

2009-2010 Annual Report

Larimer County Extension Addresses Local Concerns

Increasing self-sufficiency and enhancing economic opportunity are two of the Larimer County Commissioner's priority goals. The Larimer County Extension Office provides education and facilitation to increase the county's capacity to meet these goals. In this annual report you will see numerous examples of how Larimer County Extension Agents work to achieve these goals plus develop **leadership and enhance civic engagement** within our youth and adult population.

Need to Increase Self-sufficiency

During the current economic downturn, Extension has experienced an increase in the number of people who are seeking life skills education to better manage their homes, food, finances and other resources to make ends meet. In response, Extension offers diverse programming to increase self-sufficiency.

Practicing Food Safety Saves Money

The 831 people who attended 58 Extension food safety and preservation workshops increased their knowledge and improved their food handling practices—a change that has the potential to reduce the risk of food-borne illness and associated health care costs. The 25 trained Master Food Safety Advisor (MFSA) volunteers assisted Edie McSherry, Extension Agent, in extending CSU Extension's education on food safety and safe food preservation.



Stretching Food Dollars & Food Stamps

Thirty percent of 380 low income participants in Nora Garza's nutrition classes were less likely to run out of food before the end of the month. They saved an average of \$50 per month on groceries, stretched their food stamps to last up to a week longer, and fed their families more nutritious meals. Nora taught them how to choose healthy foods, plan menus, shop more strategically, and maximize food dollars.

Increasing Capacity to Teach Financial Skills

Extension trained 21 non-profit and governmental agency workers how to work with clients needing improved money management skills 2010. The *Dollar Works 2* training, conducted by Laurel Kubin and Jacque Miller, provided guidance on working with diverse clientele in both one-on-one and group settings. As a result, participants report increased confidence in providing their clients with current, research-based information. Participants are also reported back to that clients are making changes to improve their financial situations.



Improving Personal Finance

Ninety eight percent of the 1,966 people who participated in Laurel Kubin's financial education classes learned new information and 99 percent planned to adopt at least one behavior to improve their financial situation. These Larimer County residents learned about creating spending plans, teaching children about money, setting up emergency funds, using credit wisely, planning for long term care, and other financial topics.

“As a result of Extension classes, my family and I paid off more than \$10,000 in debt and are now living within our means.”

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Master Gardeners Extending Info

More than 22,000 residents learned how to use gardening and landscape dollars wisely as a result of Extension Master Gardener outreach. First time and more experienced gardeners were able to increase garden productivity to better feed their families and potentially have extra to sell at the farmers' markets to increase family income.

In 2010, CSU Extension horticulture specialists and Larimer County Extension Agent Alison O'Connor trained 114 local Colorado Master Gardener volunteers.

Master Gardeners educate gardeners on:

- plant selection and planting practices,
- irrigation,
- lawn and tree care,
- edible plant production, and,
- pest control management that emphasizes wise water and chemical use for productive gardens and sustainable landscapes.

Improving Native Plant Usage

Native Plant Master volunteers educated 1,747 people on native plant identification and selection for better landscape management through decreased water and chemical use. These volunteers, managed by Extension Agent Karen Crumbaker, learn plant identification and how to use native plants to reduce the negative impact of noxious weeds. In addition, the 20 volunteers, who primarily work for public sector agencies were more effective in their jobs due to their training as Native Plant Masters.

Becoming More Self-Reliant Via 4-H Training

Through 4-H, the youth development arm of Extension, 1100 youth learned self-sufficiency skills by becoming responsible for themselves, their projects, and relationships. The youth learned financial management skills as a part of their projects.

Need to Enhance Leadership and Civic Engagement

The voices of residents, including youth, are necessary to shape a diverse and vital community. All citizens need the tools and training to participate in community organizations, impact public policy and make Larimer County a better place to live and work. In response, Extension offers meaningful ways for individuals to connect and give back to their community.



Serving Communities Through 4-H Youth Development

“Christmas to Camp Cropper,” which honors military personnel deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan was a project of one 4-H club. Members sent a Christmas tree, ornaments, table decorations, and holiday cards. They also made quilts for the soldiers to raffle at their holiday party. The club received a thank you phone call from the Commander. In addition, club members hosted a Christmas Eve dinner for nearly 80 family members of deployed military from the region. Lastly, throughout the year members set up receptions to greet military men and women as they returned from active duty.

Extension Agents engage youth through the 4-H youth development program to learn leadership, citizenship and life skills in partnership with caring adults. Each Larimer County 4-H member is required to complete community service for each project in which they enroll. Awards are given for club and individual community service to honor these contributions.

4-H Study Proves Powerful Impact

Compared with their peers, youth who participate in 4-H are:

- Nearly two times more likely to get better grades in school
- Nearly two times more likely to plan to go to college
- 41 percent less likely to engage in risky behaviors
- 25 percent more likely to positively contribute to their families and communities.

