

North Carolina Cooperative Extension Montgomery County



From the Director's Desk

February, 2023

Greetings from NC Cooperative Extension – Montgomery County Center. As we near the end of winter, spring keeps tempting us with warmer days. February is the shortest month of the year but tends to be the month where we really begin putting plans for the remainder of the year in motion. My staff is busy making plans for spring and summer programs while wrapping up the programs they began already this year. I can't wait to see all that we accomplish in the coming months! If you are unfamiliar with any of our programs, please stop by and visit us at 203 West Main Street, Troy. We would love to share all that we have to offer with you in person. We hope that you will take the time to read through our newsletter and reach out to us with any questions you may have or register for one of our upcoming programs.

2023 North Carolina Peach Growers Society, Inc. Annual Meeting



The North Carolina Peach Growers Society held their annual meeting on January 24th. The meeting included a list of 10 presenters from North Carolina and beyond that all specialized in topics that would help growers with their business. Professors and researchers from North Carolina State University shared their latest findings with growers so they can stay up to date on current trends and policy shifts. Marketing programs, grant and cost share resources, and updates on farm law, status, and supply chains were shared as well. During lunch, the Peach Growers heard from the 2022-2023 Peach Queen, Ms. Katie Harris (pictured above).

The meetings can be found online on the North Carolina State University Peach Portal under “2022 Annual Meeting Presentations at: <https://peaches.ces.ncsu.edu/>

Collegiate Internship Available

We are hiring a collegiate summer intern to help out with our summer programs in our office! If you are a college student and you are looking for a summer job, please give Chrissy a call at 910-576-6011. I would love to speak with you about this wonderful opportunity to learn more about Cooperative Extension and this internship opportunity.

More information may be found here as well: <https://www.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2023-Montgomery-County-job-description.pdf?fwd=no>

Applications are due by February 17th so don't wait to apply.



Interested in giving back by volunteering in this New Year?

We have begun planning our 4-H Summer Adventures Program and are currently looking for any volunteers who have a special talent, hobby or skill that you would like to share with youth of any age group (between 5 – 18 years old). Maybe you enjoy sewing or budgeting or cake decorating and would be willing to teach little minds to like the same, then we need YOU! Contact our office to share your interests and we will plan a program around your needs.



4-H Happenings in Montgomery County

Miranda Thompson, 4-H Youth Development

2023 Southeast Regional Chicken Project 2023

This month, our group of Montgomery County 4-Her's that will be participating in the 2023 Southeast Regional Chicken Project met.



Youth learned all about their chicks that will be arriving in February, how to care for them, and what is expected from the Regional Chicken Show in April. During the presentation, Tracy Blake, Montgomery County Livestock Agent shared with youth all about how to brood young chicks, the types of chickens, the eggs they lay, and what to plan for as the chicks grow.

Miranda Thompson, Montgomery County 4-H Agent discussed with the youth the requirements for the project and how to get started on documenting their experience. This group will meet again multiple times throughout



the next four months to make sure youth are meeting all the requirements and their chickens are thriving.

We are so excited for this group of youth and all that they will learn!

a great experience for our youth to lead their table groups and take ownership in helping others within the community. The meals that were packaged will be sent to local food pantries within Montgomery County.



Grow Our Own with Tillery Charter Academy

Kindergarten students at Tillery Charter Academy have been learning all about parts of a plant. After this unit they wrapped up with a special lesson to review all they knew about plants, read a story about a boy that grows a "monster" plant, and then got to plant their own seeds! Students were excited to share their knowledge with our agents to show mastery of what they learned within the unit in their classroom. This was a fantastic opportunity for students, as well as for the teachers to informally assess their students' knowledge. We hope to see some updated photos soon of their "monster" plants.



