

# 2014 County Highlights



## BUTLER County

### MIAMI VALLEY EXTENSION EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AREA

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#### STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Recipients of the USDA's **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed)**, learn how to stretch their food dollars through interactive classes. In 2014, OSU Extension taught 1,114 food stamp-eligible and food stamp recipients classes on diet quality, physical activity, food safety and food resource management. As a result, participants were significantly less likely to run out of food at the end of the month, were more likely to make economical and healthier choices when grocery shopping, and were more likely to provide healthier meals for their families.
- The **Development of Living Skills (DLS) program** offers in-home instruction to individuals and families referred by Children Services. Instruction is given in the areas of nutrition, parenting, child development, money management and home economics. DLS provided 1,859 hours of teaching time to 155 clients. As a result of instruction, 11 children were reunited with their parents from foster care, and 24 at-risk children were able to remain in their parent's home, eluding foster care.
- The resurgence of families experimenting with home canning is one sign of difficult economic times. OSU Extension's **Food Preservation and Food Preparation classes** teach research-based techniques and skills to make the food dollar go farther while keeping food safety in mind. In 2014, 418 participants attended home canning, local foods, nutrition and food preparation classes.

#### PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- In 2014 there were 62 **4-H Clubs** in Butler County, which represented over 1,236 members. This program was delivered with the help of 193 adult volunteers, who gave countless hours back to our community and youth. In 2014, 25 new advisors went through training to become volunteers and one new 4-H Club was started.
- During 2014, 555 teens were mandated to attend one of 40 Butler County **4-H CARTEENS programs** accompanied by a parent or guardian. This program is a partnership between OSU Extension, Butler County juvenile court, and the Ohio State Highway Patrol. This program is staffed by 21 teen volunteers, who gave over 1,848 hours to the program.
- During the summer of 2014, 178 youth participated in the **STEM program**. STEM is a curriculum based on the idea of educating students in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics based on real-world experiences.
- The **Junior Master Gardener program** was taught by OSU Extension Master Gardeners. Over the eight-week program, 15 youth participated in lessons about vegetable garden planning, planting and care, pest control, soil health, and invasive species.

#### ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- **Master Gardeners** are OSU Extension-trained volunteers empowered to educate others with timely, research-based



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gardening information. In 2014, Master Gardeners reached out to people through media, community projects and programming. Working cooperatively with OSU Extension, Butler County Master Gardeners donated more than 5,000 hours last year, providing horticulture education to the public. Their volunteer efforts resulted in \$137,356 worth of community service contributions throughout Butler County.

- **Invasive species**—including emerald ash borer and most recently, the walnut twig beetle with thousand cankers disease—are of concern in Butler County. In 2014, OSU Extension provided 1,612 citizens with the most recent information on insect and tree identification, proper controls, and regulatory laws surrounding invasive species.
- Due to difficult economic times, homeowners are looking for ways to save money by growing their own food and providing their own landscaping services. In an effort to increase this “do-it-yourself” thinking, OSU Extension held the **Home Horticulture Series**, staffed a horticulture hotline, and provided one-on-one consultation, which reached 2,467 individuals.
- Pressure to limit the use of fertilizers is increasing. Legislative, regulatory, and nongovernment organization activities—including legal action pertaining to nutrients in the environment—are taking place on national, regional, state, and local levels. OSU Extension provided training to local producers on incorporating the **4Rs of Nutrient Stewardship** into their local nutrient management plans. A total of 95 percent of the participants recorded that they learned valuable information during the program and that they would be able to utilize this information on their farms.
- Increasing yields of agronomic crops/forages as well as correct use of pesticides were the main focus during OSU Extension’s **Pesticide Applicator Training**. During 2014, 54 participants representing over 14,922 acres in Butler County were provided up-to-date, research-based information on the safe and effective use of chemicals.

## ADVANCING INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- The Centers for Disease Control estimates that there are more than 76 million cases of foodborne illnesses every year. Considering that over one-third of all meals are eaten outside of the home, food safety training for food service professionals is essential to public health. Seventy-two food service professionals and 175 high school freshmen completed the **ServSafe Food Handler Program**. The objectives of ServSafe are to provide food safety education to food service managers and to facilitate food safety

certification with the National Restaurant Association and the Ohio Department of Health.

- More than ever, the youth of today need a clear understanding of how to manage their finances. **Real Money, Real World**, an OSU Extension signature program, gives middle 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” and “needs.” This hands-on program was offered to 2,122 young people throughout Butler County. Fifty-eight volunteers staffed the simulation experience. As a result of the program, students felt it was more important to do well in school, get an education or training after high school, plan family wisely, have a plan for spending that includes both needs and wants, learn how to make wise financial decisions, and start saving money regularly.
- **Workplace Wellness programs** continue to deliver educational messages designed to encourage individuals to make informed choices about healthy eating, active living, stress reduction and overall improved wellness. In conjunction with the Butler County Employee Wellness Committee and local businesses, this program reached 172 employees. In addition, social media delivered online health challenges to 84 working adults.

**Butler County receives \$98,821 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension’s local-state-federal partnership.**