

Community Support | Community Impact
Together Impacting the Lives of People in Lewis & Clark County



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Welcome to Lewis and Clark County

Thank you for your support of Montana State University Extension. MSU Extension is a partnership between Lewis & Clark County, Montana State University and the United States Department of Agriculture. This three-way partnership provides educational programs in the areas of Agriculture, Natural Resources, 4-H, Youth Development, Community Development, Family and Consumer Sciences, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Education Programs. Enjoy some highlights of the 2016 educational opportunities in Lewis & Clark County.

Family and Consumer Sciences Expands to Jefferson County

This year, the Lewis and Clark County Extension Office was fully staffed with an Agriculture Agent, 4-H/Youth Development Agent, Office Administrative Assistant, 4-H Military Program Coordinator, and a SNAP-Ed Program Manager/Family and Consumer Sciences Agent joint position. In June, our SNAP-Ed Program Manager was promoted to a one-quarter time Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent in partnership with Jefferson County. The partnership helped expand the Family and Consumer Sciences Program to provide education in communities that may be hit with job

losses or other economic hardships due to the recent Golden Sunlight Mine and the Mental Health Development Center closures in Jefferson County. The focus of the Family and Consumer Sciences Program in both Lewis and Clark and Jefferson Counties includes Food Preservation, Family Economics, and Health Education.

In October, the Agent partnered with a local community group, Growing Community Naturally, and Jefferson High School to provide a canning class in the community of Boulder. The hands-on class drew six participants from Boulder and neighboring communities who had little previous canning experience and wanted to learn more about the economical practice of preserving food at home. Participants canned a jar of pickled beets to take home and extra jars were prepared for use in the school cafeteria.



Supported by the Lewis & Clark County Commissioners
Michael Murray
Susan Good Geise
Andy Hunthausen

4-H and Youth Development

Lewis & Clark County 4-H By the Numbers

In 2016, Lewis and Clark County 4-H reached over a thousand youth through 24 active 4-H Clubs; 138 4-H volunteer leaders and educators provided educational programming for 411 youth 4-H members from ages 5 to 19.

“Learning is an active process. We learn by doing. Only knowledge that is used sticks in your mind.”
Dale Carnegie

4-H empowers youth to take on leadership roles. Learning by doing in 4-H provides a safe place for our kids to speak in front of a group, learn how to run a meeting, engage in service learning, and so much more. 2016 was a great year for Lewis and Clark County 4-H.



4-H Night at the Rodeo showcased at the Last Chance Stampede and Fair in Helena, MT

Teaching Generosity through the 4-H Club Program

Each year 4-H clubs complete a community service project. This year the Scratchgravel Wranglers 4-H Club purchased, assembled, and delivered a picnic table for the Little Children's Home, a local foster/group home. After the delivery the 4-H members toured the home to learn about foster care and needs in our community.



4-H Camp Teens Learn Independence

The 4-H Camp Counselors are in charge of 4-H Camp. From the theme, to activities, cleaning after meals, teenage counselors work with younger 4-Hers to learn and teach team building and life skills. While fostering youth-adult partnerships in the planning stages is critical, when Lewis and Clark County 4-Hers get to 4-H Camp the spotlight is on the teenage counselors to truly run the camp and create great experiences for the kids that attend.



4-H Camp Counselor, Chris Gransberry readies a canoe for canoe races

4-H In School and After School

Though the 4-H Club Program is well known, the opportunity to work in schools and after school helps reach more youth to teach life skills. Through partnerships with Jim Darcy Elementary Ag Day, Four Georgians Elementary, Central Elementary Afterschool, The Afterschool Alliance, and the PEAK (Promoting Enrichment Activities for Kids) Program, many youth had an opportunity to experience 4-H.

The majority of stations at Jim Darcy Ag Day are run by 4-H members, volunteers, and staff.

4-H is reaching out to Helena schools with a sponsorship from McDonald's that is offering kids in town the chance to raise a 4-H animal. McDonald's owner, Terry Gauthier says, “4-H teaches everything I want my employees to know. Responsibility, critical thinking, and a good work ethic. I want to help more kids have this opportunity.”



