







August, 2021

From the Director's Desk

I cannot believe that summer is winding down and that many of our local school systems have started back to school already or will begin within the next two weeks. I think back to May when my staff was deciding whether to hold an in-person summer, to offer virtual only or a combination of the two choices. When surveying the community, it was evident that families wanted a traditional in-person 4-H summer workshop opportunity for their children. We went straight to work planning high quality programming for all ages in all of our program areas within Extension while following all of the safety protocols put in place by the county and the state. I could not be more proud of my team for the wonderful summer they provided for kids across Montgomery County this summer. Their hard work, commitment to Extension and their love for what they do is evident throughout this newsletter!

As we look towards the fall, we are busy planning programs in the areas of Agriculture (both Livestock and Horticulture), Family and Consumer Sciences, Nutrition and 4-H Youth Development. If you have a topic that you want to learn more about in any of those areas, please reach out to us. Chances are if you want to learn more about an area, others do too. We are here to meet the needs of the community and we count on people like you to help us determine the needs of our community.

Employee Spotlight Corner - Tracy Blake

Hello! I'm Tracy Blake, the Montgomery County 4-H Youth Development Agent. I joined the Extension team last December, straight from a high school science classroom. I taught high school agriculture & science for five years after graduating from NC State University with a dual degree in Agricultural Education & International Studies. I also received minors in animal science & history. I'm very excited to be working for the University that made me into the professional that I am today.



My family just returned to North Carolina last year. We were living in Texas while my husband, Dillion, served as a mechanic in the US Army. While in Texas, I worked for three years as a certified nursing assistant at a local hospital and also worked as a large animal veterinary technician for a year. I took advantage of the opportunity to continue my education by taking advanced science & psychology courses on a military spouse scholarship. My work and educational experience while in Texas expanded my scientific knowledge and has allowed me to offer more STEM based programs as a 4-H agent.



While my husband was in the military, we also expanded our family. We first added our daughter Emma, who is now 4 years old. She is excited to start NC Pre-K at Wescare this fall. We also welcomed twin boys, Maverick & Zeb, last January. They are now 18 months old and enjoy their day-care teachers at Family Worship Ministries, in Troy. Though originally from Stanly County, my husband and I are thrilled to be new residents of Troy and are enjoying all the local charm and outdoor activities Montgomery County has to offer.

It has been a pleasure to work with Montgomery County youth this summer during our 4-H Summer Adventures program; as well as at overnight camp at Millstone. The youth were so excited to be face-to-face with facilitators and peers. It felt like we had a real impact this summer and built some excellent relationships. I look forward to offering additional 4-H opportunities through community based clubs and school enrichment programs this fall. If you have any questions regarding 4-H in Montgomery County, please do not hesitate to contact me.



4-H Happenings in Montgomery County Tracy Blake, 4-H Youth Development

Millstone 4-H Overnight Camp



The third week of July, nine Montgomery County 4-H'ers attended Millstone 4-H overnight camp in Ellerbe, NC. These youth came to swim, hike, and make new friends, but they left with memories and skills that will last a lifetime. Youth rose early to make sure their beds were made and cabins tidy. They participated in activities with their cabin mates and learned to work as a team. During one activity, the giant swing, a single camper in a harness was hauled to the top of a tower by the rest of their cabin mates before releasing their grip to swing through the trees. Talk about building trust! It was awesome to see them bond as a group throughout the week and make new friends from different parts of North Carolina. Hopefully camp will operate at full capacity next year so that even more Montgomery County youth can participate in this life changing experience!

4-H Summer Adventures

In July, 4-H sponsored another month of summer enrichment workshops through collaboration with Family & Consumer Sciences, Horticulture, & our Nutrition Educator. We were praised on our end of summer surveys for offering a diverse selection of workshops this summer. We worked very hard to make sure there would be something for everyone. The constructive feedback was, the youth want us to offer even more classes next summer! A few of the workshops are highlighted below, while others will appear in other sections of the newsletter.

