



## Serving Teton County

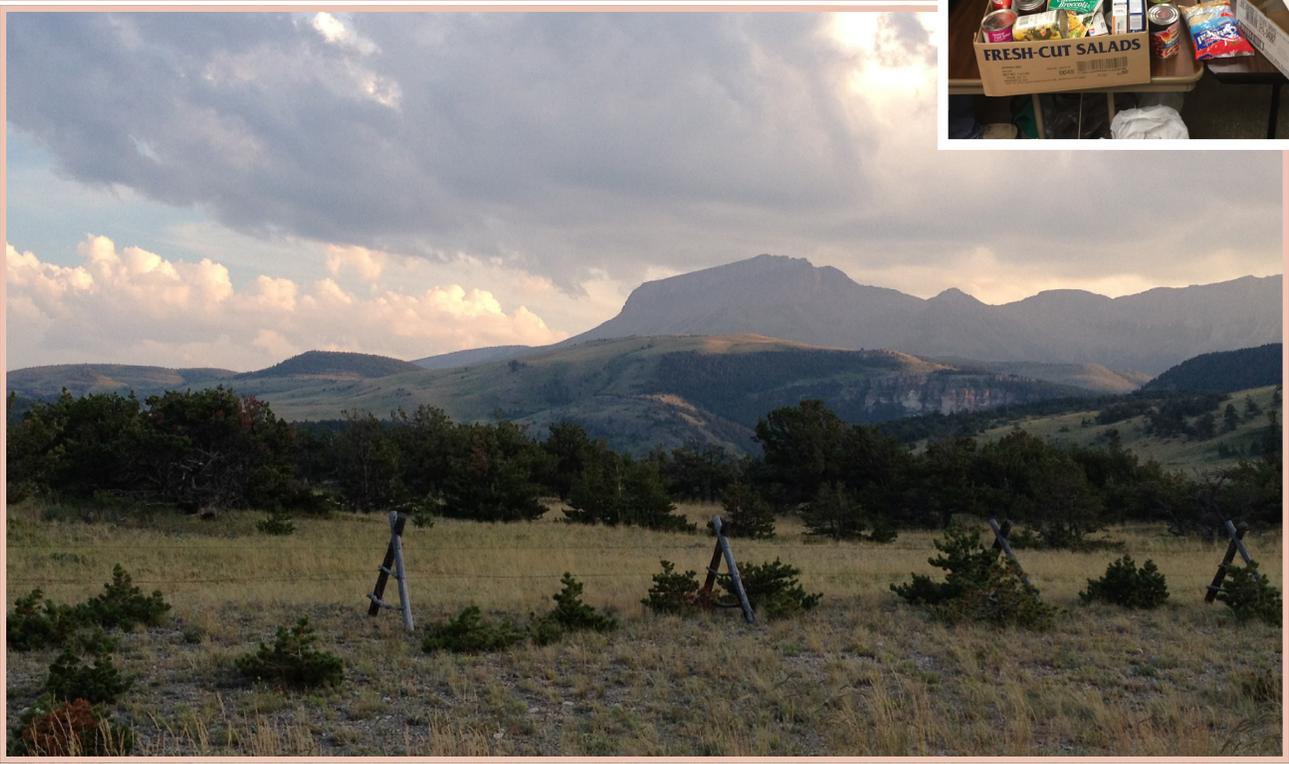
**T**hank you for your part in making Montana State University Extension relevant and successful in providing educational programs for the citizens of Teton County. This annual report highlights some of the MSU Extension success stories in Teton County.

We want to extend a special thank you to the Teton County Commissioners and voters in Teton County for their continued support of MSU Extension. We also want to thank the many volunteers, participants, readers and listeners who help us deliver our important educational messages.

When you support MSU Extension, the citizens of Teton County and Montana benefit.



**4-H service learning projects - making blankets for the Great Falls Rescue Mission and collecting food for Teton County Food Pantry.**



# Community & Family Health and Wellness Education

## Planting the seeds and growing human capital

This year, community development seeds were scattered throughout the county with Leading Local and Board Training classes reaching 20 participants. MSU Extension in Teton County also coordinated with MSU Extension specialist, Paul Lachapelle, to offer a statewide small business webinar series based on requests from local business owners.

From 2009-11, MSU Extension in Teton County facilitated the Horizons community development program in Choteau and Fairfield. The seeds of the Horizons program are now firmly rooted and continue to bear fruit for our communities.

The following were program ideas that were developed during Horizons and continue to be implemented throughout the county.

