University of Georgia Cooperative Extension is working hard for its constituents. The following are examples of Extension’s impact in the county over the past year.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

UGA Extension in Athens–Clarke County provided 84 nutrition and wellness programs for local residents, including the Walk-A-Weigh healthy living program and Cancer Prevention Cooking School, reaching more than 800 contacts. These programs focus on overall nutrition and wellness, increased physical activity and promoting healthier lifestyles all in an effort to reduce the incidence of chronic disease. The Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) agent also participated in 14 educational exhibits, reaching 245 contacts. Additional education in food safety for farmers market vendors, farmers and consumers was added throughout the year and will continue to be offered to interested organizations. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) continued reaching out to residents of the county, providing 1,355 hours of nutrition education to 400 county residents through classroom teaching and attending the Athens Farmers Market and the Broad Street Farmers Market. SNAP-Ed currently has site approval and memorandums of understanding with more than 20 partners and agencies in the county. SNAP-Ed continued to support the Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program by providing nutrition education to county residents in both English and Spanish.

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Personnel made more than 4,500 agriculture-related educational contacts in the community. These contacts were made in a wide variety of settings from teaching gardening classes, such as the popular “Free Monthly Gardening Class” series held at the Athens-Clarke County Library, civic group presentations, “Ask a Master Gardener” booths at farmers markets, home and site visits, and informational exhibits and activities at local events. Shades of Green, the Athens-Clarke County Extension monthly gardening newsletter, was distributed to more than 1,700 community members. More than 170 Athens–Clarke County Master Gardener Extension Volunteers contributed 13,000 hours at UGA demonstration gardens, the State Botanical Garden of Georgia and Athens–Clarke County school gardens. Two Plant a Row for the Hungry vegetable gardens produced more than 4,100 pounds of fresh produce for local food banks. With the supervision of Extension staff, Master Gardener Extension Volunteers answered more than 900 client questions.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

As a component of the school system curriculum, Athens–Clarke County 4-H serves all youth in grades five through eight. In 2018, more than 1,000 children and teenagers participated in Athens–Clarke County 4-H. They learned and excelled in leadership, citizenship, public speaking, critical thinking skills, teamwork, and building character and good sportsmanship. The 4-H program offers a variety of after-school educational activities. Students may join after-school judging teams including forestry, wildlife, consumer judging and poultry. As part of these educational teams, students learn subject matter to prepare for competitions. Athens–Clarke County 4-H continues to reach at-risk youth through research-based initiatives implemented to eliminate barriers that prevent youth participation in programming. To give all students the same access to 4-H competitive events, Athens–Clarke County 4-H does not charge a participation fee. All of the competitive events have a fee that the county 4-H program pays using money raised from local sources so that 4-H’ers may attend free of charge. Students must work hard to attend these competitive events. Athens–Clarke County 4-H also provides transportation to after-school practices and competitions.
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Goods and services related to Georgia’s agriculture and natural resources affect each of the state’s communities every day. Agriculture is Georgia’s largest industry, and its direct and indirect economic impact totals $73.7 billion. More than 392,400 Georgia jobs are directly involved in commodity or food- and fiber-related industries.

UGA Extension faculty and staff play a key role in the success of this industry by sharing university-based research for Georgians to use on the farm and at home. Recommendations in areas including soil fertility, pest management, plant and crop varieties, water quality, and herd health and management focus on maximizing production and profits while minimizing environmental impacts.

Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension agents also provide homeowners and communities with information on lawn care, landscaping, gardening and water conservation through a variety of workshops. Some agents also work with schools on projects like community gardens and farm-to-school programs. Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteers give thousands of hours of service to their communities by answering questions in county offices and creating educational opportunities.

4-H Youth Development

As the youth development program of UGA Extension, 4-H is also part of a national network. Georgia 4-H reaches more than 170,000 fourth- through 12th-grade students across the state and helps students develop the knowledge, life skills and attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive and contributing members of society. This mission is fulfilled through hands-on learning experiences in agricultural and environmental awareness, leadership, communication skills, citizenship, energy conservation, health, and food and nutrition.

Georgia 4-H’ers are well-known for sharing their knowledge and volunteering throughout their communities. At the school and county levels, students participate in club meetings organized by 4-H Youth Development Extension agents. At the state level, students participate in competitions, summer camps and conferences. Some 4-H competitions and events are also offered at the regional and national levels.

Research indicates that, as a result of participating in 4-H, members are more engaged in their academic studies, less likely to be involved in risky behavior, and more likely to graduate from high school and continue their education.

Family & Consumer Sciences

Family and Consumer Sciences Extension specialists, agents and staff assist in addressing real-life issues faced by Georgians of all ages. They provide programs and the latest information on obesity, chronic disease, food and financial insecurity, family stresses, unhealthy housing, food safety and preservation, nutrition and more.

To help promote the positive development and safety of preschool, school-aged and adolescent youth, UGA Extension offers resources for parents, caregivers and others. Extension professionals in this program area lead consumer economics trainings and programs such as ServSafe®, Relationship Smarts, and PRIDE, a parent and teen driving education course.

Extension also promotes healthy lifestyles through statewide programs. Walk Georgia is a virtual, fitness-tracking resource that encourages physical fitness and healthy lifestyles to better the lives of Georgians. Other health programs managed by UGA include the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed). These classes teach families how to stretch their food dollars, eat healthier meals and snacks, and reduce the risk of foodborne illnesses.

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