

CONFERENCES

The Urban Family Network implemented the Third Annual Family Conference in 2001 with over 150 participants. The conference theme was "Unlocking and Sharing Resources" with Dr. Romando James, professor and family and youth development specialist with the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service in South Carolina. The Family Conference is an annual event held each fall during the month of October and is open to all professionals who deal with urban family issues.

The Urban-Rural Interface Conference took place during the spring of 2001 in conjunction with the School of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Week at Alabama A&M University. Over 125 community leaders, educators, students, agencies and organizations were involved in the one-day event. Conference agenda topics addressed "Emerging Trends in Biotechnology: Implications for Families and Communities" to help communities thrive in changing environments.

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Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs

Summary of Accomplishments 2001

INTRODUCTION

As a public network for informal educational outreach, Cooperative Extension is compelled to serve and respond to the critical needs of people through practical research-based information. Shifts in needs and priorities necessitate changes in program content and delivery at the grassroots level. During the 2001 programmatic year, the Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs (UANNP) unit of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System was positioned to respond to such changing needs and challenges. Programs were planned, designed and implemented in accordance with the unit's mission and charge to address the needs of the state's urban, new and nontraditional audiences with a specific focus on limited resource families, underserved audiences, individuals and small enterprises.

PRIORITY AREAS AND EXTENSION TEAM PROJECT SUMMARIES

FOREFRONTING YOUTH INITIATIVE

Addressing the needs of the state's growing urban youth population remained a priority for Extension's urban youth development educators during the 2001 programmatic year. Through the Teen Leadership Connections (TLC) curriculum, Extension made great strides in recruiting and involving youth in community service and making valuable leadership connections.

TLC was developed by Prairie View University as a comprehensive, prevention-based, experiential, interactive, and community-oriented youth development program. TLC teaches important intellectual and social development skills and was adopted by Alabama to support the Forefronting Youth Initiative.

Leadership development efforts begun at the local level culminated at a statewide Service Expo that was co-hosted on the campuses of Alabama A&M University and the University of Alabama at Huntsville. Recognizing that youth leadership programs provide great opportunities for youth and communi-

ties, UANNP partnered with several local agencies, including the Huntsville-Madison County Chamber of Commerce and Madison County District Six to sponsor the first annual Youth Leadership and Community Service Expo.

Involving over 200 youth and volunteer leaders from across the state, the Expo provided opportunities for youth to showcase leadership skills acquired through involvement in various leadership and community service activities in their respective counties. The knowledge gained and the spirit of service and leadership were evidenced through the competitive service projects that were researched, planned and implemented by youth-lead teams.

First place winners, Mobile County addressed AIDS awareness. Jefferson County's youth conducted a "White Ribbon Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy." Colbert County youth focused on activities in the area of cultural diversity. Houston County youth provided assistance and leadership to a "Hispanic/Latino Youth Festival."

During the programmatic year, a variety of other youth development programs were offered to meet the needs of a diverse youth population. The Fostering Achievement Through Mentoring Education Project (FAME) worked with mentor mom programs targeting at-risk youth and young mothers. The program experienced notable success in the Huntsville and Montgomery metro areas.

The FAME project educators partnered with Girls Inc, public housing facilities and community churches to reach over 1600 youth with life skills, personal development and career education using mentoring approaches.

In Houston County, a youth entrepreneurship program was initiated to promote self-esteem, and a better quality of life for youth who reside in public housing facilities. Participants learned basic entrepreneurial skills, including developing a business plan. They also gained valuable resource management, leadership and organizational skills through practical business exercises.

WORK FORCE PREPARATION

UANNP offered programming to respond to the state's workforce needs by offering nontraditional approaches to job searches and information access. The Workforce Education and Career Assistance Network for You (WECAN4U) Web site was designed through a multi-state agreement between Alabama and West Virginia State College's Department of Land-Grant Programs. The Web site represents a new outreach tool that provides 24-hour access to employment information.

WECAN4U provides users access to interactive training resources, personal money management strategies, and workforce, employment, and statistical information in regions of West Virginia and Alabama's urbanized areas.

UANNP's Workforce Preparation: Finding and Securing Employment project adopted an interactive curriculum, Welcome to the Real World, to alert young adults to the realities of working, managing resources and making adult decisions. The curriculum serves as a primary resource for delivering workforce and career education to young adults in simulated real life settings.

