



Monroe County

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2008 County Highlights

Strengthening Families and Communities

- Extension secured \$500,000 in Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP) grant funds to improve housing in Monroe County. Monroe County's CHIP program consists of three activities:
 - Home Repair Program, which makes small, emergency-type repairs to owner-occupied housing units.
 - Private Owner Rehabilitation, which renovates an owner-occupied home to state building code standards.
 - Homeownership Program, which provides down payment assistance to first-time homebuyers and, once the unit is purchased, will renovate the home to state building code standards.
- Extension secured \$300,000 in Community Development Block Grant Neighborhood Revitalization (NR) grant funds for Monroe County. Monroe's application was one of ten funded statewide. The NR grant will complete community development projects in the area of Summit Township/Lewisville Village, including Parks and Recreational Facilities; Fire Protection Equipment; Street Improvements; Sidewalk Improvements; and Flood and Drainage Facilities.
- A collaborative effort involving a Certified Diabetes Educator from Southeastern Regional Medical Center, Riesbeck's Food Market, a local volunteer, and the FCS educator, the Dining with Diabetes program consisted of a series of four in-depth classes designed for diabetics or those who prepare meals for diabetics. Results of the pre/post tests completed by participants revealed that 100% understood the plate method of assessing food intake, nearly 70% understood that fruits are a rich source of carbohydrates, and 86% responded that they knew what an A1c test was. A walking challenge conducted during the program resulted in nearly 1,300 miles walked by participants. One participant reported that her total cholesterol decreased 20 points and another reported that she was able to maintain her weight after losing several pounds. Several others reported that their blood sugar levels improved during the program.
- Clientele from the Tri-County Help Center participated in a two-hour Basic Budgeting program that focused on determining wants/needs, setting financial goals, tracking expenses, stopping spending leaks, and preparing a monthly spending plan. As a result, participants said they planned to keep track of expenses, cut back on

expenses for "wants" in order to save for future needs, budget their money better, and follow the worksheet to prepare a personal budget. 100% of participants strongly agreed that they would use at least one concept learned in the class. On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being very valuable), the program has been rated an average of 4.7.

- Designed to aid parents in helping their children adjust to the changes resulting from divorce, Helping Children Cope with Divorce is a bi-monthly program that has been conducted since July 1994 and has reached a total of 777 parents since its inception (40 people as of November 2008). The program is mandated by the Court of Common Pleas. When asked if they planned to use the information learned in the program, the mean response was 4.3 (on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being strongly agree). Parents indicated that the most important things learned in the program included how to help children cope with their feelings; avoid putting children in the middle; children come first and parents need to be adult in their actions; and avoid putting children in the position of taking sides.
- The Family Nutrition Program is funded by the USDA and offered to Ohio families who are income-eligible for food stamp benefits. This program is delivered by a program assistant through OSU Extension. In Monroe County, 1,603 people received information about food security, nutrition, food safety, and thrifty shopping through classes, demonstrations, and educational literature. Participants gained this information through face-to-face contact, newsletters, fact sheets, handouts, and displays at numerous sites throughout the county.

Preparing Youth for Success

- Monroe County 4-H teens, volunteering their time with the 4-H Reading Makes the Best Better Program, visited local kindergarten and third-grade classrooms to promote literacy and the benefits of 4-H membership. Seven Monroe County 4-H teens read books to over 328 students in local classrooms. Each student received a free book, compliments of a grant from the Monroe County 4-H Committee. The students also received information about joining 4-H and how their parents could become involved in 4-H as volunteers and club leaders.
- 4-H members increased their animal project knowledge and skills through Quality Assurance Training. A

total of 240 participants increased their awareness of the importance of providing the consumer a safe and wholesome product while learning about the ten good production practices. Twenty-three members achieved a “successful” on the Ohio Quality Assurance Test and tested out of their age group.

- Post results from 4-H Junior Campers indicated that 93% of the campers agreed their counselors had been helpful when they had a problem or question; 88% agreed their counselors helped them learn new things; 89% agreed they tried something they had never done before; 95% indicated they made some new friends at 4-H camp; and 82% of the campers indicated they are looking forward to coming to 4-H camp again. Seventy-five 4-H Cloverbud members and parents attended a day camp at Camp Piedmont exploring the outdoors through boating, swimming, golfing, recreation, and crafts. 100% of the adults assisting with the camp reported the campers experienced a variety of new activities and learned new skills.
- Grant funds were secured from local businesses, organizations, and foundations totaling almost \$2,000 to purchase archery equipment and supplies to begin a new archery shooting sports program for Monroe County. Twenty-six members have learned safe and responsible use of firearms and archery equipment including sound decision-making, self-discipline, and concentration. Members attended a series of archery classes during October, November, and December taught by certified 4-H shooting sports instructors.
- Over 320 4-H members with animal projects presented a demonstration to their volunteer judge and completed animal project skillathons. Youth planned, prepared, and presented demonstrations focusing upon “animal diseases.” Skillathons included breed identification, animal part identification, quality assurance, selection problems, meat cuts, and disease identification, as well as other activities.

Enhancing Agriculture and the Environment

- **Dairy Luncheons**—A group of 41 individuals interested in dairy farming attended two luncheon meetings. Topics were chosen by dairy farmers who participated in two committee meetings. Keeping input costs down by utilizing managed grazing techniques is one topic that was explored. A successful local dairy producer shared methods he used to reduce costs and increase net profits. A second meeting was held to discuss dry pack bedding barns and how they can be useful to producers. Information was presented and estimates were

given for a variety of herd sizes so participants could calculate materials and costs for their farm.

- **Timber Marketing and Taxation Workshop**—Thirty-three people attended a forestry meeting where management strategies, marketing options, timber contracts, consulting foresters, best management practices, operation management plans, and timber tax issues were reviewed. Forest owners have the option to manage a timber tract many different ways to meet their objectives. A timber harvest may be one such practice. Landowners often sell timber to the first person who makes, what they believe, is a reasonable offer. This may not be as much as the timber would bring if other buyers had an opportunity to bid on the tract. These issues and others were discussed during the presentation to help landowners make informed decisions.
- **Grazing Workshop**—More than 40 producers attended a three-part workshop to learn more about using water and land resources, how grass plants grow, pasture fertility objectives, fencing techniques, paddock layout and design, and how to extend the grazing season for their livestock. Participants then used this information to start developing a grazing management plan for their farm. Rotational grazing practices offer managers the opportunity to earn higher profit per acre than conventional grazing systems. A summary of questionnaires taken at the end of the program indicated 98% of the participants plan to make at least one change on their farm as a result of information learned at the grazing workshop.

Advancing Employment and Income Opportunities

- Extension secured a Microenterprise Grant from the Ohio Department of Development to further small business development in Monroe County. The \$43,200 grant will be used to make low-interest loans to income-eligible entrepreneurs to advance small business development in the county. Typically, such low-income persons would not be able to secure a business loan from traditional financing sources. The program has an educational component that each applicant must successfully complete before the loan is approved.
- Extension collaborated with Woodsfield Junior High teachers for 116 students to participate in a “Real Money, Real World” simulation utilizing knowledge gained to make financial and lifestyle decisions. Students gained experience in using a checkbook and savings account and the implications of balancing normal monthly household expenses. Seventeen volunteers from local business and community groups staffed fourteen simulation booths for the event.

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