



EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE

Changing Lives

IN Graves COUNTY

Extension provides practical education you can trust by helping individuals, families, businesses, and communities solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future.



Left to Right: Kelly Mathis, Samantha Anderson, Tracey Tashjian

County Extension Agents Tracey Tashjian and Sam Anderson with office management assistance from Staff Support member, Kelly Mathis, work together to serve the citizens of Graves County. Every four years, members of the County Extension Council meet to develop strategies for improving the lives of families, youth and individuals through the Plan of Work. Each year this plan is reevaluated and may be revised to ensure that the most current needs of the community are being addressed.

Graves County's plan of work includes key issues such as promoting environmental education, developing necessary skills for success in life, promoting leadership and personal development, promoting financial literacy, making healthy lifestyle choices and improving agricultural profitability. If you are interested in serving on the County Extension Council, the Graves County Extension Office needs you. Please contact our office at 270.247.2334 for more information.

Program Efforts

Please insert up to 10 Program Indicators in this section. Be sure to include a good mixture of indicators, reflecting all program areas. It is preferred that you utilize program indicators that include significant numbers from your county. Examples may include:

- **261** Number of producers who reported saving money or reducing cost of operation
- **1659** Number of youth who apply the skills learned in 4-H and in other activities at home, school or in the community
- **803** Number of individuals actively engaged in collaboration and programs that build community capacity to nurture families
- **963** Number of participants gaining access to Extension programming at local farmers markets
- **2104** Number of individuals reporting improved personal and interpersonal leadership skills
- **1568** Number of individuals reporting an increase in knowledge, opinions, skills or aspirations in the visual arts.

4-H/Youth Development

Youth shine in the kitchen with Super Star Chef

Studies show that children who help cook at home are more likely to enjoy fruits and veggies than those who do not cook. This summer, the Graves County Extension 4-H program offered twenty junior 4-H'ers the opportunity to work with University of Kentucky SNAP Ed interns and learn how to sauté, dice, chop, roast and whip! The 9 to 12 year olds gained hands-on cooking experience and were introduced to new foods and recipes as they prepare healthy dishes, including fresh salsa, fruity parfaits, tasty veggie pizza, and oven-baked calzones. During the three-day program, participants learned cooking skills, how to make healthy choices while tasting new recipes, and gained confidence in the kitchen. Level of skill in the kitchen and student goals varied. Some children wanted to learn to make an after-school snack and others had dreams of becoming a professional chef. However, everyone had a great time. Students sampled the recipes and were encouraged to continue using the skills they learned at home. 4-H programs are geared toward "learning by doing" and by providing children the opportunity to learn these valuable life skills while being exposed to healthy habits that will help them grow into healthy adults. Extension is helping build a community of healthier individuals.

Another successful year for the Future City Engineering Team.



Future City Team members (L to R – Maddie Alderdice, Kayla Aldridge, Lexie Mathis, Jenna Shupe, Connor Thomas)

Future City is a nationally sponsored, project-based learning program and competition for 6th, 7th, and 8th graders that places its student competitors in real world situations and asks them to be the problem solvers as they brainstorm ideas and design solutions. Each year, teams are

challenged to imagine, research, design, and build a city that will exist at least 100 years in the future. This year's theme, "The Age Friendly City," required students to envision an urban environment that keeps older adults active, engaged, and independent while incorporating engineering ideas that would revitalize their city's economy, reduce crime, promote safety, improve the environment, and enhance civic engagement.

Students began working in June to present their vision of the future through a virtual city design (using SimCity software); a 1,500-word city essay; a scale model of their city (built with recycled materials); a presentation along with a question/answer session with a panel of STEM professionals. After much research, the team decided to base their city around hemp and its benefits for the environment and the aging population. In October, the group travelled to Eastern Kentucky to learn about hemp production through tours, arranged by Anderson, and interviews of individuals directly involved in the industry. Students applied this knowledge in writing the essay for the contest. At the Regional Event posed as "The Golden Girls," the team presented their 7-minute skit, placing first in the region of forty-six teams and receiving a \$500 cash prize from the American Association of Retired Persons for the AARP Excellence Award and Best Essay among sixty teams.

The team returned from the 2018 National Future City Competition in Washington, D.C. receiving the award for Best Use of Materials. The highlight of the trip was a meeting set up by Anderson, Graves County Ag Agent with D.C. Hemp Lobbyist, Ben Droz. The team also met with the staff assistants of Senator Rand Paul, Representative Thomas Massie, and Representative Andy Barr to offer their support for hemp legislation from the knowledge gained after eight months of research. While in D.C., they toured the Capitol, Senate and House Galleries and numerous historical landmarks. The trip was a non-stop five days crammed with tours, competition and fun.

