

February, 2024

From the Director's Desk

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.

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/internships/>

Applications are due by February 21st so don't wait to apply.



Meet Your New Livestock and Field Crops Agent



My name is Emi Briggs. I am so excited to be joining NC Cooperative Extension of Montgomery County. I grew up in the agricultural world and have a love for livestock, growing things and bees. I am an avid equestrian and enjoy the outdoors. Please feel free to contact me at 910-576-6011, email me at Emi_Briggs@ncsu.edu, drop me a letter in the mail or swing by the office to chat. I look forward to serving our community and helping the community as much as I can.



4-H Youth Development

Our 4-H club members are working hard on their project record books which are due on February 26th to the Extension Office. Our 4-H Teens will attend the South Central District Teen Retreat at Millstone 4-H Camp in March. Youth will elect new district officers, will participate in the district skit competition, leadership and citizenship workshops, and will complete a community service project while there.

2024 Summer Adventures

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 Chrissy Haynes to share your interests and we will plan a program around your needs.

We are also currently recruiting youth to attend Overnight Camp at Millstone 4-H Camp. Montgomery County youth receive a very large discount by registering to attend with our group of campers due to generous donations of business owners and community members in our county. We are so thankful for their continued support. If you are interested in sending your child to camp with us this year, please give Chrissy a call and let her know. Spaces are limited and fill up fast. Overnight camp dates are July 7th – 12th.

For more information regarding 4-H programming in Montgomery County, please contact Chrissy Haynes at (910) 576-6011 or by email at chrissy_haynes@ncsu.edu

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



How Resolute are Your Resolutions?

It seems like every new year, people make resolutions for some type of self-improvement. Perhaps you made some yourselves at the start of the year.

Most of the time, by February, those resolutions seem to have faded into the distant memory as quickly as they were made. Which makes one wonder... why do people make them in the first place? Some people would say they make them because they honestly want to be better, or because they want something different for this year than they had last year. Many of us NEED to make health improvements, but making a resolution isn't going to make the change we need. We have to be resolute in our goal. According to the dictionary, resolution means "to be firm in a decision to do or not do something." So, how can we be more resolute in our health improvement? We need to make (and stick) to a plan that will work. And even if you've already messed up, you can still get back on track! Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Be realistic. Don't choose a health goal that you can't possibly achieve. For example, although many of us would like to lose weight, losing 100 pounds may not be realistic. Definitely not by Easter.
- Determine steps you need to take to achieve your goal. If your goal is to lose weight, some steps you might need to take include eating more fruits and vegetables, getting more exercise, and reducing or eliminating less healthy foods from your diet.
- Make a plan to meet those steps. We can't just say we need to eat more fruits and veggies. Build a weekly plan where you intentionally add extra fruit and veggies to every meal and snack. That means we have to actually think about it BEFORE we get hungry. Many times we eat out of habit or convenience. Be sure you plan for healthy foods before you go to the store. After all, you can't eat healthy foods if they're not in your house.
- Don't give up if you mess up. If it's February, and you've already fallen off the wagon, it doesn't mean you have no hope. We all have

setbacks and times we don't succeed. Allow yourself grace to know that if you didn't meet your goal in January, you can try it again now, in February. Don't give up just because you slipped up.

- Ask for help or support from your friends and family. Tell them your goals are important to you, and ask them to help you be accountable staying on the right path, or better yet, ask them to join you! Exercising with friends and family is so much more fun than doing it by yourself.
- Reward yourself! When you've done well, take time to be proud of yourself and reward yourself for your hard work.

And don't forget, your Family and Consumer Science team is here to help support you along your health, nutrition and wellness goals. We have already been hard at work in 2024 sharing nutrition education and financial literacy education with community members. Keep reading for some monthly highlights.

LIFT

(Lifelong Improvements through Fitness Together)



Once again, we have partnered with the Troy-Montgomery Senior Center to implement the LIFT program, which focuses on improving strength, flexibility, and balance. This program is NOT a weight loss program, but does help participants gain the confidence to exercise at home. Our Nutrition Educator and FCS Agent work together to lead the program, which focuses on teaching and practicing eight core exercises and supplementing with valuable nutrition education. The program encourages participants to log their daily fruit and vegetable intake, as well as their minutes of physical activity. The simple act of daily record keeping has been shown to help motivate people to make healthier decisions. As an evidence-based program, we focus on documentation of progress and results during the program. We begin before the program starts by doing physical assessments of every participant. These assessments include very basic exercises that then provide a baseline for comparison of results at the end of the program. February 1 marked our 8th session of the 16 session series. Participants are already sharing that they feel stronger and have more balance. Stay tuned for more results!!!!



