University of Missouri Extension in Clay County

IMPROVING PEOPLE’S LIVES, OUR COMMUNITIES AND THE ECONOMY

2014 Annual Report

In 2014, we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Smith-Lever Act, which created Cooperative Extension, the forerunner of modern-day MU Extension.
Dear County Commissioners and Friends of MU Extension:

Over the past year, with a theme of *Celebrating the Past and Building for the Future*, MU Extension marked a century of service to Missouri. While the celebrations have come to an end, the focus on building for the future is strong. The university’s commitment to the mission of bringing relevant, reliable and responsive education to improve lives and local economies is alive and well.

To maintain our position as a valued and trusted resource for Missourians, MU Extension continues to strengthen existing programs, build relationships and explore new opportunities to benefit Missourians. For example:

In the area of agriculture, the Show-Me Select Heifer Replacement program continues to improve the breeding performance of heifers as it helps participants realize record prices for their efforts. Producers from 103 of Missouri’s 114 counties have enrolled heifers in the program. In a record-setting sale, 168 bred replacement heifers sold for an average of $3,033 at the Fruitland (Missouri) Livestock Auction.

strengthening communities through art, innovation and creativity, Extension’s Community Arts Program is piloting an initiative in Lexington to help the community enhance its image with art businesses and opportunities that reflect the talent of regional artists and benefit a nine-county tourism alliance. The Community Arts Program is also at work in the St. Louis area, overseeing the Saint Louis Storytelling Festival, which engages approximately 25,000 people each year.

Knowing the value of dialogue with those it serves, MU Extension has made a concerted effort with the Mizzou Alumni Association to introduce MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin to extension programs, participants, key stakeholders and alumni from all corners of the state. These tour events, which will continue into 2015, are designed to foster understanding and support that lead to a stronger local extension effort across the state.

These are just a few examples of MU Extension’s focus on building for the future and continuing to make an impact in local communities.

I thank you for your support of MU Extension and our efforts in your community. I look forward to our continuing partnership and welcome your ideas for improving our partnership.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Michael D. Quart
Vice Provost and Director
MU Extension

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2014 Financial Review

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<th>MU Extension programs serve residents of all ages, racial and socio-economic backgrounds. Extension’s educational programs in Clay County are funded with assistance from the Clay County Commission and are provided by faculty funded by the University of Missouri with allocations from the USDA and the Missouri State Legislature.</th>
<th>Funding</th>
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<td><strong>Clay County Commission</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Grants &amp; Contracts</strong></td>
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*Based on Independent Sector, Value of Volunteer Time
**Salary and benefits of faculty with Clay County assignments

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Master Gardeners Facilitate Research to Practice

University of Missouri Extension’s Master Gardener program in Clay County bridges the educational expertise and research conducted by University of Missouri and the lawn and gardening needs of the county’s citizens. In 2014, 61 Master Gardeners from Clay County participated in in-depth horticulture training to assist Extension faculty in dispensing lawn and gardening knowledge through the program’s required volunteer service.

In addition to manning the Master Gardener Hotline and participating in home and lawn events, Master Gardeners in Clay County maintain the historic kitchen garden at Watkins Mill, the Martha Lafite Thompson Garden and conduct youth gardening education activities throughout the county, engaging Clay County citizens of all ages in research-based horticulture instruction.

MENSE RETIRES AFTER 37 YEARS OF SERVICE TO 4-H

After 37 years of service to the University of Missouri Extension, 31 of those in Clay County and directing University of Missouri Extension’s interests at the Earnest Shepherd Youth Center, Nancy Mense has retired.

Nancy began her career in Lafayette County and transferred to Clay County on a rainy April Fool’s Day in 1983. She participated in 4-H global exchanges to Japan, assisted in program development and was often the face of the University of Missouri Extension in Clay County for many years. Nancy’s efforts increased collaboration and partnerships responding to the critical issues addressing Clay County’s youth.

On December 14th Mense was honored with a retirement celebration attended by family, friends and multiple-generations of 4-H families. Attendees spoke fondly of Nancy’s commitment to fostering 4-H participation in global youth exchanges; empowering participants to become involved in their communities; championing 4-H representation on the Clay County Extension Council; and her rousing, “GOOOOOD MORNING!”

Nancy’s efforts were also honored by the Clay County Commission during their December 15th business hearing. A proclamation was made honoring her efforts in engaging Clay County youth for 31 years.
Northland Grandfamilies Supports Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

The Northland Grandfamilies program is a partnership of Clay County Extension, Clay County Senior Services and the Platte County Senior Fund. The program has continued to expand and now serves 124 participants in both counties. Daytime and evening support group meetings are held monthly, with topics of interest to grandparents raising grandchildren.

A highlight of 2014 was co-hosting the Greater Kansas City Grandfamilies Conference in the Northland, with AARP and several partner agencies and organizations. 147 people attended the event and participated in workshops to learn more about fostering a child’s success in school, communicating with teachers & counselors, legal issues, guardianship, cyber-crimes, bullying and childhood trauma.

