

Program Accomplishments

University of Illinois Extension
Madison-St. Clair Unit
March - April 2009

Consumer and Family Sciences Lowering Fat, Sugar and Salt in Diet

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- The **Family Nutrition Program** serves lower income families in the area teaching food budgeting, food safety, and healthy meals. In March and April, 6,400 individuals participated in the two county area. The classes focused on helping families be active and eat healthy. March classes focused on hidden calories. Classes in April focused on exercise and Family Meal Times. There are numerous studies showing the many benefits of family meal times including better grades, improved nutrition, and of course, better communication. Students and their families were challenged to participate in family meals for one week. Students in Madison invited their parents to join them for a family meal at the school in late April. Family discussion questions were provided to demonstrate what can be done at home.



While Maritza was teaching at Bluffview School in Caseyville, one of the assistant teachers thanked her for providing a good education for the students on how to eat healthy. She further explained that she saved the treat from Maritza's last visit to take to her granddaughter in Virginia. While visiting her granddaughter, they decided to make some of the trail mix cereal treat which her granddaughter took to her office at the Pentagon the next day. The office staff loved it and asked the source. She explained about the University of Illinois Extension coming to the school where her grandmother works which they followed with requests to learn more about University of Illinois Extension.

- In addition to the regular curriculum taught through the Family Nutrition Program (FNP), **health fairs** are very popular. Through an interactive game, students learn about a variety of fruits and vegetables and their importance. Eighty students attending Wilson School, Granite City, 189 fourth graders from Bethalto, and 360 Collinsville Middle school students participated in March and April. Students were on a scavenger hunt complete

with booklet containing a question to answer at each booth. Lights of red and green flashed in our booth helping the children to learn to make healthy choices via a buzzer box.

7th and 8th grade students attended the Collinsville Health Fair. When they stopped at the University of Illinois Extension booth, they were asked a question about fruits and vegetables. After writing the answer, they were able to check themselves on the buzzer box to see if they got the correct answer. One of the teachers who participated as well, responded to the question *How Many Servings of Fruits and Vegetables are needed each day?* She replied, 8 a day. Then she checked herself with the buzzer box and was surprised to find the answer is 5-a-day. Embarrassed, she proclaimed that she was going to study more!

- **FNP staff member, Belva**, joined the Southwest YMCA on Healthy Kids Day (April 18) with educational activities to learn how to eat healthy. In honor of Healthy Kids Day, a national event, every YMCA in the country hosted similar activities promoting health to kids, tackling the number one epidemic in children- child obesity. The YMCA of Southwest Illinois along with the Belleville News Democrat sponsored the event to bring awareness to children's health and at the same time provide fun and healthy activities for families from all walks of life.
- Have you ever eaten jicama? How about daikon? Plumcots? All of these are some of the more **unusual fruits and vegetables** that we can find in our grocery stores. This program helped train 17 local volunteers to teach this in their communities. They learned how many fruits and vegetables to eat every day and were provided with recipes for preparing them in new and different ways.

Carol Schlitt, Nutrition and Wellness Educator with University of Illinois Extension presented the program.

- **Healthy Snacks**...Is this an oxy-moron? The American snack industry spends millions of dollars convincing you that you are hungry and need a snack! But not everything they offer is healthy. The Healthy Snacks seminar introduced participants to healthy snacks that tickled their taste buds. They went home with lots of recipes to tempt their families.
- A three-part training series on **current nutrition topics** for dieticians, home economists, and healthcare providers began on April. The first session discussed the question ***What is the optimal diet for adult health?*** The balance of dietary calories from fats, carbohydrates, and protein were explained. Donald Layman, I of I professor emeritus in the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition, presented this session.
- Carol Schlitt, Nutrition and Wellness educator for University of Illinois Extension taught three presentations for employees of Olin, Alton. Topics focused on easy and healthy meal preparation.

Food Safety

- The ***Clean Hands, Healthy Bodies*** program teaches this simple concept. In March and April, volunteers taught 884 third and fourth graders when and how to properly wash their hands through the ***Clean Hands, Healthy Bodies*** program in partnership with the Madison and St. Clair County Health Departments.

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.