These are the latest findings from the fifth year of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development according to youth development scholars, Drs. Richard M. Lerner and Jaquelin V. Lerner and faculty from 21 land-grant universities from across the nation. In addition, from the latest data collected from nearly 7,000 youth from 45 states, compared to their peers, active 4-H members are also more likely to

- Participate in science and technology programs
- Plan to pursue careers in science, engineering or computer technology



Girls involved in 4-H are also more likely to have a positive attitude toward science and are more engaged in science. This is particularly important for girls since they tend to start opting out of science by the fourth grade and so many career opportunities are eliminated for them as a result.



Family Leadership Training Institute Increases Leadership Skills

Family Leadership Training Institute (FLTI) provided 96 hours of training to develop leadership skills, civic literacy, and civic participation to engage diverse family voices in public dialogue. FLTI participants included single moms, grandparents, foster parents, individuals with disabilities, individuals of color and those with limited education or financial means. FLTI is hosted by Larimer County Extension and Jacque Miller, Extension Agent, who provides coordination of the program with support from local and state partners.

Post survey participant responses include:

- ◆ Understanding how public policy affects community increased from 34% to 80%.
- ◆ Understanding how service systems for communities are organized increased from 40% to 80%.
- ◆ Knowing what to do when problems arise in community increased from 34% to 60%.
- ◆ Being able to get information to help better understand community increased from 67% to 94%.



FLTI participants used the skills gained to develop their own community project based on their passion to initiate a positive change for children and youth. In 2010 fifteen projects were developed and they addressed:

- ◆ Health issues, such as prevention education and alternative activities for high risk youth, support for families of alcoholics, and encouraging positive body image through media.
- ◆ Education issues of successful transitions for Head Start children and college success for foster youth.
- ◆ Issues of special needs community included building positive images of children with autism, awareness of respite care needs, support for new families, and lack of housing options for older teens.



“FLTI has given me the confidence I need to make sure I am heard in a positive way. I have joined more committees and have a better understanding of the board I serve on and what I can do to make a difference.”

“I now realize that as a parent leader I do play an important role in society. Instead of merely complaining about what exists in our communities, I can have a part in developing an inclusive system of support and services for families and children.”

Need to Enhance Economic Opportunity

The current recession has resulted in job loss, underemployment, and decreased incomes. To achieve long-term economic stability at home and in business, residents are looking for ways to improve their workforce skills and enhance their capacity to generate income.

Extension

Food Safety Training Leads to Employment, Promotion or Entrepreneurism

Enhanced opportunity to obtain employment, qualify for promotion, or start their own business was the result of Extension Agent Edie McSherry's *Food Safety Works*, a course for food service workers. In 2009 and 2010 she trained 1052 workforce employees in safe food handling requirements. Participants received a wallet card certifying their completion of the course.

Fiber Fun Fest Increases

Vendor's Sales

Brown Sheep Company, which purchases its raw wool from producers in Northwest Colorado, is a regular vendor at the Fiber Fun Fest sponsored by Extension and 4-H. During the event, Joanna Johnson, a local budding self-published author, met Brown Sheep Company representative Peggy Wells. As a result of this meeting, Peggy sponsored Joanna's attendance at TNNA, the most prominent fiber arts market in the country. This led to a more successful entrepreneurial endeavor for Joanna's new company, Slate Falls Press, and her children's book *Phoebe's Sweater* is now in its second printing.

4-H Agent Kathy Wolfe organized the 2nd annual Fiber Fun Fest, an educational and promotional event featuring the use of natural fibers such as those from wool, alpaca and llama, in various arts. Vendors provided information and product for more than 500 participants.

Record Sales for 4-H Junior Leaders

The 4-H Junior Leader Club members learned and implemented important business operations lessons, setting a record for sales

and profits at the Larimer County Fair. Instead of extending credit to regular buyers at the Dairy Bar, a practice which has routinely resulted in uncollected receipts, members implemented prepaid punch cards that were sold at the beginning of the fair. This innovative business solution allowed members to retain 100 percent of all profits.

FLTI Participant Starts Specialty Business

One FLTI participant established a small business, "MaXarT", which developed a successful product line featuring the artwork of young artists with autism as her FLTI community project. In addition to generating revenue and jobs for several new employees "MaXarT" promotes awareness of the positive aspects of living with autism.

The Family Leadership Training Institute helps participants to be more engaged and effective in the workplace and community. They develop skills in

- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Decision making
- ◆ Problem solving
- ◆ Strategic planning



Larimer County Farmers' Market Sales Nearly Double

Since 2006, vendor sales increased nearly 45 percent, from \$222,307 to \$402,239 in 2010 under Extension Agent Alison O'Connor's guidance. During this same period, the number of vendors increased by 33 percent. Many factors are involved in these successes, including market location and accessibility, marketing, quality products and public interest.

The Larimer County Farmers' Market, operated by Extension and their Master Gardeners for more than 35 years, has provided an outlet for large and small agricultural producers, artisans and consumers, and the small urban gardener who wishes to sell his or her products.

