



Report to the People

Whitley County 2023



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In Whitley County, the local art center lacked a carving program despite community interest. The Community Arts Extension Agent addressed this by collaborating with a wood carving enthusiast who recently moved from Pennsylvania. It was her first-time teaching, and the Arts Agent supported her in developing teaching skills and confidence.



Community Arts volunteer, Phyllis Stone teaching our carving program

Together, they designed an eight-week carving class for adults, meeting once a week for four hours. Covering safety, tools, materials, main cuts, and knife sharpening, the program attracted a diverse group eager to explore wood carving.

The success relied on collaboration, leveraging the carver's expertise and community connections. The program significantly enhanced participants' skills, fostering personal growth. Students reported reduced stress, increased reasoning skills, and improved motor skills. The partnership filled a local art center void, celebrating heritage art and showcasing the positive effects of community collaboration on individuals and cultural preservation.

All hunters in Kentucky at least 12 years old and born after January 1, 1975 must have a hunter safety certification. During the covid shutdown the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife hunter education program was completely online. There were youth in Whitley County that did not have computer access at home to allow them to complete the required training. Once the program could be taught in person again, the ANR agent conducted two in-person training courses and a range day.

The in-person training courses included study in Hunter Ethics, Wildlife Conservation and Identification, Field Care of Game, First Aid, Firearm Safety, Archery and Muzzleloading. The last session of the courses included a written test and a live fire exercise. All materials, including firearms and ammunition, were provided at no charge.



Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent, Stacy White, assists participants with proper firearm handling procedures.

An in-person range day was conducted as a part of the annual Whitley County Farm Day. The range day was for those who had completed the classroom session of the hunter education course via alternative means (internet or CD-Rom). Students brought the proper completion certificate from a KDFWR-approved online course or CD-Rom. The range day included a live fire exercise. All materials, including firearms and ammunition, were provided at no charge. During the three sessions, 174 people received their hunter education certification. Of these, 100% learned about ethics, conservation, proper handling of game for the table, first aid including hypothermia, gun and bow safety, and tree stand safety.

The Whitley County Nutrition Education Program (NEP) Senior Assistant had the unique opportunity to collaborate with numerous local partners, including families, Save the Children, and Family Resource Center Coordinators to serve at-risk students and their families. The “Prime Time” initiative spanned six weeks and was focused on supporting youth facing reading challenges. Recognizing the importance of promoting nutrition, the NEP Senior Assistant seamlessly integrated the Healthy Choices for Every Body curriculum into the weekly sessions.

During this engaging program, young participants attended captivating storytelling sessions, read books, and participated in



Cheryl Owens NEP Senior Program Assistant leading Prime Time program

group discussions. While the children were immersed in stories, parents and caregivers received valuable education related to nutrition and physical activity.

During each session, both youth and adult participants were able to sample nutritious recipes made using ingredients that can be obtained with SNAP benefits. The NEP Senior Assistant was able to demonstrate that in a time of rising food prices and ongoing economic challenges, participants can continue making healthier food choices without straining their budgets. Each family received valuable resources to take home including nutrition handouts and recipes in addition to story books to foster a culture of reading and healthy behaviors.

The revelation that the sampled recipes appealed to their taste buds while representing healthier alternatives, sparked a keen interest in obtaining additional healthy recipes. This holistic approach yielded impressive results. Given challenges many families face in adopting healthier eating habits and tendencies to dine out frequently, it is noteworthy that of the 24 families represented in this program, all adults showed improvements in at least one food group.

Kentucky State University recognizes beekeepers' critical role in supporting pollinator populations and agricultural ecosystems. Kentucky State University initiated a series of workshops in January 2023 to provide comprehensive guidance on the fundamental aspects of beekeeping. Over a period of 10 months, we had 48 contacts who participated in these workshops. These workshops cover essential topics, from understanding the responsibilities of a beekeeper to meeting the various needs of honeybees and maintaining successful beehives. Participants learned everything from basic beekeeping principles to bee biology, bee disease, pest management, honey harvesting, and hive observations.

Our commitment to environmental sustainability and agricultural resilience drove us to develop this program. By equipping beekeepers with the knowledge and skills necessary for successful beekeeping practices, we aim to support the health and vitality of bee populations in Whitley County and beyond.

Our workshop series is thoughtfully structured to accommodate participants with varying levels of knowledge, ensuring that even individuals entirely new to beekeeping can progressively build their expertise.

This group convenes regularly every fourth Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m., and sessions take place at the Goldbug extension office. Additionally, we offer accommodations for the convenience of participants.

It was a huge success that the participants from last year asked to bring this program back in 2024.



Participants of the Beginning Beekeeping School Series examining the parts of a honey bee hive.

