



GEAUGA County

WESTERN RESERVE EXTENSION EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AREA

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ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Agriculture is a large industry consisting of 888 farms in Geauga County. The total amount of revenue generated from **Geauga County farms** is more than \$34 million per year. Of that revenue, more than \$24 million is generated by small dairy and produce farms, most of them in the Amish community.
- Geauga County is the largest maple syrup producer in Ohio. The state annually produces about \$6 million worth of syrup; about 33% of that syrup is produced in Geauga County. Maple trees are one of the county's most valuable resources. OSU Extension is heavily involved with educating, advising and providing expertise to **Geauga County's maple industry**.
- Most of the vegetables supplying our local food markets are produced on **Amish farms**. The Amish community relies heavily on written documents and individual farm visits. This information and advice is supplied by OSU Extension daily throughout the growing season.
- Prime **maple woodlots** have been harvested due to the recession and an increased demand for maple timber by the furniture industry. This summer OSU Extension began working with a committee of representatives from the Geauga Park District, City of Akron, Western Reserve Land Conservancy and local maple producers. The committee's intent is to open public land to maple production to show landowners that maple trees are more valuable for syrup production rather than timber.

- **On-site farm consultations** to Geauga County's agricultural, vegetable and fruit growers provided expert advice on insects, diseases, nutrient usage, irrigation timing and fungicide applications. Over a seven-month period, more than 500 individual consultations were made to ensure crop success and profitability on Geauga County farms.
- Geauga County Extension's 65 certified **Master Gardener Volunteers** donated about 6,134 hours of **volunteer service**. These volunteers assisted the citizens of Geauga County by answering horticultural questions on plant diseases, insect identification and proper care of plants in gardens and landscapes. The Independent Sector organization estimates the 2012 value of volunteer time in Ohio at \$19.23 per hour. Therefore, these volunteers donated about \$117,957 to Geauga County's communities on behalf of OSU Extension.
- Geauga County Extension **Master Gardener Volunteers** raised sufficient funds through educational classes and a plant sale to **award two \$2,000 scholarships**, both to Geauga County residents studying at Ohio State.

PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- **Geauga County 4-H** has 690 youths enrolled in the 4-H program, utilizing 126 adult volunteers to organize and lead 41 county-based 4-H Clubs.
- Once again, the service efforts of the 4-H **Hare Raisers and Junior Leaders** were outstanding. The Hare Raisers organized the Ninth Annual Food-a-Thon to benefit the Geauga Hunger Task Force. Eighteen 4-H Clubs participated by gathering and donating 1,751 non-perishable food items. These same clubs also collected \$2,749 in donations.

- The **4-H Junior Leaders Club** made blankets and donated them to Women's Safe and Project Linus. They raised funds to award five \$1,000 scholarships to Geauga County 4-H Junior Leaders Club members who are pursuing higher education. They also held a blood drive at the Fairgrounds, presented gift cards and Christmas presents totaling \$3,700 to needy families for the holidays and paid \$2,100 for the construction of a new roof on the Milkshake Booth at the fairgrounds.
- The **Totally Dogs 4-H Club** held its annual benefit dinner and raised \$6,130. Of this, \$3,065 went to the Geauga County Dog Shelter, \$1,532.50 to the Geauga County K-9 Unit and \$1,532.50 to Wags4Warriors.
- The **Gauga County Horse Committee** awarded two \$500 scholarships to Geauga County 4-H Horse Club members who are pursuing higher education.

and St. Anselm, and in the 2012–13 school year, two more schools (Chardon and Cardinal) were added. Overall, more than 1,200 students participated. The program also helps schools fulfill the state's financial education requirement without adding to staff burden.

- Extension consistently offers **parenting classes** to Geauga County residents and served approximately 80 families in 2013. Twenty-four classes for divorcing parents (an issue for schools, courts and social service agencies) were also offered.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Geauga County Extension offers **budget and credit repair classes** on a regular basis; **individual assistance** via phone and office hours; and a **post-decree bankruptcy education class**, which is a requirement of filing for bankruptcy. Currently Extension is working with the United Way to review all OSU Extension has to offer in this area and implement a comprehensive program to benefit county residents. The county's FCS educator was recently trained in a **new curriculum to assist families in making sound health care choices**, and by spring, a complementary program will be offered to help families use their health care benefits in a fiscally and healthy way.
- OSU Extension had a **regular presence at area senior centers**, teaching classes on wellness and how to help children and grandchildren be financially literate. **Canning and freezing classes** were held in summer to assist families in preserving their garden surplus. The FCS educator and the Master Gardeners teamed up again for **seed collection** to give to Geauga Metropolitan Housing Association gardens and to help start more community gardens.
- More than ever, the youth of today need a clear understanding of how to manage their finances. **Real Money, Real World** is an OSU Extension signature program that gives middle school and high school students an understanding of how current income and life choices affect future income. Participants learn how much to expect to pay for housing, transportation, and childcare, and how to balance wants versus and needs. In Geauga County, this hands-on program was offered to middle and high school students. Schools that participate in this program are Berkshire, Ledgemont, Gaitway High School, Newbury