

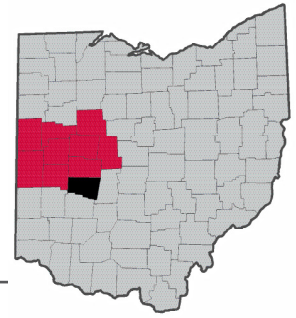
# 2015 County Highlights

## Clark County

### Top of Ohio Extension Education and Research Area

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### ADVANCING EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

- Foodborne diseases cause approximately 76 million illnesses, 325,000 hospitalizations and 5,200 deaths in the United States each year. Most cases can be prevented through education on proper cooking or processing of foods to destroy bacteria. Taught in collaboration with the Clark and Champaign County Health Departments, the ServSafe Food Handler Program for Managers was taught four times. Seventy-one food service professionals participated in ServSafe training offered throughout the year. 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. Each participant completed 16 hours of training followed by a certification exam.

### STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Obesity, poor nutrition and physical inactivity disproportionately affect minority and low-income citizens. In 2013, an estimated 1.7 million Ohioans lived 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. Lessons focus on the knowledge, skills, attitude and behavior changes needed to achieve nutritionally sound diets, food prepared in healthy ways, economical food budgets and food safety. In 2015, a total of 137 families were impacted by this program. Graduates significantly increased knowledge and improved behavior in diet quality (89 percent), food resource management (85 percent) and food safety (62 percent). The results were that 16 percent of graduates ran out of food less often each month.
- A total of 271 youth participated in EFNEP. After completing six lessons, youth reported significant increases in knowledge and positive behavior changes in the areas

of diet quality (94 percent), food safety (63 percent), food resource management (41 percent) and physical activity (75 percent).

- Research shows that community gardens provide tangible benefits such as fresh vegetables, and intangible benefits such as fostering communication among neighbors, which can lead to building neighborhoods and developing a sense of community. Staff with the SEEDS community garden program—a program supported by grants from Springfield and Turner foundations—along with Master Gardener Volunteers partnered with 25 neighborhood and organization community gardens consisting of more than 500 individuals. Five workshops, numerous one-on-one coaching sessions and site visits to the community gardens led to all of the gardens completing a successful harvest at the end of the season. The Master Gardener Volunteers also raised more than 5,000 pounds of fresh produce, which was donated to the Second Harvest Food Bank of Clark and Champaign Counties.
- The second annual Local Foods Summit—an effort in our community to develop a network of growers, consumers, educators, restaurants and others—was held in November. The goal was to continue the conversation regarding local foods. We challenged our community to identify and attempt to break down barriers to growing, purchasing and utilizing local foods. At the end of the summit, four chefs that were involved in the program made new connections with local growers and producers and were going to explore purchasing their product as opposed to traveling out of the county. In addition, five monthly programs were held with the purpose of introducing local producers to attendees and to raise the awareness of the value of local foods.
- Recipients of the USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed)—formerly the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program—learn how to stretch their food dollars through interactive classes offered by Clark County Extension. This program taught 676 food stamp-eligible



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and food stamp recipients classes on diet quality, physical activity, food safety and food resource management. As a result, SNAP-Ed 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.

## PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- Participating in the county's 72 4-H Clubs were 1,521 Clark County 4-H members "learning by doing the 4-H way" with 4,190 projects. One hundred percent of 4-H members reported at least one new skill learned through 4-H project participation and completion. Responses focused on applying knowledge learned for project success and life skills for personal improvement. Giving back to the community, caring for animals and teaching others were identified by members as important 4-H membership experiences. Four hundred twenty adults and 178 teens serve as volunteers with the Clark County 4-H program. They are making a difference with more than 2,500 youth contributing, on average, 50 hours of annual service per volunteer, worth \$641,654.
- Imagine Clark County in 20 years! That's what 53 teens and young adults representing a cross-section of the community were asked to consider during the Clark County Reconsidered Forum, which was conducted by OSU Extension. Participants described Clark County as having strong youth organizations, being economically diverse, being committed to agriculture and improving everyone's quality of life. Teens specifically talked about increased access to higher education, job opportunities, technology readiness and a need for greater urban-rural balance in order to still call Clark County home in the year 2035. To move Clark County toward a successful future image, the county needs a unified vision, joint government, career training opportunities and an investment in preparing youth and families in financial readiness and STEM disciplines.
- The 2015 avian influenza outbreak caused some ruffled feathers, but 229 Clark County 4-H poultry project members learned a valuable firsthand lesson in biosecurity's role in protecting our food supply. Instead of raising and showing birds, members showcased their knowledge and skills by educating Clark County fairgoers about this deadly disease and the economics of Ohio's poultry industry. Forty-seven percent participated with their poultry displays in the Junior Fair auction, receiving, on average, \$219.21 for this valuable real-world experience.

- Forty-five percent of the 86 applicants for the camp counselor positions were new. This is a strong indicator that the counselors are fulfilling the positive roles they have been trained for by inspiring campers and their peers to apply to become camp counselors. Post-assessments of the 66 teens selected to serve as camp counselors revealed that Extension's educational training sessions prepared them to teach, improved their communication skills, increased their confidence in working with large groups, and enhanced their teamwork skills. College-bound counselors credited camp counseling workforce preparation and skill development on job applications, scholarship forms and other volunteering pursuits.

## ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Master Gardener Volunteers performed more than 11,000 hours of volunteer service valued at \$233,200 to the community. Projects included moving the five-acre Gateway Learning Gardens, presentations, community service projects and more. Master Gardener Volunteers answered gardening questions and provided information on topics such as emerald ash borer, storm water, invasive species management, and plant selection and maintenance to more than 300 homeowners. There are currently 115 active Clark County Master Gardener Volunteers.
- The former Gateway Learning Gardens at the previous Clark County Extension office were dismantled and moved to our new location, the former Snyder Park Golf Course. We are part of an exciting partnership with National Trails Parks and Recreation District and other community organizations. We will be developing our new gardens on approximately 25 acres at this site. A landscape architect was hired to assist with the creation of a master plan for the garden area. Fundraising will begin in 2016 as well as implementation of the plan. The gardens will be a critical component to the rejuvenation of the Snyder Park community.

**Clark County receives \$16,018 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension's local-state-federal partnership.**