




REPORT TO THE PEOPLE 2024 WHITLEY COUNTY

 Facebook: Whitley
County Extension

 Instagram: Whitleycommarts
Whitley4H

 Website: <https://whitley.ca.uky.edu/>

 Email: whitley.ext@uky.edu

Main Office: Whitley County Extension Office (606) 549-1430, 4275 N Hwy 25W, P.O. Box 328, Williamsburg, KY, 40769

Downtown Office: Community Arts Center (606) 549-7373, 428 Main Street, Williamsburg, KY, 40769

Agriculture and Natural Resources



Apple Tree Grafting program

Four classes were conducted in the spring of 2024. 105 people gained knowledge of apple grafting.

Apple tree grafting

Homegrown apples are culturally important in our region. Many heirloom varieties found here are not available commercially. Grafting is the most efficient way to maintain important apple varieties. The Whitley County Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources hosts an annual apple grafting seminar for the general public and for high school agriculture students.

Participants learned the science of tree grafting and had the opportunity to graft their own tree during the seminars. Both whip grafting and bud grafting techniques were demonstrated. This program has been conducted by the ANR agent for over 20 years. Four classes were presented in the spring of 2024. In all, 105 (100% of participants) learned the skills of whip grafting fruit trees. Some participants attend every year along with new clients who are just learning to graft.

Successful grafters now reap fruit from trees they grafted during this program. This is a lifelong skill that not only preserves apple varieties and a cultural heritage but also helps supplement clients' food budgets with fresh, nutritious apples from their own trees.

Community Arts



Open Studio Ceramics program

Students have utilized the ceramic studio 74 times and put in 140 hours.

Empowering Artists: Whitley County's Open Ceramic Studio

Whitley County's interest in ceramics is growing due to the high demand for pottery classes led by the Extension Agent for Community Arts. There is a limited access to public ceramics studios in the region, and the equipment start-up cost for a personal ceramic's studio could cost up to \$10,000, or more.

To address this, the Whitley County Arts Agent launched an open studio program, offering past students and experienced ceramicists access to a fully equipped ceramics studio at the Extension Community Arts Center.

Operating for four months, three days a week, the program provided a reduced-cost space for eight students, who logged 74 visits and 140 hours. This initiative significantly impacted participants, fostering skill development, collaboration, and self-directed learning.

Similar programs cost on average \$155 per month, meaning that a four-month session would cost \$620. Our students paid \$50 for 4 months, a savings of \$570 per student.

By offering this program, the Extension Ceramics Studio provided a cost-effective solution, reducing financial barriers and making artistic growth more accessible to the community.

Family and Consumer Sciences



Bread program

100% of respondents reported improved knowledge of bread-making tools, ingredients, and techniques.

Rising Food Costs Highlight Importance of Meal Budgeting and Skills Workshops

Food-at-home prices rose by 11.4% in 2022, 5.8% in 2023, and 1.6% in 2024, making meal budgeting crucial. With families spending over \$1,000 monthly on groceries, many seek ways to cut costs. To address this need the Whitley County Extension Agent for Family and Consumer Sciences offered monthly bread-making workshops. These sessions taught cost-saving techniques while exploring diverse bread recipes. In 2024, 205 adults attended 14 workshops, learning to customize bread for dietary and cultural needs.

As a result:

- 100% improved bread-making skills
- 83% made bread at home
- 75% saved money
- 91% valued the learning and social aspects

These workshops not only reduced costs but also promoted cultural awareness and community building. As food prices stay high, such initiatives empower households to adapt and thrive.

4-H Youth Development



4-H Sewing Club Community Service Project

100% of youth participants learned a new essential life skill.

Pillow for Patients

Due to the reduction of Home Economics in many public school systems, youth do not have the opportunity to gain essential life skills. In order to meet this need, the Extension Agent for 4-H/Youth Development joined together with the 4-H Pins and Needles Club and Busy Bee Extension Homemakers to teach youth valuable sewing skills while fostering creativity and creative thinking.

The monthly 4-H Club meetings focused on building the youth sewing skills in the areas of fabric preparation, pattern use, and machine operation before advancing to more complex techniques such as sewing zippers and quilting. 4-H club members were able to create meaningful projects such as bookmarks, scrunchies, and ornaments.

To allow the members to practice their new skills as well as contribute to the community the 4H Pins and Needles Club partnered with the Busy Bee Homemakers to help the members make homemade pillowcases to donate to a local hospital. These 30 pillowcases, crafted for the hospital's surgery, and labor and delivery units provided comfort to many patients. A local hospital representative shared that the pediatric surgery patients would find reassurance in the handmade pillow cases.

These young participants exemplified how the Kentucky 4-H Sewing program can inspire creativity, compassion, and service while making a difference in the community.

As a result of the program:

- 100% of youth participants demonstrated their sewing skills by making multiple projects
- 100% of youth participants learned a new sewing technique
- 100% of youth participants volunteered 12 hours and learned the importance of helping others

Horticulture



Maple Syrup Program

One attendee remarked. "I didn't realize how much potential there was in maple syrup production. This program gave me the tools and confidence to try it myself."

