

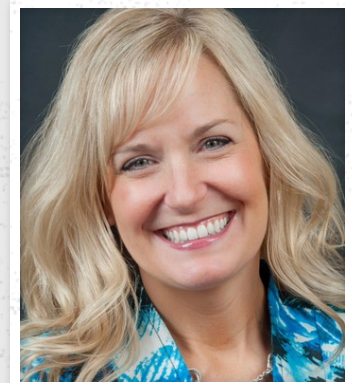
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION

GARRETT COUNTY

2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

A MESSAGE FROM OUR WESTERN MD DIRECTOR

Despite the continued challenges of the pandemic in 2021, the University of Maryland Extension (UME) - Garrett County team succeeded in making a difference in our community. We developed new and innovative ways to support the agriculture industry, protect natural resources, and enhance the well-being of youth and families. This was accomplished through offering trusted, research-based education to all residents. This outreach was further expanded through the efforts of our strong core of volunteers. Whether they were leading 4-H clubs or working as Master Gardeners, our volunteers continued to be the backbone of our programs. We are so grateful to them for their continued dedication.



All of what we do is made possible through effective collaboration among the UMD College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, USDA, and Garrett County Government, who have been long-standing generous supporters.

I am so proud to present our 2021 annual report which is a snapshot of the myriad of educational opportunities that were made available. As you will see, our programs simply made life better in Garrett County and beyond! As always, I welcome your input, so please feel free to contact me.

Dr. Jennifer Bentlejewski
jthorn@umd.edu

4-H PROGRAMS CONTINUE TO GROW

Ann Sherrard
4-H Youth Development
Principal Agent



Although COVID has continued to disrupt normal programming in 2021, 4-H volunteers and youth have found creative ways to carry on. Two new 4-H clubs were established; one community club and one robotics club as seen in photo below. Another highlight in the past year was the return of the Garrett County Fair. The 2021 livestock sale broke records with proceeds of \$588,418 to young people through the sale of 319 project animals.

- Number of 4-H Clubs: 18
- Number of Youth Reached: 721
- Number of Volunteer Hours: 6,300



GRANT FUNDING SUPPORTS OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Grant funding in 2021 provided \$78,834 to support activities for youth and families in Garrett County. Funding was available for camp scholarships, leadership training, mentoring, technology equipment, and healthy living education. National 4-H Council partners with corporations and foundations to provide opportunities for local 4-H programs.



One example is the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Well Connected Communities grant, which provided funding to support community development in the town of Kitzmiller. As seen below, the project supported additions to the library including this new STEAM cart to provide youth education in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math.



KIDS NEED CAMPING MORE THAN EVER

The Garrett County 4-H staff was pleased to be able to offer a modified resident camping experience for 100 youth in the summer of 2021. Volunteers and staff showed resiliency and creativity in adapting and flourishing within COVID parameters. The American Camp Association provided this comment regarding summer camping:

"Since March 2020, our kids have been living an increasingly bizarre, unnatural life of screens

adulthood. However, in the midst of the insanity, we learned that *summer camp* can become a beacon of hope, a lifeline towing them back to their normal selves."



VIRTUAL STEM PROGRAMMING TRANSITION SUCCESSFUL

Karen Wood
4-H Youth Development
Senior Agent Associate



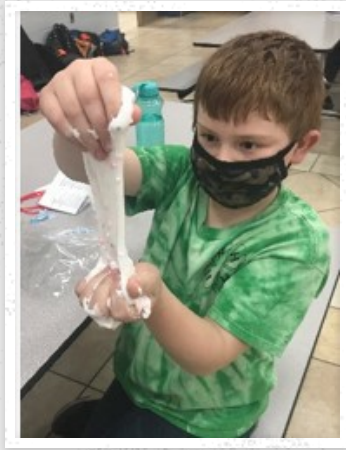
Garrett County 4-H has been able to transition the very successful virtual programming to safe in-person programming with some creative planning.

In 2021, Garrett County 4-H was able to provide 663 STEM Kits that were researched, designed, and developed for each program's specific needs. Forty-four (24 virtual and 20 in-person) STEM programs were provided to three community after schools and two Tech Wizards mentoring sites. Additionally, Garrett County 4-H was able to provide youth with in-person Environmental STEM programs at the Western Maryland Environmental Education and Camping Center. The goal was to transition safely from virtual programming to in-person programming in an outdoor setting to help youth develop awareness and appreciation for the environment. The outdoor programs were carefully selected to transition safely together in-person to include Archery, Beaver Dam Engineering, Owl Pellet Dissection, and Beginner Fishing (as seen in the photo below at Cunningham Lake at the 4-H Western Maryland Environmental Education and Camping Center.)