Real Money, Real World

We are thrilled to have continued our partnership with Communities In Schools Montgomery County to implement the Real Money, Real World financial literacy program with Montgomery County Early College. Together, we recruited 49 community volunteers to serve in various booths. 286 ninth through twelfth grade students participated in the event, and were assigned a specific career and salary, as well as family size. Participants then had to visit 14 booths and make spending decisions related to monthly expenses (transportation, food, child care, housing, insurance, etc.) 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. The greatest knowledge improvements were seen in the costs to maintain a household, the importance of having

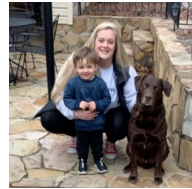


ing a spending and savings plan, that regular savings really add up, and the realization that asking questions before making purchases leads to better choices.

79% of students said that they are very likely to think through how their spending impacts other opportunities and choices; have a plan for money that includes both needs and wants. 63% of students plan to open a savings account, and 63% also plan to think about how their spending impacts other people. 85% of students indicated belief that participation in this program would help them in the future, and 81% indicated belief that participation gave them a better idea of what is involved in earning, spending, and managing money. One student shared that as a result of this program, they "plan to stop putting money into useless things so I can use that money for things I need." Another student shared, "I'm going to focus on my needs more than my wants from now on." Students were also impacted by the stress of financial management. One stated, "Life can be stressful when you can't make ends meet." Another shared "I don't know how my parents do this every day. They make it look so easy." One student also shared, "following this program, I realize that it is important for me personally to be financially stable before I have children."

Go, Glow, Grow

The Go, Glow, Grow nutrition program focuses on teaching healthy nutrition habits to our littlest of friends – those in Pre-K. Our FCS team has a goal of reaching every single student in Pre-K in Montgomery County each school year. We have completed the Go, Glow, Grow series at Green Ridge Elementary, Troy Elementary, and Star Elementary. In January, we kicked off the program at Candor Elementary and Mt. Gilead Elementary. Plans are underway to begin working with Family Worship Ministries and Wescare in March. We hope to also be in Troy Head Start and Kountry Kids in early spring. This program focuses on teaching MyPlate and helping kids recognize healthy choices. Every session includes a food demonstration, a learning activity, and a bilingual parent newsletter which is sent home weekly. The program is conducted once a week for six weeks. Teachers consistently report being overall very satisfied with the program, it meeting the core educational standards for Pre-K, and that students look forward to the lessons. Teachers also report students talking about healthy foods and being more likely to try new foods. One parent recently shared with us that her child (after having participated in the program) tried more things at home and now often asks if the food they are eating at home is healthy. We hope to get more parent feedback as the program continues in Montgomery County.



Elizabeth's Healthy Recipe Corner

Cooking Live with Extension

As we hope you know, we partner monthly with the Troy-Montgomery Senior Center to conduct a virtual "Cooking Live" program using the Facebook Live platform. It is held the fourth Wednesday of every month beginning at 10:30 am. To tune in, navigate to the Troy-Montgomery Senior Center Facebook page and the demonstration is held live. However, if you cannot join at that time, you can always watch the video at your convenience, as well as those done in the past. In January, we demonstrated how to prepare "Applesauce French Toast".

Applesauce French Toast

Ingredients

- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup milk (nonfat or 1%)
- 2 teaspoons sugar (white)
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/4 cup applesauce (unsweetened)
- 6 slices whole wheat bread



Steps

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine eggs, milk, cinnamon, sugar, vanilla and applesauce. Mix well.
2. Soak bread one slice at a time until mixture is slightly absorbed.
3. Lightly spray or oil a skillet or griddle. Cook over medium heat until golden brown on both sides.
4. Serve hot.
5. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Upcoming Programs

We are excited to launch two new programs in Montgomery County this spring. Beginning in February, we will pilot "Organ Wise Guys" with two second grade classes at Troy Elementary School. We are also hoping to pilot "Bingocize" with senior adults in the Brutonville Community. Our goal is to expand that to other classrooms and communities after successful implementation in these initial endeavors. Both of these SNAP-ED programs are designed to help participants learn and make healthy nutrition and physical activity choices.

Agricultural Updates

Owen Washam, Horticulture & Forestry

Emi Briggs, Livestock & Field Crops

Flora Fridays:

Flora Friday articles are uploaded regularly to our website. Check often for articles on plants and trees of interest in Montgomery County. In the most recent edition, winter gardening tips were presented. January and February are good months to begin planning for the upcoming growing season, as well as starting seeds and thoughtful pruning. Read more by going to: <https://montgomery.ces.edu/florafridays/>.



(photo credit: [Lucy Bradley](#))

Winter Wildflower Workshop:

On Saturday, January 20, Owen Washam taught a class on sowing native pollinator plant seeds. Participants learned how ecologically beneficial the selected seeds were, and how to grow native plants in a way where nature does most of the work. Wildflower species common to our area were available for participants to plant using kits purchased from Extension.



