Wirt County Annual Report 2018

Putting Knowledge to Work!

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 Wirt 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

- **4-H Program Growth** – Participation in the 4-H program rose from 96 members for 2017 to 2018 to 150 members currently enrolled, a 60% increase in one enrollment year.

- **STEM Education** – Approximately 1,267 youth contacts were made using STEM programming. This number includes duplicates of children who participated in more than one activity. Activities included STEM stations, club visits, National Youth Science Day and 4-H camp activities.

- **Community Garden** – Extension held four garden education classes and worked with Community Resources, Inc. to continue upgrading and managing the community garden, which features 18 4’x8’ raised beds and four standing raised beds.

- **Energy Express** – This program was fully enrolled with 40 children being served. 42.5% of the children were first time participants. 25% of the participants served had an Individualized Educational Plan or other special needs learning requirement.

- **Program Volunteers** – 33 volunteers were fully vetted and trained in youth protection during 2018, allowing for a safe educational learning environment during all our youth programs.

- **Communications** – The WVU Wirt County Extension Service office distributed an annual newsletter to 253 households in the fall of 2018. A 4-H newsletter was distributed three times throughout the year to 4-H families. 19 articles and 22 advertisements were released through the Wirt County News Journal with an audience of 2,600 people. A Facebook page for the Extension office was created and reached users on average, 4,763 times per month. The WVU Wirt County Extension Service webpage had 2,060 unique views over the course of the year.

- **National Council on Aging Partnership** – Through this partnership, one senior worker has been placed in the position of administrative assistant to the WVU Wirt County Extension Service Office for 15 hours per week.
4-H and Youth Development

Camping

- **Wirt County 4-H All-Age Camp** – 61 campers attended the five-day, four-night residential camp held at Camp Barbe from June 17-21, 2018. 95% of older campers (13 and up) felt they had an opportunity to be a leader at camp and reported the two most important things they learned were work and responsibility. Younger campers reported feeling safe and sense of belonging at camp. 17 teen leaders attended one extra day and night to help set up and finalize plans for the week.

- **Cloverbud Day Camp** – 13 youth campers (ages 6 to 8) participated in a one-day Cloverbud camp that featured crafting and recreational activities. This was held on June 20, 2018.

4-H School-Based Programs

- **National Youth Science Day Experiments** – In partnership with Wirt County Primary Center, this national curriculum was implemented over three sessions. Color Your World, a program designed to introduce youth to patterns in coding was held twice with a total of 43 participants. Code Your Dance, intended to introduce youth to terminology used in computer coding, had 14 youth participants.

- **STEM Stations for Family Involvement Night** – The following stations were implemented during family involvement events: ruminant animal digestion – two sessions (427 and 340 youths), lemon batteries (215 youths), UV bracelets (70 youths) and decoder rings (61 youths).

- **All About Pollinators** – 22 youths in a fifth-grade classroom participated in this in-school activity, where they learned the importance of pollinators and how shapes and colors of flowers attracted different types of pollinators.

Traditional 4-H Programming and Clubs

- **Community Clubs** – Wirt County is home to six community clubs, one of which was added in October of 2018. These clubs are led by 15 adult club leaders. 150 youths are members of the clubs including 19 Cloverbuds. Clubs work throughout the year on community service projects, educational programming, and fundraisers that are planned and implemented by youth leadership.

- **Teen Leaders** – Wirt County 4-H Teen Leaders worked in the spring of 2018 to develop plans for camp, including choosing a theme, planning classes and assemblies and partaking in leadership training to help them lead their tribes. They also performed community service at the community garden.

- **County 4-H Programs** – 4-H youths had the opportunity to participate in different artistic-expression events including the state poster, photo and writing contest (10 youths) and the Wirt County Fair still project exhibition (150 youths). The 4-H County Roundup Presentation Contest allowed 10 youths to improve their public speaking skills. Other county events included the
achievement awards program (24 participants), club officer’s training (20 youths) and leader’s training (nine adults).

- **All Stars** – Four adults and one youth member were nominated and accepted into the West Virginia Chapter of 4-H All Stars in 2018. This is the highest award a 4-H volunteer or member can receive.

- **Project Books** – 96 youths completed 128 project books and 84 record guides. Overall project completion rate in Wirt County for the year was 83.7% compared to the state average of 52.5%.

**Special Interest Programs**

- **Energy Express** – This program hosted 40 children for six weeks in the summer as they were overseen by trained mentors in reading, writing and the arts. 80% of these children attended at least 50% of the time. Average daily attendance was just above 28 children. The site employed one site supervisor, one community coordinator and five AmeriCorps mentors. 1,590 meals were distributed to children in the program. 14 adults and 14 youths volunteered during the program.