Sponsor, Terry Gauthier pets the pig he helped 4-Her Madelynn Smith purchase to raise in 4-H even though she lives in city limits

4-H Project Based Learning Leads to Showcasing Mastery at the Fair

4-H has a strong history and presence at the Last Chance Stampede and Fair. Kids have a chance to showcase their projects each July. Projects range from sewing to sheep, leathercraft to beef, welding to cooking. The pig project has the most entries, while during the year shooting sports has the most youth participating. The local community is very supportive of 4-H kids. Interview judging takes place Tuesday where 4-H members explain their projects to local community members that serve as judges. Saturday, July 30th buyers packed into the stands for both the Livestock Auction and the Indoor Project Auction. This year's 4-H Livestock sale was the highest grossing sale in history at \$343,792 and the Indoor Project Auction grossing \$1,535.



4-H Horse Leader, Dawn Schneider gives 4-Her Abby Gruber some words of encouragement before showing her horse



4-H member, Justin Patten, restored this No. 5 sickle mower as a 4-H project. The mower is a family heirloom from the 1940s

4-H member, Loren Lane exits the show ring with his blue ribbon lamb



4-H Military Partnership Grant

This year the 4-H Military Partnership Grant in Lewis and Clark County was all about partnerships. For National 4-H Week, with the assistance of numerous volunteers, we combined the National 4-H experiment with an open house to promote 4-H to more than 85 youth and families. The youth were able to learn about trajectory, wind speed and initial force while learning about recent global issues for the National 4-H Science Experiment. During the open house youth and families were able to learn about different projects, learn how to join a 4-H club and do fun activities.

4-H teamed up with Helena Middle School and the YMCA to offer babysitting and First Aid certification to several middle school youth using the 4-H Military Babysitting curriculum. In November, we joined forces with Carroll College, Student Assistance Foundation and Montana National Guard to offer help on how to find resources to pay for college. We had more than 60 people attend and learn how to fill out successful college applications, as well as how to fill out financial aid applications. Those youth interested were able to discuss with National Guard recruiters different options on how to help pay for their college education.

As a continuation of the college readiness series, we once again collaborated with Helena Middle School, Montana National Guard, Montana State 4-H Ambassador Officers, and Broadwater County 4-H. We were able to offer Resiliency training – how to bounce back from tough situations, especially deployment. The youth also learned how to help prevent bullying. The adults were able to learn more about 4-H and being a leader by attending 4-H Leader's College. The Montana 4-H Ambassador Officers provided numerous opportunities to the almost 30 youth and 10 adults who were in attendance.

In the near future, partnerships of this kind are going to be more vital in making the biggest impact with limited funding available to support military youth in Lewis and Clark County.



Katelyn McKay leading two youth on 4-H Robotics

Master Gardener Program - Impacting the Lives of Gardeners, their

Families and their Communities in Lewis & Clark County

The Master Gardener Program has completed its seventh year in Lewis & Clark County. Since the spring of 2010, 299 people have taken the Level I course, 99 people have taken the Level II course, and 18 people have taken the Level III course in Bozeman. The Level I course is taught every spring and the Level II course is taught every fall in Helena. The Level III course is taught in Bozeman in the summer.



An evaluation of the spring Level I course indicated participants were satisfied with the course. The instructor, Brent Sarchet, received a rating of 4.83 out of five. Course participants indicated that the course exceeded their expectations or met their expectations, 67 percent and 33 percent respectively. The majority (67%) of the spring Level I class, when asked how familiar they were with Extension, indicated they were familiar with Extension prior to taking the Master Gardener course, but they had not utilized the offices' services or taken any courses. Through the Master Gardener program, we are reaching clientele that may not otherwise utilize Extension's services. One respondent said, "How anxious I am to put the information to use! I was surprised that after every class I was so energized and looked at everything a bit differently." They continued, "To be honest, I'm sorry the sessions are over. Every class offered something surprisingly wonderful." In addition to the knowledge the course participants obtained (92%), 67 percent indicated a healthy/well being, social/networking (25%), and financial benefit (25%). They were asked to mark all that applied of the four options. A respondent said, "I am new to the Helena area, so these classes helped me focus on how to get a good start with making peace with the earth here, and it has been years since I've taken any course, so to jump into this was huge. I learned so much each time, I couldn't wait to attend the next week. I also didn't want to miss any of the extra classes offered on other evenings." When asked if they would recommend the course to others, 100 percent of the respondents said yes, and 100 percent indicated they plan to attend future MSU Extension programs and courses.

