

2014 County Highlights



SUMMIT County

WESTERN RESERVE EXTENSION EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AREA

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STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Obesity, poor nutrition and physical inactivity disproportionately affect disadvantaged populations. Of the estimated 541,824 residents living in Summit County, 10.9 percent of families with children live in poverty. In an effort to reduce this disparity and improve the health and well-being of Ohioans, the **Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)** teaches an eight-lesson nutrition education series to low-income families with children. EFNEP, funded by USDA-NIFA, contributed \$80,000 this year to our county, funding three full-time staff in the OSU Extension office. In 2014, a total of 1,376 families were impacted by EFNEP. Graduates significantly increased knowledge and improved behaviors in diet quality (91 percent), food resource management (89 percent) and food safety (74 percent), resulting in Summit 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 1,374 kindergarten 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 (88 percent), food safety (53 percent) and physical activity (38 percent).
- EFNEP partners include Akron Pregnancy Services, HM Life, Community Health Center, Peachtree Estates, Akron

Urban League, Oriana House, Barberton High School, Word of Life Mission, Project GRAD, NOAH, Edwin Shaw, HM Life-Akron, Summa CHE, Coleman, AMHA-Edgewood, Family Resource Center, Brown Mackie Nursing, Greenleaf Center-Life Link. Child Guidance and Family Solutions, Family Promise of Summit County, AMHA-Joy Park, All Around Children, Barberton Rec, Child Guidance and Family Solutions–Senior; Childtime, Color Our Rainbow, David Hill CLC, East Akron YMCA, Findley CLC, Forest Hill CLC, Glover CLC, Hatton Elementary School, Helen Arnold CLC, Immaculate Conception Preschool, Jennings CLC, Joy Park, King Elementary School, Portage Path CLC, Resnik CLC, Robinson CLC, St. Barnabus School, Twin Tots Child Care Academy, and The University of Akron-CCD

ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Twenty-seven new volunteers were trained as Summit County **Master Gardener Volunteers**. In addition to our new volunteers, over 150 seasoned volunteers offered gardening advice to thousands of community members through our horticultural hotline, farmer's market, fair booths and large-scale public programming.
- Seventy-three pesticide applicators participated in **Pesticide Applicator Recertification**. Participants learned ways to control insect and plant pests with a focus on safety and responsible handling of chemicals.
- Twenty-five new volunteers participated in training to become **Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalists**. These volunteers give back to the community by volunteering to



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teach environmental programs for parks, arboretums and museums.

- Summit County Extension offered eight different **invasive species programs** to 143 people. Participants learned about the threat of invasive plants, invasive insects and invasive earthworms.
- Four hundred sixty-nine community members learned about the importance of **native plants and pollinators in the landscape** through nine different programs offered throughout the year. Programs ranged in topic from native landscaping to providing habitat for monarch butterflies and native bees.

Summit County receives \$206,485 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension's local-state-federal partnership.

PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- **Summit County 4-H** provides youth opportunities for nontraditional learning experiences that develop the 4 H's: Head (knowledge); Heart (development of personal relationships and providing service to others); Hands (physical skills that come from learning by doing); and Health (an understanding and respect for the physical and mental health of others and the self).
- Thirty-eight **4-H Clubs** from across the county supported by approximately 120 volunteers serve approximately 400 youth. Community service, leadership development and project learning are at the core of 4-H Clubs. Youth in Summit County participate in a wide range of project learning experiences including animal sciences, creative writing, leadership and citizenship, sewing, food and nutrition, photography, STEM and natural resources. The 4-H Clubs also include Out-of-the-Box Behavioral Solutions, a specialized learning environment with youth with special needs.
- **School enrichment programs** seek to support learning in the classroom with 4-H, hands-on learning experiences. Currently two STEM projects are enhancing learning in the Akron Public and Coventry school systems. Our force-and-motion programs help learners understand how the physical world works, while the egg embryology program brings the miracle of life into classrooms. Approximately 2,000 Akron students in two grades and all third graders in Coventry schools participate annually in 4-H through school enrichment.
- In 2014, thanks to Lockheed Martin and National 4-H, 60 Summit County youth and those from surrounding counties experienced the national **Junk Drawer Robotics** program. Thanks to the generosity of the Ohio 4-H Foundation, a **youth gardening program** designed by Summit County Extension staff brought to life 11 youth group gardens and 67 home youth gardens.