

Penn State **EXTENSION**

AGRICULTURE | COMMUNITY & FAMILY | ENVIRONMENT

Extension in Action

August 2008

Penn State Cooperative Extension in Pike County

Smoking Cessation in the Community

Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death. Those individuals who wish to quit smoking and participate in a tobacco cessation program are more likely to increase their success rate. Support, coupled with nicotine replacement options, can increase success rates by 50%.

Progressive Health of PA and NJ recognizes these benefits. In February 2008, their staff and clients enrolled in the Pike County Tobacco-Free Coalition's smoking cessation course. With help from program facilitator, Deborah Albrecht, they learned how to get through the days without smoking.

Weekly meetings provided time to discuss the benefits of quitting, problems and fears associated with quitting, stress management, relaxation techniques, coping with triggers that can lead to relapse, and long term strategies for maintaining a smoke-free lifestyle.

June 2008 began the second round of this seven-week program which has attracted thirteen participants to date. As long as there are smokers wishing to become former smokers, or former smokers who feel the need for support, the Pike County Tobacco-Free Coalition will be there to help.

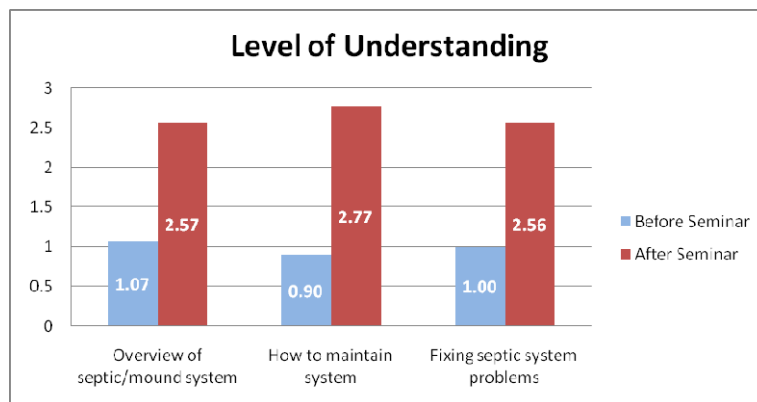


Seminar on Maintaining Septic Systems Helpful to New Residents

Many new residents of Pike County do not realize that they are water and wastewater treatment operators. This is because their new home has both a well and an on-lot septic system. To help educate homeowners Penn State Cooperative Extension collaborates with Allstate Septic to conduct On-lot Septic System Seminars annually. Two seminars were conducted in 2008.

At the seminars, homeowners learned how to maintain their septic system as well as how to identify potential problems. This could result in a reduction in possible non-point pollution of groundwater and surface water. This reduction in groundwater pollution benefits the homeowner and their neighbors because it reduces the risk of contaminated drinking water from their wells.

As seen in the chart to the right, 35 participants of the On-lot Septic System Seminars increased their level of understanding of how a septic system works, how to maintain it, and fix problems.



In addition, as a result of attending the seminars, 86% of participants indicated that they would pump out their septic tank, 80% would begin routine maintenance of their systems, and 83% indicated that they would watch for septic system failures.

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Strong Communities

PENNSTATE



4-H Summer Program Reaches Youth Across Pike County

This summer, children across Pike County had the opportunity to learn how to lead a healthy lifestyle through the 4-H Keeping Fit program. Dozens of students participated in the free 4-H program, aimed at teaching 8-12 year olds the importance of a regular fitness routine and eating healthy.

In 12 two-hour sessions at various locations throughout Pike County, children learned how to calculate individual levels of fitness and water intake as well as make simple, healthy snacks such as fruit smoothies, rainbow fruit kabobs, and vegetable pizza. Participating students began each session with a warm-up and group stretch before their aerobic activity, some of which included parachute games, jumping rope, an obstacle course, and "The Amazing 4-H Race."