Volunteer Project Highlights

Master Gardeners are putting their gardening knowledge and skills to work in their communities through many projects. Since the spring of 2010, Master Gardeners have logged over 3,803 volunteer hours; if valued at \$19.89 per hour, that is \$75,642 worth of volunteer time that has been put to work in their communities. Following are just a couple of the amazing volunteer projects that Master Gardeners have been involved in.

Fairgrounds Landscaping Project

Six years ago the Extension office and Master Gardeners built seven raised beds and planted them south of the Exhibit Hall at the Lewis & Clark County fairgrounds. They were going to require some major maintenance or removal, so the Extension agent, Brent Sarchet, approached the fairgrounds board with a plan to install permanent landscaping in the area. The plan was approved, and this spring the raised beds were removed and permanent landscaping was installed. The project will be completed over three years. The first stage of the project included: dirt work, installing the irrigation system and planting some trees, which was completed just prior to fair. The area will eventually have a gazebo and further perennial plantings.

Number of volunteers involved - 15

Volunteer hours on this project - over 180

Value of volunteer hours on this project - \$3,580

Value of the work performed - over \$5,000



Master Gardener volunteers removing the raised beds to make room for the permanent landscaping at the Lewis & Clark County fairgrounds

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Master Gardener Volunteer Projects Continued: Informational Booth at the Farmers' Market

The Extension Office and the Master Gardeners maintain an informational booth at the Helena Farmers' Market. This is the sixth year of having a booth at the farmers' market. For the last four years Level III Master Gardener, Jim Clark, has taken over the organization and coordination of the booth. This year Jim got assistance from the Gold Country Montana Master Gardener Association that formed last year. It is a group of over 50 Master Gardeners that have formed an association to help organize additional volunteer projects and provide continuing education opportunities. The booth is a great way to get information to the public. People at the booth field numerous horticulture, gardening and food preservation questions.

Number of volunteers involved in 2016 - 10
Volunteer hours in 2015 - over 300
Value of volunteer hours in 2015 - \$5,967
Contacts made in 2015 - over 360

Vole, Pocket Gopher and Ground Squirrel Management Workshop held in Helena

Twenty-two people attended a course this summer on vole, pocket gopher and ground squirrel management. The course was taught by Brent Sarchet and Stephen Vantassel, Montana Department of Agriculture Vertebrate Pest Specialist. Participants learned how to identify the pests and learned about different ways of managing them in various situations. The course had participation from a diverse group of gardeners, farmers and ranchers. Participants were asked to identify their skill or comfort level in identification and management of the three species prior to taking the course. The largest group, 47 percent, indicated that they were not comfortable, followed by 32 percent who indicated they were somewhat comfortable. After taking the course, the highest rating was very comfortable (43%) followed by comfortable at 38 percent.



Stephen Vantassel teaching about pocket gophers and workshop

These three pests can cause significant damage to gardens, crops and pastures. The course evaluations indicate that the course participants learned a great deal about rodent management. The course received an overall rating of 4.48 out of 5. Course participants commented, "Good presentation, very informative, well done!", and "Thank you, very helpful."

Fruit Tree Research Project Concludes the Fourth Year

Brent Sarchet and Toby Day, MSU Extension Horticulture Specialist, along with partners across the state are leading the effort on fruit tree research in the state. The work started with a Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) Specialty Crop Block grant in 2013, followed by a MDA Growth Through Agriculture grant in 2014 that together funded the establishment of ten fruit tree cultivar research sites across the state; an additional Specialty Crop Block grant was received in 2014 to conduct research on historic orchards across the state, and in the fall of 2016 another Specialty Crop Block was received to partner with Montana PBS to develop a series of "how to" videos on growing fruit trees and small fruit. The video series will feature the fruit tree research projects and other fruit research from colleagues that is being conducted across the state. Sarchet and Day released a publication "Growing Fruit Trees in Montana" in the winter of 2015. The publication has been very well received by the public with over 1125 copies distributed so far. The publication will be updated about every three years as they continue to collect data on growing fruit trees in Montana. Fruit is largely lacking in most local food systems in Montana. Montana has 33 of the 56 counties that have food deserts. The fruit tree research and education efforts will encourage and support future fruit development across the state. Fruit production is an enterprise that farmers and ranchers can adopt to assist them in diversifying their operations.



