Mercer 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 Mercer 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

- Agriculture and financial literacy programming was presented at 14 schools/learning centers with over 1,100 youth contacts in Mercer and surrounding counties. There are currently fourteen raised beds and one in ground garden in Mercer County.

- Two Progressive Agriculture Safety days were held, educating 760 students how to be safer around the home and when visiting farms.

- In addition, the 4-H program worked with over 1,500 youth throughout the county with six or more hours of programming in health, science and citizenship activities.

- Families and Health adult and youth instructors reached more than 381 adults and 1,130 youths during various programs and activities throughout the 2016/2017 year.

4-H and Youth Development

Camping

- Two weeks of traditional 4-H camps were held at Glenwood Park and the 4-H campgrounds. More than 120 youths participated in the week-long camps. Youth continue to rank this program high in the essential elements that we know are important for youth to be successful adults: belonging, mastery, generosity and independence.

4-H Programming and Clubs

- A 2017 study conducted by WVU Extension Service has recent 4-H alumni reporting that they received all aspects of 21st century job skills through 4-H. This was across all program areas, but
was highest in community club programming. Ninety 4-H volunteers who go through background checks and special training worked with over 1,000 young people.

**Special Interest Programs**

- Mercer County has three 4-H robotics teams ranging from Kindergarten to high school. Raegan DeVor, Gary Brown and Bill Faulkner are the lead coaches for these teams.

**Highlights**

- 4-H youth continue to shine on the state and national level. Rebecca Johnson was one of four statewide selected to represent West Virginia at the National 4-H Conference in Washington, D.C. in 2018. At Alpha II, Micah Dewitt received the “hand H” and John Mullis received the “health H.” At OMC State Camp, Ryan Stamper was the alternate for the Guy H. Stewart Charisma Scholarship.

- Through a grant written by a 4-H alumni, 4-H teen leaders built four tables for 4-H camp this summer – one for each of the tribes at camp.

- The 4-H program has great collaboration with Bluefield State College and Concord University. The Concord science department hosted a 4-H winter camp which focused on science and technology activities and our annual 4-H leadership training was held at Bluefield State.

**Agriculture and Natural Resources**

**Grazing Management Workshops**

- Three risk management dinner meetings were present in 2018. 100% of February evaluation respondents indicated they would use the information provided to help manage risk on the farm. Some of the most common changes March participants indicated they intended to make due to the presentation included grazing height, more rotational grazing, planting different grasses and timing of seeding (frost seeding).

- 224 different producers have attended Mercer County dinner meetings between 2009 and 2018. This year’s attendance for the dinner meeting programs was 149 people.

- Mercer County participation yielded $2,000 in grant funding from the Northeast Center for Risk Management Education, $1,850 from the District and $23,950 in local funding to help cover meeting costs over the last ten years. $5300 was generated in 2018.

**Local Foods**

- Mercer County Tailgate Produce Market sold $37,479 that provided income to local farm families.

- 200 senior food vouchers were distributed to provide free fresh fruits, vegetables and honey to area senior citizens.

- Current regional grant project utilizes $5,000 in outside funding to provide education, training and free poultry coups, birds and feed to severely impoverished residents in Southern West Virginia, helping them establish both a food and income source for their families.
Safety and Health

- Two Progressive Agriculture Safety Days that reached over 760 regional youths in Mercer and Summers counties. This program is also part of a grant project that will provide bicycle helmets and education to 1200 local youths to attempt to increase helmet usage.

Family and Health

Highlights

Adults:

- Taught 742 Eating Smart Being Active and Teen Cuisine lessons to 130 people, positively affecting 381 family members.
- Taught six nine-week sessions.
- Reached many people through Rethink Your Drink at various events throughout the county and in classes.
- 97.9% of adults improved nutrition practices and physical activity with positive changes.

Youth:

- Taught in 21 classrooms, two libraries and two week-long summer camps.
- Reached 497 youths from third through fifth grade with nutritional lessons that included a lesson, physical activity and a taste testing.
- Of those youths, 88% improved nutrition knowledge, 41% improved their food safety practices and 34% improved their physical activity or knowledge.