Building Strong Families

This research-based life skills curriculum is taught in partnership with Hillcrest transitional living programs in Clay and Platte Counties. Residents in the 90-day program attend classes as part of their commitment to become self-sufficient and financially independent. Topics include: family strengths, communication, setting & reaching goals, positive discipline, coping with stress, dealing with anger and balancing responsibilities. Twenty classes were taught in 2014 with 130 participants.

Northland Early Education Council

The Clay County Extension Center, the Family Conservancy and North Kansas City Hospital’s Children’s Learning Center collaborate to provide high quality educational trainings for early childhood educators in the Northland. In the past year, 224 participants attended lunch-time, after-work and Saturday morning training sessions on topics such as: leadership skills, physical activity & learning, positive behavior support, infant/toddler literacy and math & language development.

Focus on Kids and Responsibilities as Parents

Many children today experience parental divorce or have parents who never married and live apart. These parents face unique challenges in parenting their children while living apart. The purpose of the Focus on Kids and Responsibilities As Parents programs is to help parents learn how to nurture and support their children through the divorce or separation process and to help parents who are living apart develop ways to effectively work together as co-parents. These court-mandated parenting education classes are taught four times per month. In 2014, there were 397 parents who attended the classes in Platte and Clay County locations.
PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Nutrition and Health Specialist, Amy Vance
Family Nutrition Education Program Associate, Gina Conde
Family Nutrition Education Program Associate, Julie Williams

NUTRITION EDUCATION AT FOOD BANKS

Clay County area food bank recipients can participate in Family Nutrition Programs on-site. Healthy recipe tastings are a component of the Eating Smart Being Active adult nutrition curriculum promoting life-long health through nutrition. One day when offering the "Ranch Cottage Cheese Dip" recipe, served with fresh vegetables, one of the clients picked up a piece of cauliflower and said "You know, I haven’t even looked at a piece of cauliflower since I was in grade school. I really didn’t like it as a kid and have never tried it since. But I am going to try it TODAY." She went on to explain with surprise and an accompanying smile: "My taste buds must have changed or something because this is actually not bad, in fact I think I will go ahead and eat this at home now, too......not anything like I remember!" 5,646 low-income adults and children participated in Extension’s nutrition education programs.

TAI CHI FOR HEALTH

University of Missouri Extension partnered with the City of Liberty Parks and Recreation and Community Center to offer the Tai Chi program. Tai Chi is a mind and body and low-impact exercise. A series of slow and gentle movements with deep breathing promotes mental and physical relaxation and health. People with or without physical disabilities can benefit from the exercise. A total of 30 people participated in the program. Evaluation results show that the program helped most of the participants improve balance, flexibility, and coordination and reduce joint pain and stiffness. Everyone felt relaxed after practicing the exercise.

NUTRITION AND HEALTH EDUCATION

This fall the Clay County Extension Council welcomed the addition of Nutrition and Health Education Specialist Amy Vance. Vance has a Bachelor’s degree in Dietetics and a Master’s in Kinesiology. Before taking on this position she worked for W.I.C. for 5 years and taught fitness classes at her local gym. Her plans are to bring the skills and knowledge from her previous work experience to Clay County. Amy will be offering courses to assist Clay County clients in decision making that improves dietary quality, increases physical activity, offers tools to manage chronic diseases and reduce overweight, obesity and healthcare costs. She looks forward to continuing the work of those before her and paving the way for new projects addressing Clay County clients’ needs.
For over three decades, Nancy Mense and University of Missouri Extension program staff have developed and offered educational programs in leadership and teambuilding to school groups at the Earnest Shepherd Youth Center in Liberty. Radical Challenge is a University of Missouri Extension program developed to promote communication, teambuilding, and cooperation through adventure games. This program is a school field trip opportunity for grades 5 and up. The program falls under experiential education or hands-on learning. Youth are placed in situations that demand leadership, trust, risk-taking, listening, creativity and physical effort. 3,380 students participated in outdoor team building, cooperative games and indoor team building experiences. Additionally, Extension staff has provided organized summer learning experiences for young people age Kindergarten – sixth-grade. In 2014, 361 young people participated in week-long camps with outdoor activities, swimming and learning, based on themes ranging from Harry Potter to Sea Monsters, Greek mythology and art.

4-H Advances Opportunities

4-H is a University of Missouri Extension and volunteer-led organization that reaches boys and girls through small groups called clubs. 4-H members choose from over 40 projects in which to participate during the 4-H calendar year. Most projects use hands-on learning experiences to teach subject matter and life-skills such as cooperation, leadership, and decision-making — skills that can be applied over and over for a lifetime.