The 4-H Keeping Fit program, conducted by Penn State Cooperative Extension Summer Assistant and former 4-H'er, Jaclyn Bealer, reached a wide variety of students within Pike County. "One of the H's in 4-H stands for health," said Bealer. "The summer course has helped children realize that keeping fit isn't just a three-week program, but a lifestyle."



On the last day of the program, students created posters on their learning experience that were entered into the Pike County Agricultural Fair in September.

Strengthening Families: Making a Difference For Families

The Strengthening Families program, for middle school age youth and their parents/caregivers, is scientifically proven to strengthen families, delay youth from engaging in risky social behaviors such as drinking, and reduce school conduct problems. These goals are accomplished by engaging families in activities to help parents find ways of showing love and setting limits, help youth develop skills to handle peer pressure and build positive futures, and help families grow together.

A study conducted in 2001 compared families of middle school students in communities that participated in the Strengthening Families program with families in non-participating communities. Results from a follow-up in 10th grade indicated that there is a 40% reduction in students who have had conduct problems or have been drunk.*



In Spring 2008, six families participated in a Strengthening Families Booster series which included activities designed to strengthen skills presented in the base program. Parents further explored ways to nurture and discipline their youth, while youth reviewed activities to help them appreciate parents and deal with peer pressures.

At program completion, improved listening skills were most frequently reported by parents and youth. Parents said:

- "I've learned to be mindful of my child's pressures and remember myself at her age."
- "We try to spend more time together."
- "I try to remain calm and listen."
- "I use the listening technique. I learned that I have to listen to them more and answer in the proper way."
- "I learned how to listen and really hear what the other person is saying, how not to argue, and that I am not the only parent that has issues with their kids."

Youth said they learned:

- "Listening, helping out, giving ideas."
- "How to listen better and get my point across."
- "How to make new friends."
- "Listen and trust your family."

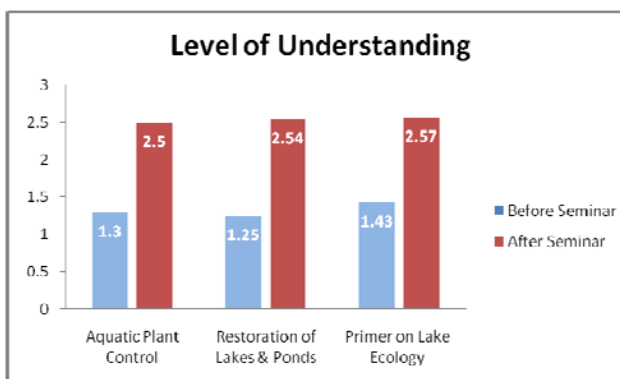
*Source: Spoth, Redmond, and Shin. 2001. Journal of Consulting

Pond and Lake Management Workshop

Many property owners who have ponds, or individuals who live in lake communities, are in need of assistance in managing their pond or lake. On April 5, 2008, Penn State Cooperative Extension in Pike County conducted a Pond and Lake Management Workshop. This workshop is important because of the large number and variety of ponds and lakes in the area.

Surveys have shown that the majority of ponds and lakes do not meet the expectations of the pond owners or lake communities. Workshop participants learned management procedures that improve water quality so that their pond or lake can be enjoyed. In addition, they learned that environmental hazards are reduced for the pond or lake ecosystem.

As a result of attending the workshop, the 24 participants increased their level of understanding of aquatic plant control, restoration of lakes and ponds, and basic lake ecology. Two-thirds of the participants will start to take steps to reduce nutrients entering the pond or lake and will create buffer strips around the pond or lake. One-third of the attendees will consider fish toxicity when selecting an aquatic herbicide and will start or do more of physically removing plants or algae.



For more information on proper management of ponds and lakes, visit the Penn State Cooperative Extension Pond Management website (<http://water.cas.psu.edu/ponds.htm>) that provides educational resources about aquatic plants, algae, fisheries, pond structure and water quality.

