Master Gardeners

Luke Gustafson - Master Gardener Coordinator

Master Gardeners by the Numbers:
75 Active Master Gardeners & Interns
3,800 hours of volunteer service (in 2015)
840 hours of continuing education (in 2015)

Stewarding the Environment

In the spring and fall of 2015, Extension partnered with the Charles County Government Division of Environmental Resources to offer hands-on composting workshops. Master Gardeners answered questions on composting and helped residents assemble 22 new compost bins to take home and use in their backyards. Over 60 people attended the workshops to learn how to make “black gold”.

What is an invasive plant? Are snakes good or bad for your garden? Where do stink bugs come from? What can you do to improve the health of the Bay? These are some of the questions that Master Gardeners posed to fairgoers at the 2015 Charles County Fair. Their interactive booth in the Flower Building won first place for educational exhibits and featured moveable magnetic insects and animals. Master Gardeners engaged young and old alike asking “where does this insect belong?” and educating residents to conserve the diverse habitats and rich natural resources of Charles County.

FSNE - New to County

Jessica Conjour - Project Leader / Nutrition Educator

Food Supplement Nutrition Education (FSNE) is a collaborative community nutrition program, offering nutrition education to assist low-income (those who qualify for SNAP/food stamps) individuals and families in making healthy food choices, developing food preparation skills, handling food safely, improving shopping skills, and increasing physical activity. FSNE’s work focuses in five initiative areas: school community, youth out of school time, farmers’ markets, food assistance, and preschool and childcare.

University of Maryland Extension expresses its appreciation to the members of the Charles County Extension Advisory Council who served in 2015: President Rick LaNore, Vice President Beverlie Ludy, Treasurer Mike Mohler, Assistant Treasurer Turner Coggins, Paul Bailey, Jeff Bossart, Mary Agnes Swann, Ronda Goldman, Steve Walter, Ann Herbert, Arthur Ellis, Charlie Gardiner, Gale Kladitis and David Hancock, Jr.

Don’t just get answers.
Get solutions from someone you can trust.

2015 Highlights

- 2,796 youth participated in animal science, environmental science and human sciences in 4-H.
- 450 farm plans covering 14,972 acres were prepared for Charles County farmers.
- 797 youth participated in EFNEP programs. Of this number, 431 youth successfully graduated from the program.
- 75 Master Gardeners and Interns provided more than 3,800 hours of volunteer service to the community.
- Over 1,000 participated in training through Health and Food Smart programs.
- 485 residents increased their knowledge and developed new skills for Financial Literacy.

University of Maryland Extension, Charles County
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4-H Youth Development

Bonnie Boyden - Program Management Specialist
dale bowling - extension program assistant / efnep
Debbie House - Extension Program Assistant
Jeanne Herbert - 4-H Program Assistant

To Make the Best Better

The Charles County 4-H Youth Development is proud to be part of the nation’s largest youth organization with a membership of 6 million youth across all 50 states. 4-H is the youth development program of America’s land-grant university and USDA Cooperative Extension System. Through the partnership with the USDA, UMD Extension and the Charles County Government, 4-Hers in Charles County have been able to reconnect to our basic teachings of a healthier food system. Youth in Charles County have the opportunity to learn how to grow and prepare fresh and safe food for not just themselves but for the nation and the world. Many of the 4-H programs focus on educating the youth and adults about these important life skills. According to National 4-H Council research:

4-H youth are 4 times more likely to contribute to their communities, 2 times more likely to make healthier choices, 2 times more likely to be civically active and 2 times more likely to participate in STEM programs. 2,796 youth across Charles County received programming in Animal Science, Human Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Natural Resources. Youth were reached through many different venues such as: Community Clubs, Special Interest groups, Camps and In-School programs.

Charles County volunteer leaders give generously of their time and talents to work with these local youth. Leaders donate 35,000 hours per year preparing lessons and teaching youth. They drive an average of 350 miles per year in their privately owned cars and spend an average of $200 of their own money to support 4-H activities. Leaders and participants purchased insurance, resource and project materials, and supplies for a wide variety of miscellaneous projects relating to the 4-H programs. Charles County has 196 certified volunteers contributing a total of $601,916 of valued time to the county economy.

Economic Impact Summary for the 4-H Animals Science Program for Charles County:

- 4-H livestock program: $115,000
- 4-H Horse program: $3,700
- 4-H Volunteers time value: $601,916
- 4-H program & resource materials: $40,000
- Yearly economic impact: $760,616

4-H Animal Science

Animal Science Projects provide a great opportunity for county youth to learn many different life skills. In 2015, Charles County had 67 4-Hers raise livestock, 31 showed horses, 15 owned rabbits, 18 youth learned to train dogs and 12 participated in poultry judging and, last but not least, 15 participated in small pets projects. For a grand total of 158 youth who learned responsibility, record keeping, decision making and acquiring knowledge. This is an increase of 18 members from the previous year. In the 2015 project year, the county youth raised a total of 161 market beef, sheep, swine and goat projects. An additional 35 breeding animals projects were managed by 4-H youth year round. Including all costs, total receipts to our economy for these animals amounted over $115,000. In addition to the livestock youth, there were youth participating in the horse project. 4-H Horse participants spent an estimated $3,700 in Charles County. Those 4-Hers involved in the small animal projects including chickens, rabbits and pocket pets, our records indicate these projects provide an additional $40,000 to our county economy.

Nutrient Management

Francis Warring - Nutrient Management Advisor

The local agricultural Nutrient Management Program is coordinated by Francis Warring, a certified Maryland Nutrient Management Advisor. The advisor conducts farm visits, assists with soil, manure and plant tissue tests and provides technical support to any farm operator in the county. The advisor provides recommendations for the use of both chemical and organic nutrients to each producer in the form of a Nutrient Management plan. The goal of writing a Nutrient Management plan is to maximize crop yields while minimizing nutrient losses into the environment. Upon receiving a plan, farm operators have the information and tools required to remain in compliance with Maryland Nutrient Management Regulations. In 2015, plans were written for 103 farm operators, covering 14,972 acres on 450 different farms. Since 1998, the Nutrient Management program has helped to reduce nutrients from entering the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

Family and Consumer Science

Patricia Maynard - Faculty Extension Assistant, Finance
Donna Bailey - Extension Program Assistant

Recipes for Success

Family and Consumer Sciences programs are designed to promote healthy lifestyles among youth and adult community members to reduce their risk of chronic diseases and conditions, such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease and chronic debt. In 2015, over 1,175 participants in Charles County received training through the Health and Food Smart programs at Judy and Senior Centers throughout the county.

Over 485 Charles County residents of diverse economic thresholds increased their knowledge and developed new skills in the area of Financial Literacy. The goal of the UME FCS Finance program is to empower residents and their families by providing pertinent financial literacy information that will improve their economic stability. Individuals and families will increase their personal health and wealth well-being by increasing savings, reducing debt and managing budgets more effectively.