Opportunities for All Scholarship Inc. (OAS) was established to provide scholarships for low-income adults and children to take advantage of

fee-based amenities and enrichment programs in our community. OAS has helped youth attend preschool, swim lessons, and fitness classes; teenagers partake in educational tours, college workshops and private music lessons; and adults learn yoga. OAS helped a first-year college student purchase books and noted that she was listed on the honor roll -- a gratifying outcome. For seven years, OAS has given between \$2,000 and \$6,400 yearly to provide educational enrichment for children, adults and families.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors (NHN) offers a wide variety of aid in Teton County. A man received dental assistance because he was in constant pain and unable to work. His health was restored and he secured a good job. He continues to make small 'paybacks' to NHN and said, "You changed my life and I can't thank you enough." A young family needed help with rent and a utility bill due to job loss. Within two months, the husband had a new job and repaid NHN. He explained, "I can now help someone else. Your help saved our family." NHN assists families so they can be sustainable by giving a 'hand up'. In 2017, \$23,980 was spent directly on projects.

Another Horizons goal was to add a service learning requirement for graduation from Choteau High School. While the idea took some time to germinate and bloom, the school now requires 20 hours of service learning prior to graduation. This averages to 560 hours of youth service yearly.

Fairfield identified community needs of housing, retirement and jobs. The community actively pursued the building of an assisted living facility. Front Range Assisted Living was originally built with 15 rooms and has expanded to 27 rooms. It has been fully occupied for nearly three years. There is a staff of 18 at the facility. The community development efforts in Fairfield led to solutions, including job creation.

MSU Extension grows human capital in our communities.

Vibrant Citizens, Vibrant Communities!



## Half the battle is mental to be healthy as a whole, mental wellness plays a role.

The World Health Organization defines health as a “state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

In a recent Teton County Community Health Needs Assessment, mental health was one of the top three concerns, along with addiction and alcohol/drug abuse. Depression, anxiety and stress were rated the top mental health issues in Teton County. When analyzing needed health services, respondents reported a lack of mental health providers.

Even before the county health assessment, MSU Extension in Teton County had been laying the groundwork to respond to these community needs. In conjunction with the MSU Center for Mental Health Research and Recovery, we offered the internet-based THRIVE program, a cognitive behavior therapy. An extensive marketing campaign about the THRIVE program resulted in 18 residents enrolling in therapy. Only three counties in the state had more participants.

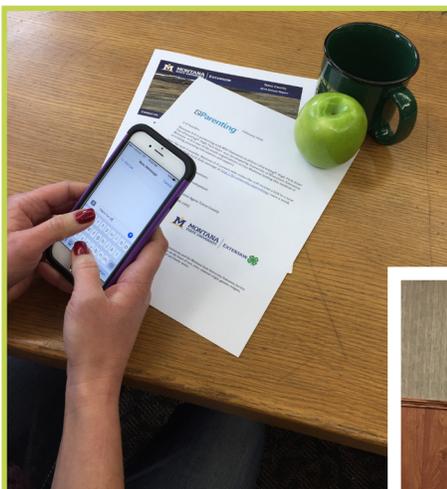
Another program addressing needs in the county is the Youth Aware of Mental Health (YAM) program. In the largest and most rigorous study of its kind, YAM reduced suicide attempts by 59% and suicidal thoughts by 52%. In the fall of 2017, MSU Extension agent Jane Wolery offered the five-

week YAM program to all schools in Teton County. Fairfield, Choteau and Powers schools participated. The program reached 115 students. A faculty member in Fairfield observed distinct changes in students’ abilities to identify and seek help for mental health needs.

As a complement to the other mental health educational programs, Wolery developed and taught TNT – Teens and Tension. The class offered coping mechanisms for stress and time management skills, as well as mental health resources, for two youth groups in the county.

In Teton County, MSU Extension offered two additional adult education programs that teach skills and strengthen family relations, which are components of mental health. The eParenting education program reached a majority of parents with school-age children. eParenting offers weekly tips to parents for connecting with their children. A second program, Powerful Tools for Caregivers, provided 14 caregivers tools for coping. One participant said, “This program has been so meaningful, not only in reducing my stress, but also in the quality of care I can provide to my husband.”

MSU Extension in Teton County provides the tools and training for youth and adults to become emotionally resilient.



**LEFT: eParenting e-mail updates help parents connect with their children. BELOW and RIGHT: YAM reaches teens and adults with mental health resources.**



