

2015 County Highlights

Seneca County

Erie Basin Extension Education and Research Area

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PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- In 2015, Seneca County enrolled a total of 43 4-H Clubs under the guidance of 151 volunteers. Membership totaled 879 4-H youth, ages 8–19, in traditional club experiences, and 129 youth, ages 5–7, in Cloverbud activities. Club activities and project work provided members the opportunity to explore subject matter areas through “learning by doing.” Members also developed life skills in decision making, teamwork, leadership, responsibility, communication, interpersonal relationships and interview techniques. As a result, youth gained self-esteem and the ability to set goals, both of which help prepare them for adulthood.
- In 2015, 182 sixth, seventh and eighth graders from Seneca East, New Riegel, and North Central Academy schools participated in the OSU Extension signature program, Real Money, Real World. Topics included how occupation affects income, calculating deductions, using checking and savings accounts, and deciding between wants versus needs. Student comments included the following:
 - “I will change asking my parents for so much money.”
 - “The real world costs a lot of money. Don’t have children till you have lots of money.”
 - “I plan on not buying everything I want.”
- Ninety-two junior campers, ages 8–13, gained life skills in communication, teamwork, leadership, citizenship and more as a result of their 4-H Junior Camp experience. In addition to building new friendships, youth experienced group living and learned to get along with others. Campers’ evaluations indicated they gained independent living skills, teamwork experiences, confidence and self-esteem. Parent comments included the following:
 - “My child became more independent.”
 - “My child has shown more confidence since being home.”
 - “Camp provides a great opportunity for youth to develop relationships outside of school friends.”

- Twenty-three older 4-H youth received 24 hours of training to assure roles and responsibilities as 4-H Camp Counselors. These young people increased their knowledge of topics such as liability issues, developmental characteristics of children ages 8–13, first aid, emergency procedures, managing behavior, identifying child abuse and neglect, conflict management and guidelines for planning a quality camp program. Counselors-in-training were provided the opportunity to develop counselor skills by working side-by-side with experienced counselors.
- The 4-H CARTEENS program was initiated in Seneca County in 2013. In 2015, more than 12 older 4-H youth were trained as CARTEENS instructors to teach the specially designed curriculum to youth ages 16–19 who had received a first-time driving offence. A total of 107 youth completed the program in 2015. Sixty-seven percent of CARTEENS participants rated the program as excellent, and 33 percent rated it as good. Participant comments included the following:
 - “I relearned a lot of things I had forgotten. I will reduce the amount of distractions in my car.”
 - “I liked the impaired vision because it makes you realize how much alcohol affects you. I will definitely keep my phone in my pocket!”

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) is proud to have provided education on nutrition, menu-planning, saving food dollars and food safety to many partner agencies within Seneca County. Some of those partner agencies are senior citizen service sites such as the Kiwanis Manor, along with the Tiffin and Fostoria Commission on Aging. SNAP-Ed, through collaboration with The Salvation Army and Seneca East Public Library, offered adult direct education classes in 2015. As a result of these classes, it has been reported that many of those county residents who participated in the programs learned either some or a lot of new information, and they reported



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that they would be changing behaviors as a result of the instruction. Clients have indicated on evaluations that the information received has helped them make healthier choices and save money at the grocery store. In 2015, SNAP-Ed continued to collaborate with principals and/or teachers in Seneca County to provide nutrition classes to some of the county's youth. The Seneca County SNAP-Ed program assistant taught preschoolers and kindergarteners at Longfellow Elementary and first- and second-graders at Riley Elementary. Both of these schools are within the Fostoria Community School District. The youth learned a lot about nutrition and the importance of physical activity while having fun at the same time.

- In 2015, Seneca County also participated in the Summer Food Service Program. In this program, SNAP-Ed travels to food service sites and delivers to children in kindergarten through sixth grade information regarding nutrition, MyPlate and physical activity. In summer 2015, the SNAP-Ed program assistant collaborated with not only the Fostoria Community School District, but also with The Geary Family YMCA out of Fostoria. The number of Summer Food Service Program sites was increased from one to three, which allowed SNAP-Ed to reach more children who might not have taken advantage of the program in previous years due to space limitations and transportation issues.
- In 2016, Seneca County Extension plans to collaborate with The Salvation Army to offer nutrition education based on MyPlate to the youth who participate in The Salvation Army's once-per-week Supper Club. We will teach the youth about making healthy food choices and being physically active. Our plan is to provide these classes to the youth every other week throughout the school year. Also, we are working with The Caring Hands Pregnancy Center in Fostoria to offer a series of nutrition education classes to expecting parents and those who are already parents. We completed one series in 2015, and we have plans to complete two to three more series throughout 2016.

Seneca County receives \$50,905 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension's local-state-federal partnership.

ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- In 2015, Seneca County Master Gardener Volunteers had 45 members. The volunteers hosted annual plant sales, maintained five flower beds, and produced newspaper, radio, and newsletter reports. "Preserving the Harvest," "Perennial Gardens," and "Agri-Ability" were some of the educational programs presented by the Master Gardener Volunteers. Fifty-three percent of program participants reported that they will change their gardening habits. For the third year in a row, the Master Gardener Volunteers were recipients of the Standards For Excellence Award.