Providing activities in an outdoor space allowed youth to increase their personal parameters while being fully engaged in the program. This program allowed youth to learn a new skill, enjoy the beauty of the lake and nature in a safe, caring environment. Providing safe and enjoyable 4-H STEM activities to rural youth in Garrett County continues to be successful as we ease back together again.

- 44 STEM Kits Programs (24 Virtual and 20 In-Person)
- 663 Individual 4-H STEM Kits
- 12 Outdoor Environmental STEM
- 335 Youth





Science of Slime



Squishy Circuit Trees



Galactic Quest Cipher Wheel

MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM CONTINUES AS DRIVING FORCE

Ashley Bachtel-Bodkins
Master Gardener Coordinator
Senior Agent Associate

As pandemic restrictions, fears, and worries carried on into 2021, virtual teaching opportunities were focused on, which included zoom classes, blogs, and sharing information via social media.



Ashley contributed [eight new](#) entries for the [Maryland Grows Blog](#), which is managed by the [Home and Garden Information Center](#). The new content had over 4,300 views. Through a partnership with fellow UME Educator, Sherry Frick, seven new virtual classes were created, presented virtually, and then archived on the [Western Maryland Cluster Youtube Channel](#) with more than 400 people viewing the live sessions and another 700 viewing at a later date/time. The [Garrett County Master Gardener Facebook](#) page continues to be a big driver for reaching people with a “page reach” of over 69,180, which is an increase of almost 300% compared to 2020.

Another major service provided was that Ashley responded to over 100 questions from local residents related to home horticulture, insect pests, soil sampling, and more. She also handled questions for the state Home and Garden Information Center through the Ask Extension web platform.

Ashley along with Master Gardeners continued to work with several community organizations including Garrett County Health Department, Garrett College Continuing Education Workforce Development, Deep Creek Watershed Foundation, Mary Browning Senior Center, Mountain Laurel Garden Club, and the Garrett County Fair Board.

The most successful program led to 40 rain barrels being distributed in Garrett County completely free of charge, thanks to funding provided by a Keep Maryland Beautiful Grant, which was secured through the Deep Creek Watershed Foundation.

A Community Partner in 2021 commented:

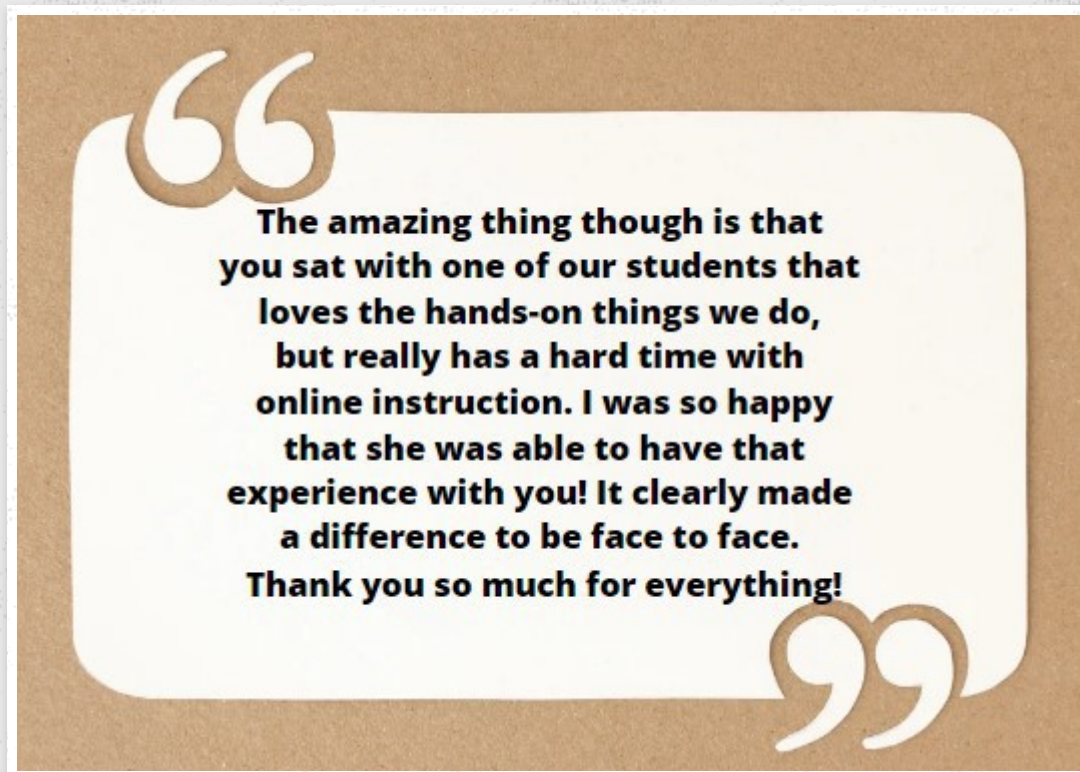


Photo is the 2021 Master Gardener Information Booth at the Mt. Laurel Garden Club Tour