According to the Health Rankings analysis of CDC, 30.5% of Kentuckians and 37.2% of Kentucky's seniors aged 65 and older have no physical activity or exercise other than their regular job. Physical inactivity and a sedentary lifestyle can increase the risk of cardiovascular disease, cancer and cancer mortality, diabetes, and premature death.

Approximately 10% of deaths among adults ages 40-69 and 7.8% of deaths among adults ages 70 and older can be attributed to physical inactivity with an associated cost of more than 11% of total health care expenditures.

Physical activity can improve quality of life by reducing the risk of physical limitations in mid-life and older adults and it encourages positive mental health and healthy aging. To encourage physical activity, the Whitley County FCS Agent offered MOVE, a weekly



Participants engaging in the MOVE Program

low-impact exercise class. MOVE consisted of five 60-minute sessions with each including activities addressing strength, endurance, balance, and flexibility. Activities were presented with adapted variations to accommodate ability levels. Students received an exercise plan and an exercise band and were challenged to exercise at least 4 times during the week. The goal of this initial MOVE program was to assure participants that they were able to exercise and encourage them to begin a regular exercise routine.

MOVE was held weekly for one month reaching 12 participants. Initially targeted towards senior adults, participants ranged from 28 to 76 years of age. 100% of attendees reported feeling better after each MOVE class and acknowledged the need to continue a regular exercise program. One attendee stated, "I couldn't do these exercises when we started, but I can now!". Three attendees have reported that they are now participating in exercise classes several times a week.



4-H Sewing Club leader on the sewing machine while making a pillowcase.

The 4-H program has addressed the decline in home economics skills among youth, particularly focusing on basic sewing abilities, where 7 out of 10 lack basic sewing skills. Participants attend monthly 4-H Club meetings, where they learned to master a sewing machine, following pattern instructions, and completing multiple sewing projects. One of their community service initiatives involves crafting pillowcases for a local nursing home, with plans to create over 90 pillowcases. Their club's entries will be showcased at the county fair, potentially advancing to the state level. Initially, 67% were unfamiliar with sewing machines, but after the program, 83% felt confident in independent sewing. 100% participants have completed a project of their own and know how to sew on buttons correctly.

This project has paved the way for a new initiative: the creation of a Life Smarts Series. Recognizing the importance of equipping young people with essential life skills, Whitley County 4-H is collaborating with local teachers to develop engaging lessons aimed at middle and high school students. These lessons will cover practical skills such as first aid, budgeting, car maintenance, cooking healthy meals, laundry, personal hygiene, and workplace readiness. By incorporating fun and interactive teaching methods, including partnerships with community groups and local businesses, the program aims to ensure that these vital life skills resonate with students. The impact of this program is expected to be substantial, particularly for middle and high school students who will gain the knowledge necessary for success in life. The collaborative effort of the community to support youth in facing life's challenges with confidence is commendable, highlighting a shared commitment to their future well-being.

In times of economic uncertainty, it is crucial that we recognize and are ready to combat inflationary pressures. The Whitley County Extension Office entered the calendar year with this idea in mind deciding to provide the community with an opportunity to participate in our 2023 Homesteading Series. The Homesteading Series consisted of 30+ programs in a joint effort across program areas at the Whitley County Cooperative Extension Service including topics in Horticulture, Agriculture Natural Resources, and the Family Consumer Sciences.

One area of particular interest in the community within the horticulture realm was the Gardening 101-Beginning Gardening program. This program was offered on two different occasions enabling community members to choose between attending an evening session during the week or coming to an early morning weekend session. The Beginning Gardening program covered topics including Site Selection, Garden Planning, Garden Preparation and Garden Maintenance.

Between the two sessions a total of 30 individuals participated in the program- 77% of participants (23) indicated that the Gardening 101- Beginning Gardening class was the 1st program provided by the Whitley County Cooperative Extension Service they had attended and 30% of participants (9) indicated that Spring of 2023 was their first time growing a garden.



Whitley County Horticulture Agent- Ben Prewitt teaching the Gardening 101 program at WD Bryant and Sons in downtown Corbin.

This online registration program allows you to sign up and pay for classes that have a fee at your convenience.



To register:

- Visit:
<https://ukywhitley.pacecommunity.net/>
- Create an account
- Browse classes being offered, you can search by program category
- Find the program you want to attend
- Register for program
- After registering for a class you must “checkout” - click checkout twice, to actually be registered.

This system will send out reminders and recommend classes, based on your interest. When registering more than one person, each person will need an account. If you are registering minors, that do not have an email, leave blank and use a phone number to register them. Each person will need to register to hold their spot in class.

If you have any issues or have questions, please call us at (606) 549-1430.

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