

Program Accomplishments

University of Illinois Extension

Madison-St. Clair Unit

May - June 2008

4-H Youth Development

Leadership Skills

- **Speak Out for Military Kids** is a leadership opportunity for youth to address issues affecting military families. A nucleus group of youth has been meeting on a monthly basis to coordinate and plan the Holiday Walk, a youth driven event to honor deployed soldiers and their families. To capitalize on out of school time this summer and to extend this opportunity to other youth, a Speak Out for Military Kids camp was held in June. Nineteen youth in grades 7-11 participated and learned valuable public speaking and journalism skills. They also learned how to use PowerPoint and publisher computer programs as well as video editing skills. Youth exercised problem solving, critical thinking, planning, and organizing life skills as they worked together to plan the Holiday Walk event.

“The Ghost of Fun Times Past” skit, a performance scheduled for the Holiday Walk, was further developed and practiced by the SOMK members. Youth had the pleasure of performing this skit during a closing ceremony for their family members. The closing ceremony also included a PowerPoint presentation explaining SOMK and the activities held during camp as well as brief video montage of photos taken during the course of the week.



Personal gains were noted as follows: One member admitted to having stage fright but was able to deliver a polished introduction to the PowerPoint presentation. Another member stated that she did not like public speaking but was able to speak confidently while performing her role in “The Ghost of Fun Times Past” skit. Thus, new and “old” SOMK members learned the importance of accepting others’ ideas and learning to work together to accomplish a variety of tasks.

After School Programming

- As part of a long term plan to inventory trees and develop a maintenance schedule, **4-H Teens Reaching for Success**, an afterschool program at Coolidge Middle School, participated in a tree identification project in Wilson Park, Granite City.

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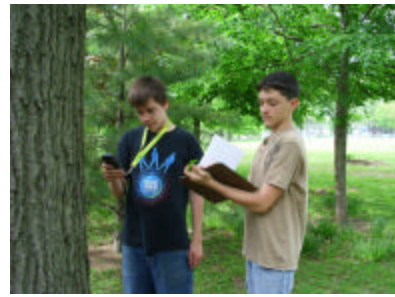
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Youth Development

Youth were trained how to identify trees and how to input the coordinates of each tree into GPS units. As a result, sixty trees were identified and marked during phase one of this project. Upon return to school in the fall, youth will learn how to use this data to construct a map of these trees, which will identify their location and type



Life Skills for Youth

- Beginners Robotics Camp for Middle School students was held at SIUE, June 10, in cooperation with Edwardsville High School Robotics Team; SIUE School of Engineering, Computer Science Department; and University of Illinois Extension.

Robotics is one of the new and emerging 4-H experiences for youth that provides hands on opportunities in designing, building and programming robots. The goal of 4-H robotics is to encourage youth to explore science, engineering and technology (SET) as part of one of the 4-H Mission Mandates. Youth participants have the opportunity to practice life skills of critical thinking, decision making skills and communications.

The camp was planned by Scott Hagin, John Marriot, sponsors of the Edwardsville High School Robotics Team and Dawn Waller, Wilbon Anthony, University of Illinois Extension. Dr. Jerry Weinberg of the SIUE School of Engineering, Computer Science Department hosted the event.

The program schedule included an introduction to robots, how to build a robot and test robots, with the assistance of the students from the Edwardsville High School Robotics Team. Dr. Bradley Noble, Associate Dean, gave a tour of the School of Engineering. Participants had the opportunity to learn about some of the latest engineering research going on at SIUE.

Impact: 14 youth increased knowledge and/or skills in robotics and related careers while increasing their aspiration interest in robotics careers. These same youth also increased their scientific processing skills of observation, comparison, hypothesis and problem solving.

- The weather was perfect for the **4-H Amazing Race**, an event that challenged groups of youth to complete activities on foot as they combed Freeburg looking for clues. Local businesses welcomed and educated participants about their services. The businesses that participated were Freeburg Pharmacy, Animal Hospital, Schaeffer Tire, Citizens Bank, Dressel Grain, and the Township building. The youth were also directed to pick up items from the post office, nutrition facts from Pizza Hut and Subway, and a library card from the public library. Along with learning about each business and gathering scavenger hunt items, the youth had to complete a form by asking questions at the business and noticing certain aspects; such as what the workers were wearing, what type of music played, etc. They also asked managers what they looked for in a good employee and what was unique about the business.
- Take more than 70 years of tradition, add some outgoing counselors, fun programs, and lots of 4-H fun, and what do you have? **Southern Illinois 4-H Camp!** For 2008, two camp sessions were offered-a youth camp and a junior high camp.

