



IMPACT 2015

Through Extension programs across the nation, Family and Consumer Science Extension Educators provide a multitude of educational opportunities to meet the needs of diverse audiences.

Protecting our Resources – Family Life

Family life continues to be a struggle for many American families. They have limited resources of time, money and energy. Many families often do not have extended family support and lack household management skills.

Extension Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) educators have developed and delivered numerous programs that help strengthen family life. The following programs have helped families better manage resources, develop skills for parenting, acquire stress management skills, learn ways to stretch family resources, and plan for the future.

Mental Health

Illinois presented 70 *Brain Health Initiative* programs to over 1,450 participants. This program is built on three main curricula including: Building a Better Memory (2005); FITWITS (2009); and Head Strong (2012). In each lesson, research driven strategies that focus on healthy habits for mind and body are encouraged through: intellectually challenging the brain, staying socially engaged, eating healthy, exercising and sleeping well. Evaluation responses indicated that 100% of participants reported trying "brain health" activities.

Some of their activities included purposely recalling information from their long term memories like childhood friends' names, states, and sports teams. Seventy-two percent of respondents reported specific strategies or activities they will continue on their own, some of which include: practicing focus and attention activities; making lists; tackling Sudoku; playing word games; and trying new activities.

In **Minnesota**, resiliency skills were taught to military families at two family camps reaching 90 participants. The majority of parents and youth agreed or strongly agreed the program

content was relevant for their family and they would apply what they learned to their family life.

Michigan FCS educators facilitated 68 *RELAX* lessons with 370 participants in 27 counties. Pre/post-tests showed positive behavior changes: 65% talk things through until solutions are reached, 62% report staying calm, and 61% reduced yelling and screaming at others.

"I take time to really listen, especially to my kids, and try to understand their point of view and let them know I am listening. I shared the RELAX concepts with my family. We can all use them to help our family dynamics." -- Michigan parent

Resource Management

Two *Preserving the Family and Estate Planning* workshops were held in NW **Kansas** reaching 103 participants with estates worth over 46.4 million dollars. Over 477 people participated in 10 *Estate Planning and Farm Succession* workshops hosted by K-State Research and Extension. The goal was to prepare families for transition, teach them how to talk with their families, how to create a plan, and learn what legal methods can help them reach their goals.

Additional **Kansas** estate planning workshops reached another 95 participants. Nine-five percent reported they planned to create or review their wills or trusts. A six month follow-up evaluation showed 80% had talked to family members about their estate. Twenty-eight percent reviewed or created a will or trust, 43% were in the process of creating or reviewing their will or trust,

Raising kids, Eating right, Spending smart



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45% reviewed their beneficiaries on financial accounts and policies, and 27% established beneficiaries.

In **Mississippi**, nine “Technology Tuesday” programs were presented to 110 senior participants teaching essential technology skills enabling them to better utilize the Internet for news and information. One hundred percent of the participants indicated they learned new skills they would use and gained new knowledge about making money on-line, building a website, and digital camera selection. Eighty percent of participants indicated they gained new knowledge of antivirus software, spyware and Internet scams.

Iowa presented 445 resource management programs to over 12,150 participants. In their *Smart Investing Courses Reach Rural Iowans*, 25 Iowa libraries participated in “Smart Investing @yourlibrary. The program provides investor education resources and is a collaboration of the State Library of Iowa, Ames Public Library and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

Over 130 **Kentucky** Master Clothing Volunteers (MCVs) taught sewing skills to over 60,000 youth and adults at more than 1,200 programs. These MCVs greatly expanded extension’s outreach as they share their expertise in sewing with others. In the Louisville area alone, MCVs made 6,464 contacts, resulting in over 1,200 community service items being constructed. They volunteered 2,674 hours in teaching, preparation, continuing education, leadership and community service.

Based on the value of volunteer time (\$21.36/hour), this is a contribution worth \$57,116.64 to their communities. Some students and MCVs have used their sewing skills to make additional money for their families.

Relationships and Family Life

Oklahoma provides several parenting and teen parenting to help build and develop parenting skills and parent-child relationships for families. Evaluation data from seven programs with 57 participants showed improvements in positive parenting attitudes, including a 69% increase that children need encouragement as much as they need discipline, and a 54% increase that parents should monitor their children’s activities.

Utah Extension played an important role in helping families strengthen relationships. Whether it’s learning how to blend a step family, strengthen a marriage or raise a child, over 11,300 people have participated in family strengthening classes.

More than 2,620 teens and single adults have learned how to follow their hearts without losing their minds by participating in *How to Avoid Falling for a Jerk/Jerkette* dating education classes in **Iowa**.

This report was compiled by Linda Combs, University Kentucky Extension, Public Affairs Subcommittee member, and Theresa Mayhew, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Vice President – Public Affairs. For more information, email tcm5@cornell.edu.



National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) provides professional development for Extension professionals who improve the quality of life for individuals, families, and communities and provide education in the areas of: Childhood Obesity Prevention; Community Health and Wellness; Financial Management; Food and Nutrition; Food Safety; Healthy Homes and the Environment; Improving Children’s Lives; and Protecting our Resources – Family Life.