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.

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

UGA Extension in DeKalb County helps citizens become healthier, more productive and more environmentally responsible. With more than 730,000 citizens and an improving economy, many homeowners still find themselves growing their own vegetables and doing their own landscaping. To assist residents with this, DeKalb County Extension provided 111 educational programs and reached 5,276 citizens on various gardening and landscaping topics. DeKalb County Extension also contributed a weekly gardening column to The Champion, with a circulation of 225,000. Published articles were on topics related to tree and ornamental shrubs, lawns, perennials, composting, soil-building, vegetables and community gardening, landscaping, insects and disease, and recycling.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

UGA Extension Family and Consumer Sciences agents offered a Kids Spring Break Cooking Camp in DeKalb County for children between the ages of eight and 12. During the interactive, three-day program, youth were engaged in activities centered around nutrition, food science and the essential cooking skills. Camp participants learned to successfully identify the five MyPlate food groups and demonstrate knife safety and proper handwashing. Participants also expressed plans to drink more water and eat more fruit, vegetables and whole grains after the camp.

With funding from the DeKalb County government and the DeKalb County Board of Health, and collaboration and partnerships among various departments and community organizations, DeKalb County Extension launched year three of the Fresh on DeK program. Fresh on DeK visited 11 locations on a weekly basis and supported six communitywide events that reached 4,689 citizens. Areas that were identified as food deserts and limited-resources neighborhoods benefited from Fresh on DeK through nutrition education, recipe demonstrations and the distribution of more than 40,000 pounds of fresh produce. Fresh on DeK also featured local produce such as muscadines, Vidalia onions, peppers, zucchini, squash, tomatoes, snap beans and corn from 13 Georgia farmers.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Driven by 4-H Teen Leaders, the 4-H Wellness 360° program leverages the proven influence of young people by engaging teens to lead and empower their peers and families to establish lifelong healthy habits today. The program includes nutrition education, cooking classes, yoga and lessons on avoiding risky behaviors. It provides the framework to ensure that today’s youth have the knowledge and confidence to not only live a healthy life themselves, but also to share their knowledge with their peers and families. The DeKalb County 4-H Club trained five teenagers to become Wellness 360° ambassadors. DeKalb County 4-H also provided Wellness 360° instruction for 690 youth participants.
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.