Brooke County Annual Report 2020

Putting Knowledge to Work!

West Virginia University Extension works to provide "solutions in your community" through key programs and resources including agriculture, environment and natural resources, 4-H youth development, food and nutrition, health and wellness, financial planning and home gardening. These research-based programs and services are available to all residents of Brooke County thanks to the tremendous support of our community members, local organizations, volunteers and local partners – the Board of Education and County Commission.

Highlights

- Extension secured four grants totaling \$25,000 this year to support education and community development in Brooke County.
- Extension coordinated an Open Market in Follansbee to assist businesses during the pandemic. At least 19 local small businesses participated in the project and gained assistance in marketing and networking efforts from the WVU Extension Office and AmeriCorps VISTA members. The Market turned out to be an amazing 6-week project at a time when many businesses were shutting down and cutting back.
- The Brooke County Extension office has coordinated a West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio collaborative for regional tourism with a 200-member data base from three states and 14 counties. The group has established a website and social media page (Facebook).
- Extension secured an AmeriCorps VISTA member for a second year in service to Brooke County. The AmeriCorps member made significant contributions in local economic and community development, including developing two websites for entrepreneurs to secure technical assistance and funding sources. She also held establish the fall outdoor market.
- Brooke County Extension worked with the Healthy Living Specialist to secure a 4-H mentoring grant to implement mentoring programming at the Alternative Learning Center and Brooke Middle School.
- 4-H camp was held online in partnership with Hancock County during the COVID-19 pandemic. 4-H programming in Brooke County has transitioned to online programming during this time to allow 4-H'ers to participate in 4-H activities.
- Energy Express also adapted and served 40 children through online programming during the COVID-19 pandemic.

4-H/Youth Development

Camping

- 48 youths participated online via the Hancock Brooke Camp URLinked; 17 adults assisted with the camp.
- 165 original posts made via the Hancock Brooke Camp URLinked Facebook page.
- 326 photos and 17 videos shared of youths completing activities.
- 283 total activities completed by virtual campers.

4-H School-Based Programs

- The Brooke Middle School 4-H Program worked on a school garden.
- The Brooke Alternative Learning Center started a 4-H club and mentoring program with all students in the school participating.

Traditional 4-H Programming and Clubs

- Clubs adapted to the pandemic. The Clever Clover's 4-H Club in Follansbee meets online and the Buffalo Clovers held one in person meeting and now meets online.
- 4-H was offered online to all Brooke County youths ages 5-18 through the Northern Panhandle Challenge.
- 4-H@4 was offered online to all Brooke County youths ages 5-18. These are live online sessions with hands-on learning activities, including STEM experiments, healthy snack recipes, crafts and a pet show, at least once a month.

Energy Express

- Meals were offered to the 36 students who participated/picked up their materials at summer feed sites in Brooke County.
- Total average attendance was 95% based on the percent of enrollment average.
- 94% of students qualified for free or reduced lunch.
- Five Energy Express mentors were hired to work at the Brooke High School location. Brooke County mentors organized educational materials to give to nonprofits in Brooke County, and helped maintain the Brooke Middle School garden over the summer.
- A new partner, UniCare, made a monetary donation and provided various school supplies for Energy Express students.

4-H School Enrichment

- Health Rocks programming taught to all 3rd graders at Brooke Intermediate North.
- Health Rocks programming provided virtually to Middle School health teachers and to the Alternative Learning Center (ALC) to use with all students.

- The ALC received funding from the 4-H mentoring grant to get aquariums and fish for two classrooms. The 4-H members at the ALC were able to teach the Brooke Primary South students about aquariums and how to take care of fish.
- The Code Your World Series, computer programming lessons, was taught to all 190 5th graders at Brooke Middle School.
 Mindfulness videos were recorded and provided to Brooke Primary South for use with their students during remote learning.

4-H State and National Level

• Extension agent became the chair of the Youth Empowerment Workgroup of the National Association of 4-H Youth Development Professionals.

Family Nutrition Program

- Our nutrition outreach instructor (NOI) takes the lead on providing Brooke County schools with nutrition education for students. WVU's Family Nutrition program provided direct education in many Brooke County schools, including nutrition classes (six to seven weeks) at Brooke Primary North, Brooke Intermediate North and Brooke Primary South. The classes provided nutrition education, physical activities, healthy food demonstrations and taste testings.
- The NOI organized a Kids Farmers Market for every student at Brooke Primary North but this was cancelled due to COVID.
- Several other Kids Markets are pending and will hopefully happen in the future. (The farmer's markets use local produce from Brooke County farmers and the Family Nutrition Program promotes our local farmers.)
- Direct education nutrition classes are still offered, but are being delivered remotely. A community walking program was also initiated remotely.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Wellsburg Community Garden

- Extension successfully turned over the Wellsburg community garden to the Brooke County ALC. Extension assisted the ALC in cleaning up the garden and preparing it for the next season, and plans to loan equipment to the gardening program for the community/school garden.
- Extension and Energy Express mentors worked to clear the Brooke Middle School gardens for another season when schools resume.

5th Grade Agricultural Days

• Brooke County Extension secured a \$1,000 grant for the county Ag Days. The funding will be carried over through 2021 when, hopefully, the event will be rescheduled.

Local Foods

- WVU Extension helps promote the Brooke County Farmers Market, currently in its 9th year. This was a modified season because of the pandemic; however, the farmers market did conduct a safe presence at the Dollar General market.
- Helped marketing efforts to promote the Farmer Markets on social media

Families and Health - Community Development/Tourism/Economic Development

- Brooke County Extension provides support and technical assistance for the Brooke County Economic Development Authority (EDA), a volunteer board committed to economic and small business development in the county.
- Extension organized and coordinated the Inspiring You: Vision to Business Speaker Series and provided classes on new business startups. WVU Brooke County Extension and AmeriCorps VISTA members created a portal of resources for new business startups and grant funding sources for business development.
- Extension secured a second year of service to Brooke County through a successful application for an AmeriCorps VISTA position. The VISTA member completed numerous projects that support community development in our region.
- Brooke County Extension remains committed to serving on local board (12) to provide support and technical assistance to the leadership and committee.
- Regional tourism is expanding in the Upper Ohio Valley Region and is coordinated by Brooke Extension Office.
 - The Visit Upper Ohio Valley Regional Tourism Committee now includes West Virginia, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Fourteen counties from these states met virtually throughout the year to discuss tourism efforts during the pandemic and to identify ways to engage/begin to roll out tourism efforts in a safe manner.
 - These 13 counties are working together to promote regional tourism assets and increase our tourism capacities. We also established a website and social media presence to promote our collaborative tourism program.

Teaching

- Extension taught a number of classes, including raised bed and square-foot gardening, leadership, and composting to Tri-State Master Gardeners.
- Extension taught a gardening and leadership class to the Ohio County Master Gardeners.
- Extension also provided marketing and networking courses to vendors at the Follansbee Open Market.