Marion County Annual Report 2018

Putting Knowledge to Work!

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

Highlights

- **Feeding Children**
  On Monday, March 5, 2018, during the teachers’ work stoppage, many of Marion County WVU Extension Service’s volunteers pulled together to hold an open feeding site at a local church that was within walking distance of surrounding neighborhoods. A meal of grilled ham or turkey and cheese was provided along with carrots, apples and milk. Unsure of the anticipated turnout, the group prepared for 200. While not many made it to the site, lunches were bagged and delivered to several sites helping with children during their time out of school. Any remaining food was donated to the local mission.

- **Kid’s Markets**
  A multitude of kid’s markets were hosted in Marion County in 2018. Kid’s markets provide on-site lessons on healthy foods and an opportunity for children to “shop” for fresh fruits and vegetables. By making healthy food fun and providing easy access, the program increases interest and consumption of fruits and vegetables. Six markets were hosted at Marion County Head Start centers, reaching a total of 200 children.

  A series of kid’s markets is underway for the 2018 to 2019 school year at East Park Elementary School. Markets were held in November and December at East Park Elementary reaching roughly 350 children each. Each market provides 2,500 pounds of produce and 50 bags of non-perishable food to the school. In 2019, nine more school-wide markets will be held at East Park Elementary and Fairview Elementary. Evaluation results of recent markets demonstrate an increase in fruit/vegetable consumption among children and families because of the program.

4-H and Youth Development

*Camping*
Marion County All-Age 4-H camp was held at Camp Mar-Mac. There were 149 campers and 11 Cloverbuds supervised by 31 adult counselors and five teen counselors. Youths participated in two class periods and one leisure educational opportunity for four days, as well as learned team-building and communication skills when working with their tribes.

**Traditional 4-H Programming and Clubs**
- Marion County has 10 clubs with approximately 135 members from third grade through age 21; 20 Cloverbuds from kindergarten through second grade; and 83 leaders.

**Special Interest Programs**
- Seeing the success of special interest clubs in surrounding counties, Marion County decided to add a hiking club this fall. The club had three vetted volunteers who jumped at the opportunity to lead this project. The curriculum was based around the Hiking Trails project book and met at Camp Mar-Mac. The club met weekly for six weeks and concluded with a hike at Valley Falls State Park.

**Agriculture and Natural Resources**

**Soil Tests**
- Marion County handled approximately 225 soil tests for county landowners during the year.

**Marion County Master Gardeners**
- The group continued their partnership with Prickett’s Fort State Park by helping to maintain the educational gardens with period-appropriate plants. They also assisted with special events by answering questions that visitors had about the plants.
- The 10th Annual Tomato Festival was held at Palatine Park in Fairmont.
- The organization provided more than 1,300 volunteer hours in 2018.

**Family and Community Development**

**Marion County Christmas Toy Shop**
- The Marion County WVU Extension Service office once again coordinated the pre-registration and on-site registration for the event.
- 678 children received toys and books for Christmas morning.
- The team raised more than $20,000 in cash contributions and engaged 63 community volunteers.

**5th Annual Bright Futures for Marion County Students**
- This event is an all-day trip for eighth graders throughout the county in partnership with Fairmont State University.
- There were 243 students who participated from five schools.
- Marion County WVU Extension Service partnered with Fairmont State University, Marion County Board of Education, West Virginia Governor’s Highway Safety Program, Marion County Sheriff’s Department, Fairmont City Police, Fairmont State University Police and Denis Scott, WVU Extension Specialist.
- Successes for the event include:
  - Measurable gains in knowledge as measured by pre- and post-tests.
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- Increased student interest in attending Fairmont State University.
- $12,160 in resources were brought to Marion County students through this project.

- The schools are divided into two days allowing for smaller workshop sizes. Unfortunately, a weather day was called for the second day of the event, and it will be rescheduled for the spring semester.

Community Education Outreach Service

- Marion County hosted the Morgantown Area Meeting this past spring bringing in more than 150 CEOS members to our county.
- The CEOS clubs provided more than 6,000 hours in community service and more than $7,500 in donations (monetary and in-kind).

Rethink Your Drink

- Six Head Start centers hosted a week-long “Rethink Your Drink” program. WVU Extension Service faculty and staff taught three sessions each week.
- Post-surveys demonstrated that 76% of the students increased water consumption, 68% of the students decreased sugar-sweetened beverage consumption and 82% of families increased their water consumption, while 65% also decreased sugar-sweetened beverage consumption.