Our highly skilled educators deliver research-based knowledge through non-credit education in the fields of Agriculture & Horticulture, Environment & Energy, Family & Consumer Education, and 4-H Youth Development.

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PUTTING KNOWLEDGE TO WORK FOR DUTCHESS!
Through quality educational programs, Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County (CCEDC) builds strong, healthy youth, adults, families and communities while enhancing the economic, social, agricultural and natural resources of Dutchess County. CCEDC links the research, knowledge and technology of the land grant system to the needs of individuals, families, businesses, and communities throughout the County. We provide practical education for stakeholders to use in dealing with critical issues affecting the County’s future and we enhance the quality of life by promoting individual growth, strengthening families, improving the economic well-being of businesses, enhancing the environment, and building stronger communities.
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Taste NY Market at Todd Hill

The Taste NY Market at Todd Hill, a project of CCEDC with funding from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, experienced a successful year and offered a wide variety of food, beverages, textiles and artisanal goods grown or processed in NYS. Local meats, fresh produce, specialty teas, farm-fresh milk, cheeses, butter, ice cream, baked goods, jams and jellies, maple syrup products, pasta and chocolate are just a few of the many products available at the store. Since its opening in June, 2014, the market has achieved over 1.2 million dollars in total sales. Products from over one-hundred and twenty-five vendors have been sold in the Market and new vendor products are added to the shelves regularly.

CCEDC’s relationship with the agricultural community allows for the delivery of high impact programming. In 2015, educational programming included: business plan development for agricultural operations, Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) training, labelling, certifications, and value added product development.

A customer satisfaction survey revealed the overall satisfaction with the “Todd Hill Experience” was 3.87 out of 4 or 97% of those surveyed. Surveys are still being taken at the store and results continue to be used as a tool to assess customer preferences and trends. A Vendor Survey was sent to past and present vendors and revealed that 56% of respondents indicated their participation at the store created growth/expansion at their place of business. One vendor stated: “We sell lamb sausages and goats milk soap at Todd Hill. Now, during the toughest time of the year, the sales from Taste NY have helped with the expenses that so many small farms succumb to. Each winter, for the past five years, we have decreased the size of our flock going into the winter because it simply wasn’t possible to support them all with the price of hay and grain. This year, because of your efforts, we were able to keep our numbers up and will be able to feed more New Yorkers.” To date, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Dutchess County has sourced five hundred and fifty thousand dollars of product from New York state growers, value-added producers, and small businesses.

Master Gardener Program

Master Gardener volunteers continue to deliver best practices education throughout Dutchess County to individuals, organizations and communities. MGs staffed Ask the Master Gardener, Home Composting and Recycling display booths at the DC Fair and other community events which reached over 3,000 people. In addition, CCEDC staff and MG volunteers provided Organics Recycling education to nearly 1200 Walkway Marathon organizers and participants, helping make it a certified Green event, with 78% of the event waste either recycled or composted, and the remainder converted to energy. Classes and lectures reached 645 residents and the MG Diagnostic Hotline and Lab answered a total of 590 questions and diagnosis requests! The MG team grew and sold over 10,000 annual, vegetable, herb, foliage and perennials plants for the annual Plant Sale, a major fundraising event for the Master Gardener Program. In total, 87 Master Gardener volunteers donated 6,600 hours of service to CCEDC and the community.

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**Agri-business Development Programming**

In 2015, CCEDC offered a series of programs for future farmers to enhance their agribusiness skills.

- Good Agricultural Practices: CCEDC hosted a GAPs Certification Training for growers;
- Business Plan Development: Farmers participated in creating, updating and putting into practice a solid business plan;
- Labeling Your Products: Producers learned about the requirements for starting a food business;
- Marketing Strategic Planning: Seven participants learned how a focused strategy and specific efforts can make every step count;
- Value Added Product Development: Participants learned to evaluate the safety and stability of fruit & vegetable-based food products for small-scale processing companies.

