



UNION County

TOP OF OHIO EXTENSION EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AREA

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STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Home food preservation has become more popular with increased interest in the local foods movement. Consumers need accurate information to preserve food safely and maintain a high quality product. Home food preservation information was distributed to 40 adults at the Union County Farmer's Market. Eight adults participated in two **home food preservation classes**, and **pressure canner testing** was also offered. Of participants, 100% indicated an increase in knowledge and planned to make changes in their procedures for canning and freezing food.
- A **parenting class** was attended by three court-ordered parents. The four-session class covered parenting styles, child development, communication and building family strengths. All participants indicated an increase in knowledge and said they had made changes in their parenting practices.
- A **building healthy relationships class** was attended by seven high school students through the Union County Job and Family Services transitional youth program. All students increased knowledge and skills in building quality relationships.
- **SNAP-Ed** (formally known as the Family Nutrition Program) offered information on nutrition, food safety and thrifty food shopping to 269 unduplicated adult participants, through 71 direct education classes (either single lessons or as part of a series) for a total of 477 direct contacts. Programs for limited-resource audiences were held in cooperation with the Union County Department of Job and Family Services, the Union County Health Department, non-profit social services

agencies, low-income housing sites, congregate meal sites and the HOPE Center. As a result of these programs, 98% (429) of the participants indicated they had learned new information, and 87% (382) planned to make changes related to nutrition, food safety practices and food shopping.

PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- **Union County 4-H** has 1,081 members in 56 4-H Clubs led by 180 volunteers. These youth enrolled in over 1,800 4-H projects. Over 650 4-H members completed youth livestock Quality Assurance Training as part of their livestock project work. Over 75 youth participated in specialized project clinics to enhance their project skills.
- Teens who volunteer as **4-H Camp Counselors** provide quality staffing for a camp experience for younger 4-H members, and **4-H Camp Counselor Training** provides these teens with job training and skills development. All 42 teens completed 24 hours of 4-H Camp Counselor Training and contributed 92 hours of volunteer service as leaders at camp. Each teen counselor planned and taught three one-hour workshops. In program evaluations, the teen counselors self-reported gains in responsibility for others, organization and time management skills and communication skills.
- Union County 4-H provides a unique opportunity for many teens to participate in fair management and leadership through two **Junior Fair Boards**. Ninety-five teens serving on Junior Fair Boards participated in eight hours of leadership training including event management, public speaking and conflict resolution—all taught by the 4-H Extension educator.

The teens contributed an average of 25 hours each of leadership service through their participation on the Union County and Richwood Junior Fair Boards, for a total of over 2,300 hundred hours of service to their program and community.

- **Union County Cloverbuds** involved 45 youth ages 5–8. Monthly meetings in 2013 focused on nutrition education and healthy lifestyle choices. Each meeting included physical activity, nutrition activities, practice with nutrition topics and taste-and-try activities aimed at encouraging youth to select and try nutritious foods.

ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- The annual weed survey of over 80 soybean fields was conducted and evaluated with more than 3,700 acres surveyed. The most common weeds across the survey were giant ragweed, marehail and volunteer corn. Over all fields evaluated, giant ragweed and marehail had the heaviest infestation. About 29% of the fields having these two weed species were rated at a level of infestation to reduce yield. However, weed pressure was reduced by 10% overall compared with 2012. Research shows weeds must be controlled within the first 4–6 weeks after planting to avoid yield loss. In addition, if weeds are kept out of the field for 4–6 weeks after crop emergence, any weeds that later invade will not likely reduce yield significantly. **Weed control monitoring and herbicide program updates** are critical and the focus point of the annual agronomy update.
- **Crop Observation and Recommendation Network (C.O.R.N.) Newsletter** is read by more than 25,000 farmers in Ohio. This weekly newsletter communicates to Union County farmers current crop conditions as well as alerts to potential cropping problems and solutions. Union County Extension was instrumental in facilitating this publication during the 2013 growing season; Union County Extension served as editor and provided local information and updates during weekly conference calls. In addition, Union County Extension helps collect the primary data necessary for this publication to remain a timely resource for corn, soybean and wheat disease scouting; nutrient management; planting; and tillage and harvest decisions. Union County Extension also provides updates on the monitoring and progress of eastern bean cutworm, wheat head scab and county weed survey data.
- Union County **Master Gardener Volunteers** just completed a new training class of 17 members, 12 of whom will be Union County Master Gardener Volunteers and five of whom will transfer to Delaware County.
- Master Gardeners, in partnership with Bunsold Middle School and Ohio Northern University, applied for and received a **\$20,000 grant from the American Society of Plant Biologists (ASPB)** to provide an after school enrichment program (BASE) to teach students basic botany at Bunsold. The program provides funding for two part-time Ohio Northern University student internships to work with Bunsold staff to implement the program.
- The **Central Ohio Youth Center (COYC)** continues to grow in size and scope. Master Gardener Volunteers worked with the young men and women all summer, teaching them how to grow food for the COYC kitchen. Over 900 pounds of fresh produce was donated to the local food pantries.
- The **Master Gardener scholarship** was presented again this year to a student studying plant sciences. McCloud Park continues to be our **demonstration garden** in the city of Marysville. For city beautification, the **Adopt-a-Pot Program** provides leadership to the city for planting the hanging baskets and flower pots located on the square and in front of participating businesses. Master Gardeners also provide the **maintenance of the Veterans Monument Plaza**.
- Union County Master Gardeners have committed to co-hosting the **2014 Ohio State Master Gardener Conference** in partnership with Delaware and Madison counties. Volunteers have been meeting on a regular basis this past year to plan and organize the upcoming event.
- Our volunteer coordinators Laurie Lowe and Karen Long were honored at the 2013 State Conference as **Volunteer Coordinators of the Year**.

Union County receives \$21,000 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension's local-state-federal partnership.