Monongalia County Annual Report 2019

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 Monongalia 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

- Moved into our new office complex located at Mylan Park, which provides much needed office and storage space, as well as a large conference room and teaching kitchen to offer additional programs and activities to the Monongalia County community.
- Partnered with the Mountaineer Food Bank to offer fresh initiative farmers markets to local schools in the county. Volunteers from Master Gardeners, 4-H and other WVU Extension Service groups gathered to provide fresh produce to all youths attending Eastwood, Mason Dixon, Suncrest and North elementary schools.

4-H/Youth Development

- 6,033 youths were served by the Monongalia County 4-H program in 2019. These numbers represent the highest number of youths reached in any county in West Virginia.
- 4,589 Monongalia County youths took part in a school enrichment program offered through the 4-H program. These age-appropriate, hands-on activities are extensions of lessons that teachers are currently doing in the classroom and relate to STEAM, healthy living and civic engagement.
- 329 youths enrolled in 4-H community clubs. Clubs meet monthly to plan service, social, 4-H promotional and fundraising activities. Monongalia County 4-H has 120 vetted volunteers and 18- to 21-year-old members who assist with camp, clubs and other 4-H events. Monongalia County has 10 community clubs, a new horse club and three shooting sports clubs. Youths exhibited livestock and other 4-H projects at the Battelle District Fair, Clay District Fair, Monongalia County Fair, and the Monongalia County 4-H and FFA Livestock Show and Sale.
- 96 youths enrolled in the six-week Energy Express program at Mason Dixon, Mylan Park and Skyview elementary schools. This impact-based program utilizes art, writing and drama activities to decrease the “summer slide” of reading loss that occurs in the summer months. Fifteen AmeriCorps members and three site supervisors were selected and trained to lead the summer program.
- 324 youths took part in Monongalia County 4-H Camp in 2019. There were two weeklong residential camps and one weeklong day camp were held. Youths took part in life skill
development activities where they learned independence, cooperation, social skills and self-confidence. 35 teens were selected as teen counselors at day camp and 12 teens were selected as teen counselors for younger camp.

- Agent Becca Fint-Clark secured a grant through the NRA Foundation to supply additional shooting sports equipment for our clubs and camp program.

**Agriculture and Natural Resources**

- Direct economic benefit to the clients of Monongalia County by using the WVU Soil Testing Lab and other WVU Extension Service diagnostic services was $16,110 in 2019. This was a tremendous cost savings for the clients of the region.
- There were 1,400 plus calls and contacts handled by the office in 2019. Of these calls, 252 involved identification of a specimen (e.g., as insect, plant or animal).
- Monongalia County Master Gardeners participated in 1,047 hours of educational training to maintain their certification in the program. Their volunteer service hours are valued at more than $38,628.
- Agent H.R. Scott was part of a research project related to cool-season grass hay yield, forage quality and changes in soil fertility. The study found that the forage yield responded directly to nitrogen rate and the forage quality for livestock was within the needs of beef cattle nutrient requirements. This study confirms that the updated fertilizer recommendations are appropriate.
- The economic impact of farmers market sales for the region was $584,192. In examining the areas of items sold at the downtown market during 2018 to 2019, the leading categories were vegetables (52.79%), meat (18.90%) and value-added products (8.87%).

**Families and Health**

- The Monongalia County Community Educational Outreach Service (CEOS) provided over 19,000 hours of community service in Monongalia County, which is valued at $423,510.
- As part of their dedicated service to Monongalia County, CEOS members hosted a number of events, including a cancer awareness luncheon in early October with 36 people in attendance; a book drive in November that provided 1,261 children’s books to various local organizations; and a sewing workshop to benefit the Totes for Tots state project – as a result, 96 totes were delivered to the Monongalia County Sheriff’s Department.
- Through the Family Nutrition Program, Adult Nutrition Outreach Instructor Belinda Nicholas taught 55 underserved families and 161 people how to prepare healthy meals and nutritional concepts through her outreach. She partnered with the Grandfamilies Program in the county and provided grandparents serving as caregivers with hands-on, educational lessons on healthy eating, meal preparation, food safety and other important topics.
- Youth Nutrition Outreach Instructor Joeline Swann reached 801 youths through her curriculum at schools throughout the county with 50% or higher free-and-reduced-lunch-eligible students. Her lessons consist of hands-on activities related to nutritional messages and lessons based on MyPlate.