**FARMEDIC**

The National FARMEDIC Training Program, developed by Cornell University, provides First Responders (fire/rescue personnel) with the training and resources they need in order to execute farm rescues using safe methods for the victims as well as the rescue team. The 12-hour course included classroom instruction, a farm tour and hands-on rescue procedures were staged from PTO shafts, hay balers, and other farm equipment. 48 volunteer firefighters and rescue squad personnel completed the course in 2015.

**Arborist Certification**

This professional training series offered by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) sets an individual apart from the competition and creates a competitive edge over non-certified arborists. CCEDC offers a four session training program to prepare participants for the ISA professional certification exam. 18 individuals participated in the training and 11 ISA Certified Arborists attended to receive continuing education credits (CEUs). CCEDC is the only organization in NYS that offers this training.

**Agricultural Districts - 8 Year Review**

In 2015, CCEDC worked with The County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Agency Board and Dutchess County to review the County’s agricultural districts. Dutchess County has four agricultural districts with over 5,000 parcels of land in the districts. The purpose of agricultural districting is to encourage the continued use of farmland for agricultural production. Every eight years, the districts must be reviewed and since the last review in 2008, agricultural district land added in to Dutchess County’s districts has increased nearly
Expanding Organics Recycling

Around the United States, organic waste is going into landfills or waste-to-energy facilities. This waste can potentially be reduced and redirected to better uses. Our team is working under a grant from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to consider this problem. We are currently looking at what is happening with organic waste in Dutchess County and are compiling the data we’ve collected to propose alternatives to help reduce and divert organic waste. This is an exciting project to offer well-researched options to the County to help meet County waste reduction goals and address energy and greenhouse gas concerns.

Flood Resiliency

CCEDC staff continued working collaboratively with Extensions in Columbia, Greene and Orange Counties on the Hudson Estuary Watershed Resiliency Project (HEWRP); funded by the NYS Water Resources Institute at Cornell, the NYS DEC Hudson River Estuary Program, and the Environmental Protection Fund. The HEWRP is a combination of research, demonstration, outreach and education focused on climate change, flood resiliency, stream management and related topics. As part of this initiative, CCEDC staff provides tools and resources to assist municipalities in reducing their vulnerability to flooding by enhancing knowledge of stream and floodplain dynamics. CCEDC offered a Streams 101 seminar, assisted with a watershed summit, undertook culvert assessment training and fieldwork to assess water passages under roads, and created short videos explaining aspects of the Climate Smart Community program.

GIS & Mapping

2015 was a busy year for CCEDC’s GIS Lab with projects including the mapping of the County’s agricultural districts and the development of two separate mapping applications; one web-based application called the Hudson River Natural Resource Mapper and the second is an application for mobile devices (smartphones & tablets) for field crop specialists to use in the field to report pest presence and damage. The GIS Lab continued to provide mapping consultation and products, including mapping projects for Oblong Land Conservancy, the Town of Dover, and the Wappinger Creek Inter-municipal Council.

EmPower NY

CCEDC staff presented 19 free, two-hour workshops for 296 residents in Dutchess, Orange, Putnam and Ulster counties throughout 2015, called Save Energy, Save Dollars. The program’s goal is to help participants take real actions that will lead to real energy savings. Through the workshops, participants learned easy and inexpensive tips to save money on their energy bills. Since the workshops focused on easy, often seasonal and less permanent steps that participants can take to reduce their energy usage, renters were also able to benefit from tips to reduce energy bills.
No Child Left Inside (NCLI)
The No Child Left Inside (NCLI) youth environmental educators have worked hard again this past year educating middle school youth and the public about the environment and encouraging youth to get outdoors and connect with nature. They conducted environmental After School Enrichment programs at Krieger Elementary School, educated over 100 5th graders as part of the NYS DEC Hudson River Estuary Program, Day in the Life of the Hudson River, and participated in a variety of community events. In 2015, the educators also began to focus on the topics of waste and recycling, touring both the ReCommunity Recycling Center in Beacon and the Waste-to-Energy Facility in Poughkeepsie and conducting a waste audit of their own high school in which they sorted through one day of trash (approximately 70 bags). In 2016, the youth environmental educators will create a report from the data collected during the waste audit and work to educate both students and staff about the benefits of recycling and diverting organics from the waste stream.
The Family & Consumer Education program empowers families, individuals and communities of Dutchess County to improve their well-being through education and change facilitation. Our programs and staff utilize research-based expertise, teaching methods and learning tools to help families, individuals and communities apply research based concepts to real life situations.

