THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

ERIE COUNTY

ERIE BASIN EXTENSION EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AREA

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STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Unemployment and financial belt-tightening continue to be the order of the day for Ohio residents. **Erie County on a Budget,** the financial education class offered to county residents at the local Job Store, has been expanded to help cash assistance clients meet their hourly work requirements for Job and Family Services. The class focuses on basic budgeting techniques, what to do if you are "in over your head," where to find assistance at the county level, and how to get more "bang for your buck" at the grocery store. A special segment of the class ties sustainability and the environment into financial literacy, in essence a green^2 approach. What this means is that when you spend less money on material goods, not only does that support your budget, but it also helps support the environment. One participant with a young child was so moved by the amount of money she could save by switching to cloth diapers, as well as being able to help reduce waste at the landfill, that she decided to give old-fashioned "diapering" a try.
- Countywide **nutrition education** helped over 4,000 residents make improvements to their health. An emphasis on eating whole grains, fruits and vegetables, and heart friendly fats and oils showed participants they can still make appealing food choices while reducing their risk for degenerative disease. One Elder College participant revealed that he lost 15 pounds and had significant reductions in his blood lipid profile after following information learned during a two-part nutrition presentation.
- **Health and wealth are related**—Poor health costs everyone more money, including the individual who gets sick, his employer, and/or the government, depending on whether the person had health insurance or was on government-sponsored health care such as Medicaid and Medicare. Bottom line? If you are healthy, you are not spending money on doctor visits, medications, and out-of-pocket expenses. You are also not losing wages for time off from work. Making good choices is a huge first step toward better health. As Dr. David Herber, Director at the Center for Human Nutrition, UCLA says, "Genetics load the gun, but environment pulls the trigger."
- In an effort to get people motivated to lose weight, programs highlighting the financial repercussions of being overweight have shown promise. Obese people spend 42 percent more than people of normal weight on medical costs, a difference of about $1,500. Obesity is a risk factor for almost every major disease, from heart disease to cancer to diabetes. Cutting down on portion sizes, cooking from scratch, choosing more plant foods, and moving the body not only saves money, but helps one look and feel better. One program participant who reported spending less on food to help reduce expenses also noticed that not having snack foods and sweets in the house resulted in a 20 pound weight loss.

ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Many times women are responsible for farm financial recordkeeping, grain marketing, human resource management activities, etc., with little or no training in these areas. **Annie's Project** works to provide risk management knowledge and resources for women involved in agriculture. By helping women improve their risk management skills, Annie's Project helps to strengthen the farm economy. The Erie County workshop received $1,085 in sponsorships, $865 in fees and several in-kind donations. Thirteen women participated in the workshop. Attendance at each class was nearly 100 percent and after completion of the class 85 percent of the women completed the evaluation survey.
  - —70 percent reported their farm had written a mission statement as a result of the workshop.
  - —100 percent believed that they had a better understanding of where to find information and what

resources are available to help make farm management decisions.

—Around 90 percent felt they were able to become more involved in farm decision-making because of the knowledge they gained through participating in the workshop.

—One participant commented, "I believe attending Annie's Project is the wisest investment of money I could have made. The amount of information learned from all the speakers was unbelievable. I feel like I can be a real asset to the farm operation now that I have a better understanding of the business."

- With the age of farmers steadily increasing and the uncertainty surrounding federal estate tax requirements, farm estate planning is vital for the longevity of individual family farms. Estate planning is cumbersome and many times overwhelming for farm families. **Transition Workshop** is designed to help farm businesses learn how to begin the process and then gain access to experienced attorneys to help them prepare for the estate planning process. By establishing open communication within the family and a strong estate plan, farms are more likely to remain a viable business for the next generation. Twenty-eight participants attended the workshop held in Erie County this past winter. An end of the class survey was conducted with 36 percent of the class completing the survey. An increase in knowledge was indicated in the following categories: understanding what transition planning is, the importance of communication and family meetings, business transfer strategies, and handling non-business family (fair or equal) members. Participants also commented: "The workshop was very helpful and gave me some good information to get started creating a transition plan." Another participant said, "Thank you, we plan to go home and start discussing estate planning and getting our information together to visit our lawyer."

PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- Research shows that youth who volunteer just one hour a week are 50 percent less likely to abuse drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, or engage in destructive behavior. Teen leaders involved in 4-H as camp counselors, Junior Fair Board members, or CarTeens instructors provided over 3,766 volunteer hours in 2010. Using the Ohio minimum wage rate of $7.30 an hour, their contribution of volunteer hours translated to $27,492 of service to our county.
- Research reveals that teens who take part in leadership programs demonstrate greater abilities to stand up for themselves and their beliefs, to make and trust their own decisions, and to believe in themselves and their abilities. Twenty-six youth did just that by serving as camp counselors for a four-day camp on Kelleys Island. Ninety-six percent of counselors agreed or strongly agreed that their camp counselor experience helped improve their leadership skills, while ninety-six percent of counselors agreed that serving as a counselor helped improve their ability to work with other people.
- Ohio teen drivers were involved in more traffic crashes than any other age group in 2008. Eighty-one teen drivers, 43 teen passengers, and 7 teen pedestrians were killed in fatal car crashes in Ohio. **4-H CarTeens** is a traffic safety program for first-time juvenile traffic offenders; its goal is to help teens become better, safer drivers. Older youth served as CarTeens instructors and helped develop and facilitate the program. Eighty-seven percent of 2010 program participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "This program will help me become a better, safer driver," while 89 percent percent of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I learned something today that will stick with me and help me make better choices on the road."
- Camp is an important learning laboratory where children develop life skills, such as responsibility, decision-making, getting along with others, cooperation, leadership, and increased self-esteem. One-hundred and eighteen youth ages 8 to 13 attended 4-H Camp on Kelleys Island. Approximately 61 percent of campers were not members of an Erie County 4-H club. Therefore, over 70 youth who otherwise would not have had a 4-H experience became 4-H members and experienced the benefits of the program through their participation in camp.

Erie County receives $39,196 in federal funding for nutritional programming for low-income people, thanks to Extension's local-state-federal partnership.

Other grant dollars:
North Central Risk Management Education Center Grant supporting women in agriculture educational workshops—$16,560
USDA Grant to support Curriculum Development for a Certificate Program in Sustainable Agriculture—$8,252
Dorn Foundation for support of local 4-H program—$2,655

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