Knowledge to Work!

West Virginia University Extension works to provide “solutions in your community” through key program areas including agriculture, environment and natural resources, 4-H youth development, food and nutrition, health and wellness, financial planning, and home gardening. These research-based programs and services are available to all residents of Berkeley County thanks to the tremendous support of our community members, local organizations, volunteers, and our local partners at the Board of Education and County Council.

Highlights

Our 4-H Livestock and Horse Judging Teams placed first in the state and represented West Virginia 4-H at two national judging events.

The newly formed Master Gardeners Speaker’s Bureau is expected to reach thousands of county residents with research-based West Virginia University Extension programs on a variety of gardening topics – 16 programs are currently offered. This program aspect is growing new leaders among our WVU Extension Master Gardeners and we anticipate heightened public education on sustainable and productive gardening practices.

Over 1,100 participants in Families and Health programs increased their healthy eating practices as well as increased physical activity (through Family Nutrition Program, Dining with Diabetes, BodyWorks, and Community Educational Outreach Services) to ultimately improve their health.

4-H and Youth Development

4-H Animal Science 101 saw excellent results in 2015 with over 800 livestock exhibits and 300+ exhibitors completing the on-line Youth Quality Assurance Training. Noteworthy for 2015, our 4-H Livestock and Horse Judging Teams placed first in the state and represented West Virginia 4-H at their respective national judging events.

4-H Entrepreneurial Leadership demonstrated sustainability and success with 55-members from one of our special interest 4-H Clubs receiving the first place national award. Hedgesville 4-H Jr. Fire Department competed with over 8,000 Jr. Fire Departments from the United States and Canada and based on knowledge and performance, they placed first. They were honored at an awards banquet in Washington, D.C.

4-H Adult Volunteer Training was a priority in 2015 with over 400 adult volunteers completing the “Best Volunteer Practices Training Series” and becoming vetted by WVU through the Children on Campus

– continued

background check.

4-H Camping

In 2015 Berkeley County celebrated the 96th year of 4-H camping with over 750 campers and counselors attending 4-H Camp. We also celebrated 100-years of camping in West Virginia with over 130 members and adult volunteers attending 4-H Camp and weekend events.

We know from experience that 4-H changes lives by helping youth to become confident, mature adults ready to succeed in today's challenging world. Studies show that youth participating in 4-H do better in school, are more motivated to help others, feel safe to try new things and develop lasting friendships.

Berkeley County 4-H programs are offered in a number of research-tested outreach strategies: school enrichment and after-school programs, camp settings and community clubs. Additionally, the Berkeley County Youth Fair and West Virginia State Fair offer 4-H members an opportunity to demonstrate their skills and earn recognition for their best work.

The fundamental 4-H ideal of practical, learn-by-doing experiences encourages youth to experiment, innovate, and think independently. Youth learn leadership, citizenship and life skills through more than 1,000 projects with topics as varied as rocketry, public speaking, nutrition and community service.

Youth quality assurance training is designed to teach young people the importance of displaying good character in carrying out livestock projects and in every aspect of their lives. They demonstrate these high standards in the care of their livestock and in their personal character.

The purposes of the WVU Extension Service 4-H Youth Development Program's volunteer selection process are to provide a safe atmosphere for youths involved in Extension activities, and to select and place qualified volunteers for 4-H youth activities.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Agricultural Education and Outreach programs reached over 1,200 people, including over 700 youths, through a variety of programs such as:

- Agriculture Education dinner meetings covering a variety of topics.
- Pesticide Recertification Training.
- Agriculture In The Classroom.
- Livestock Education Classes and Consultations.
- Youth Quality Assurance workshops.
- Agricultural Literacy programming for adults and youth.

– continued

- Liaison for Berkeley County Youth Fair judging and animal husbandry

Extension Master Gardener programs provided over 3,100 hours of community service through educational talks and demonstrations to more than 500 participants at various events including:

- Master Gardener Plant Sale.
- Tomatofest.
- Gardening 101.
- Martinsburg Home Show.
- Wild Yards program.
- Pest ID Clinic.

Horticulture Instruction and Outreach through informal and formal settings include:

- Training 14 new Master Gardeners.
- Youth gardening summer program for 54 participants including 44 youths.
- 296 soil samples results and recommendations for 2,000+ acres in Berkeley County.
- Burke Street Promise Children's Garden.
- Consultation with clients across the county.

