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 Walton County offers numerous services such as soil testing, water testing, plant identification and on-site consultations to local clientele. The Extension office processed more than 500 diagnostic samples in 2018, and Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Agent Joel Burnsed conducted more than 70 personal on-site consultations to farms and homes in Walton County. The agent also collaborated with several different organizations to provide educational resources to clientele. Examples included a pond-management field day that educated farmers and landowners on proper pond-management practices. Another example was a Feral Swine Workshop that educated farmers on proper techniques for trapping feral swine, which are responsible for significant agriculture damage each year. UGA Extension also played a pivotal role in the creation of the Walton Local Food Alliance, which is made up of numerous local organizations collaborating to provide awareness and educational opportunities related to local food and to advocate for increased access to local food through restaurants, grocery stores, farmers markets and school cafeterias, all supporting Walton County’s farms.

The Walton County Master Gardener Extension Volunteer (MGEV) program contributed 2,000 hours of service to the community through free gardening classes at local libraries, the “Ask A Master Gardener” booth at the farmers market and several other community-oriented projects. The Master Gardeners also planted a garden, donated fresh produce to more than 400 low-income families and built raised beds at the Monroe Senior Center. These raised beds will allow MGEVs to teach senior citizens about growing their own produce and the health benefits of gardening.

**4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

Walton County 4-H programs are offered for youth to learn and excel in leadership, citizenship, public speaking and critical-thinking skills. Walton County school systems focus on career readiness, and the Walton County 4-H Club offered a wide range of in-school and extracurricular activities to more than 1,400 students in 2018. The Walton County 4-H Air Rifle Senior Team and Horse Judging Senior Team both placed first at state contests and achieved Master status. Walton County BB Team placed second at the Georgia 4-H State BB Match and finished fourth in the Daisy National BB Gun Championship Match in Rogers, Arkansas. Kayla Stone, Walton County 4-H member, took first place in Focus on 4-H, third place in Focus on 4-H Service, and fourth place in Focus on Agriculture in the Georgia 4-H Photography Contest. Hailey Bittles, Walton County 4-H alumna, received a $750 Kitzinger Scholarship.

**FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES**

Project F.R.E.E. (Fostering Relationship and Economic Enrichment) programs are helping parents develop skills to strengthen the quality of their couple and co-parenting relationships.

Parenting responsibilities add demands on all couples. Our Elevate program provides couples strategies and skills to manage stress and conflict while strengthening their relationships. In 2018, 33 couples enrolled in five Elevate programs.

For parents who are apart, parenting can be challenging. Our Together We Can program helps single parents develop strategies and skills to manage stress and conflict, promote positive co-parenting relationships and help develop future healthy relationships. In 2018, 40 individuals enrolled in three Together We Can programs. A total of 51 individuals registered for three Together We Can programs offered during the year.
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.