- Does your club, church or organization raise funds by holding community dinners, bake sales, bazaars or other food events? These are the individuals we invited to attend a seminar entitled **Serve It Safely**. Twenty-one responded. Often, the organizers of food events are unaware of basic food-safety principles. A little knowledge about food safety helps them keep food events safe and successful. The seminar, co-sponsored with the Madison County Health Department, focused on preparing, storing and serving food for public consumption safely and included a take-home manual and refreshments.

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.

In March county officials participated in the statewide program, **Public Transportation: Getting Where You Need to Go**, What role will public transportation play as fuel prices continue to fluctuate and the auto industry struggles to make changes? This session examined the role of public transportation in different parts of Illinois, from rural areas and communities, to more urban and metro areas and how present and future challenges will be met.

April participants explored different ways in which local elected officials can address **public accountability** and avoid situations which can lead to loss of public trust or even activity that could be criminal. Panelists discussed the Illinois Public Accountability Project, the use by some communities of indicators and measures to proactive demonstration of progress in the work officials were elected to do, and actions performed by officials which could, in fact, be official misconduct.

One additional county official has achieved **Certified County Officials (CCO)** status in a University of Illinois Extension directed educational program for local officials. The official, **Charles Lee**, St. Clair County Board member, was recognized during the April, St. Clair County Board meeting on April 27.

He completed 24 hours of credit in the program, part of the Certified County Officials program, a joint effort of U of I Extension and the Illinois Association of County Board Members and Commissioners.

Madison-St. Clair County Extension Director, Janet Burnett presented Charles Lee who is in his third year of services, with his award. According to Lee, the people of 24th District asked him to run for the office. He is proud to serve and help municipalities and communities with their needs. Lee had a career spanning 30 years in the U.S. Air Force.

Family Life

Improving the Management of Family Resources

- IRAs, 401 (k) s and other retirement plans are great tools for accumulating money for retirement. But what are the rules for getting your money out of them? University of Illinois Extension Educator Karen Chan addresses these questions in ***Who Gets the Money?*** for fifteen volunteers who will be teaching additional groups.

These volunteers taught 120 others during the month of April. The workshop explained the various rules for taking distributions from tax-deferred retirement savings plans for those younger than 59 ½., those between 59 ½ and 70 ½, and those who have reached the important age of 70 ½. Participants learned how distributions are taxed and how to avoid additional penalties. They also gave tips on rolling over money from one account to another, even if you're already taking annual distributions. They explained what happens to the money when you're gone and what rules apply if you inherit your spouse's IRA.

- Increasingly, people who are single are living their lives fully. Those who have the resources to do so are buying homes, traveling the world, and pursuing their passions. Their lives are meaningful- and yes, they are happy," writes researcher Bella De Paulo of the University of California. Achieving this in a "couple's culture" is no easy task.

Volunteers who received training earlier this year, taught another 133 individuals participating in classes on ***Living Single in a Couples World***. They discussed current research regarding beliefs about singleness and strategies for dealing with the challenges of singlehood.

4-H Youth Development

Expansion of 4-H

- Area youth had a unique hands-on opportunity to develop and sharpen their livestock showing skills and ask a 4-H show judge questions at the **4-H Livestock Showmanship Clinic**. The clinic featured sessions on the following species: swine, sheep, goats, beef, rabbits, and poultry with ten from our St. Clair County clubs participating.
- Seven participants attend an **Interior Design Workshop** in March. Instructor Rebecca Coley, former 4-H member, stressed the importance of using different textures, styles of furniture, and accessories to finish a room. Using a simple glass bowl, Rebecca demonstrated ten different ways to incorporate the bowl into a room's design.

Next, participants were challenged to put their knowledge to work. They were given a plain cardboard box and used scrapbook paper, ribbon, and stickers to transform the boring box into something spectacular. This was the most fascinating part of the workshop because everyone was able to create something that reflected their personality. For instance, the two youngest attendees used very vibrant colors when they were decorating their box, and they used beads and glitter to accent their boxes. While the older teens took a more classic approach to decorating their boxes, and their creations turned out to more elegant and timeless.

