

EXTENSION *Today*



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

WELCOME TO THE REAL WORLD: 4-H PROGRAM TEACHES LIFE'S LESSONS

From Fulton County to Boyd County, young Kentuckians are getting their eyes opened wide about the real world. Through an Extension 4-H program called "Reality Stores" and other 4-H programs, the young people are learning life's lessons about the cost of living and preparing themselves for a career in the twenty-first century.

The Reality Store is perhaps the most visible exercise in the set of 4-H workforce preparation curricula and the one that captures young people's attention the quickest. The Store challenges participants to choose a potential career and make lifestyle choices—such as number of children, vacations, type of car—while making ends meet.

At the beginning of the Reality Store, young people select a career based on their current educational aspirations. Many of them learn in the remainder of the activities that to live the life they would like, they must first excel at school.

The Reality Store has a profound and immediate impact on its young participants. In **Owen County**, for example, more than three-fourths indicated that they intended to try harder in school; 84 percent reported learning the importance of making wise financial decisions; and 82 percent reported a desire to save money.

In **Pulaski County**, the Extension program targeted 780 eighth graders who participated in "Reality Town." In the Reality Town, the young people selected careers and then worked through 16 different booths where they learned valuable lessons in manage-



ment. They experienced paying taxes, banking, insurance, transportation, housing, utilities, day care, buying groceries, and more. They also experienced the importance of financial planning, goal setting, and decision making. One student commented after paying for insurance, transportation and day care, "I'm broke. I'm going for a career change."

In **Fulton County**, 80 percent of the 230 eighth and ninth graders participating in the Reality Store indicated they would improve their study habits to help them attain the career and lifestyle they desired.

"The Reality Store is designed as an introductory exercise for young people to think about careers, lifestyles, and the choices they make. The 4-H "WorkBook" publication series provides more in-depth education in career choices and planning," said Martha

Welch, Extension associate with Kentucky 4-H. This year, some 14,000 youngsters are expected to explore their career options with the series.

In the first of the series of three workbooks, 4-H'ers learn about particular careers they might be interested in pursuing by exploring their community and interviewing someone local who holds that job. As they progress through the three-part series, the participants then learn about the education required and the financial rewards associated with particular careers. Finally, in the third part of the series, the 4-H'ers learn how to search for a job, how to prepare a resume, and what to expect in a job interview.

"Our goal in preparing youth for the workplace is to help them make informed choices so they can look forward to employable futures," Welch said.

FROM ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH

Programs of the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service are locally defined and locally administered. Here are a few examples of county Extension programs that are making a real difference in people's lives. You'll find these programs and many others across the Commonwealth in the four areas of Extension programming: Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Sciences, 4-H and Youth Development, and Rural and Economic Development.

IMPROVING THE ECONOMY

Knott County's dependence on coal left its economy vulnerable when the industry started to decline. The **Knott County Cooperative Extension Service** began meeting with 39 community leaders to find ways to diversify the local economy. The group applied for and received a "New Town" grant to develop a more sustainable economic base. Extension agents facilitated the application process through collaboration with the committee, provided leadership in the visioning process, aided in the assessment of local resources and helped develop the proposal. As a result, Hindman was selected as one of two towns to receive \$22 million in funding over the next few years. The funding will be used to enhance the quality of life in the county and help attract business to the area.

SAFETY FIRST

Injury is the leading cause of death and hospitalization of children in the U.S. Young children, especially, are vulnerable to accidents in the home. To promote safety in the home, the **Bath County Cooperative Extension Service** worked with the County Health Department and the Kiwanis Club to provide child safety packets to parents of all newborn babies in the county. More than 400 safety packets, which include a smoke detector, batteries, cabinet safety latches, poison control information and emergency telephone numbers, electrical outlet covers, child safety seat identification sticks, and a calendar, have been distributed. Already, the lives of an entire family were saved when their free smoke detector alerted them of a fire. Although their home and its contents were destroyed, all family members escaped harm.



HELPING TEENS LEARN COMMUNITY PRIDE

The 4-H Teen Club in Green County identified two problems among the county's youth: lack of responsibility and a low sense of community pride. To improve their community and to help the teens living in it enhance their pride in their community, the **Green County Cooperative Extension Service** organized several community projects. Teens contributed more than 1,500 hours of community service to projects ranging from recycling to cleaning up public areas and helping the elderly.

HALF A MILLION DOLLARS ADDED IN VALUE

The **Bourbon County Cooperative Extension Service** is a vital part of a program that puts real money into cattle producers' pockets. Since 1991, the Bourbon County Elite Heifer Sale has helped 38 local producers market 4,123 head of beef replacement heifers for a total sale price of \$2,858,418. Consignors to the sale indicate

they have received \$500,000 in value-added premiums. Extension's work in coordinating the on-farm inspections, record keeping, compiling the sale catalogs, and facilitating meetings of the producers has been instrumental in the program's success.

¿SPANISH?

The Jessamine County Extension Council identified the need for a class to teach farmers basic Spanish to help them communicate with the growing number of Hispanic workers. The **Jessamine County Cooperative Extension Service** recruited an instructor who volunteered to work with farmers and community organizations to teach basic Spanish. Sixteen individuals completed the four class sessions. Participants received an instructional guide and two audio tapes. The farmers also received a publication, "Occupational Spanish for Farmers." An evaluation of the program indicated that it had surpassed the participants' expectation and more classes were requested.

TEACHING SKILLS FOR A BETTER LIFE

The **Magoffin County Cooperative Extension Service** and the Kentucky Food Stamp program teamed up to teach nutrition and economics to low income people. Educational programs reached 159 households. Participants learned to use the food pyramid to plan, purchase, and prepare nutritious meals and to follow a food budget. Results showed that 80 percent of the participating households now comparison shop, while keeping price, nutrition, time, taste, and convenience in mind. All participants report that they are following their food budget and are successful in having funds left at the end of the month.

