Youth and Economic Development

***Person Reporting:*Spring Williams -Byrd     *Location:*Burke *Date:*2013-06-29**

Burke County identified the need to promote small business and encourage entrepreneurship throughout the county. Cooperative Extension served on the Leadership Council with Burke County Chamber of Commerce, Western Piedmont Community College, and Burke County Public Schools to coordinate, implement, and evaluate seminars, network sessions, and opportunities for business owners and citizens.

A Young Entrepreneurship Day was held with more than 150 youth participating. A Burke Entrepreneurs and Business Owners (BeBo) Forum was held on Human Resources and Networking with 60+ business owners attending. These programs have increased awareness and have had a positive social impact for current business leaders. In addition, participants have reported enhanced and improved business practices leading to higher economic value. Youth participating also reported an increase in knowledge and skills to becoming entrepreneurs.

***Person Reporting:*Eve Rogers     *Location:*Graham *Date:*2013-07-03**

Teen leadership is a critical component to developing future leaders. The Graham County 4-H Advisory Council identified teen leadership as a major objective to work on. As a direct result, Graham County Extension partnered with the NC Rural Center and received a grant for $20,000 to use toward leadership development.

A new youth council was created called Graham United Way Youth Council. The youth council met twice a month, participated in community meetings, and toured several local cultural sites. The efforts of the youth council created an opportunity for them to help with the funding of a local park. The youth council partnered with Graham County Economic Development and Parks and Recreation with the creation of Graham Counties first public Adult Park.

The youth voted to fund a climbing wall, and provide picnic tables and grills. The goal was to create more safe recreation opportunities for local youth. The results of project include $5,000 going towards local youth leadership development, $15,000 going towards the creation of a park, and leadership development skills learned included civic engagement, public speaking skills, as well as grant writing and planning. Youth that participated in the youth council have a 100% high school graduation rate and a 100% college acceptance rate.

***Person Reporting:*Reba Green-Holley     *Location:*Gates *Date:*2013-07-01**

Every year rural counties lose their most precious resource to a more urban environment once they graduate from high school. The NC Rural Center study indicated that Gates County is one such county. As a result the Gates County Extension Director was able to obtain a $20,000 grant from the NC Rural Center to engage youth in a community development project. An action team consisting of 16 youth and adults was created.

They participated in leadership development workshops utilizing Community Voices curriculum while learning about the county's needs and resources. The action team implemented a project with three components: Youth Explosion Conference which reach 56 youth with topics covering youth issues (14 facilitators, 8 agencies, guest speaker and entertainment); Day of Caring in which 26 youth and 5 adult volunteers performed 7 service learning projects collaborating with 5 agencies; and the purchase of historic signage for the Reid's Grove Rosenwald School which was put on the national registry two years ago.

As a result of participating in the program 100 percent of the youth gained a better understanding of Gates County; increased their leadership skills; and became more engaged in the community.

***Person Reporting:* Linda Gore     *Location: Moore Date: 2012-12-20***

Research indicates a growing need for leadership training to ensure young people are prepared for the work force, political and civic life. The Moore County Government Leadership Academy 2012 is a program that places High School and College students in internships throughout county Government. The Leadership Academy is an initiative sponsored by Moore County Government and Moore County Cooperative Extension 4-H.

Since its inception in 2010, the program has continued to improve and become very popular in the Moore County community. The program gives students a unique insight into the workplace in a fun and interactive way to see the inner workings of local government. Participants gained work experience, developed leadership skills, learned how government affects them, learned how decisions are made in the county and beyond, met local government officials, state legislators, and staff. They also learned how they can become involved in the process. Interns volunteered a total of 240 hours valued at $5,160. They were also required to complete a community service project of their choice within their community.

One of the goals of the Leadership Academy is to build character and community awareness in the participants of the program. This program has taught many young people leadership skills that will benefit them throughout their life. As a result of the internship program, 90 percent of participants stated they learned that the county provided services they were not aware of and 60 percent stated they would consider a career in county government.

***Person Reporting:*Heather Gordon     *Location:*Jackson *Date:*2012-12-28**

In many cases education is most impactful when it is experiential. The members of the Give Change Get Change (GC2) Committee of the Jackson County Youth Leadership Council are learning to give their time, talent, and treasure to our community in a very real way. Through a partnership with Leading to Change and the NC Youth Giving Network these teen leaders are learning about philanthropy.

Each month a facilitator leads them through teambuilding exercises and educational programs about grant funding. During the process the Council members create a request for proposals, market what grant funds are available, seek applicants, review the applications, and award money for youth led projects, and implement an event to celebrate the accomplishments of grant recipients.

In 2012 the GC2 committee awarded $1,900 for youth-led projects in Jackson County. One of these projects, a Boy Scout Eagle Scout project to construct a permanent handicap ramp at a local church, will make a difference for many years.

***Person Reporting:*Linda Gore     *Location:*Moore *Date:*2012-12-20**

Young people of today are the entrepreneurs of the future. They like the idea of owning their own business, and being in charge, that often go along with business ownership. Futurist John Naisbitt (1994) predicts that as structured employment opportunities decline, entrepreneurial skills will become necessary for workers to compete in the workforce. Problem is, they often don’t know what it takes to become an entrepreneur.

After completing the 4-H Curriculum, “Reading Makes Cents”, and investigating different ways to make money, saving, and investing, two middle school students at the 21st Century Learning Centers, after school program, started businesses. These girls enrolled in a jewelry making class, worked on a business plan, and received start up monies from the Center. The girls sold $106 worth of jewelry in three weeks. After deducting their initial investment, $30 was invested back into their business to buy additional supplies, $6 was donated to church, $20 was put into savings, and $10.00 was fun money.

The father of one of the girls assisted in setting up a computer chart to track revenues and expenses. In addition, 12 other girls who completed the program are starting a jewelry making business. Kindergarten and first graders are in the process of growing tomato plants to sell, and boys in the program are learning car detailing in order to start businesses. These students discovered what entrepreneurship is, how to find and make their own business opportunities, and the rewards that are possible from owning a business.

***Person Reporting:*Doug Clement     *Location:*Cherokee *Date:*2012-12-28**

A $6,000 sustainable agriculture grant was received to begin a Poultry Chain in Cherokee and Clay Counties. 12 youth received instructions, equipment, and 25 baby chicks for the youth project. The youth learned proper care and management of the birds and provided 6 chickens to the project to be sold at auction. The money will be utilized to continue the poultry project in 2013.

***Person Reporting:*Donna Rewalt     *Location:*Durham *Date:*2012-06-29**

Our Kids Voting Program created a candidate guide and hosted a candidate forum for school board and county commissioner candidates. These youth-led initiatives brought young people together to write and submit questions to candidates for a candidate guide that was shared with youth and adult voters. **The Kids Voting guide is considered one of the best candidate guides available.** The youth also led the round table candidate forum and created and asked questions of each candidate. Durham Extension Kids Voting Program Coordinator successfully organized and trained the young people and volunteers for these activities.

***Person Reporting:*David Fogarty     *Location:*Gaston *Date:*2013-01-23**

In partnership with the Gaston County Schools and the Schiele Museum, Gaston County Cooperative Extension held the fourth annual Gaston Regional Science Fair. In 2012, 2200 youth participated in the Gaston Regional Science and Engineering Fair year-long school enrichment program; 425 direct competitors representing 208 projects and over 2400 8th grade youth participating in fair events and workshops. Participants gained presentation skills and skills in how to apply the scientific method. Over 80% of participants expressed a desire to pursue a STEM related career and increased confidence in applying scientific research concepts.