As a result of this workshop, many of the participants felt more comfortable about decorating. They learned that sometimes small changes can completely freshen up a room.

Military Support

- Military members miss a lot when they are deployed. They miss out on holidays like Christmas, Thanksgiving and Fourth of July as well as special events such as anniversaries, birthdays, Mother's Day, Father's Day and, sometimes, even the birth of a child.

The Speak Out for Military Kids (S.O.M.K) group decided to take action and help! This group of both military and non-military kids ages 12 to 17 was organized by University of Illinois Extension and the 126th Illinois Air National Guard. The group's overall mission is to raise awareness about the issues military families face and to motivate the public to actively support these families in practical, hands-on ways.

To help military families “re-capture” the holidays and special events they missed during deployment, the S.O.M.K. group recently organized and conducted a Holiday Walk at Belleville East High School. The day's activities included a youth performance of the *Ghost of Fun Times Past* as well as a “Time Machine” that transported families back in time to relive the holidays spent apart due to deployments. Service members and their families whispered magical wishes to Santa, blew out birthday candles, celebrated anniversaries, hunted for Easter eggs, and much more during this first-ever event. A special meal, courtesy of the L'Ecole Culinaire Competition Team in St. Louis, gave families the chance to connect with others in similar circumstances.



“My husband has been deployed since September and he just returned in late March,” remarked one military spouse. “He missed holidays and two of our three daughters’ birthdays, as well as our birthdays and anniversaries. This (Holiday Walk) was such a bonding time!”

More than 30 youth, 12 adult volunteers and numerous local sponsors who donated supplies made the event possible.

Speak Out for Military Kids is a component of Operation: Military Kids, a national initiative providing ongoing community support for the children of service members in the National Guard and Army Reserves.

After School Programming

- **4-H Teens Reaching for Success** youth at Coolidge Middle School in Granite City demonstrated concern for others during Living Well Week in March. These teens conducted a food drive and delivered 314 pounds of food to Community Care, a Granite City food pantry.

But their community service didn't stop with the collection of food. While visiting Community Care, they volunteered to weigh the donations, mark off the bar codes on the packages, and place the items on the shelves. Students also learned about the process for storing the food donations. Once they finished with a task, they were very enthusiastic and looked for the next task they could do. This service project helped the 4-H members learn about empathy, concern for others, community service, and citizenship. They walked away from the Community Care Center wanting to do more.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Home Horticulture Education

- Twenty-three individuals accepted for training in the Master Gardener program in Madison and St. Clair Counties began training in mid-January and continued through April on a weekly basis. These Master Gardener trainees graduated to become interns joining the current 150 + active Master Gardeners in supporting the work of Extension's horticulture program. Master Gardener trainees learn about vegetable gardening, ornamental plants, small fruits, tree fruits, plant pathology, plant identification, environmental problems, herbicide use, insect control, soils and fertilization, annuals and perennial, and turf. Following classroom training, they will be working in a volunteer capacity for a minimum of 60 hours.



Recent graduates include Betty Schiller, Kathy McEvilly, Glen Carbon; Marlene Engler, Tami Guslander, Irene Bertelsman, Susan Lawson, William Bremen, Belleville; Tom Henesy, Alton; Christina Gan, Tom Allen, Ellen Nordhauser, Edwardsville; Rebecca Batson, Granite City; Cheryl Palmer, Carolyn Sitzes, O'Fallon; Linda Bland, Maryville; Kay Wellen, Jamie Palenchar, Highland; and Michael Crain, Godfrey.

