Valley County Positive Youth Development Efforts Expand to Include All Area Youth

STEM programs, science, technology, engineering and mathematics, combine the strengths of experiential, hands-on education and inquiry-based science learning within a positive youth development framework. Valley County Extension strives to address the developmental and educational needs of young people in an effort to develop a foundation of skills students need to be productive, civic minded and competitive in the 21st-century workforce.

Valley County Extension serves hundreds of students during school time and out-of-school time settings by offering engaging STEM programming. Valley County youth are provided with a variety of free choice and hands-on learning opportunities that promote excitement in learning about natural phenomena.

STEM develops a set of thinking, reasoning, teamwork, investigative, and creative skills that students can use in all areas of their lives. STEM activities focus on real-world issues and problems often identified by the students. The lessons are guided by a flexible process that takes students from identifying the problem to creating a solution through productive teamwork.
Bobbie Roos, Daniels County Extension Agent, educates weed managers about houndstongue biology, spread, and control west of Scobey, Montana, as part of the Valley/Daniels County weed tour in July 2016.

“...the pulse plots received a lot of great attention this year. Some of the industry people I am affiliated with came back multiple times to them for information gathering. “(Rob Davis, local producer and president of the Montana Grain Growers Association)

“I have been fighting hawksbeard and marestail with chemicals for a couple years without much luck. After following Shelley’s recommendations about what to use and how to do it, it worked perfect. I am getting my ground cleaned up and it saved me money. The Extension Service is an invaluable service to our entire community.” (Paul Tweten, local grower and Valley County Commissioner)

“The field tools I obtained from the WSARE training and the producer and Extension speakers were an invaluable opportunity to learn while you are actually in the field. This was not my area of expertise and I greatly benefitted from these programs.” (Wendy Becker—Fort Peck Reservation Agent)

“The trainings increased my confidence in talking to producers about crop practices and potential issues.” (Colleen Buck, Sheridan County Ag agent)

New Agent Training Workshop. Valley, Daniels, and Richland County Agricultural Agents collaborated to obtain a Western SARE grant to train new agents in cropping practices, pest identification and provide resources to improve confidence and lead to success for MSU Extension Agents.

Pulse Producers listen to Eastern Ag Research Center Superintendent, Chengci Chen, discuss the Montana and Northwest regional pulse varieties trials located in northern Valley County.

“Your presentation on controlling hawksbeard at the Oct. 2016 private applicator training was excellent (most of what was said was new information to me).” (Marc Breigenzer, local producer)

“Narrow-leaf hawksbeard has been a huge issue for us here, you have brought information to us as producers that has helped curb the problem, and promote practices that keep it under control.” (Rob Davis, local producer)

2016 Weed Tour

2016 Pulse Plot Tour
...About MSU Extension in Valley County

Left, below: Heirloom Gardening Workshop - Presented by life-long gardener, James Sagmiller to a crowd of over 50 interested gardeners from three counties. The workshop was sponsored by MSU Extension and Gumbo Gals Garden Club.

“Thanks again for all you have done in our community. The educational value of your classes goes far beyond what we perceive. You have made a great improvement in our community.” (Dave Pippin, retired Valley County Commissioner)

Teachers Integrate Disciplines To Solve the Education Mystery

Continuing education is an ongoing requirement of our state’s educators. Valley County MSU Extension aims to bring professional development to the teachers, offering 16 renewal units or one undergrad or graduate credit to participants. This year teachers applied their inquisitive minds to solve a historical murder mystery. All disciplines were incorporated into the process as forensic science, historical data, literature, and technology played a role in the results. Skills gained included critical thinking, inquiry-based learning, and public speaking as they presented their “whodunit” to the group.

“I appreciate that we have professional development opportunities close to home. It saves me money in travel expenses and time.”

“I depend on MSU Extension’s Teacher Workshop to meet my continuing education requirements each year.”

“Shelley and Roubie are so creative. I love the hands-on learning.”

“I will totally be using this in my classroom.”

“The class flew by because I was very engaged!”

(Taken from participants’ MSU Northern Evaluations)
Strong Hearts, Healthy Communities, (SHHC) is “a community-based intervention trial aimed at cardiovascular disease risk reduction among overweight and obese sedentary women living in medically underserved rural areas,” which was implemented in Valley County. The Glasgow community supported a full intervention with 12 members meeting twice weekly for six months and the Hinsdale community offered nine members who met monthly for six months as the control group.

The SHHC intervention was designed to target and support behavior change at the individual, social, and community levels. The program design involved evidence-based programming including progressive strength training, aerobic exercise, and nutrition education components combined with a civic engagement and capacity building initiative tested in Montana’s rural communities.

Preliminary evidence suggests that SHHC has potential to reduce Cardiovascular Disease risk by reducing weight and caloric intake and increasing physical activity and functional fitness in midlife and overweight/obese women. Local impacts reported by participants include:

- "My husband bought a pickup that I had to have help getting into. Because of this strength training, I can get in without help."
- "We are walking partners and walk at least 10,000 steps four days a week."
- "I buy dog food in the 14 pound size because now I can lift it."
- "From Strong Hearts I have learned to try different foods and make more heart healthy choices."

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