- **STARS** – Schools Tackling At Risk Situations helps students in grades 5 to 12 identify behaviors that may indicate a serious problem, how behaviors may affect a person’s life and empower students to get help for themselves or others. The WVU Wirt County Extension agent assisted the following schools to implement the program: Wirt County schools (14 youths), VanDevender Middle School (30 youths) and Calhoun County schools (283 youths).

**Agriculture and Natural Resources**

**Gardening Programming**

- **Community Hope Garden** – Approximately 80% of the raised garden beds were utilized by community members in the spring and summer of 2018. The garden also features tools, free access to water, a ‘Little Free Library’, fire pit, compost bin, herb garden and gathering spaces.

- **Gardening Education** – Workshops were offered on soil sampling, garden planning, gardening 101 and basil. 10 individuals participated in one or more courses. Additionally, a “Gardening for Your Health” station was set up at the Senior Citizens Health Fair, which had 22 adult participants.

**Youth Agriculture**

- **Wirt County Youth Livestock Program** – 86 youths participated in the youth livestock program by exhibiting and selling one or more animals at the Wirt County Fair. Average price for a livestock animal was $1,734.34, with the sale totaling $237,094.75 for 136 livestock exhibits. 51 youths participated in a hands-on livestock quality assurance clinic. Buyers choose to donate several animals back to different organizations involved with the program and to scholarship funds. The Wirt County youth livestock fund received $4,606.93 and the Wirt County 4-H Leaders Association received $1,080.79 from these donations.

- **Kids Farmers Market Program** – 164 second and third grade students participated in a farmers market held at their school. Each student was given $4 in tokens to spend on produce.
• **Wirt County Wetlands Day** – As a partner with this annual event, the WVU Extension Service facilitated a nature walk station where youths identified different species of plants and learned about soil composition. Approximately 230 youths participated in this event.

**Wirt County Farmers Market**

• The farmers market operated from late May through early July and again in the early fall to provide citizens with access to local produce. Angie Brannon is the market manager.

• **Senior Farmers Market Voucher Training** – One participant was trained in accepting senior vouchers for the farmers market. This participant sold $4,440 in produce through the voucher program. 88% of issued vouchers were redeemed by participants.

**Agricultural Consultations**

• **Individual Consultations** – 27 individual consultations were performed in topics relating to soil testing, weed control and beginner farmer questions.

**Service to Agricultural Organizations**

• The WVU Wirt County Extension agent served as an advisor to the following organizations who support agriculture in Wirt County: Camp Barbe Association, Wirt County Fair Board, Wirt County Barn Committee, Wirt County Farm Bureau and the Community Hope Garden Board. Across these organizations, the WVU Extension agent contributed approximately 214 hours of service.

**Family and Community Development**

**Learning Opportunities**

• **Heart Healthy Luncheon** – 14 adults enjoyed a heart-healthy lunch and heart health presentation on February 2. 100% of the participants rated the training as good or excellent.

• **Blood Pressure Monitoring Station** – As part of a state-wide grant, a free blood pressure monitoring station was set up in the WVU Extension office, along with educational grab and go materials.

• **Canning with Confidence Workshop** – In this beginning canner workshop, 15 adult participants learned about food safety and canning safety before practicing their skills by preparing two different jams.

• **Spring Valley Food Pantry Nutrition Program** – Beginning late in 2018 and continuing into 2019, this program addresses food accessibility and healthy living. The WVU Extension Service offers taste testing and demonstrations during food pantry hours. The demonstrations are conducted using foods participants seldom take because they don’t know how to prepare them. These include many fresh fruits and vegetables that have short shelf lives and expire before they are taken. If funding is granted through the Sisters Health Foundation, this program will expand in 2019 to host biweekly sessions. During a pilot session, 63 adults and three youths participated.
• **Breast Cancer Awareness** - The County Educational Outreach Service provide awareness materials for the Wirt County Courthouse during the month of October for breast cancer awareness. This included a kickoff event with nine participants, wreath hanging and balloon release.

**County Education Outreach Service**

• **Membership** – 20 adults were enrolled as a member of one of our Community Educational Outreach Clubs, the Palestine and Elizabeth CEOS. The Palestine club performed 1,256 hours of community service with one member receiving a 500 hour certificate. The Elizabeth club performed 3,738 hours of community service with one member receiving a 2,000 hour certificate and one member receiving a 1,000 hour certificate.

**Service to Family and Community Development Organizations**

• **Wirt County Family Resource Network** – WVU Extension Service has partnered with this agency to provide information and support to events like the community baby shower (30 participants), staying sober event at the high school (129 participants) and the secret Santa program (64 families served).

• **Town Hall Meetings** - As a WVU Extension Service representative, I attended the spring and fall town hall meetings to address the opioid crisis. I addressed the issue from a point of providing activities for children to participate in and getting more adults involved in volunteering who are trained identify and report child abuse and neglect.