Goodland apples which is one of the best performing apple cultivars so far in the cultivar research

Family and Consumer Science Programming

Food Preservation

Hands-on Canning Classes provide an opportunity for participants to practice canning in a group setting before trying it out at home. This year, four hands-on Food Preservation classes were held at the Lewis and Clark County Extension Office throughout September covering water bath and pressure canning safety and best practices. There were twenty-two community members who attended total. The classes were a mix of experienced and new home canners who were able to share tips with each other and discuss methods they currently use. Participants preserved jars of ginger pear preserves in a water-bath canner as well as beets or green beans in the pressure canner.

Canning classes are a very popular and important program Lewis and Clark County Extension provides. Both water-bath and pressure canning are an economical alternative to preserve food and save money. Participants expressed interest in the class because they want to know where their food comes from. A number of participants also stated that they were interested in the class because a relative (mother, aunt, grandma) used to can and they now would like to learn. A number of participants asked questions about practices that are no longer recommended for safety such as using paraffin wax to seal, open kettle canning, and water bath canning tomatoes with no additional acid. All three of these practices can result in an extremely unsafe product that could grow mold, bacteria, or even the botulinum toxin in low-acid foods, which in some cases can be fatal if consumed.

In an effort to increase outreach of the food preservation resources Lewis and Clark Extension provides, a new partnership was created this year with RockHand Ace Hardware in Helena. Ace Hardware sells a number of canning supplies including jars, canners, and new pressure gauges. Every Saturday in September an Extension Volunteer was on hand answering canning questions and sharing information



including MontGuides and resources from The National Center for Home Food Preservation. The Family and Consumer Science Agent was even featured in one

of Ace Hardware's commercials as an opportunity to promote the resources and classes Extension provides.

SNAP-Education

The partnership between Lewis and Clark County Extension and MSU Extension's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) Program continued this year providing Cooking and Nutrition Education Programming for families eligible to receive SNAP (Food Stamps)

benefits. Class partnerships included the YWCA, the YMCA, WIC, Florence Crittenton, the Salvation Army, the Friendship Center, Helena Food Share, Bryant Elementary School, Helena Housing Authority, Helena Industries, Career Training Institute, and the Lewis and Clark Library.

A series of eight adult classes are taught in SNAP-Ed covering topics such as meal planning, reading Nutrition Facts labels, physical activity, and the nutrition messages of My-Plate. Adults enrolled in the program receive small kitchen gifts such as measuring cups and meat thermometers, and graduates receive a certificate and cookbook once they have attended seven or more classes. There were a total of 49 adult participants this year with 21 graduates. A new youth curriculum was also introduced and will be taught this coming year in 1st, 3rd, and 5th grade classrooms in Title I Schools.

Another component of the SNAP-Ed Program is Policy, System, and Environment Programming. The SNAP-Ed Program Manager works with community partners to help develop policies, systems, and environment changes that can help make the healthy choice the easy choice the populations we work with and the communities where they live, work, and play. A few examples of projects worked on in the past year include the installation of a new school garden at Bryant Elementary School, helping to organize a free community dinner with partner agencies, and developing nutrition education resources for a local grocery store with the No Kid Hungry Kid's Hunger Coalition.



Dishing up samples of a lentil chili with Registered Dietician and volunteer Mary Ellen Holverson at a Helena Food Share SNAP-Ed Class. All of the ingredients for the chili can be found at Helena Food Share and prepared in 30 minutes.

Family and Consumer Science Programming

Program Highlight: Bryant Elementary School Garden

Over the past year, the SNAP-Ed Program Manager has been working with the Bryant Elementary School Principal to provide nutrition education in the Title I School. One need the Principal identified was that the school would like a garden to use in programming and provide space for students to learn where their food comes from. The Principal is concerned about the access to fresh food many of the students have and wanted to see a space where students and maybe even the community could grow food.

In February 2016 a \$1,000 grant from the Montana Partnership to End Childhood Hunger (MT-PECH) was awarded to Lewis and Clark Extension to help Bryant Elementary install a school garden. Master Gardener volunteers were recruited to manage the design and building of six raised beds on the school property in partnership with the school principal and the YMCA 21st Century Learning Program over the summer. Students planted the garden and the SNAP-Ed Program Manager visited the garden once a week to provide nutrition education to the 1st and 2nd graders.