Cake Decorating, as a way to inspire future entrepreneurs was a favorite this summer. Our Horticulture Agent, Kaitlyn Lamaster, who is an avid baker in her spare time volunteered to share her skills with youth during a cupcake decorating workshop! This was one of the most popular workshops of the summer. We had 30 youth register to participate, causing us to split the group into a morning and afternoon session. Youth learned basic techniques with a piping bag and various decorating tips as well as how to measure ingredients with a scale and to make their own buttercream icing! Cake decorating could become a side-business or lead to youth opening their own bakery one day! We hope to offer additional baking opportunities through a new 4-H cooking club this fall.

Another highly anticipated workshop this summer was Citizens of the World; a three-day workshop planned and facilitated by our two summer interns, Sarah Alexi & Cindy Vargas. Our interns took 20 youth on a journey around the world, teaching them various aspects of different cultures and how to celebrate diversity. Youth sampled food from other countries, created art from other cultures, and read books from around the world. Youth showed great curiosity and appreciation for people and places different from their home, and learned about different cultures present right here in Montgomery County. We hope we have inspired youth to continue learning about diverse cultures and how much more interesting the world can be when we celebrate what makes us each unique.







Photo 1 & 2: Participants in the Cake Decorating Class show off their cupcake masterpieces.

Photo 3: Dia de los Muertos Masks, Mexican holiday to celebrate deceased friends & family

Finally, we wrapped up Summer Adventures with a pool party at the Town of Troy Pool & Pelican's Snoballs! We were happy to support local businesses when planning this event. It was a great way to end a wonderful summer with Montgomery County youth.







State Level 4-H Presentation Contest

It takes a lot of courage to get up in front of a group and speak. Many people struggle with glossophobia (a fear of public speaking), but through 4-H, youth have the opportunity to overcome that fear and build confidence in their speaking voice through our presentation program. This year, Madilynn Bowles worked hard on her presentation, "Unique & Interesting U. S. Presidential Facts" in the Citizenship category for ages 10-12. She practiced multiple times at the county level and placed Gold at the district competition. This week, she was awarded with a **State Level Bronze!** Great Job Madilynn!

Egg-cellent Egg Contest

The deadline to register for the second annual 4-H Egg-cellent Egg Contest is September 10th. Youth must already have a flock of laying hens to participate. In addition to raising hens and collecting eggs, youth will complete a project record book with additional components about eggs and poultry.



For more information regarding Montgomery County 4-H Programs or to register your child (ages 5 – 18) in 4-H,

please contact Tracy Blake, 4-H Youth Development Extension Agent at (910) 576-6011 or by emailing

tracy_blake@ncsu.edu

Agriculture Updates Kaitlyn Lamaster, Extension Agent, Horticulture

Montgomery County Bee Keepers Association

The Montgomery County Beekeeper's Association did not meet in July, but will resume monthly meetings on August 19th at 6PM at Montgomery Community College in the large meeting room.

It is sure to be a great welcome back into the monthly meetings as Lisa Sooy will be speaking to the group on preparing and planting land for honeybee forage crops.

If you are interested in attending future meetings or learning more about the group, please contact Kaitlyn Lamaster at kaitlyn lamaster@ncsu.edu.



Montgomery County Master Gardener's



The Montgomery County Extension Master Gardener group did not meet in July but did continue work at the multiple Master Gardener managed gardens in the meantime. At their August meeting, on August 4th, members discussed what the future looks like for the three gardens the Master Gardener Volunteers are currently overseeing. New flowers have been planted at the Montgomery County Extension Office to help bring life to the old beds. Irrigation has been put in place at the STARworks garden thanks to STARworks Center for Creative Enterprise to help promote new potential plants in the spring and fall, as well as care for established plants during dry spells. Automated irrigation will hopefully be going in this fall. The Lowe Warner Park Garden is still seeing some deer damage, so perennial crops are being fostered that are not as palatable. This includes the addition of two beds of asparagus, which

will take three years to establish before harvests are advised.

Thank you much to the Master Gardener Volunteers for all that you do!

If you are interested in joining the group or learning more about the Master Gardeners and what they do, please contact Kaitlyn Lamaster at kaitlyn_lamaster@ncsu.edu or call 910-576-6011 ext. 26. Like or follow the Montgomery County Master Gardener Facebook page to stay up to date on their projects around the county!