Friendsville Trunk or Treat



Holiday Make and Take



Rain Barrel Distribution

OPPORTUNITIES CONTINUE FOR AGFS

William Lantz
Agriculture & Food Systems Educator
Principal Agent



In 2021, the Agriculture and Food Systems (AGFS) programs in Garrett County remained active despite the Covid-19 restrictions.

AGFS in Garrett County conducted a few in-person meetings and cooperated with statewide efforts to offer virtual educational events. AGFS also continued to cooperate with organizations and other government agencies to offer unique opportunities in Garrett County. Finally, the AGFS program conducted 4-H activities for youth in Garrett County and across the state.

Program Highlights:

- Conducted 3 pesticide recertification meetings for 43 producers
- Assisted with virtual Agronomy and Forage meetings that were statewide
- Assisted Western Maryland Food Council (WMFC) with a virtual 3 session conference "Our Food, Our Future 2021: Growing A Healthy Food System in a Pandemic World" over 150 people attended and \$4,500 was raised through the conference to assist with the food system project in the three counties.
- Assisted WMFC with applying for a Rural Maryland Councils, Maryland Agricultural Education, and Rural Development Fund grant. The grant was funded for \$26,300. The funds are being used to hire a person to work on five objectives: farm to restaurant forum, directory of agriculture education resources, directory of resources for community gardens, survey food pantries for needs to handle local products, and determine the feasibility of creating a non-profit for WMFC.
- Assisted Mountain Maryland Hemp Alliance with applying for a Rural Maryland Councils, Maryland Agricultural Education, and Rural Development Fund grant. The grant was awarded and the funds (\$19,000) are being used to purchase equipment to turn hemp stalks that are waste material from CBD hemp plants into wood pellets.
- Assisted Western Maryland RC&D with completing a feasibility study on processing fiber hemp that was funded through an Appalachian Region Commission grant funded in 2020

(Feasibility Study for Industrial Hemp Processing Industry). Willie served as a co-director of the project and provided leadership to the extension committee that produced a PowerPoint presentation on growing fiber hemp. The presentation was conducted virtually four times to over 100 people. The extension group also organized two fiber hemp demonstration plots with a field day held at one of the demonstration sites.

- Willie worked with two local farms on the creation of corn mazes.
- AgFS assisted DNR with the completion of Bear Damage claims.
- AgFS worked with Garrett Growers to expand sales through Turnrow Appalachia Farm Collective as part of a USDA Local Food Promotion Program Grant. Garrett Growers is assisting Turnrow with marketing in Northern West Virginia and providing products to the Mountaineer Food Bank.
- AgFS is assisting Garrett Growers and Net Glow (private company) with the development of food hub marketing software. The software will streamline the operation of small food hubs such as Garrett Growers. The funding is being provided by Maryland Department of Agriculture.
- AgFS is a partner with Future Generations University in the "Accessing South Atlantic Markets for US Maple Syrup" grant funded by USDA Acers Program. The grant provided funds to conduct two regional maple syrup workshops held in Garrett County. The grant also assisted one Garrett County Farm with marketing syrup in the southern part of the United States.
- AGFS worked with the Western Maryland RC&D to partner with Future Generations University on a USDA Acers Program Grant. The grant, "Enriching Maple in Appalachia" is a three-year grant to expand maple syrup production through educational programs.
- AgFS program in Garrett County has continued to provide leadership to the "Transforming Shellfish Farming with Smart Technology and Management Practices Grant". AgFS is leading the youth component through the 4-H program. The 4-H program held a statewide STEM virtual camp in the summer. The project contributed activities related to shellfish and underwater robotics to the camp. Work is underway for the 2022 4-H Robotics Challenges to have shellfish themes in 2022 and the development of an underwater robotics project.
- Willie provided leadership for the Maryland 4-H Robotics Challenges at the Maryland State Fair. 11 teams and over 45 4-H members participated in the challenge in 2021.
- AgFS conducted the 4-H Electrical, Small Engines, Tractor Driving, and Lawn and Garden Tractor Engineering events for Garrett County. 29 youth participated in the events.
- Willie assisted with the Garrett County FIRST Robotics Team "GFORCE" They participated in two state qualifiers and the Chesapeake (MD, VA, DC) Region Championship, earning third place in the Inspire Award qualifying the team for the National Championship (which was cancelled).

