



# Clark County

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EXTENSION

## 2008 County Highlights

### Strengthening Families and Communities

- Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) classes were taught at 12 different locations. Agencies and organizations with clients participating in the program included three different GED programs, three faith-based groups, Parent Infant Center, MRDD parent classes, Kenwood School parents group, Fit for Tomorrow, On-the-Rise (teens and parents), and the Juvenile Detention Center. Nearly 120 adults from limited-resource families with children living at home and 104 youth attended one or more classes on topics including the MyPyramid food guide, food safety, understanding nutrition labels, stretching food dollars, healthy weight management, portion distortion, and healthy snacking. Thirty-two of those participants attended a series of classes, successfully completing and graduating from the program.
- More than 300 people participated in 20 community gardens in the city. Participants learned how to plant and maintain vegetable gardens. One garden at a local church raised \$700 in sales of vegetables and donated produce weekly to St. John's food pantry. Participants at Hannah House sponsored two weekend barbecues during harvest time to share their proceeds with neighbors. They are anticipating expansion of their raised beds next year so they can offer garden space to neighbors. Participants in the community gardens believe that teaching vegetable gardening and food preservation are more essential now than ever. Environmental and food safety issues are also addressed through community gardens.
- New Start for Financial Success is a program to address the new mandates of the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act of 2005. Anyone filing Chapter 7 or Chapter 13 bankruptcy must complete a financial literacy class before the case can be discharged by the court. In the class participants evaluate current financial resources, set financial goals, and establish a personalized plan to meet those goals. The class also assists bankruptcy filers develop and carry out a plan to discharge debts and manage personal finances as they move forward. More than 125 people attended these classes. Of those returning six-month follow-up evaluations, 100% reported that "they believe they can change their financial behaviors, they feel more successful in managing their money, and they continue to use the learning materials that were received during the program."
- There were 66 reportable infectious diseases, attributable to foodborne bacteria, in Clark County in the first

three quarters of 2008 (reported online at [odh.ohio.gov](http://odh.ohio.gov)). Assuming that these foodborne illnesses were serious enough to require a trip to the emergency room (at an average cost of \$1,000), these incidences would account for \$66,000 in health care costs. It does not include loss of wages due to the illness. Foodborne illnesses can have a significant impact on family finances, as well as health. In order to address this issue, a Clark County Extension educator, along with several partners, conducts programs focused on food safety. ServSafe® is a nationally recognized food safety course for food service managers and owners. Twenty-seven restaurant owners, managers, and other food service personnel, completed the 16-hour training with 100% of the participants passing the certification exam with an average score of 90%. ServSafe for Employees® is a one-day course designed to train food service supervisors and other employees in basic food safety principles. Fifty people participated in this program. With pre- and post-tests of basic food safety competencies, an average 19% gain in knowledge was documented.

### Preparing Youth for Success

- More than 100 teens were trained to reach their leadership potential as 4-H camp counselors, Junior Fair Board and Teen Council members, and CARTEEN facilitators. One member noted, "4-H has been a way for me to spread my wings and has shaped the person I have become. Before 4-H, I was shy, but no longer; I am the first to take on a task, to lead my peers, or even work with a group of kids I do not know." Teens completed an average of more than 30 hours of leadership training and program planning time before giving back 100 hours each in 4-H service. 4-H is helping teens meet service learning requirements and develop essential workforce preparation skills for success today and in the future.
- Tomorrow's scientists, engineers, and technologists are likely to be one of this year's 224 4-H Project Mini College participants. A new program, funded by a \$6,300 Ohio 4-H Foundation grant, supported project learning success, enhanced and built community partnerships, and improved youth workforce skills. Hands-on intensive work alongside specialists and professionals enabled members to make "real world connections and application." Comments included, "This program helped prepare me for success at county and State Fair judging, but more than that, I got to work with someone making a living in what I hope to do someday—what an awesome experience."