Pesticide Disposal Day

A partnership was struck between the Montgomery County Cooperative Extension Office and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Sciences to gather unused and unwanted pesticides from community members and farmers on July 28th. The program pulled in 85 containers for a grand total of 515 lbs of pesticide spared from improper disposal! This free program helps keep harmful chemicals out of our waterways and natural ecosystems, so thank you to everyone that contributed. The program is set to run again for Montgomery County in two years' time!





What's Wrong with My Tomato?

The Extension Horticulture Agent is putting on a virtual webinar over the lunch hour on August 19th to help community members identify, and possibly treat, the problems that may arise in their tomato plants. This program is aimed to help new and experienced growers in understanding both the living and non-living factors that plague their gardens.

The event is free but registration is required and can be found at: https://moco-whats-wrong-with-mv-tomato.eventbrite.com

Any questions or concerns can be directed towards Kaitlyn Lamaster at <u>kmla-mast@ncsu.edu</u> or by calling 910-576-6011.

Pesticide Recertification Credits

The Cooperative Extension Office and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences are teaming up to offer pesticide recertification credits at an in-person class on August 31st. The courses will be held at the Montgomery County Cooperative Extension Office (203 W. Main St.) in Troy, NC. There will be 2 credits of V available from 10-12PM, a 30 minute break with no lunch provided, and then 2 credits of A,B,D,G,H,I,K,L,M,N,O,T, and X will be offered from 12:30-2:30PM. Registration is not required but highly encouraged. Please contact Kaitlyn Lamaster with your pesticide license number at kmlamast@ncsu.edu or call 910-576-6011.



Empowering Youth & Families Program Updates Sara Little, EYFP Program Assistant

Over the past couple of weeks our EYFP families have been planning for our Community Event. We will have a booth set up at the back-to-school festival held at Montgomery Central High School on August 5, 2021. The purpose behind this event is to go out in our community and share with others about Opioid Misuse and to help recruit families for our fall cohort. We have a spin wheel for participants to spin and answer a question that is opioid related, we have a display of the opioid deaths that occurred in 2019 for North Carolina and Montgomery County, and we have some goodies to pass out.











For more information regarding Montgomery County Empowering Youth & Families Program

please contact Sara Little, EYFP Program Assistant at (910) 576-6011 or by emailing slittle6@ncsu.edu



Family & Consumer Sciences Updates Rhonda Peters, FCS Agent Elizabeth Thompson, Nutrition Educator

Wow! What a hot, busy and IMPACTFUL July! We are so excited that our Family & Consumer Science program was so well represented during the 4-H Summer Adventures series. Of the 16 classes planned for the summer, our FCS Agent and/or Nutrition Educator planned, participated, or assisted with 75% of them. What a fabulous partnership and opportunity to reach youth and families.













BBQ Boot Camp

We started July by holding a two-day BBQ Boot Camp as part of 4-H Summer Adventures. During the seven hour program, Rhonda Peters (FCS) and Tracy Blake (4-H Youth Development) collaborated to help youth improve their knowledge of local food and agriculture systems, life skills, preparation of local foods, and safe home food handling. Elizabeth Thompson, our Nutrition Educator, also provided information about how to supplement grilled foods with nutritious side dishes and desserts.

The BBQ Boot Camp Challenge is structured to combine competition-based learning, problem-based learning, and collaborative-based learning in a game -like way to motivate youth participants to learn and achieve during the class. Congratulations to Joey Dunn and Charlie Kearns for winning the challenge and being named Grill Masters!

As a result of the workshop, youth demonstrated improvements in their abil-

ity to light a grill safely, label the different parts of a cow for consumption, explain what E. coli is and how to prevent it, and accurately take the internal temperature of a piece of meat. Youth demonstrated knowledge gain related to food safety and preparation and all indicated intention to practice techniques learned in class at home. One family reported that their children (who were participants) volunteered to grill for the family during the Fourth of July holiday AND made them buy a meat thermometer so they could be sure they were doing it correctly.

