Educating the Next Generation

At the Charles County Fair, Master Gardeners performed “Misadventures of Farmer MacGregor and Peter Rabbit”. In this puppet show adaptation of Beatrix Potter’s timeless story, kids learned about the role of pollinators in a healthy ecosystem, the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables and more. Master Gardeners hope to expand performances to reach youth throughout the county.

What is a seed? How do they know when it is time to grow? These are some of the questions kids explored at the Needs of Seeds program in partnership with Charles County Public Schools. Start programming over a year before it opened to the public, Master Gardeners along with Port Tobacco River Conservancy and Southern Maryland Audubon Society partnered with Charles County Parks and Recreation Division and Maryland Department of Natural Resources to enhance the landscape with native plants and trees. The park now offers area residents an opportunity to experience the beauty of the native flora and learn about conservation landscaping to put to use in the home landscape.

Recipes for Success

The Food Supplement Nutrition Education (FSNE) program is a collaborative community nutrition program, offering nutrition education to assist low-income individuals and families in making healthy food choices, improving shopping skills, and increasing physical activity. FSNE’s work focuses in five initiative areas: farm to family, healthy school communities, healthy tots and families, and securing food resources for families. In 2017, FSNE provided direct nutrition education to 1,623 individuals, while reaching over 9,300 individuals through community events and print materials.

University of Maryland Extension expresses its appreciation to the members of the Charles County Extension Advisory Council who served in 2017: President Ann Herbert, Vice President Gale Kladitis, Treasurer Mike Mohler, Assistant Treasurer Turner Coggins, Paul Bailey, Jeff Bossart, Mary Agnes Swann, Rick LaNore, Arthur Ellis, Charlie Gardiner, Steve Walter, Ronda Goldman, David Hancock Jr. and Margo Champion Alam.
Financial contributions were received from more than 30 community groups to support 4-H youth development programs including: Day and Overnight Camp, Project Day, Livestock, Horse and Dog programs and 4-H Clover Days. The National Wild Turkey Federation and NRA continue to give financial support for the 4-H Shooting Sports Education program.

**4-H Youth Development**

Bonnie Boyden - Program Management Specialist
Darby D’Ambrosio - Ext. Program Assist/EFNEP
Jeanne Herbert - 4-H Program Assistant

Reaching Thousands of Charles County Youth!

4-H, across the nation, faces a difficult challenge in demonstrating return-on-investment, or economic impact than most Extension program areas, because the impact of teaching life skills to youth is less readily quantifiable than are the impacts from programs designed to reduce pollution, poverty, or crop loss. However, 4-H proves its worth by demonstrating a clear return-on-investment to stakeholders that continue to partner with 4-H each year. Charles County 4-H has over 200 different organizations, associations, businesses and county schools that see the value and continue to partner to strengthen the program.

The results are stated below:

- 445 4-H Community Club members participated in projects including: Animal Science; Environmental Science; Human Science & Cloverbet Development programs for ages 5 to 7 years.
- 2055 youth experienced a 4-H opportunity of decision making by participating in Charles County schools and community centers focusing on food & fitness.
- 183 trained volunteers gave 11,000+ hours to support our youth; valued at over $462,000.
- 34 classes were offered to 4-H volunteers to maintain and improve their skills.
- 171 youth experienced outdoor and environmental education programs through day and overnight camps.
- 519 youth increased their knowledge of healthy decision making related to drugs and alcohol by participating in the Health Rocks Grant from National 4-H.
- 364 youth improved their animal husbandry skills, and food safety through 4-H Animal Science projects.
- 182 youth received advanced leadership training in Leadership, Citizenship, and Communications.
- 151 Military Youth participated in the 4-H Military Club on the Naval Support Facility, Indian Head Base.

Charles County 4-H prepares future leaders through research-based 4-H youth development programs. The program reaches over 4000 youth and adults from all areas of Charles County. Research shows that youth in 4-H are more likely to make healthy choices, become active citizens, and contribute positively to society. The youth that participate in 4-H will be ready for future careers thanks to hands-on and minds-on learning. The 4-H Motto is to "Make The Best Better"; that is what we strive for in Charles County.

**Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program**

Donna Bailey - Ext. Program Assistant
Darby D’Ambrosio - Ext. Program Assistant

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is a nutrition education program that empowers limited-resources audiences to learn and develop the skills to make behavior changes that will lead to improved diet, health, and well-being.

Darby D’Ambrosio and Donna Bailey, Charles County’s EFNEP educators, educate youth to eat nutritious foods, participate in physical activity, and make healthy snack and drink choices through fun and interactive lessons.

There was a 98% increase in diet quality, 55% increase in food safety practices and a 28% increase in physical activity across the youth participants in 2017.

Donna Bailey will be retiring in 2018 from the EFNEP program after her twenty-nine years of service.

**Nutrient Management**

Francis Warring - Nutrient Management Advisor

The Charles County Nutrient Management Program is coordinated by Francis Warring, a certified Nutrient Management Advisor. The advisor conducts farm visits, assists with soil, manure & 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 2017, plans were written for 83 farm operators, covering 14,657 acres on 366 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 - Senior Agent Educator

Making Cents of it All

Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) programs and workshops are designed to promote healthy lifestyles among youth and adult community members to reduce their risk of chronic diseases and conditions such as chronic debt, food insecurity, obesity and stress. The goal of the UME FCS program is to empower front line community workers, adults and children with financial and health capabilities by providing pertinent programs and train-the-trainer workshops that are accessible to all. Providing financial and health literacy programs to approximately 500 Charles County residents of diverse economic thresholds resulted in increased economic security and an increase in youth and adults ability to make short- and long term decisions regarding credit, debt, saving, spending, and personal and family health.