Welcome to the Real World is a comprehensive program that focuses on budgeting, career selection, survival skills and decision-making strategies. Urban and rural county Extension agents used the program statewide to educate youth in school settings, extended day programs, JOBS programs, and Boys and Girls Clubs. Over 6,000 youth received face-to-face training using the curriculum. An estimated 10,000 citizens received interactive training using other resources such as the Job Hunting Manual published by the project leader and the Works for Me curriculum co-authored by the project leader. Over 500,000 radio and television broadcast and print media contacts were made.

County programs like the Houston County Youth Career Summit used professional role models to motivate youth in their work and career preparation decisions. Industries, service agencies, institutions, and the local Chamber of Commerce partnered with Houston County's Urban Center to implement the first annual Career Summit to encourage young women to pursue nontraditional careers. The Summit targeted 11th and 12th grade students from thirteen schools and eight counties in the

Wiregrass Region to promote the theme "Preparing Young Women for High-Skilled, High Wage Careers." Six hundred students and school counselors participated in the Summit. The Houston County Career Summit serves as a transportable model for other counties that will implement Summits during the 2002 programmatic year. Four summits are in the advanced planning stages for areas in Mobile, Madison and Houston Counties.

Lauderdale County's "Life Skills" program is representative of the quality of services and the impact of programs in the area of workforce development. The 118 clients that participated in the program benefited from services designed to help them develop skills needed to obtain employment and improve their quality of life. The program has experienced a 68% successful employment rate for participating clients. The return investment to the county and the Shoals community is approximately \$1,350,000.00, and money saved by the Department of Human Resources is estimated at \$300,000.



DOGS AS COMPANIONS: PHYSIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS

Extension educators involved in the Dogs as Companion: Physiological and Psychological Benefits program helped Alabama citizens to increase their awareness of the health benefits of dog companionship; to improve their knowledge of dog nutrition, training and health; and to expand their understanding of the laws and ordinances regarding dog ownership. County Extension

agents in Baldwin, Jefferson, Morgan and Tuscaloosa metro areas provided educational programs, including dog obedience training and seminars on animal cruelty and dog care. Partnerships established with agencies such as the Greater Birmingham Humane Society and the Madison County Veterinary Medical Association continued, offering support to community campaigns like the

"All About Neutering Your Pet" campaign conducted in collaboration with the Greater Huntsville Humane Society.

New audiences impacted by this program include hearing and physically impaired citizens, children and adults in hospitals, and seniors in nursing homes who could benefit physiologically and psychologically from animal companionship.

**TRAPPED IN POVERTY,
TRAPPED BY ABUSE AND
TRAPPED BY POOR HEALTH!**

The Trapped program continued as a viable outreach service to statewide communities to address issues of domestic violence. Domestic violence is a community problem that impacts the entire nation, crossing all races, social and economic backgrounds, cultures and religions. According to the National Violence Against Women Survey 2000, an estimated 1.5 million women in the United States are assaulted by their partners every year. Alabama reflects the national statistics with thousands of reported cases of victimized women and men.

Prior to 1998, Extension had no coordinated projects to combat the family issues associated with domestic violence and child abuse. Yet, over the past three years, the Trapped project leader and participating county Extension agents have been instrumental in getting agencies and community leaders to address this growing issue. The Trapped project was put in place to provide educational training and to heighten awareness of community services and solutions on anger management, conflict resolution, power and control issues, welfare reform, domestic violence, and resiliency. The success of the program is reflected in the

growing county involvement. During the past year, 12 of the state's 67 counties were extensively involved in designing programs and structuring coalitions to offer supportive services to families and communities affected by domestic violence.

Agents in Fayette, Lauderdale, and Lawrence Counties spearheaded grassroots efforts to incorporate domestic violence task forces in their respective areas. Extension personnel in Fayette County were actively involved in community collaborations that ultimately lead to the development of the Turning Point Task Force. The task force has provided supportive services to 150 adult victims and 25 children in violent homes since the office opened in May 2001.

Programs were implemented across the state to also prepare youth to respond appropriately to pressure and violence through conflict resolution. Programs such as "Small World Youth Development" and "Talking with T.J." in Perry County, and "Can We Talk?" in Mobile County have been instrumental in preparing youth to deal with conflict. Broadcast campaigns such as "Tune Out the Violence" in Morgan County, and print media campaigns like "Hands are Not for Hitting" in Jefferson County and "Sanity Savers" in



Lawrence County reached over a half million citizens. Eight hundred and seventy-nine sixth through eighth grade students in the Morgan County school system were involved in the "Animal Cruelty: Its Connection to Human Violence" program. A similar program involving 90 professionals in Mobile County addressed "The Linkage Between People Abuse and Animal Abuse."