Special thanks to Jim Turner and Frank Garcia, our community volunteers who helped teach and supervise youth during the program. A very huge and special shout out of thanks to Dale & Sharon Thompson for their generous beef donation for this event.

Adulting 101

What is the Adulting 101 program? In a nutshell, it is a three day program for older youth that gives them the knowledge and skills that will be required of them when they "launch" into adulthood. In years past, we have done this program in three full eight hour days, but due to Co-Vid restrictions and regulations, we had to scale it back to three half days. Even so, our FCS Agent worked hard to plan and coordinate an amazing program that was implemented through partnership with our 4-H Agent with support from our summer interns, Horticulture Agent and Nutrition Educator. Research indicates that some of the most important developmental tasks of early adulthood include achieving autonomy (the ability to establish oneself as being independent), establishing identity, developing emotional stability, establishing a career and finding intimacy (forming close, intimate, long-term relationships). The Adulting 101 program gives youth information and education to meet these developmental tasks while working under a financial management framework. During this program, youth were introduced to basic financial principles (budgeting, savings accounts, checking accounts,



managing credit), learned to understand their own personalities and those of others, learned interpersonal relationship skills, and were introduced to leadership development. Youth learned about the different styles of communication and how important teamwork is during each stage of life. On the second day, youth were privileged to visit the Uwharrie Mercantile where Dana Dawson generously gifted each participant with a homemade muffin and a discussion about entrepreneurship and time management. Her presentation was so thought-provoking that one youth even went home and did his own Facebook Live video to share with others exactly how much he learned from Mrs. Dana. What an impact!!! On our final day, youth continued to learn about saving and budgeting money while also learning some real-world skills such as how to do laundry, how to perform basic car maintenance, and how to stretch their food dollars AND improve health through meal planning. As a result of this training, 69% of participants improved their skills in being able to differentiate between needs and wants and 62% improved their ability to compare prices before making purchases. Seventy-seven percent reported improvements in being able to understand non-verbal communication cues, more than half reported being able to communicate more effectively with others, forty-six percent reported being able to set and achieve personal goals, and 38% reported improvements in being able to manage their time. Seventy percent reported improvements in their ability to take basic steps for car maintenance. Special thanks to Dana Dawson for her contribution in both food and time and to community volunteer Jim Turner.

Babysitter's Backpack





One of the absolute funniest workshops of the entire summer to plan and participate in happened to also be one of the longest. Our Babysitter's Backpack program was based on the curriculum provided through NC State University and expanded to include a full **twenty hours** of comprehensive training for our participants. By the end of the program, youth had been trained in child developmental stages; food, bedtime and cleanup; bathroom basics; keeping children safe; dangers of shaking a baby; how to read to children; children's activities; using positive discipline; the art of positive praise; the business of babysitting, and how to interview. We also learned about modeling nutritious and healthful behaviors and how to prepare nutritious snacks with children in our care. As always, we recognize that 4-H'ers learn best by doing, and because of this, we worked really hard to plan lots of interactive activities to really support and extend learning. We enjoyed activities such as a Diaper Dash, and a Bottle Battle, as well as hands-on learning about first aid and CPR (provided by the amazing Stacey Kerney). We took a trip to the Montgomery County Partnership for Children

where the Executive Director Debbi Musika and staff member Myrna Sneed taught us about the importance of literacy and how to read with (not to) children in our care. We toured their amazing Lending Library so we could learn about the resources available to help our babysitting jobs be even more enriching. On our final day, we were thrilled to be able to visit Wescare and practice our literacy skills by reading with the pre-k class. We are so thankful for the Montgomery County Partnership for Children who donated backpacks for each participant, including resource books about how to encourage literacy and language development, as well as books and supplies to assist our babysitters while on the job. We supplemented these bags with things such as first aid kits, flashlights, games, and playdough to make sure that each participant left the workshop with a "go-bag" to make their babysitting adventures truly successful and age-appropriate. At the end of the program, we were able to certify 12 youth as having completed the entire Babysitter's Backpack course. The biggest improvements in learning were reported as understanding how to market themselves for babysitting, understanding the stages of child development, feeling confident in their ability to start their own babysitting business, and understanding how to use positive discipline. On the final evaluation, youth made the following comments: "I will discipline a child positively now", "I will make up more games to play with the kids", and "I will read a book differently now". Although many of our participants had prior babysitting experience, some of them did not. Regardless, all participants can benefit from further opportunities to care for children. As such, we are in the process of planning a Parents' Night Out fundraising activity, where we will invite this group to come back and provide childcare in a chaperoned environment, here at the Extension office while raising money for our 4-H and FCS programs. Although the goal is for the youth to care for the children who attend, there is always a need for adult volunteers. If you would like to find out more or be involved, please email