Master Gardeners Step Up to Help Honeybees

Did you know that more than 25 percent of the Western honeybee population has disappeared over the last several winters? This poses a serious risk to our natural food supply.

One cause of these losses is an alarming phenomenon called Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). When a hive experiences CCD, the honeybees mysteriously leave their hive and die. CCD symptoms are reported by more than 35 states across the United States and in many other countries. Researchers do not know exactly what causes CCD, but they believe there may be many factors contributing to the problem, including viruses, mites, chemical exposure or poor nutrition.

Haagen-Dazs recently has announced a gift of \$150,000 toward honeybee-related programs in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences. The college has taken a lead role in investigating the cause or causes of Colony Collapse Disorder.

As a part of this, Master Gardeners across the commonwealth will instruct homeowners and gardeners on establishing pollinator friendly plantings because the loss of habitat and flowering plants is an important factor in the decline of pollinators, according to Robert Berghage, Penn State associate professor of horticulture. "By growing 'bee gardens,' individuals can contribute to pollinator health by providing the food sources these insects need to survive and thrive."



Currently a Bee Pollinator Demonstration Garden is located at the Delaware Township Building. Master Gardener Frank Wojcik has been gathering data about pollinators visiting the Smith-Harker Garden which will be forwarded to Penn State University.

To see a podcast on Colony Collapse Disorder go to:
<http://pike.extension.psu.edu/second.asp?county=Pike&table=Hort>

D.E.W. Exercise for Better Health

Studies show that exercise promotes physical and emotional wellness, reduces stress, and improves brain function. However, more than 60% of American adults do not exercise regularly and more than 72 million are obese.

Penn State Cooperative Extension in Pike County partnered with the PA Department of Health and Newton Memorial Hospital to create a 10 week walking program called D.E.W. (**D**rop **E**verything and **W**alk). D.E.W.'s goal was to increase participants' daily physical activity.

D.E.W. made involvement easy. Members were able to exercise and reported their weekly progress to team captains who reported to Penn State Cooperative Extension's D.E.W. website. In 2008, 16 teams (80 people) traveled west, some as far as Utah on a virtual progress map.

Teams' progress, Milford Health & Wellness Center health screenings, health and environmental articles, and participants' comments are contained in weekly emails. Additionally, the D.E.W. website provided an opportunity to blog and keep everyone connected.

Polled results at the completion of D.E.W. showed that 28% of participants got started in exercising as a result of the program; 71% of participants were more physically active at the completion of the program; and 42% indicated that because of the program they motivated family and friends to exercise.



Extension Helps Improve Quality Child Care

Penn State Cooperative Extension's Better Kid Care Program provides state-wide support to county educators who in turn provide access to educational materials and resources, direct training workshops, satellite broadcasts, web-based workshops, telephone helpline, and videos to local child care providers, parents, and employers. The satellite training workshops alone were down-linked on average to 55 Penn State Cooperative Extension sites across Pennsylvania and on average to 42 states nation-wide.

State-wide statistics show that:

- 46,453 early childhood educators, teachers and child care providers were trained state-wide, enabling them to operate in compliance with state regulations. Continuing Education Units, PA Department of Education credits, Child Development Associate credits and PA Department of Public Welfare credits were awarded;
- 105,000 hours of credit bearing professional development was delivered via internet and print-based curricula;
- 6,000 hours of professional development was provided via web-based units;
- 2,500 early childhood educators, teachers and child care providers received state-mandated certification through distance education web-based units;
- 99,000 hours of professional development were delivered to early childhood educators, teachers and child care providers via DVD/print-based distance education programs;
- 49,460 hours of professional development was provided to new center-based staff that successfully completed the New Staff Orientation curriculum during the first 90 days of employment in child care centers.



Through Extension's work thousands of early childhood educators across the commonwealth are able to remain in compliance with state mandated regulations and policies thus better assuring parents that their children are receiving high quality care.

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