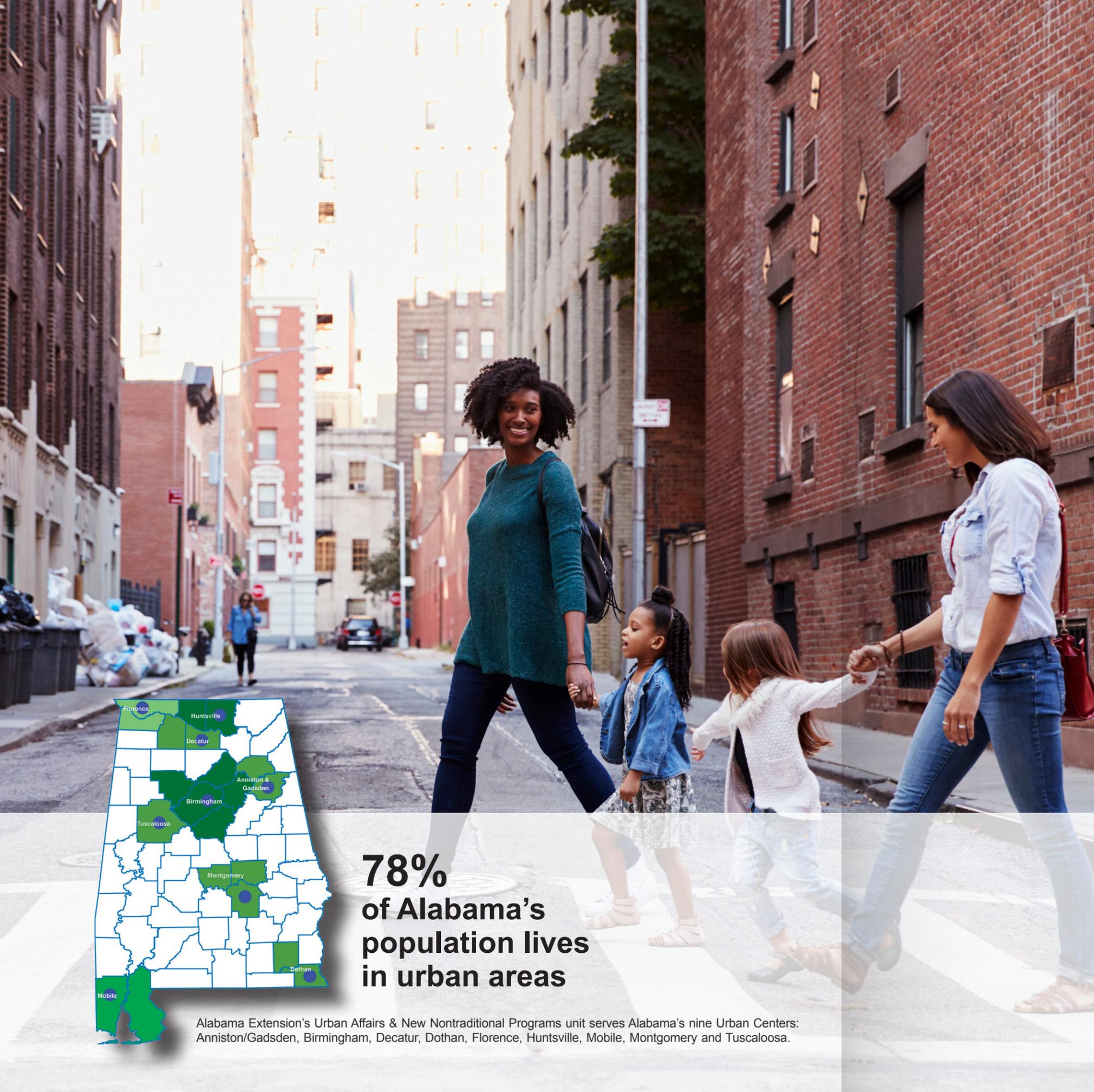




The Urban Difference: Report 2017
Urban Affairs & New Nontraditional Programs
UPN-2133



78%
of Alabama's
population lives
in urban areas

Alabama Extension's Urban Affairs & New Nontraditional Programs unit serves Alabama's nine Urban Centers: Anniston/Gadsden, Birmingham, Decatur, Dothan, Florence, Huntsville, Mobile, Montgomery and Tuscaloosa.



