AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) agent in the Gwinnett County Extension office provides professional pesticide applicators numerous environmental protection education and training programs on the safe and proper use of fertilizers. This year, 678 pesticide credits were given to professional pesticide applicators in three different categories (Ornamental and Turf, Right of Way and Mosquito Control). Program evaluations revealed that 90 percent of all participants thought the techniques and strategies taught would save their business money, help them become more efficient in their operations and help them make changes in the ways they handle pesticides and control landscape and turf pests. Educational programs are also offered to landscape professionals on how to improve the appearance of landscapes using environmentally safe practices. The ANR team consistently offers free educational programs to homeowners on a countywide basis in a variety of settings. Trained Master Gardener Extension Volunteers (MGEVs) assist the team in reaching a large audience (12,569 program participants in 2018). In collaboration with three other metro Atlanta Extension offices, Gwinnett County Extension provided Master Gardener training to 20 new and enthusiastic Gwinnett County volunteer trainees. This enabled our MGEVs to engage in 13,119 hours of projects and educational programming in 2018 alone. Because we have received incrementally more requests to assist Gwinnett County teachers with STEM (science, technology, engineering and math)-related gardening projects over the past two years, we expanded our capacity to meet the needs by conducting an additional MGEV training open to teachers only. Responding to walk-in customers (1,339), phone calls (6,814) and emails (24,865) are all part of the daily functions of the ANR team as they provide guidance on how to successfully grow vegetables, flowers, trees and shrubs. Other routine services include plant and plant disease identification and soil and water testing through UGA’s Soil, Plant and Water Laboratory.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Our 4-H youth education and development program is delivered via in-school programming, after-school clubs, summer camp experiences and supervised/guided activities that help students learn and practice leadership skills, such as public speaking. Gwinnett County 4-H’ers gain valuable knowledge and skills that help them grow up to become successful, contributing members of society. The Gwinnett County 4-H Club provided researched-based education to 7,575 fifth-grade students in 12 out of 19 Gwinnett County Public School clusters using STEM-related curriculum designed to meet Georgia Performance Standards and Gwinnett Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) Standards. Learning also takes place after school, at grade-level council meetings, special-interest club meetings, summer camps, fundraising and community-service project activities and through competitive Project Achievement events at district and state competitions.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

In an effort to accommodate a growing Gwinnett County population (more than 1.17 million projected by 2030), a new part-time, bilingual Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) program assistant was hired, enabling the expansion beyond previous outreach efforts to include both English- and Spanish-speaking residents on topics such as food safety, nutrition, chronic disease prevention and basic home finance. In 2018, FACS programming offered 289 programs reaching 5,512 participants. In total, 685 of all Extension programming reached 15,006 limited-resource audiences.

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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.