Held at Woodmen of the World Little Egypt Camp on West Frankfort Lake, the camp offers the traditional activities of swimming, canoeing, hiking, and fishing. It also provides boat regatta, hot air balloon building and launch, service project, water Olympics, and more. Seventeen youth from the Madison-St. Clair unit joined many others from the southern region for some outdoor fun. Camp Wartburg in Waterloo is the site of the junior high camp for kids ages 12 to 14. Six youth from the Madison-St. Clair unit enjoyed special activities with their new friends that included robotics, rocketry, GPS scavenger hunt, Dutch Auction, high ropes course, and more.

Consumer and Family Sciences

Lowering Fat, Sugar and Salt in Diet

- A two-hour seminar for local dieticians focused on **metabolic syndrome**, a condition that increases a person's risk of type 2 diabetes and some cardiovascular diseases. The enlarging girth of Americans in the last decades, caused by poor lifestyle choices, is leading to increased risks of many chronic diseases. The last several years has seen much research interest in a relatively new diagnosis- metabolic syndrome- that is used for assessing future risks of some diseases. Clinicians evaluate a handful of biomedical markers including blood levels of fasting glucose, plasma triglycerides, and high-density lipoprotein cholesterol. Additionally, blood pressure and waist circumferences are measured. If an individual has reached or exceeded threshold levels of any three or more of these markers, the person is diagnosed as having metabolic syndrome.

Robert J. Reber, PhD., U of I Extension nutrition specialist reviewed recent research that indicates the types of lifestyle changes adult Americans can make to reverse this condition and lower associated risks.

- Can you prevent the onset of diabetes and other diseases with what you do or do not eat? According to recent research, the answer is that maybe you can. To learn about the relationship between food consumption and chronic diseases, particularly diabetes, ***Eating to Lower the Risk of Diabetes*** was offered to the community in May. Nineteen participated in the class taught by Martha Winter, U of I Extension educator for nutrition and wellness. As a result of this training the volunteers are teaching others in the community with 59 being reported to date. They are teaching *what conditions can lead to diabetes and how proper diet and lifestyle choices can help reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.*

Food Safety

- The **Family Nutrition Program** serves lower income families in the area teaching food budgeting, food safety, and healthy meals. In May 2,138 individuals participated in the two county area with an additional 9,000 receiving educational information through educational fact sheets. Cheese and yogurt, the featured topic for May explained the nutritional benefits of milk products for building and maintaining strong bones. Cheese and yogurt are milk products that contain fat and cholesterol so classes emphasized the choice of fat-free and low-fat yogurt and low-fat cheese. Fat-free and low-fat yogurt and low-fat cheese are a good substitute for milk for individuals who do not like milk or have trouble drinking milk.

As the school year concluded for our youthful FNP clients, the principal from Dr. Katie Harper Wright School wrote to let us know the impacts of our program on her students. She wrote, *I want you to know how much my children and staff look forward to your visits. I have had very positive comments from both the children and staff. After a recent visit, one of my second graders told me that he never knew broccoli could taste so good. That was the month that you brought the children a variety of raw veggies to taste. Another time I saw a student with a bag of cereal at the lunch table. That child told me it was a healthy alternative to potato chips!*

One of my second grade teachers comments regularly on how the children look forward to your visit being announced. She stated that she can do the same lesson but without the excitement you generate.

..... I hope you can see the difference that your visits have made, because I can!

Simply put, that's what Family Nutrition Program (FNP) is doing.

- Want to stay healthy? Wash your hands.

The strategy seems simple enough, but a 2005 study from the American Society for Microbiology and The Soap and Detergent Association show that although 91 percent of adults say they always wash their hands after using restrooms, but only 83 percent were observed doing so. Only 42 percent of Americans said they washed their hands after petting a dog or cat and only 32 percent washed their hands after coughing or sneezing. Hand washing is so low tech it doesn't get the credit it deserves. The *Clean Hands, Healthy Bodies* program teaches this simple concept.

In May, volunteers taught 56 third and fourth graders how to properly wash their hands through the *Clean Hands, Healthy Bodies* program in partnership with the Madison and St. Clair County Health Departments.