- 161** Enrolled Youth Members
- 17** Cloverbuds
- 76** Certified 4-H Volunteers
- 350** Additional youth reached with enrichment programs
- 6** Community Clubs
- 2** Project Clubs - Shooting Sports
- 3000+** Hours donated by volunteers
- 24** Youth in executive officer positions
- 12** Participants in Leadership Retreat
- 36** Youth and adults serving on county committees
- 46** Youth learners at 4-H Camp
- 64** Cash Camp Money Management Students
- 2231** Pounds of food collected for Teton County Food Pantry
- \$761** Donations generated for Food Pantry
- 5** Livestock evaluation participants
- 3** Teton County 4-H Ambassadors
- 88** Members in livestock projects
- \$139,660** Invested in youth agricultural pursuits
- 12** Clover Communications youth presenters
- 6** District Make It with Wool contestants
- Numerous Club Service Projects:**  
Community, County, State, National and International
- 5** Montana 4-H Congress participants
- 2** First and second place Career Communications Winners at Montana 4-H Congress
- 1** Third place Illustrated Talk winner at Montana 4-H Congress
- 2** Montana State 4-H Ambassador officer applicants
- 1** Montana 4-H Ambassador President
- 1** Montana Make It with Wool contestant
- 2** National 4-H Congress delegates
- 2** National 4-H Shooting Sports Championship Competitors
- 1** National 4-H Western Heritage Shooting Sport Competitor
- 1** Citizenship Washington Focus Inauguration delegate



**TOP TO BOTTOM:** 4-H members enjoy outdoor recreation while learning archery skills at camp; learn timeless project skills and valuable interviewing skills through 4-H (Madeline and fair entries); and practice leadership and teamwork (making noodles at camp).



## 4-H: A fundamental addition for our communities

4-H in Teton County grows tomorrow's community leaders and service volunteers. 4-H alumni serve as board members, county commissioners and volunteers throughout the county. One current 4-H member stated, "4-H is a youth leadership organization that teaches young people necessary life skills. Some of these skills include public speaking, record keeping, livestock management, sewing, cooking, robotics, computer skills, and any manner of other necessities. 4-H also gives youth a constructive outlet for their creativity and abilities. Most of the successful young adults in my community are involved with 4-H. All people should recognize 4-H is building future leaders who will eventually be the leaders of our state, country, and world. The future rests on these young 4-Her's. This essential organization allows for the possibility of a better tomorrow."

From current membership to alumni, the 4-H program has a far-reaching impact on our communities. Numerous graduates have credited 4-H with their successful entry into adulthood and into their chosen career. Youth are able to explore a variety of projects and skills that help them focus on career paths. One former 4-H member credits his photography project with his current profession. Another credits 4-H with his early interest and training in range management. He plans to use plant pathology to help Montanans produce high-yield, high-quality, sustainable crops and credits 4-H for his goals. A doctoral student has shared that her work with NASA and her presentations at national meetings have been directly impacted by 4-H training. Many Teton County agriculture producers got their early start in agricultural pursuits through 4-H.

The 4-H program teaches skills that add to the fiber of our rural communities. While the entire impact of 4-H may never be truly calculated, it is expressed in the hearts, heads, hands and health of our youth and our communities.



4-H teaches livestock and showmanship skills.



Equestrian skills can be important in an agricultural community. 4-H teaches skills in horsemanship and animal care.



Even the youngest 4-H Cloverbuds learn to prepare and speak in front of an audience.

# Agriculture Services and Pesticide Education

## Diagnostic Services

The MSU Extension office in Teton County recorded 2,923 contacts on ag/natural resources issues in the 2017 production year. Those contacts generated a conservative \$28,945 in savings or returned revenue to producers. MSU Extension in Teton County strives to offer the best diagnostic capabilities for commodity grain and pulse producers, forage growers, commercial horticulture, and homeowners. We offer insect and weed identification, disease analysis through the Schutter Diagnostic Lab at MSU, pest insect monitoring, water testing through Energy Laboratories, forage analysis through Midwest Labs and in-house testing for nitrates in forages pre- and post-harvest. MSU Extension in Teton County provided diagnostic and educational services to 320 Teton County residents. The office provided traps and monitored seven fields across the county for Orange Wheat Blossom Midge weekly, submitted 23 samples for disease diagnosis or identification to the Schutter Diagnostic Lab, sent 37 forage samples and soil samples for analysis, and conducted 78 nitrate tests for producers. One spring wheat field required additional monitoring due to high Orange Wheat Blossom Midge numbers, but no insecticide application was ultimately required. Forage producers saved \$1,170 on nitrate tests for their hay. Due to the dry conditions over the summer, many producers took advantage of this service to ensure their grain regrowth was safe to graze. Fifty-nine samples were sent to professional laboratories for more detailed analysis. Several producers used MSU Extension in conjunction with local veterinarians to try and diagnose losses occurring in calves.



Educating Teton County producers about spray drift.



Above: In house testing of forages for toxic levels of nitrate. Below: Providing resources for growers considering new crop rotations.



## Pesticide Education

Pesticide applicator certification enables producers and commercial applicators to purchase and use restricted use pesticides. MSU Extension, in an agreement with Montana Department of Agriculture, is responsible for educating applicators and handlers on current regulatory changes and safety precautions. The two agencies work together to keep people and the environment safe. Five producers in Teton County became newly certified to apply restricted use pesticides on their property and 39 received continuing education training. These producers now have more options to control weeds and a better understanding of how to protect themselves, their family, and the environment from pesticide misuse.



contact us:



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