

Mercer 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 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

- Mercer County Extension staff worked with 2,363 4-H youths and 99 vetted 4-H volunteers.
- More than 279 adult contacts and 335 youth direct teaching contacts were made through agriculture and natural resources programming.
- Families and health programming made 75 adult direct teaching contacts.

4-H/Youth Development

Camping and Clubs

- 63 youths in two weeks of virtual 4-H camps; 193 additional camp packets were distributed.
- Since the pandemic began in March, more than 60 teens and leaders met virtually on a weekly basis to connect, adapt programming and learn. Virtual 4-H opportunities available on the county, state and nation level were advertised through weekly emails to 250 enrolled 4-H families. These efforts led to new youth and volunteers enrolling in the program.
- 23 Mercer County projects were featured in the State 4-H Virtual project exhibit; one project was selected statewide Best of Show.
- Four youths participated in the State Virtual Visual Presentation and Public Speaking Event.
- Community service efforts:
 - o 15 4-H teen leaders delivered at least \$500 worth of food to Blessing Boxes.
 - 4-H members donated more than 200 slightly new and used books throughout the county to small libraries, community food distributions and teachers.
 - o Four families planted four red tulip beds at Mercer County 4-H Camp and Glenwood Park through "Plant the Promise" to stay drug-free.
 - Mercer County 4-H agent made more than 400 masks for the community. 4-H members and leaders also made additional masks.

Special Interest Programs

- Two of our older 4-H robotics groups continued to meet both virtually and face-to-face (when safe) to prepare for virtual competitions.
- National 4-H Summit on Healthy Living
 - Five teens and three adults attended the National 4-H Summit on Healthy Living in Washington, D.C. The group along with others from Wyoming and Wood counties

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- identified problems that need addressed in their communities, which were issues related to mental health and drug abuse.
- The group planned and executed the first Snowflake Conference on Mental Health (held virtually) with 30 participants. Their work has been presented nationally and will continue to address mental health and drug abuse issues in our state and nation.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Risk Management

- 336 hogs were brought into Mercer County (105,840 pounds live weight) yielding approximately 74,088 pounds of affordable high-quality meat for 99 families.
- 34 participants are currently enrolled in the winter virtual Annie's Project class.
- Three risk management dinner meetings were held in 2020 with a total attendance of 113.
- Presented to 23 individuals at the Small Farm Conference on the topic of food safety.

Horticulture and Local Foods

- The Mercer County ANR agent served as the state coordinator for the Beginning Gardener Program series, releasing 18 peer-reviewed fact sheets, videos and weekly Facebook posts.
- Distributed 3,000 garden calendars throughout Mercer County.
- 25,000 people statewide (600 people in Mercer County) participated in the Grow This program.
- Packed 660 kids seed kits for distribution at schools in Mercer and Summers counties.
- Supplied seeds for more than 20 Blessing Boxes county-wide.
- Provided support and training for the Tailgate Market, which provided income to 16 local farm families generating \$26,000 in revenue.

Master Gardeners

• 15 Mercer County Master Gardeners completed 511 volunteer hours.

• Youth Agriculture

- Developed and presented wildlife curriculum for 4-H enrichment training for teachers. 24 faculty attended the train-the-trainer program, and the curriculum is offered to classrooms across the state.
- Presented Plant & Animals curriculum for statewide virtual Cloverbud programs.

Safety and Health

• 255 students participated in virtual Safety Day at Mercer Elementary learning about safety in and around homes.

Families and Health

FARMacy

- One of 10 counties in \$600,000 Walmart Foundation "Appetite for a Healthier Future" grant.
- Partnered with Bluestone Valley Health Center to monitor health issues, teach nutritional lessons and provide fresh produce weekly for 15 weeks to 30 members of the community.

Dining with Diabetes

• Partnered with the Princeton Community Hospital and Princeton Health & Fitness Center to teach the Dining with Diabetes program to 30 attendees.

Community Classes

• 5 individuals participated in a webinar on holiday food safety for CASE Headstart.

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- Taught healthy cooking classes for 10 Concord University students.
- Distributed health and wellness information to 110 seniors at the senior center and fitness center health fairs.
- Led a virtual cooking class during 4-H Teen Leader Weekend.
- Created various Show Me Nutrition videos for online use in classrooms.
- Reached 398 students in grades 3rd through 5th for Show Me Nutrition (pre-COVID shutdown).
- 72 students participated in the Get A Life program learning about financial literacy.