

# 2014 County Highlights

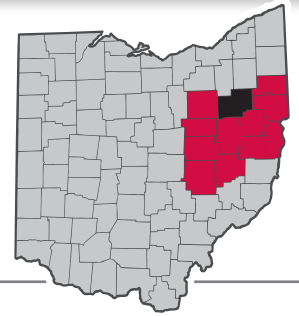


## STARK County

### CROSSROADS EXTENSION EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AREA

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### ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Pesticide Applicator Training and Recertification:** Seventy private applicators cited water quality, pesticide mode of action and protection of pollinators as the top three things learned from participating in the program. Additionally, 95 percent of program evaluations returned indicated that pesticide practices have improved as a result of participant attendance.
- Engaging Women in Food, Agriculture and the Environment:** Stark County was identified as having over 500 women farm operators. An advisory team comprised of 11 local women farm operators and stakeholders convened to plan a "pilot" educational networking forum. Forty-three women registered, with 38 attending the event. Evaluation survey results identified two key motivations: increasing networks (45 percent) and increasing knowledge (31 percent). Eighty-seven percent of participants were interested in networking, educational sessions and an annual event.
- Local Foods, Urban Agriculture and Farm to Table:** Stark County is home to 13 farmer's markets, over 20 on-farm markets, 15 you-pick markets, eight wineries and over 30 community gardens and one potential urban farm.
- Growing Gardens, Growing Partnerships:** A team of Stark County Master Gardener Volunteers organized three community-based gardening programs focused on vegetable production, composting and garden maintenance. The programs reached over 80 local participants.
- Master Gardener Volunteers:** Trained by OSU Extension, Master Gardener Volunteers share research-based information with all types of gardeners through workshops, community gardens and one-on-one consultations. Master Gardener Volunteers also provide the Garden Information Line, delivering over 200 hours of service. In 2014, more than 100 calls, emails and walk-ins were assisted with home horticulture questions. To date, 45 educational presentations were offered by members of the Speakers' Bureau, and over 250 hours were contributed by Master Gardener Volunteers in support of our stewardship gardens. Also in 2014, the Stark County Master Gardener program renewed 75 active volunteers, and 12 new Master Gardener Volunteer interns are working toward graduation in October 2015. Master Gardener Volunteers contributed 1,066 volunteer hours and 589 hours of education to Stark County projects and programs.
- Hunger and Food Access Awareness:** Ohio's Farm to School program, led by OSU Extension, offered the Northeast Ohio Regional Farm to School Workshop as a preconference to the First Annual Ohio Hunger Dialogue hosted by Walsh University. The workshop featured lectures, and discussions focused on Ohio Farm to School's objectives of healthy young people, healthy economies and healthy communities by building connections in the cafeteria, classroom and community to over 60 conference participants, 95 percent of whom were students seeking higher education degrees in nutrition, dietetics and education.



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## PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- **4-H Club, 4-H Project Work and 4-H Activities:** More than 1,265 youth experienced hands-on learning through over 79 4-H Clubs and 4-H activity groups, participating in over 2,078 projects and activities. The 4-H experience also provided a “safe, fun and educational environment.” Life skills, problem-solving and decision-making techniques were fostered through the guidance of more than 280 dedicated volunteers, donating more than 100,000 volunteer hours. These 4-H volunteers help prepare our “leaders of tomorrow” to become productive, competent, caring and capable young adults.
- **Quality Assurance Training:** More than 650 youth completed Quality Assurance Training, a requirement for Stark County Junior Fair participation in market and lactating project areas. This program enabled 4-H and FFA youth to participate in the 2014 Junior Fair livestock auction, which positively provided Stark County with a record of over \$845,000 in sales. This money was then reinvested locally by Stark County 4-H and FFA Youth. All grand champions broke their respective records for sales.
- **WeGrill:** This five-year USDA/CYFAR grant started in late 2013 and funds the efforts that will address local concerns on the importance of active fathering and the nutritional health of targeted youths and adults in Stark County and two other counties. More than 20 fathers and youth participated in a data collection activity to assist in designing the WeGrill project to meet the needs of participants in Stark and other counties throughout our project efforts and beyond. LIFE Ministries participants experienced positive food safety, grilling and nutritional techniques while sharing relationship-building needs and challenges in their lives.

in diet quality (93 percent), food resource management (88 percent) and food safety (46 percent), resulting in Stark County residents making healthier choices. Chronic diseases are largely preventable through a healthy lifestyle involving a balanced diet and regular physical activity. Over half of graduates increased their physical activity levels and fruit and vegetable consumption upon completing EFNEP. A total of 826 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 (91 percent), food safety (58 percent) and physical activity (51 percent). The benefits of EFNEP extend into the community. It costs less than \$210 in grant dollars to reach one EFNEP family with 3 to 6 months of intensive, practical nutrition education classes. Preliminary results of a cost-benefit analysis in Virginia show that for every \$1 spent on EFNEP, there is a potential health care savings of \$2 to \$17 due to the delayed onset of nutrition-related chronic diseases and conditions among participants.

**Stark County receives \$67,302 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension’s local-state-federal partnership.**

## STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- **Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP):** More than 23 Stark County community partners were part of the 2014 Stark County EFNEP outreach and educational efforts. Obesity, poor nutrition and physical inactivity disproportionately affect minority and low-income citizens. Of the estimated 375,432 residents living in Stark County, 19.4 percent of families with children live in poverty. In an effort to reduce this disparity and improve the health and well-being of Ohioans, EFNEP teaches an eight-lesson nutrition education series to low-income families with children. EFNEP, funded by USDA-NIFA, contributed more than \$67,302 this year to Stark County, funding 2.5 full-time staff in the OSU Extension office. In 2014, a total of 487 family members were impacted by EFNEP. Graduates significantly increased knowledge and improved behaviors