According to data USA, as of 2017, Martin County had a median household income of only 29,000 and a poverty rate of almost 30%. These numbers are well below the Kentucky and national averages of 46,000 and 57,000 respectively. Poverty rates for all of Kentucky are 18% and 11% nationally. All schools in Martin County qualify for the national free lunch program. These statistics alone provide barriers for youth in Martin County to have a great quality of life. When problems with infrastructure, clean water and drug abuse are added, these barriers grow even more.

Because of all the hardships youth struggle with to get quality experiences, it is important that 4-H does everything we can to provide these kids with positive experiences. One way we do this is with 4-H camp. Youth gain multiple benefits from 4-H camp experiences in the areas of leadership, character development, self esteem, decision-making skills, independent living skills and citizenship. As illustrated above, most families cannot afford to pay over $200 for 4-H camp. Martin County 4-H works hard to raise money throughout the year to raise money to pay for
potential campers. With fundraising efforts and help from the district board, we were able to pay for 50 campers this summer. This allowed us to take a Martin County record 63 campers. This is up 78% from 2004 when Joe Maynard first started as an agent.

As a result, 100% of the campers experienced hands on learning from caring adults, gain leadership, independent living, citizenship and decision-making skills. They also gained character and self esteem.

**POP Club-Farmers’ Market**

The Martin County Farmers’ Market participated in the POP Club Program, *Power of Produce*.

Children ages 4-14 were eligible to participate in the program. The kids received $2.00 each with the opportunity of receiving more by trying a yummy, nutritious Plate It Up snack. POP vouchers were used to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at the Farmers’ Market.

The POP Program was very successful with 177 kids purchasing 664 pounds of produce from the Farmers’ Market. The kids also participated in fun activities and had the opportunity to taste and explore new foods.

**Superstar Chef**

According to US Census estimates for 2016, an estimate of 3,993 residents of Martin County lived in poverty and 1,207 being children. Child poverty typically results in food insecurity. Food insecure children do not have access to nutritious foods, like fruits and vegetables.

To help combat this issue, the Martin County Family & Consumer Sciences Program partnered with the Nutrition Education Program to implement Superstar Chef. This was a 3-day program teaching children from ages 9-12 years to choose healthier foods and prepare them. The recipes used were inexpensive and ingredients are available at local grocery stores.

Overall, there were 13 students, both male and female attend this program. The post-test comparisons showed that the program enhanced understanding of the nutrition concepts covered in the 3-day program. Self-efficacy of the participants also increased from 32.15 to 34.85. The post-test also included 7 self-assessments of participants intentions to make healthy nutrition choices and be more physically active. After attending the program, all respondents (100%) reported they can identify healthy foods, and that they plan to drink more water every day, eat more fruits, and be more active. Also, 92% plan to drink less sugary beverages, eat more vegetables, and try new foods.
Grow Appalachia

The Martin County Extension Service works with The Grow Appalachia organization and together they address food insecurity for families focused on organic gardening practices. The Grow Appalachia program has successfully created opportunities for fresh produce to be grown and used/preserved by families in the program.

This program allowed the Extension Service to assist twenty-three families to produce and preserve food produced from their gardens. Many of these families could not have had a garden without the help from the grant.

Classes have been offered to the group from planning the garden to preserving the food with most expenses covered by the grant.

We have been approved for the Grow Appalachia grant for 2020. If you are interested in participating in the project or know someone that is interested, please contact the Martin County Cooperative Extension Office.

Conquering Healthy Habits at Eden Elementary 3rd Grade

According to the 2016 data from the U.S. Census Bureau Small Area and Income Poverty Estimates, Child Poverty in Kentucky was 24.4% with 3,993 Martin County residents living in poverty, 1,207 of those being children under the age of 18.

To help address this issue, The Martin County Cooperative Extension Nutrition Education Program partnered with 3rd grade Eden Elementary students and teachers to increase their fruit and vegetable consumption, increase physical activity, and how to better budget their food dollars by cost/food brand comparison. The Supplemental Nutrition Education Program Assistant offered a 6-session series called Literacy, Eating, and Activity for Primary (LEAP). Each week’s topic centered on an educational book along with a healthy snack and activity targeting their age group.

Overall, the program educated 4 students. As a result, 825 increased their vegetable consumption, 895 improved regarding handwashing and hygiene and 80% increased their physical activity, and 93% improved safe food handling procedures, and 100% improved their abilities to chose healthier food options. Post evaluations revealed the following positive changes, “Every time you come to school, I have to go to the store so
Learning Healthier Habits at the Inez First Baptist Food Drop

Kentucky Health Facts states that Senior Citizens 65 years of age and above live below the poverty level, at 17% Martin County is higher than the Kentucky State average of 11%. To help combat hunger in this age group, Inez First Baptist Church has a monthly food distribution called Food Drop.

Martin County Supplemental Nutrition Education Program Partnered with Inez First Baptist Food Drop to offer a 7-week program to 12 participants to teach hands on, nutrition education to a limited resource senior audience focused on buying and preparing healthy foods, developing cooking skills, adopting new healthy lifestyle behaviors, food safety, managing SNAP resources, and the importance of physical activity.

As a result of this program, 100% of participants showed improvement in one or more diet quality indicators, 100% of participants showed improvement in one or more physical activity behaviors, 100% of participants showed improvements in food safety practices, and 10% of participants showed improvements in one or more food resource management practices. In addition, two of the participants are now volunteers to the Supplemental Nutrition Education Assistant in Adult and Youth Programs.

“A garden requires patient labor and attention. Plants do not grow merely to satisfy ambitions or to fulfill good intentions. They thrive because someone expended effort on them.”
- David Hobson, author

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Extension At a Glance

- 45 Number of producers who can accurately identify agricultural food products that extend beyond the growing season.
- 75 Number of participants engaged in home and consumer horticulture programming.
- 150 Number of participants gaining access to Extension programming at local farmers’ markets.
- 150 Number of people reporting improved lifestyles through a focus on proper nutrition, disease and injury reduction and comprehensive health maintenance.
- 50 Number of individuals more likely to buy a Kentucky fruit or vegetable as a result of tasting a Plate It Up! Recipe card.
- 70 Number of individuals who reported eating more healthy foods.
- 600 Number of youth who apply the skills learned in 4-H and in other activities at home, school or in the community.
- 600 Number of youth who understand the role of agriculture in the production of food and fiber.
- 600 Number of youth that report feeling good about themselves.
- 600 Number of youth that report making healthy lifestyle choices.

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It Starts With Us.
Healthy Families. Healthy Homes.
Healthy Communities.