The Family and Consumer Education Programs (FCE) are designed to respond to and serve the complex and dynamic needs of Dutchess County families and households. The diverse and vibrant communities of Dutchess County continue to face complex challenges with health, finances, education, parenting, and employment, and the FCE programs adapt to address the ever-changing needs of Dutchess County households. Our programs empower our residents with applicable and strategic education and information that continues to enhance our families and residents.

Under our mission statement of “Facilitating change with Dutchess County Residents and communities through education,” we strive to connect all residents with the latest, evidence-based research and practical information that can be directly applied to their day-to-day lives. We work to strengthen individual knowledge and skill and provide community level education. We continue to educate and partner with other community agencies and providers of services. Through community facilitation and dialogue we work toward positive changes in organizational practice and policies. Our main topic areas in FCE are Food, Nutrition, and Wellness, Parenting and Family Education, and Financial Management Education. FCE continues to work toward targeting programs to those living in underserved areas, areas with a high percentage of racial and ethnic minorities, and individuals with disabilities and other special needs. Through our work with families, individuals, and youth, our programs improve nutritious eating habits, reduce risk of disease, decrease food insecurity (hunger), increase use of local foods, improve school and family engagement, increase ability to save money and reduce debt, and reduce the need for foster care and social services in the long-term.

The Food Access Collaboration and Education Project reached 4,519 persons, and our Hudson River Fish Advisories Project reached 342 persons, for a total of 4,861 adults, seniors, and youth who have taken action to improve their healthy eating, active living, food security and food safety behaviors! Our Relatives as Parents Program assisted 131 relative caregivers and over 150 youth in their care, to develop healthy parent-child relationships and positive living skills, creating a safe, structured environment to avoid foster care. Our Financial Literacy for Youth and Young Adults Programs reached 132 persons in Dutchess County. The total direct educational impact and reach of our programs was 5,274 Dutchess County residents and their families!

Through our collaborations with community partners and stakeholders, our FCE staff has promoted and implemented systems and environmental changes that increase access to healthy food, combating childhood obesity and chronic disease. Through partnerships with schools and after school youth development programs we continue to provide financial education for youth, combating poverty for the next generation. We have provided programs and support for relative caregivers, helping to reduce the number of youth who enter into foster care. Family and Consumer Education Programs help create opportunities for healthy, productive Dutchess County families and communities.
The goal of our Eat Smart New York project is to provide behaviorally-focused education, social marketing and environmental system and/or policy changes to over 32,000 families, children and individuals (SNAP eligible and recipients), living in the priority sites throughout our region. Behaviorally-focused education is delivered to qualifying youth and adults utilizing the approved SNAP-Ed curricula. Through the highest quality nutrition education workshops and one-time events, our nutritionists support the New York State SNAP priority messages which include: increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables daily; reduce the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages by one or more servings each day; and increase the number of days each week individuals are physically active for 30 minutes or more.

In Dutchess County, numerous partners and collaborations for the 2014-2015 federal fiscal year allowed us to reach approximately 3,677 residents. 655 residents were reached through direct nutrition education, and 3,022 through indirect education. We are also actively involved in six coalitions/committees throughout the county with similar missions and visions for the community. Our systems change efforts include involvement with three school districts as we work to facilitate policy updates and implementation of that policy. Our efforts for the new federal fiscal year include strengthening school wellness teams and policy efforts, engaging partners in worksite wellness initiatives, and facilitating a regional movement to encourage healthier food selections for food drive donations.
The 4-H youth development movement which began more than 100 years ago as a rural youth education program has adapted and expanded to meet the needs of youth from all types of communities. Studies have shown that children participating in 4-H do better in school, are more motivated to help others, feel confident to try new things, achieve a sense of self-esteem and develop lasting friendships. 4-Hers are ready for an ever changing world!