► **Dr. Allen Malone, 1890 Administrator** and **Dr. Celvia Stovall, Associate Director**

From the Administrators

With nearly 80% of Alabama's population now living in urban areas, Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs is changing the way you view Alabama Extension. Through the programs highlighted in this report, you will discover how we made The Urban Difference by:

- Partnering with law enforcement agencies to remove harmful drugs like opioid medication from homes and the hands of Alabama youth.
- Increasing child literacy by empowering parents to teach their child to read; therefore strengthening family bonds.
- Helping residents to understand the value of a dollar as they saved money, reduced debt or reviewed their credit score for the very first time.
- Educating citizens about healthy eating habits and the importance of physical activity in reducing the onset of chronic diseases.
- Encouraging residents to become water conservationists by installing rain barrels at local homes and businesses.
- Paving the way for Alabama youth to not only choose the right job, but a STEM career to reduce current labor shortages and bolster global competition.

You could say that our vision is clear and our hands remain on the pulse of Alabama cities—ready to adapt our programs to meet Alabama's changing and growing needs.



Animal Science & Forages

► Risk Management Strategies for Small-scale Farmers

Expanding Alternative Meat Markets

Small ruminant producers in the Southeast have an opportunity to expand their markets by providing alternative foods like goat meat to Alabama's growing and diverse populations. Unlike other livestock producers, approximately 90% of sheep and goat production in the United States is conducted by individuals and families on less than 50 acres and many of these entrepreneurs obtain their income from other sources. That's why risk management strategies are extremely valuable to small-scale producers.

Alabama Extension's Animal Science and Forages Team educates regional goat and sheep producers about basic management strategies that will enable them to breed healthier animals with minimal risks and costs. As a result of participating in regional workshops and field days, 373 small-scale and limited-resource farmers in Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee provided the following outcomes:

- 288 (77%) gained knowledge of key production management practices for sheep and goats.
- 84 (23%) observed improved sheep and goat production efficiency.
- 70 (19%) observed improved herd health and well-being among sheep and goats.
- 71 (19%) reported increased profitability rates ranging from 5 to 20%, or an average of \$5,100 more revenue a year.

Risk management education allows alternative meat producers to meet consumer demands, reduce operating costs, and improve on-farm revenue.



\$5,100
average revenue gained per year from using new practices

77%
learned new production management practices

Financial management education helps individuals and families to learn the value of saving money that could offset economic crises and enable them to meet financial goals.



