

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

### Highlights

- Working with H.E. White Elementary, we constructed the county’s first high tunnel, first school garden and worked alongside teachers using garden-based learning. Kids there are currently harvesting lettuce for their own cafeteria use.
- Extension Agent Ami Cook received a 1<sup>st</sup> place national team award for her work with the Five Love Languages research program.
- Partnering with other Extension professionals in the Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation area, we developed a summer-long STEM Ambassador Program for our counties and obtained \$126,000 for its support. 622 youths participated in STEM activities in Clay County this past summer led by a college student ambassador studying the field of chemical engineering.
- Ami Cook is pursuing research on literacy skills and home literacy environment of rural Appalachia in Clay County Elementary schools.
- The Buffalo Creek Recreation Trail now spans from Clay to Widen for almost 20 miles. The Swandale/Crestmont section will be stocked with trout in 2016 by the West Virginia DNR. WV DEP is working on stream restoration on Buffalo Creek. The United Way of Charleston has provided support. We are responsible for creating these partnerships. The Clay County Extension Office also organized two service learning projects that resulted in the decking of two bridges on the trail.

### 4-H/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 Clay County, youth are more likely to obtain well-paying jobs, create their own businesses, and contribute to the health and well-being of their communities.

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

- 132 youths attended county 4-H camp and interacted with a college STEM Ambassador this summer.
- 20 youths attended a state 4-H camp at WVU Jackson's Mill.
- 109 were active members of a community 4-H club. Clubs are located at Big Otter, H.E. White, Clay Middle, Lizesmores Elementary, the high school and Pleasant Dale.
- Serving our youth are 8 adult 4-H club leaders and 22 adult camp counselors.
- 11 youths attended a three-day STEM day camp at Clay County Park. These campers gained an awareness of career possibilities in a STEM field for themselves and their peers.
- The Summer STEM Ambassador Program was not just at 4-H camp. There were 622 youth participants of the Summer STEM Ambassador Program in various settings. Clay County received nearly \$15,000 from the GKVF as a partner in this regional summer-long grant.
- Four adult leaders received All Star status, the highest award bestowed upon a leader at the state level.
- Two youths completed the charting program this year, the highest award bestowed at the county level.
- Michael Shamblin continues to train State 4-H Shooting Sports instructors in muzzle loading. Eight adults were trained to teach 4-H'ers across the state.
- Three Clay youths attended State Shooting Sports Camp this past year. Michael Shamblin continues to serve as the lead instructor for muzzle loading at this camp.

## Agriculture and Natural Resources

As Clay County produces more local food, more of the food dollar stays in the county or in West Virginia. In addition, buying local, fresh produce has benefits related to healthy eating and nutrition and can save families hundreds of food dollars each year.

- 24 soil tests, involving 130 acres were analyzed.
- 29 youths showed animals at the Agriculture Fair. \$26,000 was donated by businesses for their efforts.
- 150 consultations this year decreased pesticide and fertilizer use, increased yields and increased production efficiency, particularly those of gardeners and homeowners.
- One of the first high tunnels in Clay County is now functioning as a school garden at H.E. White Elementary. Teachers are utilizing garden-based learning to compliment Next Gen Standards as well as teach students healthy food choices.

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- Beginning and advanced beekeeping courses each spring and fall increase the number of beekeepers in our area. One beekeeper has expanded to 45 colonies and plans to begin selling bees this spring.

## Community, Economic and Workforce Development

- The Clay County Farmers Market generated an estimated \$15,000. Local fresh vegetables and fruits were marketed at the Clay Courthouse.
- River accesses have been constructed at Two Run and Hartland Bridge with our facilitation. The DNR is currently working out details for another access at Ivydale.
- The Buffalo Creek Recreation Trail, now spans from Clay to Widen for almost 20 miles. The Swandale/Crestmont section will be stocked with trout in 2016 by the WV DNR. WV DEP is working on stream restoration on Buffalo Creek. The United Way of Charleston has provided support. We are responsible for creating these partnerships. The Clay County Extension Office also organized two service learning projects that resulted in the decking of two bridges on the trail.

## Families and Health

- Nutrition education encourages youth to try a variety of healthy foods. 376 youths were reached in 2015 in Clay County elementary schools.
  - 72% of children and youth improve their abilities to choose foods according to Federal Dietary Recommendations or gain knowledge.
  - 35% of children and youth use safe food handling practices more often or gain knowledge.
  - 27% of children and youth improve their physical activity practices or gain knowledge.
- 21 people participated in the Rethink Your Drink campaign to encourage self and others to replace sugar-sweetened beverages with water and other healthy drink options.
- At 4-H camp, 3 students participated in the Relationship Smarts program.
- The Five Love Languages program, which focuses on improving communication in relationships, was delivered to 3 participants at the H.E. White Elementary School parent program.
- 11 people received Smart Money training to equip them to deal with the state pay cycle changes.
  - 70.8% of participants can now identify three categories of expenditures that they could control following this training.

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- 85% report now knowing something about budgeting that they didn't know before.
- 83% plan to use the information or skills they learned in the class in the next six months when managing their money.
- 95% of SPOKES participants reported being more likely to sit down together for meals more often after receiving the Strong Families Eat Together program.
- About 20 Farmers Market shoppers collected information and asked questions about home canning practices.
- Over 100 participants started walking for the Get Moving Clay campaign that partners with the Clay County Health Department, Clay Family Resource Network and the West Virginia Division of Tobacco Prevention. \$1,500 in grant funding is being used in the county for this project.
- \$5,000 in grant funding was secured through a Partners in Prevention grant for the Braxton and Clay Healthy Families Healthy Children Coalition.



2015 4-H Camp—Camp Sheppard Gandeeville—132 youths, 22 adult counselors

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Clay County Park—Rock Garden Community Service Project

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