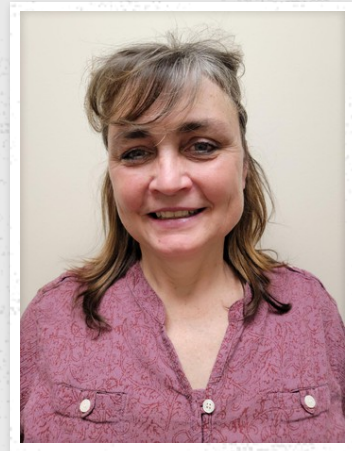
Below is a photo of the Hemp Field Day at Fiber Hemp Demonstration Plot



SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Jill Hauser
Nutrient Management
Coordinator

In 1998, the Water Quality Improvement Act (WQIA) was enacted to protect the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries by ensuring fertilizers, animal manure, and other nutrient sources were applied in an effective and environmentally sound manner. This requires farmers who manage 8 or more animal units (8,000 pounds of live animal weight) or earn \$2,500 or more gross annual income for the agricultural operation to have an up-to-date nutrient management plan written by a licensed planner.



Jill Hauser serves our farmers in Garrett County by providing advice and written nutrient management plans that meet WQIA standards. For more information, contact Jill at 301-334-6965 or jhauser1@umd.edu.

Nutrient Management Highlights

- Nutrient Management Plans were written for 72 cooperators.
- 238 plans were written for 1,302 fields for a total of 12,632.4 acres.

LOCAL SCHOOLS BENEFIT FROM MARYLAND SNAP ED PROGRAM

Kristin Spiker
SNAP-Ed
Senior Agent Associate

Maryland SNAP-Ed is a program within University of Maryland Extension that creates healthier environments and improves the health and wellbeing of limited-income families. Garrett County SNAP-Ed program encourages a nutritious and active lifestyle through increased food access (recipes, links to food pantries and farmers markets), drinking more water (water bottles, school posters, parent handouts), and promoting physical activity (even providing sleds and indoor recess supplies!). SNAP-Ed provides comprehensive programs that consist of nutrition education lessons, social marketing programs, and policy, system, and environmental-level changes at partnering sites.



Garrett County SNAP-Ed partners with elementary schools (Broad Ford, Crellin, Friendsville, Grantsville), Head Starts, and Garrett College's SING food pantry to reach 2,626 clients. Nutrition education programs available to youth and adult audiences consist of hands-on activities including gardening, food preparation, and tasting opportunities.

Second-grader quote from November 2021

**I was grocery shopping with my mom.
I told her to please buy asparagus!
She couldn't believe that I tried it in
school and that I loved it so much-even
to eat it raw like we did in school!**



[ReFresh](#) student enjoying [broccoli salad](#)!



Picking veggies at Crellin [School Garden](#) with kindergarten!



Picking [peppers](#) to take home!

WEATHERING THE STORM

Dr. Jesse Kettermann
Family and Consumer Sciences

Our Finance and Health Insurance Literacy programs aim to empower our clients to reduce debt, be financially secure, and make the health insurance decisions that are best for them and their families. Our Farm Stress and Farm Family Resiliency programs are expanding to serve more farmers and farm families than ever before.



Finance and Health Insurance Literacy 2021 Highlights

79 programs offered to 1,374 participants

Participants range in age from elementary school to 65+

Program topics included:

- Personal Finance Seminar for Professionals
- Your Money Your Goals (for Human Service Workers)
- Personal Finance for College Students
- Understanding Credit and Credit Reports
- Health Insurance Literacy
- Farm Stress Management

Community Partners: Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County, Allegany County Work Experience Program, Allegany County After-School Program, Washington County Family Self-Sufficiency Program Coordinating Committee, Allegany County Public Library, Frostburg State University, and Allegany College of Maryland.

HEALTHY FOR LIFE

Lisa McCoy, RD

Family and Consumer Sciences



The pandemic has changed how we serve our communities in Western Maryland. Lisa McCoy has expanded her social media, newspaper, virtual learning and print reach with great success.