Currently, the Larimer County Farmers' Market is the only market in Larimer County to accept Food Stamp coupons. Since this effort to provide fresh, local and quality produce to low-income individuals and families began in 2007, sales to food stamp customers increased 77 percent.

"The farmers' market is not only a great venue for us (Café Richesse) as a business, it's also a great place to raise funds for Socially Conscious Coffee. \$1 of every pound of coffee we sell supports food for 70 Brazilian children whom we fed for 2 months with funds earned at the market".
Luiz Neves

Increasing Income from Small Acreages

With interest in providing fresh eggs for their family or for supplemental income, attendees at Extension small acreage workshops learned how to raise a small flock of chickens. Landowners also learned how increase family income through agricultural marketing techniques.

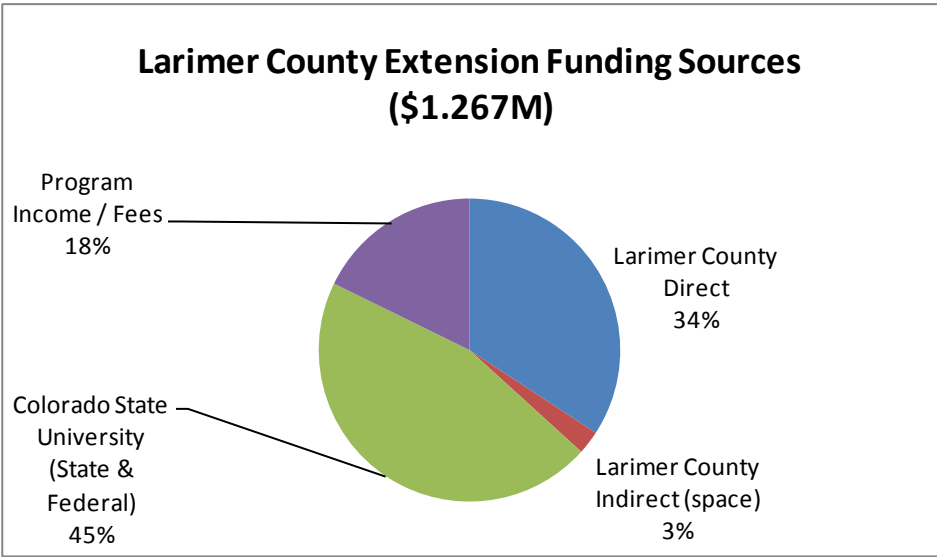
In 2010, Extension taught more than 500 people how to better manage their small acreage through educational programming and technical assistance. These efforts helped small acreage owners increase the forage and property values of their property as well as improve land stewardship practices involving soil, water, weed control, and animal and pasture management. Landowners learned to reduce the amount of herbicides used to control weeds, saving both time and money.

Improving Agriculture Business

Two hundred thirty three (233) local growers learned more sustainable and effective business and production practices at the "Colorado Agriculture Big and Small & Small Acreage Conference." By implementing these practices they have the potential to increase their incomes.

At the 3-day conference held In February 2010, CSU Extension agents, including Larimer County Agent Karen Crumbaker, conducted workshops for new and experienced agricultural producers. At the annual conference 32 sessions were offered. Larimer County Extension also co-sponsored the "Growing Your Future in Larimer County" seminar series. Through these programs, local producers learned about:

- marketing natural and organic meat products,
- small fruit production,
- producing naturally and selling locally,
- farm to school models,
- marketing differentiation,
- beginning farmer efforts



Return on County Investment (ROI) = 135% **With volunteers ROI = 325%**
 (For every dollar Larimer County contributes, the return on investment is \$1.35; with volunteer contribution, the return is \$3.25)

- #### Extension by the numbers
- 1,100 4-H members— consistent from year to year
 - 432 4-H adult leader volunteers
 - 114 Master Gardener volunteers
 - 25 Master Food Safety Advisor volunteers
 - 23 Native Plant Master volunteers
 - Volunteer contribution value: \$1.3 Million per year

2010 Larimer County Extension Funding

Larimer County Direct	\$434,048
Larimer County Indirect (space)	31,815
Colorado State University (direct & indirect)	576,574
Program Income	<u>224,679</u>
Total	1,267,116
Value of volunteers	<u>1,300,000</u>
Total	\$2,567,116

Meet The Staff



Laurel Kubin
Director



Kathy Wolfe
4-H / Youth



Jacque Miller
Family &
Consumer



Edie McSherry
Food Safety &
Health



Diane Kern
4-H Horse
Program Coord.

Vacant
4-H / Youth



Donna Goodwin
Support Staff



Alison O'Connor
Horticulture



Nora Garza
SNAP
Nutrition
Education



Karen
Crumbaker
Agriculture /
Natural Resources



Pam Heeney
Support Staff



Fred McClanahan, Jr.
Support Staff