



Erie County

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EXTENSION

2008 County Highlights

Strengthening Families and Communities

- The federally funded Family Nutrition Program (FNP) received \$42,360 for the 2008–09 year. The funding assures that this successful program will continue for a 17th year. In 2007–08, over 1,000 food-stamp eligible participants attended 110 programs with 78% indicating they plan to make recommended changes by improving nutrition, food shopping, meal management, or food safety practices. More than 7,800 Family Nutrition Program newsletters were distributed to Salvation Army, Metro Housing, the Vermilion Food Pantry, WIC, and former program participants.
- An ongoing partnership with Job and Family Services (JFS) has increased the availability of knowledge and resources for food stamp recipients. Afternoon sessions are offered every other week in the lobby at JFS to provide convenient access to food safety, nutrition, and grocery shopping information and resources. This enables food stamp recipients to acquire greater amounts of food with their food stamp dollars and helps prevent food waste (and loss of food stamp dollars). The most popular offerings have been the refrigerator/freezer thermometer and Food Safety Handbook. One recipient stated that “she has wanted information like this for ages and didn’t know anything like it existed before.”
- Nutrition education for general population Erie County residents flourished in 2008. 171 programs were offered throughout the county, and 3,697 participants took part in a variety of program options. Classes were conducted at sites such as Erie Metro Parks; various Erie County school districts, Milan and Berlin Heights Libraries; Fruedenberg; churches; Firelands Regional Medical Center; Erie County employees; civic groups; local businesses; and Job and Family Services. One plant manager remarked that the information and visuals presented at his employee health fair had the staff talking all day about the changes they needed to make in their diets and lifestyles.
- Ohio State University Extension provided nutrition, food safety, and child development education programs to 127 day-care providers and/or foster parents at their training sessions coordinated by Erie County Job and Family Services and Child Care Resource Center. These training sessions are a necessary component for certification. The classes will help improve dietary quality and food safety for children attending day care.

- Over 500 Erie County residents attended programs in 2007–08 dealing with the importance of the diet in relation to heart disease. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in this country, and Ohio State University Extension made a concerted effort to educate residents about the difference between saturated, unsaturated, and trans fats. Nutritional interventions dealing with appropriate food choices to reduce cholesterol, lose weight, and increase exercise were emphasized as lifestyle choices to help reduce someone’s risk for heart attack and stroke.
- Bankruptcy filings have declined since the tougher Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act was enacted in 2005. However, new filings are rising at a steady rate, which shows there is still a huge need for financial education both nationally and statewide. Ohio State University Extension’s response is *New \$tart for Financial Success*, a Department of Justice pre-discharge financial education approved program for bankruptcy filers. The two-hour classes are designed to give basic information on Spending Plans, Money Management, Wise Use of Credit, and How to Get Consumer Information. 18 classes were offered in 2008 at the Erie County Extension office with a total of 56 people receiving financial education assistance.

Preparing Youth for Success

- In partnership with the Erie County Juvenile Court, the local post of the Ohio State Highway Patrol, and Firelands Regional Medical Center, the Erie County 4-H CARTEENS program entered its second year. CARTEENS is a traffic safety program for first-time juvenile traffic offenders. Older youth served as CARTEENS instructors and help develop and facilitate the program. Eighty-four percent of 2008 program participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “This program will help me become a better, safer driver.”
- Seventeen Erie County teachers received Extension assistance, materials, and training in the 4-H School Enrichment Program with over 360 students enrolled. Programs in 2008 included *The Incredible Egg* and *Rockets Away*. Students used scientific inquiry and direct observation to increase their science knowledge.
- The Erie County 4-H Youth Development program involved a total of 1,349 youth in various programs. These youth participated in 4-H in a variety of ways—539 in

community clubs, 361 in school enrichment groups, and 891 took part in special interest and camp programs. Approximately, 150 adult volunteers were active in the 4-H program. Additionally, 62 youth served as active volunteers. When asked, "What's so great about 4-H?" one member replied, "Everything! But who can't get excited about a program that offers so much to children and teens just like me. Whether it be the many livestock or still projects you take or just being involved in the many leadership roles offered."

- Twenty-seven older youth got a chance to develop and polish their leadership skills as camp counselors. Each teen supervised a cabin of campers, planned, conducted and evaluated activities and tackled issues like home sickness and conflict management. Ninety-five youth ages 8–12 attended youth as campers.
- Sixty-four youngsters, ages 5–8 years took part in the Cloverbud program. They were involved in cooperative social learning activities that helped develop decision making and social skills, while at the same time helping to develop fine and gross motor skills. Eleven volunteers gave leadership to the program.
- Twenty-eight Cloverbuds participated in a day camp. They also took part in games and activities that fostered both mental and physical development, including socialization and communication skills. Nine youth volunteers helped facilitate and run the camp.
- Forty-one youth and 10 adults took part in a parliamentary procedure clinic where they viewed a demonstration of Robert's Rules in a business meeting, then met for intensive hand-on training specific to their individual office. This was supported by seven adult volunteers. By attending this clinic, participants were able to serve as effective leaders for their 4-H clubs and other community organizations to help facilitate business meetings.
- Twenty-four students participated in a Junior Master Gardener Program sponsored by OSU Extension and the Sandusky City Schools. Students were involved in an eight-week course covering topics on vegetable and flower gardening. This was funded through the Safe Schools Healthy Students Initiative.

Enhancing Agriculture and the Environment

- The 2008 Master Gardener Class of Erie County, with 11 members, completed three months of horticultural training. The 2000 through 2008 classes completed more than 3,000 hours of volunteer work and staffed exhibits at the Erie County Fair and the Kalahari Home

and Garden Show. Several Master Gardeners completed advanced training classes offered through the Erie County Extension Office.

- Sixteen women attended and completed the Annie's Project program. Annie's Project was designed to empower farm women to be better business partners through a series of education sessions covering the business of farming, and through networking.
- Over 100 farmers certified as Private Applicators were able to be recertified to apply restricted-use pesticides. Three different training sessions provided opportunities for producers to sharpen their pesticide management skills in 13 categories, plus core subjects. A New Applicator Training Session was also offered with 25 new applicators attending.
- A wide range of consumer and commercial horticulture and agriculture questions were answered by over 1,000 consultations. A majority of these included household pests, disease and insect identification, yard and garden pests, pasture establishment and maintenance, and farmland rental rates. Mass media efforts included 52 columns.
- The North Central Tree Fruit IPM Program is coordinated through Erie County. Commercial fruit growers from Erie, Lorain, Sandusky, Ottawa, Richland, and Huron counties are enrolled in the program. Twenty growers enrolled over 35 blocks of apples and peaches in the program in 2008. On average, growers saved two sprays even with heavy insect and disease pressure. The estimated savings of cost of materials and application time and equipment equaled \$45,000.
- Over 100 clients attended the 2nd annual North Central Ohio Wildlife Conference for the Private Landowner. It was a day event covering topics such as coyotes and other predators, aquatic management, deer and geese hunting, and Lake Erie fishing.
- Master Gardeners staffed a Horticulture Hotline in 2008. Over 250 home, lawn, and garden questions were answered with several fact sheets being delivered.

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