A creative, nontraditional program was initiated in Hale County, "Talks and Teddies," to collect unused cell phones and teddy bears for abused families. The cell phones went to the local shelter in Tuscaloosa and the teddy bears were given to abused children in situations where they had to be abruptly removed from their homes by law enforcement.

LEGAL EDUCATION

The *LegalEase* program was initiated in 2001 to provide practical legal education to Alabama citizens. Research shows that a large percentage of legal needs of both urban and rural communities are not addressed in this country. The goals of *LegalEase* are to:

- 1) examine and respond to the

- law-related needs of Alabama citizens; 2) provide training and technical assistance to improve the quality of legal resources; 3) educate citizens on the types of legal assistance needed; and 4) provide information on where to locate such assistance.

A legal consultant has been engaged to provide in-service training to prepare county

agents and educators of partnering agencies to provide appropriate responses and referrals to a client's legal concerns. The program is well underway in the north Alabama area. The first of a series of *LegalEase* modules has been published in the area of *Elder Law*. Resources have also been developed relative to *Alabama Laws for Youth and Pre-Law Frequently Asked Questions*.

**URBAN
FAMILY
NETWORK**



Youth and adult consumer education programs were promoted across the state during the year 2001. The first state LifeSmarts competition was held on the campus of A&M University. Youth showcased their consumer savvy in a game show format, and participating winners from the Hayden community went on to the national competition that was held in San Diego, CA.



LifeSmarts is a program of the National Consumer League that seeks to improve the consumer knowledge of teens in grades 9-12 relative to personal finance, health and safety, the environment, technology and consumer rights and responsibilities. UANNP is the state's partner for this consumer education program.

Grant prospectus and partnership agreements have been developed to expand financial management outreach and training to underserved/limited resource audiences, non-English speaking citizens, the elderly, and clientele who may be impacted by domestic violence. During 2001, training efforts were focused in research based need areas of consumer fraud,

investing, retirement, credit, money management and savings.

Educational tools such as the money management calendars, the on-line Pocket Money Tracker and the Department of the Treasury's Electronic Funds Transfer 99 program were used to educate over 2,000 clients on organized ways to manage their resources.

A multi-state agreement was formed with New Mexico State University to provide resources that facilitate outreach to Limited English Proficient families and children. The objective is to enhance the consumer education, personal finance and domestic violence knowledge of Spanish-speaking audiences in selected counties in north Alabama.

In the area of parenting, Urban Family Network (UFN) specialists identified and trained trainers using creative, nontraditional resources. Emphasis was placed on delivering programs to meet the needs of the state's changing family profiles. Over 12,000 clients were served through UFN parenting programs at state and county levels. Curriculum packages were developed and/or adapted for long-distance parenting, grandparents parenting grandchildren and families in divorce transition.

One state specialist and two county Extension agents with urban responsibilities partici-

pated in training and were registered as directors to provide educational services under the RAINBOWS program.



As registered directors, these educators are working to establish agreements to implement RAINBOWS across the state to help children cope with loss due to death or divorce, which is the objective of the program. A grant to the Governor's Office on Drug Abuse Policy For At-Risk Youth has proposed piloting the program in the Dothan and Montgomery metro areas.

A lead specialist with the UFN is working to establish support groups for grandparents who are parenting grandchildren. The objective is to establish community-networking groups that understand and relate to parenting, legal and financial issues facing grandparents who function in dual roles.

Specialists in the UFN have partnered with the Huntsville-Housing Authority to establish a Family Life Center located in Huntsville's inner city Patton Apartments. The Family Life Center represents a community-based hub for families that dwell in the metro area's public housing. Programs offered through the facility during 2001 continued to address diverse educational needs of nutrition and health, money management and workforce preparation.

STUDENTS PROMOTING ACTION: COMMUNITY EDUCATION

During FY 2000-2001, the Students Promoting Action: Community Education (SPACE) program recruited five program site managers to provide volunteer leadership and training to SPACE programs across the state. A volunteer recruitment

program that targets largely untapped sources of student volunteers at secondary and post-secondary institutions, SPACE activities and programs are presently operating at Alabama A&M University in Madison County, Calhoun

Community College in program that targets largely untapped sources of student volunteers at secondary and post-secondary institutions.

THE TWO "C" PROGRAM: CITIZENS AS CHANGE AGENTS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

The *Yes I Can* curriculum that was designed by the specialist giving leadership to the Two "C" Program, was used as a training tool to meet the expectations of partnership agreements between Extension, the Madison County Juvenile Court (PHOENIX program) and the Neaves Davis Detention Home.

