

Marion County Annual Report 2020

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

- In-person Zoom trainings were conducted throughout the year.
- Fresh produce was delivered through a Food Lion grant.
- A monthly 4-H program night was hosted.
- The community participated in a virtual 4-H and FFA livestock show and sale.

4-H/Youth Development

Activities:

Camping

- Marion County 4-H participated in the Camp URLinked activities created by WVU Extension agents and program assistants from across the state. There were 30 members who took part in this online format, utilizing Zoom and a private Facebook group to complete both live and asynchronous activities. The two most well attended programs were the assemblies, including one given by an instructor from the NASA IV & V and Fairmont State University collaboration.

Traditional 4-H Programming and Clubs

- Due to group size restrictions stemming from the pandemic, most of our 4-H activities have been moved to an individual level or to a virtual setting. In an effort to alleviate some pressure on our 4-H volunteers, we began a County Program Night held monthly via Zoom. The kids can choose between three interactive topics that are a majority hands-on activities.

Energy Express

- This six-week summer program is for children grades 1 - 6 and focuses on reading and art. Energy

Express was held virtually in 2020 with our site team meeting at the Field House. Of the 26 enrolled children enrolled, 92% of them attended more than 50% of the time.

- A Food Lion grant in the amount of \$1,700 was awarded to the Energy Express backpack program. The funds were mostly spent at Speedway Market, a local produce supplier, and provided seven weeks of fresh produce to our participants. We chose fruits and vegetables they may not have tried before and included recipes and any special spices.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Master Gardener Program

- The Master Gardener Program in Marion County has been around for more than 20 years. In that time, members have given more than 24,000 hours of volunteer time to the community.
- In the last year, members have:
 - Volunteered with the Homestead Farm Center
 - Maintained the period and education gardens at Pricketts Fort
 - Assisted and educated the staff and volunteers at Valley Falls State Park in the renovations of their gardens
 - Given to various organizations in the community and region

Families and Community Development

Continuing Education Outreach Service (CEOS)

- The CEOS continues its outreach efforts in the Marion County community by providing more than 7,000 service hours in the past year. As part of that service, members provided more than 400 masks to local nursing homes, homeless shelters and others in the community.

In-Person Zoom Training

- To fill a great community need, Family and Community Development agent, Ric Rodriguez, created an in-person Zoom training held in the county complex open to anyone in the community. It was limited to eight participants at a time, due to WVU guideline restrictions.

Kid's Market Partnership

- DTE Energy and a partnership with Mountaineer Food Bank brought a Kid's Farmers Market to Marion County at Blackshere Elementary. Approximately 330 students in grades Pre-K - 4, participated in an interactive agriculture lesson called "Tops or Bottoms," — which is a discussion of which vegetables grow above the soil and below ground. Each child was sent home with two bags of fresh produce that contained sweet potatoes, brussel sprouts, carrots and winter squash.

- **Families Nutrition Program**

Grow This Initiative

- Part of a state-wide program, “Grow This” challenges all West Virginians to grow their own fruits and vegetables to promote healthy eating. In previous years, only a few hundred participants signed up, however, more than 25,000 registered this past year, with funding available for only 10,000. Marion County had 622 participants with 253 being fulfilled through local funding. In a partnership with the Board of Education and Marion County Parks and Recreation, leftover seeds were distributed at all Summer Feeding Program sites.