Future City students serve as guest speakers for Kentucky Society of Professional Engineers

Upon returning from Nationals in D.C. The Future City team was invited to present to present their Future City Engineering Project at the annual meeting of the Kentucky Society of Professional Engineers in Owensboro, Kentucky. Future City was one of four engineering projects and the only middle school program sought out to promote the

future of engineering to today's engineers. The team provided a seven-minute presentation before over one hundred and fifty engineers from all over Kentucky and other states including Ohio, Tennessee and Indiana. The event provided an opportunity to promote Extension and highlight the skills that 4-H teach in a non-traditional setting to a captive audience. After their presentation, the engineers visited with the girls over the course of an hour and comments were made including, "The girls are very well-spoken for middle school aged children", "These are the 'soft skills' that we are looking for in the engineers we hire." A number of the group collectively stated that after seeing the Graves County group they "felt better about the future of our nation and engineering". One engineer in particular approached the agent with a story of his own engineering firm. He stated that after watching the team's presentation he was excited to see an organization teaching skills that would be useful in the work world.

Agriculture & Natural Resources

In 2018, the Graves County Agricultural Development Council administered fourteen CAIP (County Agricultural Investment Program) applications. This funding is provided through the GOAP in accordance with Kentucky statute to stimulate markets for Kentucky agricultural products in tobacco-affected counties'. This funding will be beneficial to the individual recipients as well as the entirety of Graves County.

Graves County plays a vital role in the overall agricultural economy of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Ranked statewide as second in total cropland and fifth in total number of farms, Graves County producers are integral in feeding an increasing population (Census of Agriculture, 2012). In regards to grain crop rankings, Graves county leads that state in soybean acres harvested.



Ranked third and fifth, respectively, in corn and winter wheat acres harvested, the county continues to be a proven leader in statewide row crop production. Tobacco production is a long-standing tradition in Kentucky; with this tradition, Graves County leads the state in pounds of dark fired produced (National Agriculture Statistics Service, 2016). Finally, valued at over \$1 billion, poultry is Kentucky's top commodity (National Agriculture Statistics Service, 2014). Based on total sales, Graves County is the Kentucky leader (Census of Agriculture, 2012).

The Graves County Cooperative Extension Service provides a wide variety of agronomic services to the community. From large-scale producers to homeowners, Cooperative Extension can offer valuable resources to enhance your particular operation. In conjunction with the University of Kentucky Research and Education Center at Princeton, Graves County residents can benefit from soil test and plant diagnostic services.

Multiple continued education opportunities were offered this year. Focusing on the diverse needs of Graves County, these programs included:

- Pecan Grafting
- Master Gardener
- Pasture Walk with University specialist
- Purchase Area Master Cattlemen's course
- Purchase Area Master Cattlemen's Summer Tour
- Murray State University Hutson School of Agriculture Tobacco Twilight Tour
- Winter Ag Conference at Lowry Farms

Locally, the Graves County Cooperative Extension Service offers certification for pesticide private applicator licensing, Beef Quality Assurance program certification, GAP training for tobacco producers as well as supervision for state and national yield contests.

Family & Consumer Sciences



Veteran's Day Program (L to R – Nancy Smith, Jan Mayes, Joyce McClain, Jamie Mullins)

KEHA members consist of everyone from young adults to retirees and senior citizens who are in entirely different stages of their lives, but all have the desire to make their home and community a better place for everyone. Members have the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities and events throughout the year including trips, programs and seminars. In conjunction with the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, homemakers clubs typically work with county family and consumer science agents to coordinate program in the areas of food, nutrition and health; management and safety; family and individual development; environment, housing and energy; leadership development; cultural arts and heritage; and international. In the last year, Graves County Extension Homemakers volunteered over 5500 hours to their communities. Some of the areas GCEH participated in are:

- Needline/Food Pantry Volunteers
- Purchased coats for students
- Donated extra to Ovarian Cancer Research
- Participated in Veterans' Day Programs at local schools
- Sent birthday cards to local nursing home residents
- Provided two scholarships to local high school graduates
- Offered crochet classes

- Offered a barn quilt painting class
- Volunteered as Reading Buddies in local schools
- Presented the "Taste of Graves County" for the community
- Hosted the PAEH Annual Day with over 100 in attendance
- Worked in church, cooking meals for local elderly and shut-ins

Graves County started out their year with four extension homemakers clubs, but due to age and inability to meet on a consistent schedule, ended the year with two clubs, Friendship and TLC. Some members of the clubs who disbanded joined with the two remaining clubs. Even though our club numbers have decreased, Graves County Extension Homemakers is still strong and provides for meeting the needs of citizens in Graves County. If you are interested about GCEH, you can contact the Graves County Extension Office at 270.247.2334.

"Extension Homemakers has provided me with relevant life lessons, friendships, and fun! And it's made realize that Homemakers in not just about cooking and crafts, it's about lifelong learning that fit's today's lifestyle."

- Debbie Smith



University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service
Graves County

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**For more information,
Please contact us at:
251 W. Housman St.
Mayfield, KY 42066
(270) 247-2334
Fax: (270) 247-5193
www.ca.uky.edu**

