

Extension is

Montana State University,
U.S. Department of Agriculture and
Montana Counties Cooperating.

MSU researchers and educators work together
to help communities, businesses, families,
environment & agricultural enterprises thrive.

Local Support Leads the Way

Advisory and support groups are key in maintaining a successful and relevant MSU Extension program. Input you provide to identify major issues and plan programs establishes local ownership in the process and ensures the success of local programs.

Meet your Yellowstone County MSU Extension Team:

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The Montana State University Extension Service is
an ADA/EO/AA/ Veteran's Preference Employer
and Provider of Educational Outreach.

MSU...

Extension is fundamental to Montana State University's land grant mission, developed to ensure that *all Montanans* can benefit from the university.

Public Access...

MSU Extension extends a wealth of university resources for all Montanans to explore, even if they never set foot on a campus. It provides access to useful information and expert knowledge via workshops, demonstrations, community meetings, publications, videos, the Web and other learning opportunities.

Educational Outreach...

MSU Extension is a statewide network that connects university resources with grass-roots needs. Topic specialists on campus and agents in county and reservation offices bring the people of Montana practical knowledge and current research that can impact their livelihoods and affect their lives.

Free Information...

MSU Extension serves the public with resources on topics that range from protecting the environment, growing crops and raising livestock to managing finances, growing businesses, building communities and supporting healthy families.

For Everyone...

Extension is *your* MSU resource. Take advantage of education, community building and access to hundreds of free and low-cost educational publications.

To learn more, contact your local MSU Extension agent.



Learning in Progress: Yellowstone County

Master Gardener Project Benefits Women's Pre-release Program

The Yellowstone County Master Gardeners, coordinated by Horticulture Assistant Amy Grandpre, have several projects, all noteworthy, but for 2009, the time, sweat and care volunteered by Master Gardener Larry Walby to the new Visions Women's Pre-release Center tops the list.

This garden project, started in 2007, has grown from a vacant lot to a 150' x 200' square foot garden area. For five months Larry went in every weekday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and worked with more than 480 different participants throughout the summer. The women who worked in the garden ranged from "lock down" status to "pre-release," all the way to kitchen help. With assistance from Master Gardener Judy Martin, this garden was coordinated and tended following the most stringent rules that must be implemented when working with pre-release inmates.

This garden provided the majority of vegetables consumed by 200 pre-release residents from July through September, saving New Visions \$2,000 on their food bill. An excellent variety of crops were grown: winter squash, tomatoes, carrots, rutabagas, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli,



The New Visions Women's Pre-release Center garden project.

lettuce, radishes and even raspberries and strawberries. Production was great even with a June killing freeze. The bounty included more than 200 winter squash and tomatoes from 144 plants.

These women are now equipped with gardening skills they can use to not only help with grocery expenses, but give them a sense of accomplishment and a source of relaxation as they face their new life free from prison.

Women Gain Strength

Beginning at about age 30, women begin to show a decrease in muscle mass and bone density resulting in reduced muscle

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www.msuxtension.org

strength, a higher likelihood of osteoporosis and other severe health consequences as they age. Scientific research has demonstrated that exercise with weights will increase strength, muscle mass, and bone density in middle-aged and older women, as well as reducing the risk for diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis, and arthritis.

The Strong Women program from Tufts University is a strength training program taught by Bernie Mason, MSU Yellowstone County Extension FCS Agent since January 2008. Women participate in strength training classes twice weekly and are encouraged to perform exercises once a week at home. Seventy-one women have participated in the program with positive results.



A recent Strong Women class poses for a group picture.

* One woman with osteopenia was able to increase her bone mass test results by 4%.

* After not having been able to get down on her knees for 15 years to clean under the bed because of pain, one participant is now able to perform that task easily.

* Another participant who had undergone neck and chest surgery, has increased her breathing capacity.

* One woman no longer has the pain and discomfort in her legs that had been keeping her awake at night.

Due to the positive benefits of the program, another class of Strong Women will begin in January 2010 at the Billings Community Center.

4-H and the Military: Working Together for Youth

With help from the Montana 4-H Center for Youth Development, the 4-H program in Yellowstone County is reaching out to military children and youth. In addition to our regular 4-H clubs and projects, new work is being done through the 4-H/Military club grant and the Operation Military Kids Program. This is a national outreach effort to help support youth of those who serve in the National Guard and the Army Reserves.

Through these programs, Yellowstone County now offers new opportunities and resources for youth of military families, throughout the county and Eastern Montana. Since starting this 4-H/Military partnership, we have impacted 455 youth, 186 who come from a military home.

Programs in 4-H's mission mandate areas of Science, Engineering and Technology (SET), Citizenship and Healthy Living go a long way to ensuring youth are prepared for the challenges of living in the twenty-first century. In our robotics club, youth learn to build and program an operational robot using SET skills. Aerospace members learn about the aerospace industry, do hands-on experiments with rotors, planes, and shuttles they've built, and get step by step direction in building their own 18" rocket. Kids are becoming more involved with the GPS/Geo Caching workshops, 4-H/Military Day Camps and have also participated in a healthy living seminar called "Reality Check - Health Rocks!" all offered through the 4-H/Military partnership.

Because of these partnerships, our service members are better prepared to focus on the mission at hand, confident their children and families are in safe and nurturing environments. They model the

best of the Land Grant mission - reaching out to meet the needs of citizens wherever they are.



Two youth work on building their robot as a group. Later they built and designed programs to make the robot perform various functions.

Meal Planning Saves Dollars

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program presented classes to 421 homemakers. Classes were held in locations around Yellowstone County. Participants learned to stretch their food dollars and food baskets, to plan and prepare meals based on myPyramid, and to make healthy food choices.

Clients enthusiastically returned each week for information, recipes and friendship. Participants eagerly shared ideas and encouraged each other in preparing healthy meals and snacks for their families. As a result of the homemakers taking the classes, 1,399 people were impacted by the information given. There are 40 families continuing the classes, given through December.

Additionally, 356 youth in grades one, three and five, were taught to make healthy food choices and encouraged to taste new foods in a series of six classes taught in their classrooms. The hands-on classes help take the fear out of trying new foods.

Sugar Beet Crop in Jeopardy

Yellowstone County's 2010 sugar beet crop began with a great deal of promise. Sugar beets that would be worth approximately \$50/ton and record production were a reasonable expectation. Record cold temperatures struck the bumper crop the first week in October. The Board of County Commissioners needed to know if they should call Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer to apply for emergency low interest agricultural loan designation. Agricultural Extension Agent Steve Lackman became the informational conduit the Board needed to make this decision. The amount of harvest quotas, the condition of storage piles, sugar beet samples, healing conditions, producer opinions and county-wide field surveys were frequently reported to the commissioners. Lackman's goal was to establish lines of communication between the commissioners and the producers by providing usable information to help make educated decisions. If good weather continues, the harvest and processing of the beets will be able to proceed and Lackman would anticipate low interest agricultural loans would not be necessary.

Youth Learn about Agriculture

More than 1,600 fourth grade students from 39 Yellowstone County schools attended the NILE Ag in the Classroom Program to gain a better understanding of how Montana's No. 1 industry, agriculture, affects their lives. Yellowstone County Extension taught classes to expose youth to the important role agriculture plays even if your family is not directly involved in agriculture. Every time you eat, hunt, fish, put clothes on or take a drive through the county, you are relying on Agriculture for the product you are using or the environment you are enjoying.