The YMCA Summer 21st Century Learning Program had 14 students enrolled June-August 2016 and there were 225 students enrolled for the 2015-2016 school year at Bryant Elementary School. The SNAP-Ed Program will be at Bryant Elementary in the Spring of 2017 and plans to incorporate the garden in the SNAP-Ed Nutrition Education Programming. There will also be efforts to recruit local community members to help with the garden.



Perennial herbs growing in one of the raised-bed gardens at Bryant Elementary School. Two out of the six beds were built three-feet high to accommodate those in wheelchairs.

StrongWomen—Healthy Hearts

StrongWomen—Healthy Hearts is a cardiovascular disease prevention program that aims to help midlife women reduce their risk of heart disease through fitness and nutrition education. This program was provided March-May this year at the Helena Indian Alliance free of charge and open to the public. The program is designed for women who get very little to no exercise and are looking to increase heart health. Half of the class includes leader-directed discussion around eating for heart health and hands-on cooking activities. During the other half of the class, participants engage in aerobic activity by walking outside or dancing to music. According to pre-and post-surveys taken by the group, after the program there was an increase in the number of women who felt they now have more self-control when eating and more motivation for physical activity. There was also an increase in those who reported they record their physical activity. There were twelve women who participated in the program and eight attended eighteen or more of the twenty-four total classes. After the series of classes finished a core group of women decided to keep on meeting at the Indian Alliance to continue with a walking group.

Additional FCS Programming

- **Diabetes Empowerment Education Program** is a program provided by Mountain Pacific Quality Health (MPQH) for Diabetes patients on Medicare to receive Diabetes Management Education. The Agent is now a certified Peer Educator and is currently partnering with the local MPQH office to co-teach these classes in the community.
- **Solid Finances** is a financial education program out of MSU Extension partnering with neighboring Extension Programs to provide financial education through a series of webinars covering topics such as budgeting, student loans, identity theft, and retirement planning. A series of three webinars was shown at the Public Library this year.
- **eParenting** is a program shared with us out of the University of Wisconsin Extension. This curriculum provides parents and caregivers with a weekly email tip on how to use digital media as a powerful parenting tool. This program was shared with Helena Middle School and distributed to their email list of 680 parents and caregivers weekly from February through May.

Lewis & Clark and Jefferson/Madison County Partner in Offering Cover Crop Education to Producers

A cover crop seminar was hosted in Sheridan and Helena on February 2nd. The group of presenters was Clain Jones, MSU Extension Soil Fertility Specialist, Fabian Menalled, MSU Extension Cropland Weed Specialist, Zach Miller, Superintendent Western Research Station/Assistant Professor along with a panel of producers who are using cover crops. Cover crops are a popular topic among producers, but there is misleading information. The goal of the seminar was to provide examples of relevant applications of cover crops and to discuss the benefits of using cover crops. When asking attendees if they would be incorporating cover crops into their operation after attending the seminar, 39 percent responded that they would plan on incorporating them followed by 26 percent who said they plan to use them on a trial



Fabian Menalled presents during the Cover Crop seminar in Helena

basis the next growing season. Eighty-three percent of attendees indicated they would attend a similar seminar in the future.

4-H Youth/Adult Partnerships

By developing youth/adult partnerships, 4-Hers have an opportunity to learn valuable life skills from business and community leaders. This year a number of leadership trainings were offered including Leadership 101, Leader's College, Indoor Judge's Training, and 4-H Club Leader Update. Several sponsors have stepped up to provide pro-bono services and scholarship funds from the connections made.

The opportunity for 4-H youth to participate in activities such as Demonstration Day and Fair Interview Judging provides a platform for developing public speaking skills and critical thinking when answering questions. Many

volunteers enjoy seeing the youth in action. This year 4-H volunteer, Luke Duran, said, "This is the most valuable training I've been to." Through focusing on the experiential learning model and the growth mindset, adult volunteers completed several "Learn By Doing" activities to apply the skills and share ideas on how to reach kids that may learn in a different style than what works for the volunteer.



Commissioner Susan Good Geise asks Taylor Converse a question about her demonstration at Augusta Demonstration Day

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