- Training is continuously provided for Master Gardeners volunteering for Extension for many years. Recently, training for teaching **Seasonal Care for the Home Landscape** was provided for 12 Master Gardeners by David Robson, U of I Extension ornamental horticulture educator. Elizabeth Wahle, horticulture educator in fruits and vegetables provided training for Master Gardeners who will be teaching in the community on **Growing Small Fruits in the Home Garden**. Twelve Master Gardeners attended a session on **greenhouses** taught by Carl Duewer, President of All American Associates. Carl is a St. Clair County 4-H alum who focused on horticulture in his projects. Thirteen attended training on **Warm Season Vegetable Gardening** while two attended a class on **Buy Local, Eat Healthy**.
- The teachable moment happens every day as master gardeners respond to local homeowners via the **Horticulture Helpline**. For the months of March and April there were 122 responses to questions.
- Master Gardeners volunteer for Extension in the community in a wide variety of ways including sharing their knowledge through **community presentations**.
 - Don Kniepkamp, Belleville, taught a class on **Prairie plants** prior to a prairie burn at the Henry White Farm in Millstadt with 25 attending.
 - **Roses** was the topic for 14 members of the Holiday Shores Garden Club with Julie Hamilton, Edwardsville teaching.
 - In view of many citizens losing their jobs and the slumping economy, Chouteau Township is starting a **community garden** on the township grounds at 906 Thorngate Drive, Granite City. Master Gardeners Bill Klopfenstein and Duwane Nickle, Edwardsville shared their vegetable garden knowledge with the group leading the garden project.
 - Master Gardeners taught a class on **groundcovers** for a group of local volunteers who retaught that information to another 143 individuals in March.
 - 52 members of the Mississippi Valley Garden Club came to hear Ron Smith's presentation on **Landscaping**.
 - MaryLou Barringer from the Master Gardener class of 95 presented **Easy to Grow Perennials** for the Trinity Lutheran Ladies Aid Society in Edwardsville. MaryLou is recognized in the community for her wonderful presentations and is a requested speaker.

- Bill Klopfenstein composed the **Glen Carbon Village Farm Walking Trail Nature Guide**. The guide was produced through collaboration of U of I Extension Master Gardeners and the Village of Glen Carbon. Duwane Nickel, also a fine wood worker, crafted the twelve signposts along the walking trail. A ribbon cutting for the new Nature Walk was held on April 25.
 - Master Gardeners Bill Klopfenstein, Joe Knoll, and Mary Mallott taught a group of Collinsville school district special needs students about **basic garden planting**. The twenty students participated in planting at the Willoughby Farm garden site.
 - Rhonda Koldehoff presented a program on **Things you didn't know about your favorite flowers** for the St. Clair County Elegant Swans group.
- If winter had them down, they got rejuvenated and ready for spring at *Weekend Gardener* held Saturday, March 7th with 15 workshop choices. 114 individuals attended choosing topics ranging from **Hydrangeas** by Tim Tosovsky, Home Nursery, inc., **Container Gardening** by Jill Gerardi, Garden Manager, Market Basket; and **Organic Gardening** by Elizabeth Wahle, University of Illinois Extension.

Participants could also choose from two new and exciting additions: **Horticulture Trivia** with Elizabeth Wahle, University of Illinois and Nancee Krueschek of Naturescapes Nursery. Charlie Giedeman, newspaper columnist and educator entertained questions in **The Answer Man Answers Your Questions** session. Other workshop topics included **Water Wise Gardening, Composting, Backyard Fruits and Landscape Basics**, all presented by University of Illinois Extension educators or area gardening experts.

Urbanization: Moving Away from Agricultural Roots

- During the fourth visit from **Madison County C.A.R.E.E.** (Conservation, Agricultural Resources, and Environmental Education) fourth grade students learn how technology has improved and changed agriculture throughout the years. During the first part of the lesson a timeline of different agriculture technologies starting with the cotton gin and ending with GPS is discussed. Also discussed are the improvements made in the dairy industry and the ethanol industry. At the end of the lesson students play bingo. The bingo game is a review game going over all of the lessons during the school year. In March and April, 104 classrooms were visited reaching 2,346 students.
- 8th grade classes at Lincoln Middle School, Edwardsville and Highland Middle School learned about the importance of renewable resources focusing on ethanol and wind. The process of making **ethanol** was discussed. Students also learned how **wind turbines** worked and the pros and cons of using wind turbines.
- Schools participating in the **Envirothon** competition were Triad with two teams, East Alton- Wood River with two teams, Alton with two teams, and Mascoutah with one team. Students had the opportunity to hear speakers talk about aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife and biodiversity. After listening to the speakers, students took a test on each topic. Each team also provided an oral presentation on biodiversity. Triad High School won the competition and will be competing at the State Envirothon on May 14th and 15th.



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

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.