Rhonda Peters at <u>rtpeters@ncat.edu</u>. Thank you again to Stacey Kerney, Debbi Musika, Myrna Sneed and Wescare for your contributions and partnership with this program.

Senior Salsa Canning

Although we certainly enjoyed our partnership with 4-H during the Summer Adventures series, Family and Consumer Science has stayed busy serving other facets of our community as well. At the end of July, Rhonda worked with Theresa Thomas at the Troy-Montgomery Senior Center to provide a "Senior Salsa Canning" class. We were able to use fresh, local tomatoes and peppers from Christy's Country Produce as the base of our salsa, and combined that with onions, pickling salt, and lemon juice to preserve over 14 pints of "Choice Salsa". Although we had several suggestions for how to alter the recipe to make it tastier, we must remember that when canning food it is absolutely imperative that we follow kitchen-tested, evidence based recipes. After it has been processed, and you open the jars to consume them, it is fine to "doctor" the salsa at that point to adjust for your family's taste buds- but we must always can according to a tested recipe in order to prevent foodborne illness. All clients were satisfied with the training, and indicated increases in their knowledge about the correct steps to process food. We were thrilled that one participant even posted on her own social media page about how much she enjoyed our class! Special thanks to Kayla Shomaker, an Extension Master Food Volunteer, who lent her expertise and assistance.

Family Game Night

Many people think that "play" time is fun but not necessary or important for children or families. However, play is a child's work and is critical for their development. Engaging with children during play time is beneficial for the entire family, as it promotes bonds between siblings, opens the door for sharing of values, increases communication and allows for teachable moments and assists in problem solving. Having regular family game nights is super important for children AND families. As PBS Kids points out, games are good for motor skills - children develop hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills by rolling dice, shuffling cards and moving game pieces – all of which can lead to later success in sports, playing instruments, writing and more. Games can actually lead to better academic success, can help your kids solve problems, and is an excellent opportunity to promote family bonding. Numerous studies have shown that children from families who maintain strong lines of communication through frequent get-togethers like game nights and family dinners enjoy benefits to nearly every aspect of their lives, including: larger vocabularies at age two, higher reading scores in elementary through high school, more motivation in school, better relationships with peers, a more positive perception of the parent-child relationship, and better emotional well-being and life satisfaction. Although many parents are concerned about fixing certain aspects of their child's behavior, research shows time and again that it is imperative that you build the relationship before you work on changing the behavior, especially when you are forming new stepfamilies. Game night is just one way that you can positively build these relationships.

For all of these reasons, we hosted Family Game Night as part of our Summer Adventures series on Friday, July 9th. Ten families came together for a night of board games, fellowship and fun. It was great to see families interacting and laughing without cell phones or other forms of digital engagement. The feedback was clear – they want more family game nights. Even though we encourage them to continue this activity in their own homes, there's also benefit in coming together as a community to share these fun nights. For this reason, we are hoping to sponsor Family Game Night once a quarter moving forward. Our next event will be held Friday, October 1st from 6-8pm. There will be a small charge of \$10 per family to participate in order to provide a light supper and snacks during the event that is due by Monday, September 27th. However, if \$10 will be cost-prohibitive for your family to participate, please contact Rhonda Peters or Tracy Blake to discuss other options. We NEVER want cost to prevent anyone from participating in any of our programs. Pre-registration is required and can be completed at the Family Game Night registration link or accessed directly at go.ncsu.edu/familygamenightoctober2021.











