



Geauga County

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2008 County Highlights

Preparing Youth for Success

- The Hare Raisers Rabbit Club orchestrated the 4th annual Food-a-thon to benefit the Geauga Hunger Task Force. Sixteen 4-H clubs and one committee worked together to raise a grand total of \$2,055 and collected 3,057 food items.
- The Geauga Junior Leaders Club collaborated with Job and Family Services to sponsor families during the holiday season. The Junior Leaders club provided grocery gift cards to ten families in November for the Thanksgiving holiday. They then gave gifts, including grocery gift cards, clothing, household items and toys to five families in December. The Junior Leaders manage the milkshake booth at the Geauga County Fair, and use the profits to fund their community service projects.
- A new project in 2008 involved five of the Geauga Junior Leaders Club members who each researched a local organization in need of assistance and presented their findings to the club. The membership reviewed the information, made their selections, and donated \$500 in cash to each of the charities they selected for a total of \$2,500 awarded to charities.
- The Geauga Junior Leaders Club members donated \$5,000 to the 4-H Camp Whitewood of Northeast Ohio to upgrade and winterize a cabin in this facility. This will allow for opportunities to expand its use and provide shelter for users of this camp during the winter months.
- The camp leadership team, made up of 26 teens, 4 adults, and the 4-H Extension educator, planned exciting programs for 150 campers who participated in the Geauga 4-H week-long residential program at Camp Whitewood. 4-H collaborated with Job and Family Services to offer camp scholarships to three families in need of assistance. This year's learning and fun revolved around a theme of humane education, which promotes humane attitudes towards people, animals, and the environment. Counselors studied the Six Pillars of Character and learned how to serve as positive role models.
- Two hundred adults serve as club advisors, committee members, camp deans, and project judges. They contribute their expertise and countless hours of their time to lead projects and programs for 850 young people throughout the year. Club advisors participate in training and workshops at both county and state 4-H programs to develop their project knowledge and leadership skills.

Enhancing Agriculture and the Environment

- OSU Extension in cooperation with the Geauga County Soil and Water District offered the Equine Professionals Workshop. Thirty horse owners and stable managers attended this workshop. The program included small business training, horse nutrition and pasture management, and environmental stewardship. This program is scheduled to be repeated in the spring of 2009.
- The Geauga County maple program was active in 2008 with programs for over 230 producers and consumers. OSU Extension was also involved in starting the Ohio Maple Museum and Ohio Maple Hall of Fame Project to be built in Geauga County. When completed, this project will bring thousands of visitors to Ohio's largest maple producing county.
- Three Vegetable Growers Field Nights hosted more than 170 Amish and non-Amish commercial vegetable growers during June, July, and August. These field night/workshops provided growers with an opportunity to see, identify, and discuss problems associated with vegetable production. Diseases, insects, and nutrient management issues were identified to assist growers in their efforts to raise better produce.
- Over 100 homeowners and interested fruit enthusiasts participated in the annual "March In and Prune Out" workshop. This workshop is a hands-on approach to teaching attendees the correct pruning principles and practices for growing good fruit. Apples, peaches, thornless blackberries, raspberries, blueberries, and grapes are pruned by everyone in the workshop. Everyone enjoys the day and learns how to properly prune their own fruit trees and plants. The show, tell, do-it-themselves approach allows them to overcome their fear of making their mistakes by pruning on someone else's plants.
- OSU Extension of both Geauga and Ashtabula counties partnered and taught the "Too Large to Mow, What Can I Grow"—Small Farms workshop. This in-depth, four-part series of programs gave 45 new and interested farmers the basic skills they need to set up and run small but diverse family farms.
- Twelve new Master Gardener interns were taught correct horticultural principles and practices for over 50 hours, in a 13 day class series. In turn, each Master Gardener intern donated at least 50 hours back to Geauga's communities, for a total of 600 hours of volunteer service. The 77 currently certified Master Gardeners

provided an additional 3,477 hours of volunteer service to communities. The non-profit Independent Sector organization places the value of an hour volunteer time at \$18.05. Therefore, Geauga's Master Gardener organization donated over \$62,760 worth of service to Geauga County.

- Over 200 licensed private pesticide applicators were re-certified by the four-county consortium of Geauga, Lake, Ashtabula, and Trumbull. Applicators were shown the effect of worn spray nozzles, incorrect pressure, and boom height being off by 1 inch. They were also shown how to calibrate a sprayer. These corrections, if applicators modify their current practices, will not only reduce the costs per acre to grow a crop, but it also directly impacts the environment.
- Geauga County's Master Gardeners planned, organized, and taught over 25 workshops/classes on various horticultural themes for local Geauga homeowners. The Master Gardeners also served as the educational advisors/consultants to assist with every planting phase throughout the entire Red Simmons Memorial project at the Geauga County Safety Center.
- Hundreds of on-site farm visits were made during the growing season to advise commercial producers regarding their specific concerns and questions. For example, production problems, diseases, insect identification, troubleshooting why plants are dying, and cultural issues like fertilizer use, chemicals and alternatives, depth of planting, etc., are all part of these consultations. These consultations are essential to keep producers and their associated businesses competitive and a viable part of Geauga's economy.

Strengthening Families and Communities

- As a faculty member of the Ohio Supreme Court within their training program for Ohio Guardian-Ad Litem, Terri Worthington trained over 200 attorneys in seven different counties. All attorneys working as a guardian for juveniles within the court system are required to take this training.
- Senior Wellness Day, which is a whole day of activities for senior citizens held for the counties of Lake and Geauga, teaches principles and practices on health/wellness and drug/alcohol awareness. Over 150 seniors attended and participated in the daylong training on how to eat nutritious meals and finding ways to exercise in order to maintain healthy lifestyles.

- Peaceful Parenting classes teach correct techniques and principles to help develop and assist parents. They are trained how to best deal with day-to-day situations that challenge parenting skills. This class is taught six times each year in Geauga County to 66 parents.
- The Red Ribbon drug and alcohol awareness school program was taught in three different schools systems with over 600 people in attendance. This program helps parents, teachers, and youth to know, recognize, and view the true consequences of drug and alcohol addiction and abuse.
- Real Money Real World targets area middle schools and teaches youth about financial literacy. This is an all-day simulation with local banks, businesses, and other agencies staffing booths while the students spend their "paychecks" on necessities like housing, transportation, utilities, and food. Their paychecks are based on the salaries of the professions that interest them. A total of 160 youth will experience this financial training this year.
- Divorced Parenting classes are taught to approximately 75–90 people each month to help them understand the impact of divorce on youth and the family. This class helps parents to understand the warning signs and symptoms indicating that children are not adjusting to the changes in their lives. Parents are trained to cope and avoid the major disturbances that might intrude into the lives of all involved in a divorce.

Advancing Employment and Income Opportunities

- For the third year in a row, the Geauga Produce Growers Association achieved their auction sales goal of over \$1,000,000 for vegetable sales in 2008. A major summer effort by a Geauga County Extension educator is to assist and consult with both Amish and non-Amish local vegetable growers. Profitable produce growing in Geauga County continues to attract at least 3–5 new growers each year.

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