

# 2014 County Highlights

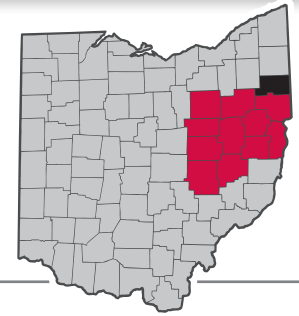


## MAHONING County

### CROSSROADS EXTENSION EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AREA

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#### STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- OSU Extension Family and Consumer Sciences has been working with Ohio's **Smarter Lunchroom pilot project** to create sustainable, research-based principles that promote healthy eating in seven schools. These lunchroom strategies guide students to make smarter nutrition choices. The strategies have resulted in increased consumption of fruits and vegetables by the seven-school student population by 65 percent.
- Using social media, the Mahoning County Extension Family and Consumer Sciences educator conducted three six-week **Live Healthy, Live Well eChallenges** with over 295 adults participating during the past year. Biweekly email messages encouraged respondents to increase their physical activity, improve their diet and use coping techniques to reduce stress. Over 82 percent of participants report adopting one or more of the recommended practices that might help reduce their risk of developing chronic disease, and 95 percent report maintaining or losing weight in postchallenge surveys.
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed)** and **Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)** are offered in Mahoning County through funding from the USDA. SNAP-Ed reached 130 adults and 846 youths through direct programs. Participants reported positive health changes in areas of physical activity, meal-planning and food safety.
- EFNEP offers community **nutrition education** to youth and families with limited resources and children in the home. In 2014, a total of 888 families were impacted by EFNEP.

Graduates significantly increased knowledge and improved behaviors in diet quality (88 percent), food resource management (75 percent) and food safety (59 percent), resulting in Mahoning County residents making healthier choices. A total of 182 second- through twelfth-grade youth participated in EFNEP in 2014. After completing six lessons, youth reported significant increases in knowledge and positive behavior changes in the areas of diet quality (87 percent), food safety (55 percent) and physical activity (61 percent).

#### PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- In its fourth year in Mahoning County, the **National 4-H Mentoring Program**—supported by a grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention—continued to impact at-risk youth in urban neighborhoods. Working on homework, going on field trips and spending a week at camp, 18 mentors assisted 48 youth to increase their social and family living skills by 40 percent, according to parent surveys.
- Over 1,100 youth ages 5–18 were members of **Mahoning County 4-H** in 2014. These youth participated in 55 community clubs, and 27 new volunteers were trained to help run the county 4-H program, bringing the total of trained 4-H volunteers to 239.
- Thirty-four 4-H teens gained leadership skills through training and applied those skills as counselors for 16 4-H Cloverbuds ages 5–8 at **4-H Day Camp**, and for 117 youth ages 9–14 at **4-H Resident Camp**. On postcamp surveys, 100 percent of campers reported learning something new at camp.



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- In cooperation with the Mahoning County juvenile court, nine 4-H teens served as peer-instructors to teach traffic safety classes through **4-H CARTEENS**. Using such strategies as driving simulators to teach about the dangers of texting and driving, the 4-H members taught strategies for safer driving to 54 juvenile traffic offenders. On postprogram surveys, 92 percent of the participants indicated they would positively change their attitudes and behaviors about driving as a result of attending CARTEENS.

## ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- The first **Northeast Ohio Fruit and Vegetable School** was held to assist participants with decision-making in the areas of production and composting. Growers stated they were better informed on current disease and insect issues, which would help them improve production for the year.
- Fifteen new volunteers were trained as **Master Gardener Volunteers**. In addition, 54 seasoned volunteers answered thousands of consumer questions through our weekly clinic, led community events, taught technical sessions and provided general service to the community.
- Improving fruit and vegetable production skills was the focus of our **Local Flavor: Community Vegetable Garden Trainings**, where 147 urban farmers and community gardeners gained new information and skills.
- Three **fruit tree pruning clinics** were held, during which 125 area gardeners learned to improve fruit production and reduce disease pressure. Backyard fruit production drew 71 participants who stated they were more knowledgeable about good production practices.

## ADVANCING EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

- Illness costs employers money, in both sick days and lost revenue from customers. OSU Extension helps businesses deal with these issues. Foodborne illness costs the nation \$77.7 billion a year due to an estimated 48 million illnesses, 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths. Research indicates that restaurants and other food service outlets are responsible for 7 in 10 outbreaks. Mahoning County Extension Family and Consumer Sciences **provides training to the licensed food industry** to prevent such outbreaks. Since January 2014, 126 public food servers were taught to avoid cross contamination and to take/log food temperatures from delivery and storage to cooking, holding, cooling and reheating.
- Farm marketers learned about mobile media marketing through our **Maps and Apps Program**, where 100 percent of

the 27 farm business owners stated they had an increased confidence in using mobile media as part of their marketing practices. Twenty-four local farms learned to sign up for **www.ohiomarketmaker.com**, a local foods-based marketing site to assist them with marketing and promoting for their businesses.

- The **Northeast Ohio Small Farm Conference** was held in Canfield. Twenty-four percent of respondents to an evaluation indicated they would be adding acreage based on what they learned at the conference. Other participants stated they would have better access to loans and information about recordkeeping. Others still said they would have better access to information about implementing planning strategies for their farm business.
- Owners, staff and employees from three urban farms participated in 24 summer **sessions on good agricultural production practices**. The farms reported increased production and income based on participation and connections with OSU Extension as a resource.
- Thirty-four local farmers learned about **grants and low-interest loans** for their farming operations. All of the participants stated they gained ideas for the future of their farm business.

**Mahoning County receives \$75,151 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension's local-state-federal partnership.**