Martin Luther King Jr. "Day On" Challenge



Youth Leadership Montgomery along with many other volunteers joined the annual MLK "Day On" Challenge this

year to complete community service. On this day youth and adult volunteers packaged over 10,000 meals in under three hours. This day of service is a part of the requirements for Youth Leadership Montgomery. This was



Family & Consumer Sciences Updates

Rhonda Peters, FCS Agent

Elizabeth Thompson, Nutrition Educator

Did you make a New Year's Resolution this year? According to ABC news, the top 5 resolutions were as follows: (1) Exercise More, (2) Eat Healthier, (3) Lose Weight, (4) Save More Money, and (5) Spend more time with family and friends. Interestingly enough, all five of these top resolutions are programmatic goals for Family and Consumer Science. And although research will also tell you that most people fail their resolutions by February, we are here to remind you and encourage you to stick with it! The term "resolution" means a firm decision to do (or not do) something. Remember, that most of these goals require changes in your entire lifestyle habits. You didn't make bad habits overnight and you can't fix them overnight either. So even if you've already slipped on your goals, set your resolve again, and let's work on getting stronger and healthier together. It doesn't have to be January to determine you want better for yourself. Get involved in any of the FCS and Nutrition Education programs we have to offer. If you want something offered in your local community or group, all you have to do is reach out to us, and we're happy to discuss it with you! One step in front of the other – let's keep conquering our goals!!

LIFT at the Troy-Montgomery Senior Center



We are thrilled to have started Lifelong Improvements Through Fitness Together again at the Senior Center. Participants started the series with a pre-

program assessment and have already completed six of the sixteen classes. One participant also does physical therapy and told her therapist that she was planning to quit the LIFT program because she wasn't getting out of it what she'd like. The therapist replied to her, "Oh yes you are! You're range of motion has already improved by two points!" And that was in just two weeks. This is just one success that we've seen with this program. Others are reporting feeling stronger, being more willing to try new things, and being excited to participate in class. So far, we have a total enroll-

ment of 21, with an average attendance of 16. With this series, we are also heavily emphasizing the nutrition component in addition to being physically active. The ladies in the group have talked about their favorite

fruits and

vegetables, have been tracking their nutritional intake, and are gathering healthy recipes to combine into a LIFT cookbook. They have even sampled some nutritious

recipes – such as Glitter Grapes. We are excited to see this group progress and meet and/or exceed their personal goals.



Financial Literacy Education



It was our distinct pleasure to partner with Communities In

Schools Montgomery County to once again implement Real Money. Real World at Montgomery Central High School in November 2022 and Montgomery County Early College in January 2023. As part of this program, all students are randomly assigned a career and corresponding salary, a family size, and an amount of credit card or student loan debt. They are then tasked with visiting 14 different stations staffed by community and school volunteers where they have to make decisions about how to spend their money. Booths include things like Housing – where students decide if they want to rent or own, and where booth volunteers discuss the advantages of each and help students think through which is best for the current financial situation. Another booth is transportation – students may really want the nice sports car, but they also may realize that their budget may not allow for that. Other booths include things

such as food, health and wellness, entertainment, insurance, communications, child care, charitable contributions and chance. Students are always amazed at how much the real world costs and how expensive it is to have children. Although we never want youth to think having children is a bad thing, we DO want them to think through their decisions and plan for children at a time where they may be more prepared to raise and pay for them.



Self-reported evaluation data shows that students increased understanding in all major areas of the program: the costs to care for a child; to maintaining a household; the importance of having a spending and savings plan; that regular savings really add up; and that the level and type of a person's education greatly affects the type of job they will get and their earning potential. 74%



of students said that following this program they are "very likely" to think through how their spending impacts other opportunities and choices. 60% of students are "very likely" to get more training or education after high school. 76% stated

they were very likely to have a plan for money that includes both needs and wants. Improvements in participant understanding were highest in the areas of the costs to care for a child, learning how to make wise financial decisions, asking questions before making purchases, having a spending plan to meet various living expenses, the costs to maintain a household, and the importance of having a savings and spending plan. 76% of students reported that they believe that participating in RMRW gave them a better idea of what is involved in earning, spending, and managing money. 70% of students believe that participating will help them in the future. Twenty four students commented (in open ended questions) that money goes by too fast - "you can easily use it all up without even thinking!" One student said, "I understand now why my parents struggle so much to make ends meet." Students also commented on plans to make change in their personal spending habits, "I now realize how

much I waste on entertainment". Another student said, "I'm gonna stop putting my wants over my needs." This highly effective and eye-opening experience is helping students learn the importance of budgeting and prioritizing education and solid jobs.