Program Highlights:

- Dining with Diabetes programs (a 4-week series followed by a 3-month follow-up) reaching 24 adults.
- DASH plus (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) program (4 sessions reaching 12 adults across the state).
- Mind-Body Medicine Group (8 weeks) for hospital employees.
- Monthly nutrition program for residents at a short-term substance abuse recovery center.
- Hazardous Household Products presentation to 59 Master Gardeners.
- Assisted with the Food Systems Conference held virtually reaching over 200 people across multiple states.
- Building Effective Virtual Programs that Work: a 3-session curriculum that was held 3 times throughout the year reaching 17 participants.
- Health Insurance Literacy Initiative webinars reaching 31 adults
- Print and social media:
- 7 Healthy Living videos with 1,386 views.
- Contributed to University of Maryland Extension blog “breathing room” throughout the year.
- Co-authored “Health Insurance Claim Problem? How to Navigate the Health Insurance Claims Process” UME fact sheet.
- Contributed to virtual newsletters and social media posts for the EXCITE vaccination education and engagement project.
- Healthy Living Facebook posts- 65 posts with 2,309 views in Garrett County
- Wrote articles relating to healthy living for the *At Home Places* magazine summer, fall and holiday editions. Circulation: 7,000 print copies as well as Facebook (over 1,000 followers), Twitter and Instagram posts.

DELIVERING HOPE

The Maryland Rural Opioid Technical Assistance (MarylandROTA) Program had an epic second year, despite lingering pandemic restrictions and uncertainty. Through the delivery of various programs targeting adults and youth, the ROTA team successfully reached 5,341 participants from across the state in year-2 alone.

In other program news, full-time educator Dr. Stephanie Hutter-Thomas is stepping down from her role to lead a large study being conducted by WVU Research Corporation in collaboration with Yale School of Public Health. The good news is that she will remain involved with the ROTA project as a part-time consultant and instructor. As new funding opportunities present themselves, MarylandROTA hopes to hire another full-time educator in this region to assist with program delivery.



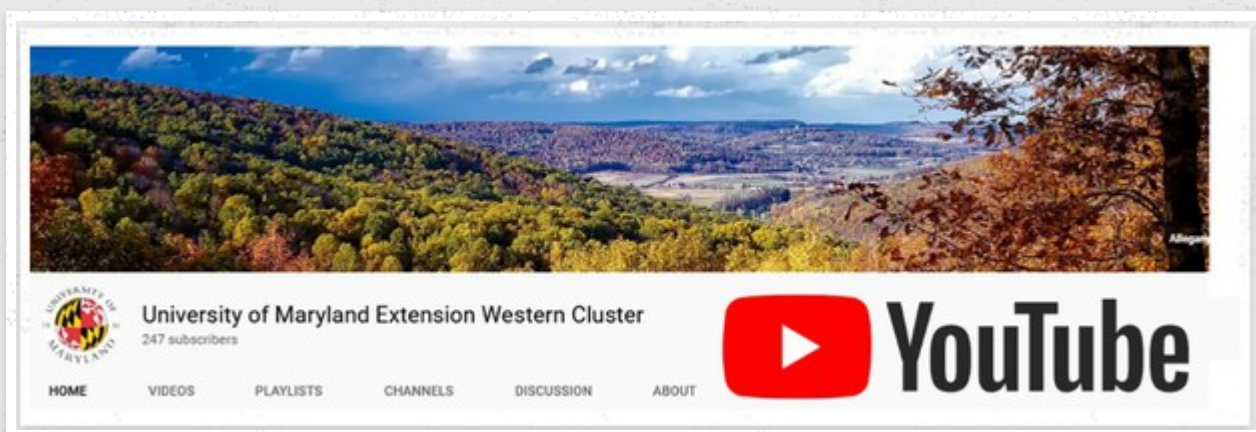
Program Highlights

- 5,341 total participants in 2021
- 81 Mental Health First Aid workshops
- 157 Opioid Use Disorder related trainings and webinars
- 47 youth programs
- 15 train-the-trainer events reaching over 7,300 Marylanders during the program's two-year grant cycle

Community Partners: Because we strive to connect the right resources with any person seeking assistance regardless of geography, Maryland ROTA has partnerships and collaborations across the state and across the country. For a list of partnerships and resources located in Western Maryland, please visit [WesternMDLocalResources](#).

WESTERN CLUSTER YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Did you know University of Maryland Extension Western Cluster has our own YouTube channel? Our 248 videos on nutrition, healthy living, agriculture, home gardening, 4-H Youth Development, and more have been viewed by over 50,000 visitors since we launched in April 2020. Find what you're looking for at [WMDYouTube](#).





KEEPING CONNECTED

If you have questions, contact one of our UME experts to provide solutions.

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