- If their Food Safety Manager Certificate expires this year, they needed to attend the *Refresher Course for Food Handlers*. This course focuses on sanitation, health, personal hygiene, and safe food handling practices. Presented by U of I Extension educators, this course meets the re-certification standards required by the Illinois Department of Public Health. Sixteen participants in Madison County rated the course as exceptional.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Natural Resources

Watershed Nature Center

- May events at the Watershed included a variety of events for all ages. As part of the *Get Outdoors!* series, a Bat Walk brought 23 adults and 14 youth for an evening program by guest lecturers from the Illinois Natural History Survey.
- More than 60 volunteers from college campuses, church groups, scouts, and individuals joined forces for **Work the Earth Day** to help battle invasive species.
- Students from pre-K through middle school visited the Watershed for field trips for a total of 161 youth and 111 adults. Topics ranged from **exploratory hikes to aquatic macroinvertebrate study to groundwater and wetlands**.
- **Tree identification** was the topic for the Highland Garden Club and the Coolidge afterschool group, reaching 11 adults and 8 middle school youth, respectively.
- Webelos **Conservation Day** brought more than 70 Cub Scouts to the Watershed. An Eagle Scout completed his project by adding on to the Treehouse to make it safer and transplanting native perennials in that area to prevent further erosion.

Home Horticulture Education

- Master Gardeners volunteer for Extension in the community in a wide variety of ways including sharing their knowledge through **community presentations**. Presentations in May and June include:
 1. St. Andrews Church Mayfest in Edwardsville hosted Master Gardener Julie Hamilton with 12 participants learning more about **herbs**. Another 10 participated in a program on **roses**.
 2. Beth Surmeir greeted 25 members of the Madison County Prime Timers group for a class on **annuals**.
 3. Hortica (Edwardsville) hosted Beth Surmeir for one of their lunch and learn classes. Beth's topic, *Seasonal Care for Home Landscape* engaged 17 in discussion.
 4. Eden United Church of Christ, Edwardsville learned what a vast amount of knowledge, Master Gardener MaryLou Barringer is willing to share. She spoke with 20 from the ladies group on **annuals**.
 5. Jan Villhard, Master Gardener taught the class along with personal experience on **Body Smart Gardening** for the Trenton Garden Club- which met at the Henry White Farm, Millstadt for the class and tour of the Master Gardener gardens.

Urbanization: Moving Away from Agricultural Roots

- Students participating in the Illinois **Ag in the Classroom** program in St. Clair County learned about George Washington Carver's life and research. Students learned his importance to agriculture and the economy of the south.

Exploring the concepts in economics of supply and demand along with market resources, goods, services and free enterprise, an auction brought them to life. Students were given tokens, and they could bid on items like Frisbees and Beanie Babies (donated items). They even had a chance to bid on the air in the classroom and a piece of trash. They learned that demand is weak when the items seem to have no use or value- like the lack of demand for peanuts before Carver demonstrated their usefulness.

Pre and post tests were given this year resulting in a 60% knowledge increase from the 5 classes that were taught during the school year. In just less than 5 hours, the program was able to raise the student's understanding of agriculture and the importance it relates to their daily lives.

- Fourth graders in Madison County went back in time to look at technology in agriculture while comparing to the technology relied upon today. *Madison County C.A.R.E.E. (Conservation, Agricultural Resources, and Environmental Education)* program presented this lesson in 109 classrooms in 40 different schools across Madison County.

CAREE is co-sponsored with Madison County Farm Bureau, Madison County Soil and Water Conservation Service, and University of Illinois Extension.

Community Development

Developing Community Leadership

- Illinois county officials are challenged to obtain necessary information to make informed decisions regarding policy and delivery of services. The goal of University of Illinois Extension is to provide county officials with opportunities to sharpen their skills and gain knowledge about their legal, administrative, and fiduciary responsibilities necessary to make informed decisions involving their constituency.

University of Illinois Extension programs provide local officials an opportunity to gain access to experts on current issues without leaving their home county. Presenters for the programs include university faculty, representatives of state and federal agencies, and community leaders with experience in the issues and challenges faced by local officials.

Mental health is a prevalent issue in many families and communities in Illinois and across the nation. The program, **Illinois Policy on Providing Mental Health Services**, provided an overview on the status of mental health issues in Illinois, current policy related to mental health, and resources available to communities. Three members of the St. Clair County Board attended in May.

Orange areas are one of four program areas of focus for University of Illinois Extension.

Blue is the identified issue for Madison-St. Clair unit within the program area.

Black describes the programmatic activity conducted within the two-month period.