Berkeley County is an agricultural region based on small farms. Adults that attend our agriculture outreach programs and consultations, classes, hands-on sessions, and Master Gardener events take what they learn to their farms, gardens and back yards. Our growers and farmers work very hard to have fertile soil and productive farms using sustainable IPM, soil sampling and excellent animal husbandry skills. What adults learn today, they pass on to those who inherit the family farm. The children of today learning on the family farm and those reached through our programs such as Burke Street Promise Garden, Agriculture in the Classroom and 4-H will be the farmers, growers and scientists of tomorrow. They will discover and employ the technologies that help feed the community, the country and the world using efficient, environmentally sustainable practices.

Families and Health

Family Nutrition Program had 967 youth and 51 adult participants in 2015. Assessments/evaluations indicated the following:

- 62% of adults improved their use of safe food handling practices.
- 79% of adults improved resource-management practices and nutrition practices.
- 45% of adult participants improved their label reading practices.

– continued

- 100% of adults reported a positive change in any food group.
- 83% of children and youth improved their abilities to choose foods according to Federal Dietary Recommendations or gained knowledge.
- 39% of children and youth used safe food handling practices more often or gained knowledge

Dining with Diabetes had 44 total adults complete class sessions in 2015. Assessments/evaluations indicated the following:

- 80% of participants maintained or decreased their A1C scores. One participant dropped from 9.4 to 6.1; a huge reduction in A1C.
- 52% reported an increase in physical activity.
- 36% are using herbs and spices to replace salt.
- 24% reported eating more fruits and vegetables.
- 73% reported an increase in using Nutrition Facts labels when shopping for food

Food Preservation hands-on classes (3) and one discussion were attended by a total of 30 participants. Assessments/evaluations indicated the following:

- 100% of participants strongly agreed they gained new knowledge about home food preservation and either strongly agree or agree that they know where to find reliable resources for additional information about home food preservation.
- 100% of participants marked either strongly agree or agree that they plan to use this knowledge to preserve food at home this season.

Community Education and Outreach Service membership totaled 115 in 2015. Noted achievements for the year include:

- 2,521 books read.
- 18 different lessons studied.
- 16,070 volunteer hours served.
- 9,993 hours of physical activity reported.
- 82 attended event benefiting domestic violence prevention (\$857 plus items donated to local domestic violence center).
- 59 participated in leadership training workshops.

Other Programming included BodyWorks, with six families completing the program; the Five Love Languages Program with eight participants; Mindfulness/Anger Reduction training to eight participants; and Smart Money workshops serving 214 state employees with the following outcomes:

– continued

- 72% of state employees in the Smart Money Workshops agreed or strongly agreed they now know something about budgeting they did not know before the workshop.
- 80% of state employees in the Smart Money Workshops agreed or strongly agreed they plan to use information or skills they learned in managing their money.

According to a report by the West Virginia Governor's office in 2013, for West Virginia to successfully reverse high health care costs and poor outcomes, it will require specific changes in the healthcare system to address high-cost health conditions and improve the overall health of West Virginia families. Berkeley County's Family Nutrition Program plays an important part in improving overall health by training youth to make healthy food and activity choices early in their lives which will lead to better health outcomes over time for them and their families. The adult program partners with local organizations to provide nutrition and healthy cooking instruction to limited-resource adults in order to improve their health. Adult participants learn strategies to reduce their food expenditures and stretch SNAP monies and receive recipes that promote eating whole grains, fruits and vegetables, and reducing fat, salt, and sugar intake. They learn to interpret nutrition labels and are encouraged to incorporate regular physical activity into their lives.

Properly preserved fruits and vegetables by Berkeley County citizens will increase the consumption of healthy foods leading to an improvement in general health and decrease the need for medical interventions.

State employees who participated in the Smart Money workshops learn strategies to help stretch the family income, initially to adjust to a different pay schedule but continuing these practices can enable them to save money.

Programs and activities offered by the West Virginia University Extension Service are available to all persons without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, veteran status, political beliefs, sexual orientation, national origin, and marital or family status. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Director, Cooperative Extension Service.

The WVU Board of Governors is the governing body of WVU. The Higher Education Policy Commission in West Virginia is responsible for developing, establishing, and overseeing the implementation of a public policy agenda for