

4-H Youth Development

Uses a "learn-by-doing" approach to enable youth to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to become competent, caring, and contributing citizens of the world.



Family and Community Health Sciences



Focuses on Staying Healthy, Raising Healthy Kids, Eating Right, and Living Well. Emphasis on proper nutrition and healthy lifestyle, food safety, and environmental health.

Agriculture and Resource Management

Addresses agricultural, environmental, and ecological concerns; fosters education, volunteerism, and horticultural awareness through the Master Gardener program. Focus areas include agribusiness viability, watershed management, urban and community forestry, and new partnerships to enhance local and regional environmental stewardship.



A Strong County Partnership

Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders:

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Annual Report 2006



Child Health Summit: Fighting Back Against Childhood Obesity

The 6th Children's Health Summit – *Fighting Back Against Childhood Obesity* sponsored by Family and Community Health Sciences of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties and their partners was held in May 2006 for 150 professionals. The conference explored the causes of childhood obesity, identified the physical and emotional health consequences of childhood obesity, and highlighted local resources. Partners included Merck & Company, Inc., Somerset Valley YMCA, Somerset Hills YMCA, Hunterdon YMCA, Somerset Medical Center, Hunterdon Medical Center and others.

Participants' evaluations indicate a successful conference with 92 % of attendee's agreeing that the conference gave them a better understanding of the health consequences of childhood obesity. Also, 88% of attendees felt that the conference had increased their awareness about available resources. Evaluation results:

- 91% plan on encouraging children to be physically active
- 82% plan to set a good example by eating a nutritious diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and being more physically active
- 57% plan to encourage school boards to support daily physical activity, not just competitive sports
- 86% plan to encourage children to eat a nutritious diet
- 79% plan on others to serve healthy snacks at meetings and events

- 90% plan on sharing the conference materials with at least one other person
- Participant's said: 'Great summit', 'well coordinated,' 'Dynamite!'
- Overall praise for the conference was high and attendees enjoyed the presentations, increased their knowledge about the problem of obesity, and many plan on working towards a solution.

A *Building Healthy Kids Coalition* for Somerset County started in January 2007 to continue networking and outreach.

School Children's Wellness a Top Priority

Overweight children are at increased risk for many chronic, life-threatening diseases including diabetes and heart disease. Also many children do not eat well or get the suggested 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Schools across NJ and the nation are implementing policies to address this issue. Family and Community Health Sciences provides professional, school, family and community education to help keep our children healthy. 2006 outreach:

- *Eat Smart – Keeping Kids Healthy*, a teacher workshop about incorporating hands-on nutrition and physical activities in the classroom.
- *Child Obesity and an Overview of My Pyramid* for Warren Township Schools' health teachers and school nurses.
- Planning for 2007 includes work with Branchburg Township schools

4-H at a Glance

School Enrichment – 5,372 youth

Short term and Fair activities – 4,111 youth

4-H Club – 1,328 youth members in 83 Clubs

Volunteers & Educators Trained- 228 adults, 281 teens

Camp programs – 111 youth

4-H is a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills. In 4-H we provide educational opportunities that focus on personal and life skill development through the four H's:

Head – Youth learn to think, plan, and reason.

Heart – Youth gain compassion, a sense of connection to others, develop social and cooperative learning skills and a sense of community.

Hands – Youth develop concern for the welfare of others, learn to give back to the community, and develop positive attitudes towards service.

Health - Youth apply the skills learned to be motivated, competent, and successful individuals living a healthy lifestyle.

Youth can be involved in 4-H school enrichment activities, short term workshops, 4-H clubs, and special weekend and camping adventures.

School Enrichment

In 2006, Somerset County 4-H staff and volunteers reached 5,372 youth through 260 programs at schools throughout the county. Fifteen different topics were offered, including nutrition, composting, astronomy, environmental science, and dinosaurs. These programs enhance the learning experience offered by the schools by complimenting the topics being offered with hands on activities that engage the youth in the topic in a more practical manner that relates to real life situations.

Short Term and Fair Activities

In 2006, 4111 youth participated in 53 different programs such as Science-sational day, cultural education and art workshops during the year and activities at the fair. These educational programs are open to both 4-H members and nonmembers and include science activities, clothing and textile projects, fine arts, and nutrition education all presented in a fun, hands-on manner.

