FOOD SUPPLEMENT NUTRITION EDUCATION (FSNE)

Both FSNE and FCS faculty retired in 2017, so there was a lull in programming. The FSNE faculty position was filled in January 2018, and UME is planning to fill the FCS faculty position by June, 2018.

FSNE is a federally-funded program that provides nutrition education to low-income families of St. Mary’s County. The program’s aim is to help participants make healthy food choices, improve their shopping skills, and increase their physical activity. FSNE also provides nutrition education to professionals (teachers and child care providers) who work with low-income families, thus expanding the reach of the FSNE Program. Programs are provided in settings convenient to low-income learners throughout the community. Many printed materials are available in both English and Spanish.

In St. Mary’s County, the FSNE educator works with four Title I elementary schools and four Head Start centers, training teachers and bringing nutrition education programs to parents and youth alike at school-sponsored, Judy Center, and Head Start-sponsored events. Gardening for healthy eating is also a component of FSNE’s work; individual Title I schools work with the FSNE educator to maintain student-involved school gardens with resources and financial support provided by FSNE. In addition, monthly nutrition newsletters are sent home throughout the school year with every student in all four schools, approximately 2,400 families in 2017. In 2017, a total of 2,276 adult and youth participated in the FSNE education program.

2017 FSNE Program Highlights:
- 200 participants for child care provider training in So. MD cluster.
- 50 adults participated in Food Safety and Preservation classes.
- 700 students were active in the Farm to School program.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES (FCS)

FCS programs are designed to promote healthy lifestyles among youth and adult community members to reduce their risk of food-borne illness and chronic diseases and conditions, such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease. In the past, FCS has trained many county residents about food safety, nutrition and wellness through several training programs:

- “Food Safety is for Everyone and Nutrition, Health and Wellness.” Agency staff, volunteers, youth, parents, and other adults who acquire food safety, nutrition, and physical activity knowledge and skills, enabling them to make healthier lifestyle choices for themselves and those in their care.
- “Growing Healthy Habits and Refresh.” In-school youth receive nutrition education that aligns with and supports state curriculum.
- “Let’s Move Child Care and I Am Moving, I Am Learning; and Youth Gardening/Growing Healthy Habits.” Teachers and child care providers are trained to implement nutrition, food and gardening, and healthy lifestyle curricular activities in the classroom and afterschool.
- “Market to Mealtime.” Demonstrations and presentations at Farmer’s Markets, along with the farm-to-school initiative reach shoppers and students and have the aim of increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables and supporting the local economy through agriculture education and outreach.
- “School Wellness Leaders: Champions for Change.” Youth and adult residents are engaged through community partnership efforts that address systems and environmental changes to influence their eating and physical activity behaviors. Note: This is a statewide research and education initiative that UME St. Mary’s and St. Mary’s County Public Schools have been participating in.

EXENTIONSADVISORY COUNCIL (EAC)

The St. Mary’s EAC is a group of representatives from the county who contribute to the overall program development of the Extension Office in program areas. Members help in identifying problem areas and establish program priorities. Members also maintain adequate fiscal internal control procedures, assist with informing the public about Extension programs, and assist in building support for Extension Programs. We would like to thank our members for 2017: Ves Cory (President), Weylin Anderson (Vice President), George Borenick, Delores Magnani, Lisa McCoy, Bubby Norris, Ann Richards, John Richards, Jerry Spence, and Mary Wood.

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AGRICULTURAL & NATURAL RESOURCES (AGNR)

St. Mary’s County is home to a variety of agricultural enterprises, including tobacco, row crops, vegetables, greenhouse and nursery crops, as well as hay and livestock. Agriculture has experienced a significant amount of recent change as farmers adopt enterprises that allow them to remain profitable and sustain operations.

University of Maryland Extension strives to provide the practical tools and information that farmers need to adapt to such changes. Using non-biased, research-based information and the network of extension agents and specialists throughout the state, farmers and those seeking alternative crops have direct access to the latest technology, marketing, and production information.

2017 Program Highlights:
• Driving economic growth. Knowledge gains regarding cropping practices and advances in technology are key components to farm operators in the region. Providing relevant information producers can use to improve their operations is a cornerstone of the UME Agricultural Program.
• Increasing the number of successful beginning farmers in the region through participation in the Maryland Collaborative for Beginning Farmer Success. 200 farmers participated in the training.
• Provide direct consultation to agricultural producers solving a diverse array of production and marketing issues. Each year, an average of 300 field consultations are conducted with growers and 500 fact sheets, bulletins, or written recommendations are distributed to agricultural producers.
• Assist farmers transitioning to other enterprises including vegetable, cut flower and burley tobacco production, greenhouse and nursery operations, forage production, and grape production.
• Conduct various workshops and conferences including the Southern Maryland Vegetable Conference, Southern Maryland Crops Conference, Hay and Pasture Conference, Vegetable Production Twilight Tour, Beginning Greenhouse Production Workshop, and Grape Growers Workshop. 368 sessions reaching 2,669 participants were conducted.

MASTER GADENER (MG)

The MG program mission is to train and support volunteer horticultural educators who put their knowledge to work for the citizens of St. Mary’s County. In 2017, the MG program consisted of 66 active volunteers and six interns, who performed 2,564 hours of volunteer service. By organizing the “Ask a Master Gardener” plant clinics and attending public events, including the St. Mary County Fair, the Easter Egg Festival, Heritage Day at Colton’s Point, and River Fest. The MG answer questions and solve problems for gardeners throughout the county. A few of the many projects in 2017 included:
• Held 34 “Ask a Master Gardener” plant clinics at local libraries and additional sessions at the Farmer’s Market.
• Certified five properties as Bay Wise, which promotes landscape practices that help protect our waterways.
• Presented monthly horticultural demonstrations from July through November at the Home-Grown Farmer’s Market.
• Taught gardening classes through the continuing education program of the College of Southern Maryland.
• Assisted in the maintenance of 19 garden entrance-sign counties parks, as well as historic and native garden beds at historic sites throughout the county.
• Assisted in the detection and prevention of devastating invasive pests.

WATERSHED PROTECTION AND RESTORATION PROGRAM (WPRP)

WPRP is administered through the University of Maryland Extension—Sea Grant Extension Program through the work of the regional faculty member and local program assistant. These individuals provide programming in watershed management and restoration, watershed and environmental sciences education, and aquaculture within Southern Maryland. Specifically, they:
• Engaged with the local UGM and NRCs offices in the two-year milestone and WIP directives.
• Assisted the St. Mary’s River Watershed Partnership in planning and implementing on-ground and projects that resulted in quantifiable reduction in non-point sources of pollution.
• Supported the St. Mary’s River Watershed Partnership in the pursuit of funding opportunities for planning and implementation efforts.
• Conducted Stormwater BMP workshops that train the direct connection to watershed improvements, enhanced water quality and habitat or environmental science education.
• Participated in the St. Mary’s County Fair, Earth Day on the Square, Riverfest at Historic St. Mary’s City, and Plant-a-Palooza.
• Provided technical assistance to a new local watershed association, Friends of St. Clements Bay, in support of watershed projects.