Once a year, members have the opportunity to put those skills on display or to use during the 4-H Fair. In 2014, 34 members’ efforts advanced beyond the local fair to the Missouri State Fair. In addition, two members had the honor of representing Missouri in national events.
Dislocated Workers Seek Retooling Training

As entrepreneurs and innovators, Missouri’s small businesses are becoming a more diverse group that continues to make the state’s economy productive. Nearly 98 percent of all businesses with employees are categorized as small businesses. In assisting the owners and managers of those businesses, MU Extension contributes to a county’s economic development through growth in jobs, sales, innovation, technology development and commercialization.

The Career Options Program focuses on improving individual capacity and assists displaced workers and others in many ways. This includes exploration of business ownership and career repositioning and retooling following company closings, layoffs and other employment-related changes. These Clay County workshops are held in partnership with the Full Employment Council.

Missouri Employment Training Program Workstation Now Open

Participants of the Missouri Employment and Training Program (METP), funded by the United States Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are now eligible to access METP program specialists at the Clay County Extension Center. This individualized assistance offers SNAP-eligible recipients assistance in developing job skills needed for employment success. A METP workstation will provide information that will help employment specialists assist in job placement. Eligible recipients must schedule a time to utilize the station and meet with a trained counselor.

STRENGTHENING NONPROFITS

Often the backbone of community activity and civic efforts in Clay County; nonprofits, coalitions and other organizations seek out University of Missouri Extension assistance for expertise in strengthening their organizations. In 2014, local nonprofits utilized Extension expertise to facilitate strategic planning sessions, networking, and structural development. These activities lead to empowered, engaged civic organizations that strengthen our communities and our county.

FOOD SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

Clay County’s continued urbanization has allowed a flourishing local food system to develop. Farmers markets continue to grow in popularity and are utilized as a tool for economic development. Community Supported Agriculture operations, or CSA, allow consumers seasonal access to produce. Restaurants, grocery stores, wineries and brewpubs continue to seek out the flavors of Clay County food products. Extension continues to offer assistance to agriculture producers and businesses seeking products through courses aimed at addressing a growing local food system.
2014 CLAY COUNTY EXTENSION COUNCIL
The Extension Council serves as an advocate for University of Missouri Extension in Clay County. Elected and appointed members provide assistance in setting and accomplishing extension education program goals and objectives, developing the annual operating budget and determining local educational priorities.

Vern Windsor, Elected, Chairman
Amanda Riesselman, Elected, Vice Chairman
Kim Gasperi, Elected, Secretary
Kyle Geiger, Elected, Treasurer
Sara Cooke, Elected
Jimmie James, Elected
Grace McKay, Elected
Gene Owen, Appointed, Clay County Commission
Sherri Peters, Elected
Nicole Riegel, Appointed, City of Excelsior Springs
Christina Slipke, Appointed, 4-H Council
Sarah Smith-Maser, Appointed, City of Kansas City
Cass Sullivan, Elected
Eugene Suter, Appointed, City of Gladstone
Melissa Wright, Elected
Vacant, Appointed, Clay County Farm Bureau

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION FACULTY AND STAFF SERVING CLAY COUNTY
* DENOTES FACULTY AND STAFF HOUSED IN CLAY COUNTY

Agriculture
Nathanial Cahill, Agriculture Business Specialist, 660.474.3193
James J.W. Crawford, Natural Resource Engineer, 660.744.6231
Cory Creed, Horticulture Specialist, 816.252.5051
Wyatt Miller, Agronomy Specialist, 816.776.6962
Amie Schliecher, Livestock Specialist, 660.744.6231

Business & Community Development
* Crystal Weber, Community Development Specialist, 816.407.3490
* Richard Zarate, Business Development Specialist, 816.407.3490

Families & Communities
* Diana Milne, Human Development Specialist, 816.407.3490
* Christine Brunkow, Program Associate, 816.407.3490
* Amy Vance, Nutrition & Health Education Specialist, 816.407.3490
Marsha Alexander, Environmental Design Specialist, 816.482.5850
Nina Chen, Human Development Specialist, 816.482.5850
Shatomi Luster, Family Financial Education Specialist, 816.482.5850

Family Nutrition Education Program
Rachel Gordon, Family Nutrition Program Project Director, 816.482.5854
* Gina Conde, Nutrition Program Associate, 816.407.3490
* Julie Williams, Nutrition Program Associate, 816.407.3490

4-H and Earnest Shepherd Memorial Youth Center
* Nancy Mense, 4-H Youth Development Specialist, 816.407.3490
* Sheila Bruns, 4-H Youth Development Program Associate, 816.781.7733

CLAY COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE SUPPORT STAFF
* Edythe Weber, Bookkeeper/Administrative Assistant, 816.407.3490
* Carla Rathbun, Administrative Assistant, 816.407.3490

URBAN REGION, 4200 Little Blue Parkway, Suite 560, Independence, MO 64015
Cindy Zluticky, Regional Director, 816.252.7717
Jody Squires, Associate Regional Director, 314.367.2585
Milly Carter, Regional Administrative Associate, 816.252.7717

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100 YEARS
EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE CHANGING LIVES

1914-2014