



NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION - STATEWIDE IMPACTS

Week Ending 6/5/09

- ◆ In Tyrrell County, a senior citizen was automatically put into a Medicare Part D plan with full Extra Help due to her limited income. However, she was still unable to pay for her drugs. **When her case was reviewed by our Family and Consumer Sciences Agent, it was discovered that another full LIS plan would better cover her drugs, saving the client \$232 per month.** Without the training from SHIP, the agent would not have been as productive in assisting this client. In addition, a client who did not qualify for Extra Help for Medicare Part D due to his income was unable to pay for an especially expensive life-saving medication. **Our agent assisted him in filling out forms for help directly through a drug company. He was approved for no cost medication for one year, saving him \$640 a month, ultimately saving his life.**
- ◆ In New Hanover County, NC Cooperative Extension's Ability Garden provides needed therapeutic and recreational opportunities for people of all ages living with a wide range of cognitive, emotional, and physical disabilities. This program depends heavily on outside support to remain operational. **A \$5,000 grant from the United Way of the Cape Fear Area will underwrite approximately 166 hours of horticultural therapy, a proven intervention that draws upon the innate connection humans feel in the presence of a safe natural environment.** In order to qualify for United Way funding, programs must demonstrate measureable outcomes that have an impact on the quality of life for the overall community. Outcomes that have been reported from Ability Garden programs include improved job skills associated with plant care, enhanced social skills, and improved mood arising from exposure to sunlight and fresh air.
- ◆ Employee training and development is essential to maintaining business competitiveness. Following local industry surveys of workplace issues, teamwork among employees were identified as a priority need by the Regional Workforce Investment Act Director. Responding to this concern, NC Cooperative Extension in Alleghany County partnered with the County Challenge Course Director to deliver team-building training to 12 line workers employed by an industrial manufacturer with over 450 employees. A day and a half training of Challenge Course elements and activities on team building, trust, and communication were offered. The Perceived Competence Functioning Inventory (PCFI) was used to measure change in participant's motivation, cognitive, affective, and relational competencies. **The participants increase in General Level of Functioning was measured at 13.56 points, while the average is a 5 point increase. Noting these employee competency changes, the company training director selected new team leaders, who with the promotion would receive a wage increase.**
- ◆ Cumberland County is ranked 38th in NC for teen pregnancies. The good news is we have come down a great deal. In 2002, we were ranked 20th. NC Cooperative Extension along with Cumberland County Schools began implementing the *Baby Think It Over* program again in January 2009 due to securing funds for newer dolls called *RealCare-plus* babies. Males and females between the ages of 10-18 explore the emotional, financial, physical, and social consequences of teen parenting by caring for an infant simulator. **According to the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Coalition of NC, Cumberland County rates have fallen since 1998 (when program was started) from 107.8 to 72.7 in 2007 (pregnancies per 1,000 teens). A total of 4,241 students have participated in this program and according to the questionnaire, over 85 percent indicated this program helped reinforce their decision to wait to have children.**

- ◆ Sediment and erosion from development resulted in concerns being expressed by citizens, the Transylvania Natural Resources Council (TNRC), the planning board and County commissioners. A local ordinance proposed by the Planning Board was met with opposition by several groups. In response, NC Cooperative Extension in Transylvania County organized a Sediment and Erosion Control Training work group. This work group, composed of contractors, public officials and other resource people, was able to clarify many of the issues with the proposed ordinance and outline suggested training needs for local contractors. With the assistance of the NC State University Soil Science Department, a "hands on" training was held on March 4, 2009. Of the over 85 participants, 98% indicated that they had never attended any type of training. **The local ordinance was approved by the Board of Commissioners on April 27, 2009.**

- ◆ Duplin County farmers need more alternative income opportunities to sustain their farms. With a growing need for bioenergy and other sustainable energies nationwide, NC Cooperative Extension in partnership with Murphy-Brown, LLC and NC State University specialists work together to offer educational opportunities about biofuels. At the Murphy-Brown Vendor Expo, a continuing education class was offered. **As a result, 66% of those who attended said they would save money on their farm by using biofuels and 60% said they would be willing to produce alternative products on their farm as a result of biofuels.** Extension will continue to offer relevant and easy-to-use information on biofuel production.

- ◆ According to a 2005 report from the USDA, North Carolina had the ninth-highest rate of food insecurity in the nation. *Hunger in America* reported that more than 36.2 million Americans were food insecure in 2007. The recent rise in unemployment rates and food price inflation has affected nearly everyone with being able to stretch the "food dollar". To help alleviate this problem, EFNEP's *Families Eating Smart and Moving More* lessons were taught from October 2008 thru April 2009. **Of the 40 participants who graduated during this period, 95% showed improvement in three or more food resource management practices, such as: planning meals, comparing food prices, not running out of food, or using a grocery list. By making these behavioral changes, the participants will be able to "stretch" their monies and provide food security for their families.**