

## MISSOURI: SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS WITH DIVERSE AUDIENCES

### 4-H Living Interactive Family Education (L.I.F.E.) Audience: Children of Offenders

For the past six years, Missouri has offered an enhanced visitation program for children of offenders and their families. In addition to traditional 4-H programming for youth, educational and social support are provided for parents and caregivers. Since its inception, 133 children and teens -- ages 5-18 -- have participated in 4-H L.I.F.E.; 54 incarcerated fathers and 96 caregivers also have participated. Children in the program have shown significant increases in social competencies, decision-making and communication. Fathers report stronger parent-child relationships and improved behavior and academic performance by their children. This project began as a part of Missouri's CYFAR (Children, Youth and Families at Risk) project. Efforts are under way to expand the L.I.F.E. program to correctional facilities around the state and nation. This program received the Family Strengthening Award from the Annie Casey Foundation for programs that demonstrate positive outcomes for rural, disadvantaged youth. The L.I.F.E program was also selected along with ten other programs to be featured in the National Collaboration for Youth's new publication, "Making a Difference in the Lives of Youth." See <http://extension.missouri.edu/fcrp/>.



### Alianzas Program Audience: Hispanic/Latino Community

Alianzas is a partnership among 30 campus and field specialists throughout the state. The goal of the program is to bridge the gap between communities and the state's growing Latino population by 1) accessing established university faculty and community resources to address issues that arise from cultural differences within the community, 2) fostering effective communications and cultural diversity skills and 3) using a community-based, shared-learner model to address the needs and assets of the community. Among its accomplishments are: instituting the annual national Cambio de Colores conference and organizing health programs focusing on overcoming health disparities. The health programs culminated in a Binational Health Week. Other programs that target the Latino community include a sixteen-week Home Buying Academy, debt reduction and financial planning. A growing number of Hispanic youth participate in the after-school computer lab program to strengthen their abilities in technology, math, language, and science health geography and career preparation. A number of programs and materials are available in Spanish. Alianzas received the 2005 National Diversity Champion Award from the National Extension Diversity Center. See <http://www.ediversitycenter.net/>.



### Assistive Technology Program for Farmers with Disabilities (Missouri AgrAbility Program) Audience: Farmers with Disabilities

Agricultural producers' lives are being changed. For example, a hog producer is developing symptoms of muscular sclerosis. The disability is slowly taking his ability to farm away from him. First it was trouble working in the hog barn, then trouble getting in and out of the tractor. For someone with limited exposure to other alternatives, a disabling injury may leave them feeling hopeless. However, with the help of AgrAbility staff, this producer was able to stay in agriculture by acquiring technology such as tractor lifts, a motorized wheel chair for working in the hog barn, and an accessible vehicle to work on the farm. AgrAbility, a statewide program, has provided this kind of direct assistance to Missouri farmers, farmworkers, and family members with disabilities since 1992.

Since its inception, the Missouri AgrAbility Program (MAP) has impacted approximately 5,500 individuals with disabilities or their family members by providing information or referral assistance to promote their return to farming or a farm related profession, to the community, and independent living. Services have included 400 cases of direct delivery of services; 670 educational programs; 2,000 awareness activities at safety fairs, county and state fairs, garden shows, youth events, farm shows, technology and disability shows, or other events of interest; and trained over 500 professionals. Success has also been through statewide awareness campaigns that included over 400 media releases, 80 radio spots, 55 television appearances on local and national coverage; 650 electronic releases of information through e-mail or web pages; 450 releases of information in newsletters or magazines; and 10,021 recorded hits on the Missouri AgrAbility Project web page coupled with a media campaign that brought about state and national referrals. Statewide contacts, based on circulation rates from newsletters, newspapers, and the viewing and listening audiences exceed 987,555 persons who have been made aware of the Missouri AgrAbility Program. See <http://www.fse.missouri.edu/agrability/>.



### **Dining with Diabetes**

**Audience: Low Income individuals with Diabetes**

Dining with Diabetes is a three-session series which provides nutrition education, food demonstrations and tasting of foods for individuals with diabetes and their families. Participants learn how to better choose and prepare tasty, nutritious foods that are low in sugar, fat and sodium. Guest diabetes educators are invited to at least one session to provide additional information and answer participants' questions. The long term outcome of this series is improved quality of life and health for those with diabetes. The program has been taught in six of MU Extension's eight regions. A grant from the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services allowed MU Extension Specialists working with community coalitions in the South Central and Southeast regions to reach 469 low income individuals between 2002 and 2005. Prior to the series 67% of participants reported they were confident about their ability to prepare healthy meals for someone with diabetes. After completing the series, 88% reported being confident.

Based on follow-up data participants also improved their food preparation skills. Prior to the series, 68% of participants reported the use of nutrition labels, 76% reported the use of herbs and spices instead of salt and 85% reported the use of canola or olive oil. On follow-up at three months, 97% of participants reported the use of nutrition labels, 91% reported the use of herbs and spices and 95% reported the use of canola or olive oil. Dining with Diabetes materials have recently been translated into Spanish by Extension paraprofessionals and these are being used with Hispanic/Latino audiences. The program is currently being expanded statewide.



### **First Step Fund**

**Audience: Minority and Low Income Aspiring Business Owners**

The MU Extension Business Development Program provides one-to-one counseling and training to individuals who want to start or expand a business. The counseling and training is designed to help individuals make decisions about and improve their businesses. Topics include: business planning, starting a business, financial analysis, cash flow, understanding financial statements, marketing, management, human resources and contracting with the government.



Minority audience participation in 1,319 trainings held across Missouri in the past three fiscal years (October 2002 – September 2005) was 20.2%. In this same time period, 9,309 individuals were counseled and 14.7% of these were minority clients.

Among the Business Development Programs are the First Step Fast Trac programs which have existed in Missouri since 1994. These programs, developed by a partnership of Metropolitan Community colleges, Guadalupe Center, Black Economic Union, Women's Business Center, and others, target low income individuals who are interested in exploring Entrepreneurship. The goal is to assist participants in becoming self-sufficient. Since its inception, 1,172 low income entrepreneurs have participated in business training classes. Of these, 80% have successfully completed the 36 hour training. Through the program, 500 graduates were provided with additional support, loans were made to 28 participants, and three hundred businesses were assisted in the start-up or expansion of over businesses. These businesses are currently in operation, employing an additional 430 individuals. To assist participants, a fund was created by local representatives from banks and private businesses to provide funding for starting or expanding their businesses. Upon completion of the program, participants may take advantage of microloan and mentor programs. Last year, the Spanish version of Fast Trac was offered for the first time. It will continue to be offered. See [www.missouribusiness.net](http://www.missouribusiness.net).

### **Successful Initiative**

**Audience: African American, Latino, and Hmong Families**

University of Missouri recently held discussions across the state with diverse audiences to determine the types of programs diverse audiences would like to have extension offer, and how we might best reach them. In 12 facilitated dialogues with 130 residents, the following programs were requested by Hispanic/Latino, African American, and Hmong families: nutrition education, personal finance education, business start-up assistance and programs in Spanish for providers. For youth they indicated a need for programs that build character, promote life skills, career preparation, and youth and teen pregnancy prevention and parenting. It was discovered that the best ways to reach the audiences were through radio and TV, and churches and libraries. Others suggested using word of mouth, key diversity leaders in the community, or by phone calls or through service providers.