- While our country is facing the greatest financial crisis since the Great Depression, 4-H members are learning ways to enhance income, build credit, and save money. With more than 2,300 4-H livestock projects, 100% of the members keep financial records to track income and expenses to calculate project profit or loss, and learn marketing skills to help maximize the sale of their animal. The result—a \$672.93 average project sale price with total gross market livestock sales from 1,311 projects of \$882,205.03, a \$40,000 increase over the 2007 sale. “I sold a market hog and a dairy feeder and put the other hog in my family’s freezer. After expenses, I plan to use my earnings to attend college in the fall of 2009,” said one successful 4-H member.

### Enhancing Agriculture and the Environment

- More than 1,500 people visited the Gateway Learning Gardens where they learned a variety of topics focused on healthy lawns and gardens for a healthy environment. Master Gardener volunteers taught best management practices for the lawn including proper mowing height to reduce weeds, plant selection to help minimize the need for pesticides, and how to use integrated pest management in the lawn and garden. Follow-up discussions with visitors indicated that many plan to make changes to their current gardening practices in order to move toward sustainability in the home landscape.
- Twenty-five people participated in the Master Gardener volunteer training program, completing 50 hours of horticulture training and 50 hours of volunteer support to the horticulture program. These volunteers worked with 86 other volunteers to contribute more than 12,200 hours of service to Clark County residents. Volunteers answered phone calls on the Horticulture Helpline. One resident noted that she was glad to have a non-biased resource in the community to help determine whether or not to spray for emerald ash borer. In addition, volunteers maintained the Gateway Learning Garden and hosted more than 300 people on tours of the garden. Other volunteer projects included organizing the Clark County Fair Flower Show, assisting with the Neighborhood Housing Partnership project and implementing the First Annual Garden Fling, an educational program for home gardeners.
- Master Gardener volunteers worked with the city of Springfield utilities division, Clark Soil and Water Conservation District, and National Trails Parks and Recreation to develop a rain garden in an area where water run-off was difficult to manage in heavy storms. The garden was designed to allow the collection of all of the water that flows into the intersection to avoid the pooling of water in the intersection and the formation of ice in the winter. Volunteers served as resource experts on the

design and selection of plants as well as volunteer labor to install the garden. The garden not only improved the aesthetics in the neighborhood, it is doing its job as well by collecting the run-off. This resulted in a \$42,000 cost savings for Springfield as they no longer need to incorporate drain pipe in this area. Plans are to implement additional rain gardens in the city to help meet the EPA standards for storm water runoff.

- Twenty-four people attended an interdisciplinary two-day “Forages for Horses” program with OSU Extension Clark and Miami County as well as the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The program addressed equine owners who needed information on soils and soil fertility, pasture establishment and renovation, manure management, plant growth, pasture management, paddocks, and watering systems. Participants took home a large binder filled with additional, in-depth information on the addressed topics as well as many others. A survey concluded that 90% of people attending said they would attend a program like this again, and 75% said they took home useful information that will improve their current practices on equine health, nutrition, and care.
- The second annual Clark County pasture walk was conducted with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on Florabrook Farm, a replacement heifer farm. Twenty-two people attended and gained knowledge on proper pasture grass and forage species identification and selection, pasture establishment, and managing cool season grasses. All information is adapted for producers of any livestock such as sheep, horses, beef, dairy, and goats, which allows producers to improve their best management practices.

### Advancing Employment and Income Opportunities

- As a part of the economic development process, a Clark County Extension educator, along with 13 other professionals, explored innovative ways to leverage the county’s agricultural and natural resources into new means of economic stimulus for the area. The Clark County Economic Development Team (CCEDT) teamed with Springboard Marketing Group to help pinpoint key reasons why Clark County is a great place to locate a business and prosper within the tri-city corridor of Columbus, Dayton, and Cincinnati. The CCEDT set goals to preserve Clark County farmland and provide farmers with the means of enhancing their income and providing a basis for long-term success and land preservation. The process included an assessment of natural assets to an exploration of potential business ideas using those local resources. This data has made economic development more streamlined and is currently being used to attract businesses to Clark County.

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