CCEDC’s vibrant 4-H Youth Development program is led by a committed staff and dedicated volunteers who work closely with youth on projects, public presentations and entries to the Dutchess County Fair. During 2015, more than 400 youth participated in 40 4-H Clubs and the Green Teen Community Gardening program. Youth and their activities were supported by more than 75 volunteers and partners across the county who donated their time and skills. Beyond the Club experience, Dutchess County 4-Hers participated in county-wide educational programs, including horse bowl and hippology, Fashion Revue, livestock clinics, farm visits and the Dutchess County Fair.
A Year of Youth Development!

Winter

- The Green Teen Community Gardening Program held a 10 Year Reunion! They reached out to all the former Green Teens who had worked with Green Teen since 2004. It was a fun evening of old faces, new stories and reminiscing about past adventures.
- Tractor Safety began in February with 13 youth participating - the largest class to date! During the eight week class, taught by the 4-H Community Educator, youth participated in both classroom style lectures as well as gained hands-on experience operating a tractor and an implement. 12 youth were old enough to be certified which allows them to hold jobs on farms and legally use farm equipment.

Spring

- The Agricultural Literacy Week Program continued to grow, reaching 2,385 children in 118 classrooms and libraries across the county! The story of a young girl preparing to weave from her lamb’s wool was read by dozens of volunteers who then also led the children in an activity of felting marbles.
- Green Teen built a new garden on Main Street in Beacon working together with OneNature, an environmental design firm, to transform an empty lot into a pop up park for the public and community to enjoy.

Summer

- Green Teen implemented the Greens for Greens program which allows customers at the Common Greens Mobile Market to get more fresh produce if they utilize their EBT/ SNAP or FMNP farmers’ market checks. The program was very successful and had a 64% return rate.
- For the first year, Interest Area Representatives were a key part in connecting with the public at the Dutchess County Fair. Select youth each created their own plan on how to interact with other 4-Hers and educate the public on the 4-H program during the week of the Dutchess County Fair.
- Green Teen increased the number of crew leader positions from one to three positions. They partnered with local organizations Common Ground Farm and Hudson Valley Seed and hope to reach 5 positions in 2016!

- Despite the Avian Influenza outbreak, the poultry clubs participating in the 2015 Livestock Sale still sought out buyers, promoted their animals, and managed to sell them via photograph during the sale. The birds sold were pre-packaged and already frozen, ready to go to their buyers on sale day.

Fall

- Green Teen received funding to buy a small school bus to take our youth, tools, and produce around! Stay tuned in 2016 for the final touches and decoration of the bus!
- The 4-H Program added 10 new leaders, co-leaders, or project leaders to help support the growing 4-H club program. The creation of a new Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) focused club was an exciting addition to our many agriculturally focused clubs.
Estimate of Financial Support

TOTAL FUNDING $3,481,199 100%
PARTNERS

Working together to build strong, healthy families and communities while enhancing Dutchess County’s economic, social, agricultural and natural resources.

Abilities First
Astor Early Childhood Education Center
American Farmland Trust
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Beacon Recreation Center
Beacon Institute for Rivers & Estuaries
Beatrix Farrand Garden Association
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Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies
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Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse
Cities of Beacon & Poughkeepsie
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Community Associations Institute
Community Family Development
Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley
Community Housing Innovations
Cornell Urban Horticulture Institute
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DC Animal Response Team
DC BOCES
DC Community Action Partnership
DC Conservation Advisory Council
DC Dairy Committee
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HV Greenway Council
Kids R Kids Feeding Program
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Mental Health America
Mid Hudson Alcohol Recovery Center
Mid Hudson Building & Grounds Superintendent’s Assoc.
Mid Hudson Children’s Museum
Mid Hudson Green Industry Assoc.
National 4-H Council
New York Farm Viability Institute
NYS 4-H Youth Development
NYS Agriculture Experiment Station
NYS Arborists Association
NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets
NYS DEC
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