4-H Clubs

The 4-H club is the foundation of the 4-H program. **1328 youth participate in 83 clubs** including project,

in-school and after-school clubs. In clubs, youth gain life skill that will help them as they mature. These include goal setting, public presentation skills, mentoring, teamwork, leadership skills, and workforce preparation. Clubs work together to accomplish goals within the project. Project areas can include anything a youth might be interested in; astronomy, go-karts, clothing and textiles, nutrition, horses, small animals, rocketry, cultural education, livestock, and much more. All clubs are encouraged to give back to the community by participating in service projects. These include food drives for the less fortunate, road clean ups, collections for animal shelters, and making blankets for the troops.



4-H Member, Erin Posbergh, teaches Summer Camp Participants all about sheep.

Volunteers and Educators Trained

Volunteers make a difference! Research cites the importance for youth to have long-term consistent relationships with adults as well as their parents. Volunteers are essential to the successful delivery of programs within 4-H.

In 2006, **183 adult and 281 teen volunteers** were trained to deliver 4-H programs. These include the club leaders, camp counselors, workshop presenters, and presentation judges. In addition **45 educators from other youth serving organizations** (teachers, DYFS, Park Commission, etc.) received specific training to implement other educational programming such as Family ASTRO, Project WET, Project WILD, True Colors, and Character Counts.

Camp Programs

111 youth participated in overnight and day camps sponsored by Somerset County 4-H in 2006. These include Teen Winter Camp, Family Camp, Club Camp and RCE Summer Day Camp. During these camps youth are introduced to a wide variety of activities including boating, hiking, fishing, environmental and earth science, and nutrition.

Agriculture and Resource Management

Awards

Presented at the National Association of County Agricultural Agents (NACAA) 2006 Conference:

National Winner, Longwood Gardens Episode of "If Plants Could Talk" NJN Television series.
National Finalist, Feature Story, "Chainsaw Safety On and Off the Farm," published in *The New Jersey Farmer*.

Workshops

First Detector™ Training

Facilitated three regional First Detector™ training sessions to review the processes involved, diagnostic events, and notifications that trigger regulatory responses. Trained over 350 RCE Master Gardeners as First Detectors™ since 2005, and Rutgers leads the northeast in this effort.

The 2006 Urban and Community Forestry Academy

Presented annual program in cooperation with the NJ Youth Corps and the NJ Department of Labor. Agent coordinated four (4) four-day regional training sessions in Atlantic, Essex, and Somerset Counties for 160 participants of local NJ Youth Corps programs.

Green and Growing Newsletter

A quarterly online newsletter was created and designed through the collaboration of the Somerset County Board of Agriculture, Farm Bureau, and Rutgers Cooperative Extension. This initial publication year highlighted different producers, commodities, and the challenges within agriculture. Four issues were published online in 2006, with a total of 1,360 downloads.. This newsletter available at <http://somerset.njaes.rutgers.edu>, and to subscribers of <http://service.govdelivery.com/>.

Evaluative Research:

Using IPM to Control White Pine Weevil

Research evaluated the 1) Plant Phenological Indicators, 2) expected emergence time, 3) alternative chemical controls of White Pine Weevil in Christmas tree at eight locations throughout NJ. Results indicated that growers would be too late in applying sprays when waiting for forsythia to bloom.

Cut Flower Variety Trials

Variety trials of sunflowers and zinnias, conducted at Rutgers Research Farms in Pittstown and Bridgeton. Five varieties were rated on disease incidence, stem number and length, and marketability. Early results

indicate Moulin Rouge sunflower is not suitable as a cut flower.

2006 Search for Excellence Award The Master Gardener Speakers Bureau

This award was presented at the 2006 Northeast Regional Master Gardener Conference in Rhode Island. RCE Certified Master Gardeners teach on a variety of topics to garden clubs, church groups, service clubs, and at libraries, county parks and arboreta, civic betterment or neighborhood groups, county fairs, senior citizen groups and fellow Master Gardener organizations.

In 2006, 477 RCE Volunteers provided approximately 102,785 hours of service valued at \$2,248,936.00 worth of support, reaching over 100,000 local and regional residents.

The Master Gardeners have been volunteering for 14 years providing horticultural and environmental education to local and regional residents, sponsoring educational events, supporting horticultural therapy programs, and harvesting produce to support local food banks.

The Speakers Bureau provides informative and effective presentations and hands-on workshops, while also promoting NJAES, RCE, Somerset County, and interest in recruiting new Master Gardener volunteers. There are 27 presentations available through a variety of teaching media. Since 2002, 117 presentations have been given to 3,380 audience members. Evaluations have ranked both speakers and presentations at 4.8, on a scale of 1 to 5 (poor to



excellent), on knowledge, engagement skills, audio-visual aids, time management, answering questions