Yes I Can is a prevention and intervention program that has proven successful with at-risk youth as well as with 4-H youth and adults needing assistance in boosting their self-esteem, values clarification, job hunting skills and study habits. More than 2500 children, juveniles, teenagers and inmates going before the courts and/or participating in other youth development programs were reached.

Evaluations and observations show a general change in behavior subsequent to youth's involvement in the *Yes I Can* program. Specifically, program administrators in detention facilities reported positive changes in behavior, resulting in less tension and less vocal temperament among the youth. Reports also reflected a decrease in repeat offenders in juvenile programs.

The Madison County Juvenile Court's Chief Probation Officer is partnering with the project's lead specialist to develop a model PHOENIX program including a transportable training manual and video for statewide implementation of the PHOENIX program. Similar services were provided at the AIM/Julia Tutwiler Prison



in Montgomery County. A total of 600 adult female inmates were trained using the *Yes I Can* curriculum in the areas of building self esteem, values clarification, and preparing for the job market.

The curriculum was also used in Lauderdale, Montgomery and Bibb Counties to educate an estimated 2,000 youth in local communities on building their self-confidence and improving their study skills.



COMMERCIAL AND HOME HORTICULTURE

Relative to horticultural programs, research continued in nontraditional areas of plant production during 2001. Emphasis was on identifying new approaches to increase the yield of shiitake mushroom production on logs. Funding support was obtained to continue the development of a shiitake Web site that should be completed by January 1, 2002. Over 200 articles have been summarized and will be searchable and included as links. Cooperative programs are being developed between the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, the Florida Mushroom Growers Association and the University of Georgia. Plans are underway to develop a cooperative agreement and a regional symposium in 2002.

Work in the area of commercial landscape and gardening also resulted in the development of a Web site that includes detailed photos of landscape plants, their characteristics and descriptions. The site serves as a tool for

identifying and choosing landscape plants and can be used by agents, and clientele.

County Extension agents worked diligently to assist communities and community leaders with farmers' markets, community gardens and projects. Lauderdale County's "Farmers' Market Nutrition Program," a collaborative effort between Extension, the Farmers' Market Authority, and Alabama's State Department of Health, distributed over 8,500 coupon vouchers to clientele to redeem for fresh produce at a local farmers' market. Community vegetable garden concepts were promoted in Birmingham City Schools serving over 450 youth through partnership efforts with the Birmingham Urban Garden Society (B.U.G.S.). And, residents of neighborhood duplexes in the Titusville community were educated on container gardening to beautify a renovated inner city area.

MANAGING AND VALUING DIVERSITY

Programs offered under the Managing and Valuing Diversity project corresponded with grassroots needs as reflected by Census 2000 data. No doubt, the face of Alabama is changing. The state has one of the fastest growing Hispanic populations in the country. Over the past decade there has been significant growth in metropolitan counties. Rural Alabama has also experienced some growth with two non-metropolitan counties – Bibb and Marshall – ranking among the ten fastest growing counties in the state.

Between 1990 and 2000, the Asian population increased by 50% and the Hispanic population increased by over 200%. Geographical shifts from rural communities to urban locations and changes in Alabama's population profile have increased the demand for programs that educate citizens on ways to manage diversity and deal with issues related to the urban-rural interface. Agents

across the state coordinated creative and innovative diversity programs. "Welcome to My World" in Hale County serviced over 500 fourth through sixth graders. The "Soy Unica, Soy Latina" multi-county health and cultural festival in Houston County attracted an estimated 350 families. "Let's Take a Trip," a cultural diversity program conducted in Madison County in collaboration with the International Student Association at Alabama A&M University was designed to teach the 160 students and teachers involved about the similarities and differences in people, their food, language, costumes and culture.

An estimated 2100 citizens increased their awareness, understanding and tolerance of cultural differences through other county and statewide efforts. County personnel worked to promote and/or establish collaborative work through diversity councils and county coalitions. Seminars and conferences with state agencies, educational institutions, and

community organizations helped to educate citizens on how to respond to and manage differences. Some 200 employees of the Child Nutrition Program of Huntsville City Schools received diversity training through Extension's Managing and Valuing Diversity Program. A statewide diversity symposium and in-service training held at Alabama A&M University trained over 100 professionals and educators on issues related to racial profiling, prejudice and people with disabilities, keeping racism out of the workplace, and bridging cultural differences. A Tuscaloosa district youth leadership conference, "It's a Small World," involved over 250 youth in organized diversity workshops, including "Take a Walk in My Shoes," "Shadows of Hate," and "We the American Hispanics."

