

CUMBERLAND COUNTY EXTENSION

REPORT TO THE PEOPLE



Do you know the Value of a Volunteer?

According to independentsector.org the value of one hour of volunteer service is equal to: **\$33.49**

In 2024, the Cumberland County Cooperative Extension Service had **38 active volunteers** who assisted in delivering Extension programs.

Using the volunteer hourly wage of \$33.49, their combined contributions equaled **\$50,904.80!**

On average, Extension volunteers contribute **over 40 hours** annually.



Fostering Healthier Lifestyles

From May to September 2024, the Cumberland County Extension Office partnered with the Cumberland County Drug Court to deliver a comprehensive program that combined gardening skills, youth engagement, nutrition education, and financial literacy. The initiative aimed to empower participants with practical knowledge to improve their well-being and enhance family connections.

Participants received hands-on gardening training, learning to cultivate fresh produce while also gaining insights into available 4-H youth programs, such as the poultry and country ham projects. The harvested produce served multiple purposes: participants took fresh fruits and vegetables home to enjoy, and some were used for cooking demonstrations that emphasized preparation techniques, nutritional benefits, and food preservation.

A key highlight of the program was the Family Meal Night, where participants applied their skills by planning and preparing a meal for their families and supporters. This event not only showcased their culinary accomplishments but also strengthened family bonds and provided an opportunity to practice financial management skills.

By the end of the season, participants harvested an impressive 149.1 pounds of produce, equating to 50.47 servings of fresh fruits and vegetables, based on USDA calculations. This harvest had a retail value of \$456.61, directly benefiting the participants and their families.

This program demonstrated the power of gardening and life skills education in fostering healthier lifestyles, supporting family engagement, and providing resources for a brighter future.



Actors and speakers for the Farmers' Dinner Theater event.

Farmers' Dinner Theater

This event took place on February 22, 2024 at the Cumberland County Extension Office. The audience, which consisted of 55 listened to speakers about suicide awareness in the farming community, local farmers who had recently experienced farming accidents, and watched a skit put on by local farmers that covered hearing loss, sun safety, hydration, tractor safety, mental health, communication, and more.

A short discussion was had at the conclusion of the skit. According to the 51 surveys collected at the end of the event, some items that stuck in participants' minds that they plan to change are seat belt safety on farm equipment; being more careful; and weather preparedness.

“Enjoyed the comedy intertwined with the knowledge.”

-Farmers Dinner Theater Participant



4-H Members with Congressman James Comer on the steps of the U.S. Capitol.

Washington DC Experience

Rural youth often lack opportunities to explore national history, government, and urban environments, limiting personal growth. In response, 11 Cumberland County 4-H members, 4 adult volunteers, and their 4-H Agent embarked on a transformative trip to Washington, DC. For most participants, this was their first time flying and visiting the nation's capital. The itinerary included the U.S. Capitol, Smithsonian museums, and a meeting with Congressman James Comer.

The program emphasized life skills like navigating airports and public transit, fostering independence and critical thinking. Youth returned home with enhanced confidence, expressing excitement about future travel and civic engagement. Evaluations showed that all participants gained a deeper understanding of history and government, inspiring continued involvement in 4-H, with some planning to attend the 4-H Issues Conference. Funded by \$13,000 in community-raised funds, the trip provided a life-changing experience, broadening horizons and building leadership skills for youth and adults alike.



Mentoring the Middle Members with Judge Executive Luke King and Feed My Sheep Food Pantry volunteers.

Mentoring the Middle

The Cumberland County FCS agent partnered with the Cumberland County Middle School to establish a youth leadership team. School staff made nominations and twelve students were chosen. The group met and set goals for their school and local community. The name "Mentoring the Middle" was chosen by the members. Members fundraised by recognizing Red Ribbon Week and selling red ribbons to businesses.

Members identified the need for an outside heater for the local food pantry as clients were seen lining up outside hours before it opened to wait for commodities. With cold weather approaching, the students made contact with the food pantry to determine if this was something that would be useful. Volunteers readily accepted the idea, and the heater was purchased.

The Cumberland County Judge Executive issued a press release thanking the group for the generosity of their donation and recognizing them as leaders among their peers. WBKO, the local news station out of Bowling Green, did a spotlight on the Mentoring the Middle group which was aired on television.

“ Today was the second day that the Food Pantry used the new heater outside for people waiting in line (in below freezing temps) for our doors to open. Next time you talk to our junior adults, please thank them again for their thoughtfulness and generosity. Our clients are very appreciative!

-Joe Rhor, Feed My Sheep Food Pantry Volunteer



High-Quality Childcare Supports Youth Development

High-quality childcare is essential for the positive development of young people. To support local daycare facilities, the University of Kentucky Extension Services in Cumberland County implemented the “Healthy Choices for Everybody” program, offering vital nutrition education to daycare staff and families.

The eight-week program featured weekly 30-minute lessons at a daycare facility and provided take-home materials to reinforce key concepts. Ten participants, including parents and one expectant mother who completed the program after giving birth, engaged in topics such as food safety, budgeting, food resource management, feeding young children, and improving diet quality.

All participants graduated, reporting improved knowledge, skills, and plans to apply their learning.

This initiative highlights the importance of community education in addressing local needs, equipping parents and childcare providers with tools to foster healthier families and better childcare practices in Cumberland County.



Strawberry pancakes made by participants.

Services Offered

Agriculture and Natural Resources

- Educational Classes and Events
- Plant Disease Identification and Control Recommendations
- Insect Identification and Control Recommendations
- Weed Identification and Control Recommendations
- Plant Identification
- Soil Testing
- Forage Analysis
- Farm Visits
- BQA Certifications
- Pesticide Certifications
- Groups: Cumberland County Gardeners, Cumberland County Beekeepers, Clinton-Cumberland Cattlemen's Association

4-H Youth Development

- In-School and After-School Clubs
- Project Groups and Clubs (Country Ham Project, Dog Project, Animal Science Club, and Shooting Sports club)
- Conferences and Camps (Teen Summit, Issues Conference, Teen Conference, and 4-H Camp)

Family and Consumer Sciences

- Educational Classes and Events with an emphasis on well-being with a focus on human development, parenting, resource management, nutrition, health and leadership development.
- Pressure Canner Gauge Testing
- Groups: Cumberland County Homemakers

Nutrition Education Program

- Educational Classes and Events with an emphasis in educating families on how to plan nutritious meals on a limited budget, acquire safe food handling practices, improve food preparation skills and change behavior necessary to have a healthy lifestyle.

Extension Staff



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Monday-Friday
7:30am-4pm CT (Closed Noon-1pm)



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TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE

Cooperative Extension Service

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

MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

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