Through recruitment efforts of both North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Communities In Schools Montgomery County, and both schools, we were able to secure more than 60 volunteers, donating a combined total of over 300 hours. That equates to over \$5000 of in-kind support. We absolutely cannot do this program without these fabulous volunteers, and we are so thankful for each and every one of them.

First Grade at Star Elementary

In addition to Real Money, Real World, we also worked with first graders at Star Elementary School in January. These students learned about producers and consumers, the difference in needs and wants, and the importance of not wasting money. They learned the 3 S's of financial literacy – save, share and then spend. After the interactive lesson, each student had "earned" \$5 for working



hard being respectful, attentive and engaged. Of that \$5, they had to put \$1 in their savings accounts or piggy bank, and they had to share \$1 with a

teacher. They had to prioritize nutrition as a need, and had to spend their next dollar purchasing a fruit of their choice. That left them with two dollars they could spend at the "4-H Store" where they were able to choose water, juice, a snack or a pencil. At the end of the program, all students could tell the difference in needs and wants and explain why it was important to save money and not waste it. This valuable information is important to learn at a young age so it will become a part of their decision making process as they grow up and become adults.



Go, Glow, Grow

Elizabeth (Nutrition Educator) finished Go Glow Grow at Green Ridge and Troy Elementary Schools with all Pre-K classes. Elizabeth is starting up Go Glow Grow with 1st grade classes at Green Ridge Elementary School on February 1st. Heightened childhood obesity rates continue to be a concern across the nation and the state of North Carolina. According to the 2020 Montgomery Community Health Assessment compiled by the Montgomery County Department of Public Health, 49% of public schools in the county are either overweight, obese, or extremely obese. Encouraging healthy eating and ample physical activity during the preschool years will have long-term benefits. Through the Go, Glow, Grow curriculum, preschool-2nd grade learn to make the connection between eating healthy foods and beginning to live healthy!



Upcoming Opportunities

Elizabeth has been invited to the LoveJoy Women's group on February 13th to do a one shot program with our LIFT program to see if they will be interested in participating in the 8-week session meeting two times a week. LIFT is NOT a weight-loss program but instead focuses on building strength, flexibility and balance. Research proves that these three things are imperative for senior adults especially, to help them age in place and be able to complete everyday activities. For adults of any age, this program helps to achieve the recommended number of minutes spent in strength training activities. Additionally, the nutrition component of this program encourages participants to prioritize the consumption of more fruits and vegetables. We are excited to see how this meeting goes!

In addition, Rhonda is working with Save the Children to implement Go, Glow, Grow at Head Start. If all goes well, the program will start in Candor in February and continue through March. We are excited to reach a group that we haven't worked with previously!



Elizabeth's Nutrition Nuggets

The ultimate in simplicity, this recipe calls for chicken and cream of chicken soup. Pair it with a salad, or roasted mixed vegetables for a colorful dinner. Even better, 2-step around the kitchen while it is heating up, getting some physical activity while you cook!

Two Step Chicken

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 2 Boneless chicken breasts
- 1 can cream of chicken soup (10 ounces)
- 1/2 cup water

Directions:

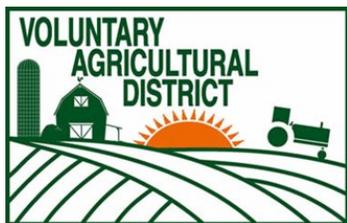
1. Heat oil in a skillet at a medium-high setting.
2. Add chicken and cook for ten minutes.
3. Remove chicken from pan and set aside.
4. Stir the soup and water together in the skillet and heat it to a boil.
5. Return the chicken to the skillet. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for an additional 10 minutes, or until the chicken reaches an internal temperature of 165° F.