Family Worship Ministries



Elizabeth has continued to excitedly work with the kids at Family Worship Ministries. In July, she worked with two groups of kids aged 5-7 and 9-12, both of which were amazing to work with. Elizabeth used two different curriculums with these groups – GO GLOW GROW for the little kids and Speedway to Healthy with the older. With each of these programs, Elizabeth did a nutrition lesson, review questions, food demonstrations and physical activity. She finished the GO GLOW GROW curriculum in July, but is still working with the Speedway to Healthy curriculum throughout August.

Recipe Round Up



North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Montgomery County Department of Health, and the Partnership for Children are all working together to conduct a "Recipe Round Up." This program urges community members to find and submit healthy recipes every week based on a certain theme. It is hoped that this search for healthy recipes broadens participants understanding of nutrition and increas-



es the variety of tools they have to prepare and consume healthy foods. Two winners are named weekly who each receive a \$50 grocery gift card. As part of this program, Elizabeth does weekly food demonstrations using one of the recipe submissions. This has been a great way for the community to learn and share recipes and be involved with three wonderful agencies. At the end of the six weeks, all recipes will be combined into a digital cookbook showcasing all of the submissions.

Elizabeth's Nutrition Nuggets

Healthy Snacks for Back to School



Kids may know what's healthy, but that doesn't mean they always like healthy foods. You won't win every battle, but these tips could keep their diets a bit healthier. Always include fruit and vegetables, even if it's just cucumber slices or glitter grapes (which are just grapes and sugar free Jello). Make their snacks fun! You do goldfish on one side of a Ziploc baggie and then do strawberries or any type of fruit your child enjoys and put a clothespin in the middle to make a butterfly. Always include dairy or another calcium-rich food,



as kids are building bones, for which calcium is needed. Plain yogurt with frozen blueberries or granola topping is very popular. Switch from white to whole grain bread and pasta, to keep kids feeling full throughout the day. Also, be sure your child has a water bottle with them so they can stay hydrated throughout the day!

Coming Up in FCS in August.....

- August 5th: EYFP Community Event
- August 9th: Facebook Live Weekly Drawing @12:30
- August 17th: Youth and Families Advisory Meeting @ 3:30
- August 18th: Cooking with Extension Accessible through the Troy-Montgomery Senior Center Live Feed on Facebook @ 10:30
- August 19th & 20th Senior Canning Program @1 pm Registration Required
- August 23rd: Facebook Live Celebration and Final Drawing for Recipe Round Up Contest @ 10:30 am
- Fall 2021: Teen Cooking Club Read the article on our webpage to find out more

Don't Forget....

Register for Family Game Night (go.ncsu.edu/familygamenightoctober2021) which will be held on October 1st from 6-8 Complete the Teen Cooking Club Interest Form at go.ncsu.edu/cookingclub if you are interested in participating

To find out more about FCS programs in Montgomery County, visit www.montgomery.ces.ncsu.edu or visit us on Facebook. If you would like to discuss bringing programs to your community, please call Rhonda Peters or Elizabeth Thompson at (910) 576-6011 or email rtpeters@ncat.edu.or eathompson@ncat.edu

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Ask Extension

The North Carolina Cooperative Extension is a service that is meant to help serve the general community, both professionally and personally. If you have questions regarding any topic within Horticulture, Livestock, Family and Consumer Science, or Youth Development please do not hesitate to reach out! The office can be called at 910-576-6011 and your question will be directed to the agent that best fits your category. Emails can also be sent directly to agents that you feel would best know the answer. It is a good idea to include pictures if you have a specific situation at hand. The list of agents can be found at https://montgomerv.ces.ncsu.edu/people/.

STAY UPDATED!!!!!



If you haven't "liked" us or "followed" us on Facebook, take the time to do it today! Our facebook and webpages are updated regularly with news articles, posts, and pictures of current and future programs as well as news you can use. Find us at https://www.facebook.com/North-Carolina-Cooperative-Extension-Montgomery-County-117219574995061/ and on our website www.montgomery.ces.ncsu.edu. If you would like to be added to our email distribution list, please email Kim_Gibson@ncsu.edu

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