Sweet Success with Maple Syrup

According to the International Maple Syrup Institute, the maple industry not only contributes to the environment by conserving forested areas, but it also provides an opportunity for local farmers to boost their economic prosperity. Many Whitley County residents have expressed an interest in the potential to boost their farming profits by adding another value-added product to their small farm or property.

In order to provide local farmers with more information on value added products that could be produced in Whitley County, the Extension Agent for Horticulture, along with State experts in the Maple Syrup industry hosted a maple syrup workshop. Attracting more than 50 eager participants, the workshop taught individuals how to identify and tap sugar maple trees, sap collection, boiling techniques, and marketing strategies. Attendees gained insights into the economic and environmental benefits of syrup production in Southeastern Kentucky.

One participant shared, "I didn't realize the potential for maple syrup production in this county. This program has given me the tools and confidence to try it myself."

As a result of the program:

- 100% of attendees learned new skills and techniques
- 75% of attendees stated they would try this endeavor for the first time

This program highlighted the power of education and collaboration. Proving that tapping into local resources can lead to sweet success for Whitley County residents.

Nutrition Education



LEAP Program

100% learned the proper way to wash their hands

LEAPing into Health

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in 2021, 32.1% of children aged 1-5 did not eat fruit daily and 49.1% were lacking daily vegetables. In order to address this need, the Whitley County Nutrition Program Assistant introduced the LEAP (Literacy, Eating and Activities for Primary Youth) into the kindergarten classrooms in our local school system.

Aligned with Kentucky Academic Standards, LEAP promotes practical living skills, psychomotor development, health, and nutrition in a fun, engaging way. Kindergarten students were taught better nutrition by learning about MyPlate, balanced eating and given their own MyPlate to encourage healthier habits at home. Children were given the opportunity to make healthy snacks that reinforced fine motor skills, creativity and math.

In addition, students learned about germs and proper hand washing by playing with "Glo-Germ" and singing catchy songs that made hand washing steps fun and memorable. Demonstrations with stuffed animals taught the children the concept of germ transfer.

Through storytelling, snack preparation, physical activities and newsletters, the program promoted family wellness. One educator commented "the kids are so excited to see you again!"

As a result of the program:

- 71% of children tried a new fruit or vegetable
- 100% learned the proper way to wash their hands



Spanish-to-english program

Over eight months, the program reached 380 participants, with 279 identifying as Hispanic.

Spanish-to-English Agricultural Classes

Spanish-to-English Agricultural Classes / English-to-Spanish Agricultural Classes, launched in February 2024 by Kentucky State University Extension and the University of Kentucky, aim to support Hispanic farmers. Over the past eight months, we've engaged 380 recurring participants, including 279 recurring Hispanic community members, with 75% of participants having never accessed Extension Services before.

Our classes, held monthly at a local Mexican restaurant in Corbin, focus on practical topics to bridge language barriers and provide hands-on agricultural education. Experts from Kentucky State University Cooperative Extension and the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension lead sessions in beekeeping, predator control, soil testing, nutrition, budgeting, and drone technology. Workshops accommodate varying English and farming skill levels, with interactive demonstrations sparking real interest.

Participants have shown strong engagement with the program, with 100% reporting they learned new agricultural skills, 90% gaining knowledge about the services Extension can provide, and 100% planning to use Extension Services in the future.

Newsletter Mailing List

Want a physical copy of our programs newsletters sent to your house?

If so, all our programs have a mailing list on Pace for you to join!

How to join.....

01 Sign into your Pace account.

Don't have one?

Call our office to sign up or create an account here: <https://ukywhitley.pacecommunity.net/>

02 Go to special interest tab

03 Select one or all of our mailing list - (program) options, then hit the arrow to move the program to the next column

04 That's it! When a program creates a new newsletter, they will mail it to you!

Whitley County Extension Staff



Front Row (left to right):

Extension Horticulture Agent: Ben Prewitt, ben.prewitt@uky.edu
Extension Community Arts Agent: Cortney Moses, cortney.moses@uky.edu
Extension Family & Consumer Science Agent: Linda Burgard, linda.burgard@uky.edu
Extension 4-H Youth Development Agent: Lisa Jones, lisa.jones@uky.edu
Extension KSU Small Farms Area Agent: Laura Rogers, laura.rogers@kysu.edu
Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent: Stacy White, stacy.white@uky.edu

Back Row (left to right):

Extension Staff Assistant: Allie Brimm, allison.brimm@uky.edu
Extension 4-H Youth Development Program Assistant: Brittany Browning, brittany.browning@uky.edu
Extension ANR/Hort Program Assistant: Andrew Modica, andrew.modica@uky.edu
Extension FCS Program Assistant: Reagan Weedman, reagan.weedman@uky.edu
Extension NEP Program Assistant Senior: Cheryl Owens, cheryl.owens@uky.edu
Extension Staff Assistant: Becky Meadows, rebecca.meadows@uky.edu
Extension Staff Assistant: Tina Noe, tina.noe@uky.edu
Extension Custodian: Nate Russell, billy.russell@uky.edu
Extension Community Arts Program Assistant: Mawnie Belcher, mawnie.belcher@uky.edu

Cooperative Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources
Family and Consumer Sciences
4-H Youth Development
Community and Economic Development

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