Caption: Participant planting native wildflower seeds that support pollinators

Southeast Regional Fruit & Vegetable Conference

The regional conference was held in Savannah, GA from January 10 -14. Owen Washam was asked to attend and represent Montgomery County. He participated in agent training for conducting research variety trials with farmers and agencies. If you are a grower wanting to collaborate on horticultural variety trials, please express your interest to Owen by calling or emailing him at owen_washam@ncsu.edu.

NC STATE EXTENSION

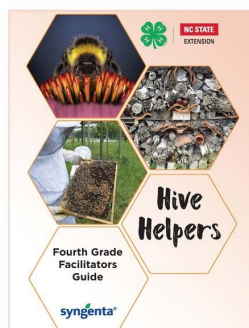
Master Gardener | Montgomery County

The Volunteers (EMGVs) met for a business meeting on January 8, approving revised bylaws and collecting dues for the new year. Members signed up for various committees, and began planning for their flagship event - the annual plant sale. This year, the sale will be held on a Friday and Saturday in May.

EMGV students began their 40 hour Initial Training on January 8. Each 2 hour class impresses horticultural theory and best management practices, training students to be community sources of expertise in gardening and plants. At the conclusion of Initial Training, students will demonstrate their knowledge gained through a final exam. When passed, students are promoted to Interns and authorized to volunteer under supervision of Certified EMGVs. Interns must apply their knowledge as an Intern prior to graduating to Certified status. Three cheers to this enthusiastic, dedicated group of new students!

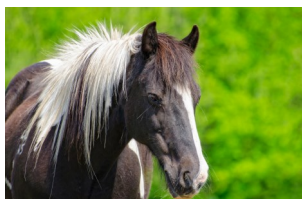
Hive Helpers

This month I was blessed with the chance to teach Hive Helpers to Star Elementary fourth grade students: We did four lessons. The first lesson went over where bees live and what



they eat. The second lesson went over bee anatomy. The third lesson went over different types of bees and their life cycle. The last lesson was on bee homes. We had a lot of fun learning that bees are helpful, not hurtful.

Equine Spring Vaccinations



It's time to get on your veterinarians book for spring shots for your horse and pull their annual coggins testing.

While it is not quite

spring, vets can book several weeks out and you want your equine friends protected. Spring shots and coggins are vital to the herd immunity and prevention of communicable disease. A coggins test is a blood test that looks for Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA). Typically horses have no symptoms, but they are infected for life and it is highly contagious.

Montgomery County Beekeepers Association



The Beekeepers meet the third Thursday each month from 6-8pm in the multipurpose room at MCC. On January 18, the group met for a covered dish meal and presentations. Wade Turner, regional director for the State association, visited to promote State membership and biannual meetings. The meal was followed by a presentation from a multigenerational beekeeper, Nic Halchin of Halchin Hives in Mebane NC. Nic manages over 200 hives and discussed from experience, month by month, suggested tasks for beekeepers to keep hives healthy and productive.

Bryan Fisher will be presenting "Beekeeping Hacks to Save Time and Money" on February 15th from 6-8 pm in the MCC multipurpose room.

If you are interested in attending future meetings or learning more about the group, please contact Emi Briggs at Emi_Briggs@ncsu.edu.

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Montgomery County Cattlemen Association

The Montgomery County Cattlemen will meet on Tuesday, February 13th at 6:30 PM at the Ag Center located at 200 Glen Rd. Troy, NC.



The 72nd Annual NC Cattlemen's Conference Hickory Metro Convention Center - Hickory, NC February 23 - 24, 2024. Please go to <https://www.nccattle.com/news-events/annual-conference> for registration information.

Anyone interested in becoming part of the Montgomery County Cattlemen's, contact Emi Briggs at emi_briggs@ncsu.edu or by calling 910-576-6011.

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 (Keeping the Bees Buzzing)



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

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

Ask Extension

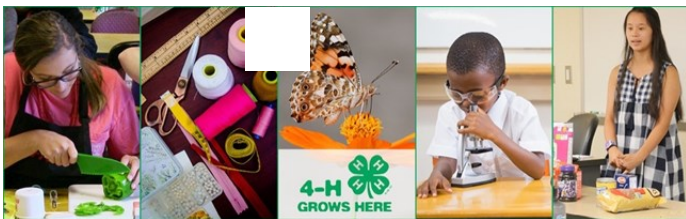
The North Carolina Cooperative Extension is a service that is meant to help serve the general community, both professionally and personally. If you have questions regarding any topic within Horticulture, Livestock, Family and Consumer Science, or Youth Development please do not hesitate to reach out! 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



Staff Directory



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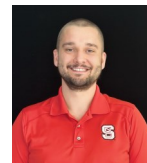
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