

## Wyoming 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 Wyoming County thanks to the tremendous support of our community members, local organizations, volunteers and local partners – the Board of Education and County Commission.

### Highlights

Extension Agent Stephanie Lusk co-presented at the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents Annual Conference in Portland, Oregon.

Three youth completed the charting project, resulting in a \$500 scholarship for 4 years.

Families & Health Extension Agent Loren Wells co-authored an article for *WV - Health Motivators Calendar* which will be used state-wide through CEOS and other educational programs.

### 4-H and Youth Development

Increased success in STEM and other academic subjects, leads to positive outcomes for youths as well as a reduction in risky behaviors. Because of their involvement in 4-H activities in Wyoming County, youth are more likely to obtain well-paying jobs, create their own businesses, and contribute to the health and well of their communities.

- 416 youth participated in STEM activities this year.
- 109 youth participated in the 2015 4-H National Science Experiment: Motion Commotion.

Low-resource children have been found to have lower vocabulary levels when they enter school and continue to be behind other children throughout their school years. Children who participated in Energy Express in our county, and who read and practice reading skills in the summer, will enter the new school year better prepared. The better prepared students are to learn, the more likely they will graduate from high school and pursue college training.

- Three Energy Express Sites reached 108 Wyoming County youth, providing over 3706 meals.
- 3,414 hours of service were given from volunteers.

In 2015, we celebrated 100 years of 4-H camping!

- 65 youth attended county 4-H camp.

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- 16 attended a state 4-H camp.
- 74 were active members of a community 4-H club.

4-H in Wyoming County Schools:

- 606 youth participated in healthy living topics including ATV Safety, Stop Spit Tobacco and Health Rocks.
- 75 youth participated in a financial literacy program.
- 15 volunteers gained knowledge and skills necessary when working with children.

## Families and Health

### Smart Money Series – Bi-Weekly Pay Change

*Smart Money* is a lunch-and-learn style workshop developed at the behest of the West Virginia State Auditor’s Office to teach West Virginia state employees about budgeting and personal finance in order to prepare for financial success while making the transition to a bi-weekly pay schedule. WVU Extension Agents were asked to conduct the lunch-and-learn sessions for state employees beginning in the spring of 2015. Agents were tasked with helping these employees see the practical scenarios related to paying their bills and leave them with a better understanding of what they and their families should consider under the new pay system.

- 64 state employees in Wyoming County attended Smart Money workshops in which they learned budgeting skills and how to prepare for the new payroll program change to bi-weekly pay.
  - 69% (45/64) reported that after attending this training, they knew something they didn’t know before about planning a budget.
  - 60.9% (39/64) reported that they felt more confident about their ability to prepare for a change to bi-weekly paychecks and intended to do something differently after attending this training.

### Rethink Your Drink

Sugar sweetened beverages are by far the biggest sources of added sugar in the average American’s diet. They account for more than one-third of the added sugar we consume as a nation. Not only is sugar linked to dental issues but poor overall health. Consumers drinking sugar sweetened beverages tend to have an overall lower dietary quality. Studies show that sugary drinks increase the risk of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers. Rising consumption of sugar sweetened beverages has been a major contributor to the obesity epidemic, metabolic syndrome and fatty liver disease. West Virginia has one of the highest rates of adult obesity in the United States, with 32.9% of the population reported as obese in 2010 in comparison to 27.8% of the U.S.

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population. Rates for childhood obesity in West Virginia also reflected higher than national rates. Children who are obese have a greater risk for high cholesterol or high blood pressure (risk factors for cardiovascular disease). Obese adolescents are predisposed to diabetes and are at a greater risk for bone and joint problems, sleep apnea, and social and psychological problems. In the long-term, obese youth are more likely to remain obese as adults and are at a greater risk for adult health problems such as heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, stroke, some cancers and osteoarthritis. These risks can be lessened by helping children maintain healthy lifestyle habits. (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention).

According to 2013 health rankings\*, Wyoming County ranks 54th in West Virginia, falling second to McDowell County as the unhealthiest county in the state (Univ. of Wisconsin Population Health Institute). Much of what influences our health happens outside of the doctor's office – in our schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods. Through opportunities presented at community health fairs, county organizational meetings, farmers markets, and within the schools (i.e., Kids Koupon Project), the RYD campaign reached a wide number of residents across the state this year. In Wyoming County, Rethink Your Drink was incorporated into health fairs, county organizational meetings, and specifically, Wyoming County's 4-H camp.

- 51 youth participated in Rethink Your Drink activities during 4-H camp.
  - When asked the open-ended question, "Because of your camp experience, what do you intend to do differently when you go home?" the most frequent response was, "drink more water."
  - 74.5% (38/51) completed a written pledge to drink more water.

#### **Retrain Your Brain – Healthy Choices, Healthy You**

- 30 adult participants learned basic nutrition education using the MyPyramid & MyPlate method (i.e., portion control, the health benefits of fruits and vegetables, the importance of reading food labels, and the benefits of fiber in your diet).

#### **Extension Agent, Loren Wells, advised 2 WV-CEOS Clubs:**

- Pineville CEOS club received the Certificate of Achievement Award at the State CEOS Conference at Jackson's Mill in recognition of their number of volunteer hours reported.

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