



Holmes County

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2008 County Highlights

Strengthening Families and Communities

- **Food Preservation**—Dial and weighted gauge pressure canners were checked for more than 60 families in Holmes County. Following a safety inspection and gauge accuracy check, approximately 88% were encouraged to make changes in behavior and food safe practices.
- **Food Service Education and Food Protection**—Food Safety education continues to be a focus of the Family and Consumer Sciences program. Person-in-Charge training, a 6-hour food protection program, was conducted 6 times and attended by 28 food service workers. Results from the pre- and post-tests revealed that 93% of respondents improved their knowledge. Post-test scores were an average of 13.18% higher than pre-test scores. ServSafe® Food Protection Certification for Managers, a 16-hour course from the National Restaurant Association, was attended by 10 personnel from a variety of food service establishments. One hundred percent of participants passed the exam and also received Certification in Food Protection from the Ohio Department of Health.
- **Diabetes Education**—Each month OSU Extension hosts an evening Diabetes Support Group for the public. Averaging 10 participants a month, 21 individuals attended in 2008 looking for a place to share their experiences related to diabetes and learn new information. Topics discussed during the past year include new insulin pump options, blood sugar control during the holidays and other food-related events, physical activity and calories burned by activity, blood sugar fluctuations related to stress and illness, portion control, modifying recipes, and menu planning.
- **Table for Two**, a 5-session cooking class targeted for older adults, was conducted twice this year and attended by 31 individuals. Fifteen recipes were demonstrated and tasted. Many cooking and shopping tips for smaller portions were provided along with all recipes. Evaluations revealed the instructor and materials received ratings of 4.7 and 4.9, respectively, on a 5-point scale.

Preparing Youth for Success

- **Holmes County 4-H Program**—In 2008, over 300 volunteers worked with about 639 4-H youth in traditional clubs, Cloverbud clubs, overnight camping, livestock clinics, and quality assurance programs, with another

75 volunteers reaching 2,420 non-4-H youth through school enrichment, life skills activities in the afterschool program and other special activities.

- OSU Extension provided life skills lessons, including math, science, history, and literacy lessons related to foods, nutrition, health, and food safety, as well as daily nutritious snacks to four elementary schools with 72 students participating for more than 100 program days. OSU Extension Family and Consumer Sciences, 4-H Youth Development, and Community Development programs are currently in their 5th year of partnering with West Holmes Elementary Schools 21st Century Learning Grant After-School Program.
- Ten 4-H CARTEENS teens assisted with the 11 CARTEENS classes held for 82 peers who had a first-time driving offense.
- More kids in the woods' was the goal of our 4-H camp experiences. Sleeping under the stars was the highlight of camp for 22 campers as a first-time "outpost" experience. The Explorers Program provided fourteen 4th–5th graders an outdoor program to learn about and appreciate nature in a series of 10 sessions. Thirteen 8th graders met three times to learn outdoor survival skills including orienteering, tree identification, and outdoor cookery led by volunteer naturalists. Learning about nature at a young age creates awareness about environmental career choices and opportunities, also an initiative for the National Forest Service.

Enhancing Agriculture and the Environment

- The second year for the Ohio Volunteer Naturalist Program celebrated the certification of 54 additional trained volunteers committed to donating a minimum of 40 hours of service. The total of 110 OCVN volunteers in the Holmes County program represents over 4,000 hours of volunteer service valued at \$73,917 to benefit Ohio's environment and natural resource programs. Locally, this community development and natural resources education program is partnering with the Holmes Park District, Rails to Trails, The Wilderness Center, Mohican Outdoor School, ODNR, and SWCD.
- Management intensive grazing is a common management tool on many dairy farms throughout the county. To meet the educational needs of these producers a series of pasture walks was held. Participants learned

correct grazing practices, how to measure and monitor forage growth, maintaining forage supplies, identifying and controlling weeds, and developing water sources for cattle.

- Teaching farmers best management practices related to pesticide handling and use is the focus of the annual pesticide applicator recertification training. More than 100 farmers received three hours of training in the proper handling and use of pesticides along with management options for identifying and controlling insects and diseases of agronomic and forest crops.
- Winter weather can be hazardous for anyone on the roadway, and with approximately 40 percent of the population using a horse and buggy as their primary mode of transportation, it presents unique challenges. Working with the Amish Advisory Committee and the county engineer, a set of guidelines has been developed for Amish buggy drivers and snow plow operators to follow during times of ice and snow removal on county roadways to ensure the safety of everyone.
- Fifty-eight classrooms with 1,079 elementary school children received school enrichment through the Breads of the Harvest Program, learning about the history of bread, its nutritional content, and making a loaf of bread on their own, with more than 90% of the teachers incorporating two to four subject area state standards into the lessons in math, language arts, science, and social studies. Three classrooms used the Incredible Egg curriculum to study the life cycle of a fertilized egg developing into a chick and to perform many experiments using non-fertilized eggs.

Advancing Employment and Income Opportunities

- The Reality Store gave 205 eighth grade students the experience of managing a monthly budget to pay for living expenses as a 25 year old, most often with a family to provide for. As many had less money than they thought they would, the simulation provoked comments from the students such as, “This paycheck doesn’t go very far,” and about future planning, “I think I understand now why Mom keeps talking about going to college.”
- New Homebuyer Education programs were conducted for individuals and/or families purchasing their first homes through the Federal Welcome Home Program or USDA Rural Development Grants. Five families and individuals received training on the homebuyer decision, budgeting and credit management, the mortgage closing process, Fair Housing Act, and home maintenance and repair. Many resources were used, including,

the six-session self-study course from OSU Extension, titled *Manage Your Money*.

- Growing local produce is a way for landowners to increase family income. In a new initiative, Extension has identified new seasonal markets for produce within the county. More than 1,000 persons per day will benefit, as well as the environment.
- A regional tourism cooperative has been established as a result of leadership development support for local heritage organizations and nonprofits. The Amish Country Byway Visitor Center and the Millersburg Glass Museum opened their doors to thousands of visitors, especially on the weekend, thanks to our many volunteers. An average of 300 visitors per month sign the visitor register. Partnerships continue to be established with nonprofits and small businesses to strengthen the authentic experiences offered in heritage tourism for the region, supporting the \$200 million dollar tourism industry in the county. The satisfied visitor exponentially attracts new and return visitors by word-of-mouth marketing, still the most powerful and inexpensive marketing technique.

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