A Spanish-only website and a Spanish translation of UANNP's newsletter, *Metro News*, are additional state resources that have been initiated to expand the unit's reach to new, diverse and non-English speaking audiences.

ENHANCING SMALL RUMINANT ANIMAL HEALTH CARE DELIVERY SYSTEMS



Enhancing Small Ruminant Animal Health Care Delivery Systems seeks to educate consumers on best practices, enhance productive efficiency of small ruminant breed herds and

provide research and expertise to assist agents who are developing programs of instruction.

During 2001, new publications were valuable resources for moving the project towards its established goals. A sheep and goat management calendar provided helpful management and animal health related tips.

Preliminary work was completed for two newsletters (HARE Today and G.O.A.T (Grassroots Outreach for Animal Technologies) that will premier in printed and electronic format in 2002.

The calendar and the newsletters target sheep, goat and rabbit producers, veterinarians, Extension agents, Extension clientele and other professionals interested in health and education needs of these specific livestock industries.

HEALTH INITIATIVE IMPACTING UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

The Health Initiative Impacting Underserved Populations was designed to provide educational outreach to reduce risk factors of chronic diseases, (smoking, high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, diabetes, and obesity). Activities conducted under this initiative serviced nearly 10,000 clients. A number of grants were written to pursue external funding to support the initiative. A funded grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) allowed a team of Extension and AAMU University faculty to participate in the annual Summer Institute for health and nutrition educators. The 2001 Institute was held in Accra, Ghana. It focused on ways to lend support to the African Nutrition Capacity Development Initiative that seeks to renew and strengthen the role of nutrition in any development agenda in Africa. A research, teaching and Extension outreach team from

Alabama A&M University presented a proposal on the "Modification of Peanut-Based Foods Commonly Consumed in Africa to Increase Vitamin A Content." The team plans to expand the proposal and pursue funding and partnership initiatives for outreach opportunities on the African continent.

Funding received from the USDA's Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service will support a three-year multi-state project between Alabama, Washington, West Virginia, Idaho and Hawaii. The Germ City project seeks to educate youth and adults on the importance of hand washing to food safety, food handling, disease prevention and personal health to facilitate meaningful changes in hand washing behaviors. The research base and evaluation methodology developed and utilized during this project can

be successfully applied to additional target audiences throughout the food system including food service operations, field sanitation leading to improved microbiological safety of fresh fruits and vegetables, and food processing operations. These changes will lead to a healthier and more productive community – decreased health care costs and increased productivity.

Additional funding has been sought through the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program (NEP) to expand the program to underserved urban communities targeting seniors who participate in the nutrition programs at senior nutrition sites and youth and adults who live in public housing facilities in the state's metropolitan areas. The urban NEP will empower low-income families to make wise food choices, to select and prepare safe foods and to consume a nutrient dense diet of healthy foods.

A COMPREHENSIVE BREAST CANCER AWARENESS PROJECT

Since the Comprehensive Breast Cancer Awareness project was initiated in 1998, 32 counties have established community coalitions with health-related agencies or are collaborating with health councils to increase awareness of risk factors and encourage self-help approaches to early detection of breast cancer. Interactive seminars, "Purple Teas," health fairs, and lunch and learn sessions were made with over 13,000 male and female citizens.

The four-year partnership agreement with the American Cancer Society (ACS) continued with an ongoing focus on breast self exams (BSE) as early detection, and the Tell-a-Friend program. The Tell-a-Friend program has a proven record of success in getting women to obtain a mammogram. Using a peer-oriented approach to reach

hard-to-reach audiences, Tell-a-Friend coordinators recruit volunteer callers who contact friends or family members to encourage them to get a mammogram.

A number of agents embraced the program and partnered with their local and regional ACS offices to plan and implement outreach services. A first time Relay for Life event in Chambers County was co-chaired by a Chambers County Extension agent. Community efforts raised a net total of \$47,000 to support cancer education and awareness programs. The agent was the recipient of the American Cancer Society's Cancer Control Life Savers Award. An agent in Mobile County also received the American Cancer Society's Regional Life Savers Award in April 2001

Coalitions also created a closer alliance with health agencies such as the Alabama Partnership for Cancer Control in Underserved Populations, National Cancer Institute, the University of Alabama-Birmingham Comprehensive Cancer Center and the Alabama Department of Public Health. Activities proposed under funded projects through the Alabama Department of Public Health will assist county Extension agents in Jefferson and Macon Counties in providing educational information on the importance of screening for the early detection of breast and cervical cancer. The grants will also support enrollment of qualified women into the Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program.