Agricultural Updates

Tracy Blake, Livestock/Field Crops

Protecting Farmland in Montgomery County



At the January board meeting of the Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD), four farms were accepted into the program, which will protect an additional 461.1 acres of farmland in Montgomery County. The Voluntary Agricultural district is a program in which farmers agree to keep their land in agricultural use to protect that land for future generations. We are proud to have 2486.1 acres in the VAD.

Helping Local Farmers Embrace Technology

Last year Montgomery County Extension did a program called “Better Business Practices for Farmers & Growers.” The program emphasized utilizing technology to grow your business.



[Reynelito Farm](#) & [Haywood Farms](#) made the decision to begin their digital journey in 2023 by creating their own websites and getting verified on Google. The websites are still a work in progress, but Extension can help! Farmers can make an appointment to come to our office and walk through the process. Call 910-576-6011.

Partnering with Animal Control

Montgomery County employees work together to serve our citizens. When animal control received a phone call about two donkeys loose in the town limits of Mt. Gilead, Extension was there to help. Through a partnership between our agencies and the help of a local farmer, we were able to secure the donkeys and get them to a safe foster situation. We encourage citizens that may be experiencing hardship to call

our office or animal control for assistance before deciding to turn them loose. If your livestock escape, we also encourage you to call. We are here to help. Loose livestock are hazardous to humans and other animals in our county. To report loose livestock call animal control at (910) 572-3067 or for livestock support contact Extension at 910-576-6011.



New Farmers Market in Biscoe



The Town of Biscoe is seeking produce growers, certified meat handlers, artisans, and certified bakers to form a farmer's market. Interested vendors should contact Delana Cagle

delana_cagle@townofbiscoe.com for more information and plan to attend an interest meeting on Monday, February 27th at 6PM at Biscoe Town Hall.



2023 Cattlemen Conferences: Save the Dates

[NC State Cattlemen's Conference](#): February 24-25

[Piedmont Cattlemen's Conference](#): March 24 (Tour local farms!)

Beef Field Day: March 18

The Montgomery County Cattlemen will meet on **Tuesday, February 14th at 6:30PM**. A representative of Norwood Stockyard will be speaking. Anyone interested in becoming part of the Montgomery Cattlemen's, contact Tracy Blake at 910-576-6011.



Need your hay, feed, or forage tested for nutritional value? Soil testing? NC Cooperative Extension & NCDA partner to offer this service. Test now, to save time and money later! Call 910-576-6011.



The next Montgomery County Beekeepers Meeting will be held **February 16 at 6:00PM** at MCC. The speaker this month will be Bryan Fisher from Concord speaking on "Beekeeping Hacks."

4-H Youth Livestock Club

The January meeting of the 4-H Livestock Club was attended by 76 youth and parents! We are thrilled to see this club grow and watch our youth become more involved in shows, contests, and state level activities. The January meeting was held at Montgomery Sheep Farm. Join us for the February Meeting, tentatively scheduled for Saturday, February 11. We will be going to a local goat farm that produces show quality goats. Call 910-576-6011 for more information.

**Links of Interest:**

The Visit NC Farms App (Download Today!): <https://www.visitncfarmstoday.com/>

Meatsuite a direct-to-consumer meat app! <https://www.meatsuite.com/>

Livestock Newsletter: <https://montgomery.ces.ncsu.edu/livestock-newsletter/>

NC Horse Blog: <http://nchorse.blogspot.com/>

Farms Food & You Podcast (Building a Community Garden) <https://cals.ncsu.edu/farms-food-and-you/>



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

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://montgomery.ces.ncsu.edu/people/>.



Check out our current videos by visiting

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOIPmzMobAJoawefJK_ldzA

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