FAIRS HELP TEENS LEARN ABOUT BUSINESS

Nearly 400 students, parents, and teachers learned about business through the **Knox County Cooperative Extension Service's** 4-H program. This joint effort of the Barbourville City School Resource Center, School-To-Work Labor Market Area, and local Extension Service allowed teens to learn about supply and demand. Forty business plans were developed by the young people and each business was operated for a full school day. The teachers stated that now their students understand what it means to compete in the real world.

BETTER BEEF, BETTER PROFITS

The **Owen County Cooperative Extension Service's** program on beef nutritional management has made a real difference in local cattle producers' profits. One producer started backgrounding calves because of the program; the result was a \$5,000 increase in income. This producer also sells herd sires and through better genetics has improved profits from his bull enterprise by \$2,500 per year. Another producer improved both the genetics of his calves and his feeding program and increased profits by \$20 per calf.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION FOR KIDS

Teen violence is a major social issue. The **Graves County Cooperative Extension Service** presented the "Talk-

ing with T.J.—Conflict Resolution" 4-H program to 84 students in grades four through six. The students learned to recognize signs of anger in themselves and others, understand the consequences of violence, and ways to control anger in themselves and others.

DIVERSIFYING THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

Hart County producers identified the lack of marketing opportunities as a real barrier to increased production for a number of commodities. As a result, the **Hart County Cooperative Extension Service** promoted the formation of the Green River Produce Marketing Cooperative. The Cooperative applied for and received a \$224,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Business Enterprise and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture to renovate an old tobacco handling building as a facility for grading, cooling, and packing fruit and vegetables. Twenty-seven members made commitments to grow cabbage, cantaloupe, tomatoes, and pumpkins. The coop estimates that it will market \$100,000 of produce its first year.

LEARNING ABOUT CAREERS IN AGRICULTURE

The Seneca High School Urban AgriScience 4-H Career/College Day taught teens about careers in agriculture. This day-long event organized by the **Jefferson County Cooperative Extension Service** allowed the entire student body to learn about the variety of careers in agriculture and involved 30 agribusinesses and three Kentucky universities offering agricultural courses. Some of the businesses not only taught the teens about careers in agriculture, they also used the day to recruit students for summer jobs.

VISIONING FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

The **Webster County Cooperative Extension Service** responded to local needs by developing a county-wide community visioning program that involved 415 citizens in six communities. The citizens organized a list of needs they believed should be addressed in the Webster County Economic Development Corporation's five-

year plan. A UK Extension sociologist is now helping the Economic Development Board use the results of the visioning process to develop its plan.

HEALTHIER BABIES IN TODD COUNTY

Less than two-thirds of all pregnant women in Todd County seek early prenatal care. To help address this issue, the **Todd County Cooperative Extension Service** collaborated with seven other community agencies to help new or expectant mothers understand the importance of prenatal and well-child care. "The World's Greatest Baby Shower" taught 42 expectant mothers



about taking good care of themselves and their babies before and after they are born. Several representatives of support services were on hand to let the women know about local services to assure a healthy baby.

PROMOTING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

With an increasing number of bankruptcy filings nationally, the need for financial management is clearly evident. The **Hardin County Cooperative Extension Service** developed a program to help citizens manage their personal finances and plan for their future. The program was offered on three consecutive Saturdays to groups of 12 to 25. A survey indicated that 90 percent of the participants plan to implement new concepts immediately and 40 percent said they are interested in meeting with a financial planner.

THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY: THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY

Sometimes we forget why the University of Kentucky is unique in its mission. UK is a "land-grant" university. That means that it is mandated to:

- *teach students in academic degree programs,*
- *conduct research that results in new knowledge and information, and*
- *reach out to apply that new information throughout the state.*

The University founders understood the strength of the linkage between research, teaching, and outreach. Classroom students need the hands-on experiences offered by work in laboratories and communities. Researchers work on solving problems found in the real world. And the Cooperative Extension Service provides the outreach which helps citizens

use and adapt the new knowledge and information.

The land-grant concept makes the University accessible to everyone, not just students taking classes on campus. It ensures that the University of Kentucky is more than merely a university of Lexington. Through the county offices of the Cooperative Extension Service, UK has a presence in every county of the Commonwealth. Through County Extension Agents, UK is responding to the unique problems and issues as defined in each county.

The educational programs of the Cooperative Extension Service are defined and conducted locally under the guidance of the County Extension Advisory Council. Council members are a cross section of local citizens who

volunteer their time to ensure educational programs remain relevant and responsive. These leaders are involved in determining what programs are needed and in contributing many volunteer hours to ensure their success.

The Cooperative Extension Service is committed to serving the needs of all Kentuckians. We are located in every county and provide a gateway to access the total resources of the University of Kentucky and the Land-Grant System. The Cooperative Extension Service is what helps make the University of Kentucky a "people's university."



Walter J. Walla

Associate Dean and Associate Director



SPECIAL NOTE

With this issue "Extension Today" takes on a new look. In the past, each issue was written around four articles that communicated the accomplishments of each the four program areas of the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service: Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Sciences, 4-H and Youth Development, and Rural and Economic Development.

We found that the format severely limited the number of educational programs that could be highlighted. There are so many stories to tell and so little space. As you can see from this issue we will still include a feature article describing a successful statewide program effort; however, we will also have the opportunity to share brief descriptions of the impacts of more county programs. We hope that this change will make this publication even more useful.

Extension Today is published twice a year and highlights program accomplishments of the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service. For more information, contact us:

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Educational programs of the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service serve all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability, or national origin.