417
attendees applied for a copy of their credit report for the first time



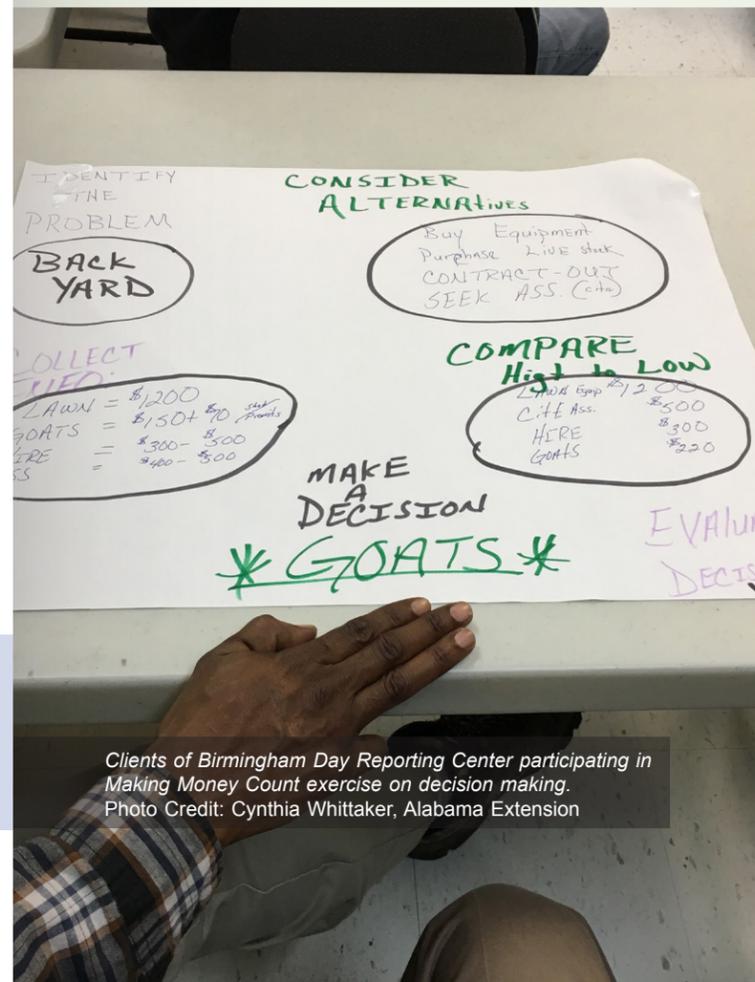
75%
used spending plans



57%
included their kids in family conversations about money



139
made less impulsive financial decisions



Clients of Birmingham Day Reporting Center participating in Making Money Count exercise on decision making. Photo Credit: Cynthia Whittaker, Alabama Extension

Consumer Sciences & Personal Financial Management

► 40% of Alabama residents have debt that is near "collections" status

Making Ends Meet

American credit card debt is estimated to be \$1 trillion dollars with the average household credit card debt at \$5,700 (ValuePenguin, 2018). However, for Alabama consumers that figure is much higher at \$6,052. According to data collected by the Urban Institute in Washington, DC, 40% of Alabama residents have debt that is near "collections" status. High credit card debt can lower credit scores and the lower the credit scores, the greater the chance that consumers will pay higher interest rates on personal loans. Programs like Making Money Count help consumers to improve their economic well-being by avoiding financial risks, indebtedness, and bankruptcy.

In 2017, 417 Making Money Count participants applied for a copy of their credit report for the very first time. Post-delayed assessments collected from 176 participants further indicated the following:

- 162 (92%) tracked spending habits.
- 139 (79%) made less impulsive financial decisions.
- 139 (79%) reduced the use of high interest credit such as payday loans, cash advances or title loans.
- 132 (75%) used spending plans.
- 100 (57%) included their kids in family conversations about money.
- 93 (53%) identified ways to reduce spending.
- 48 (27%) used a debt management software such as Powerpay at www.powerpay.org.

In addition, individuals saved an average of \$70 a month or \$840 a year for a grand total of \$147,840. Participants not only added money to their monthly budget, but they learned how to live within their means or as the idiom goes: to make ends meet.

Economic & Community Development

► Career planning motivates students, increasing test scores and graduation rates

Choosing the Right Career Path

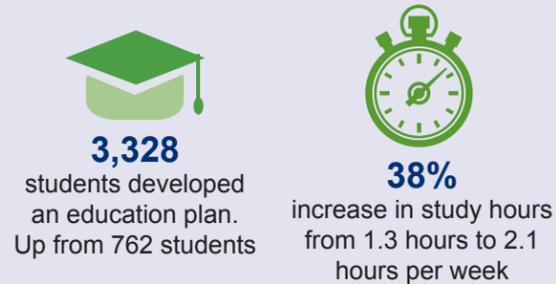
The high school dropout rate has declined across the nation from 11% in 2000 to 6% in 2015. Today, Alabama high schools graduate nearly 90% of its students compared to just 72% in 2011 (Crain, 2017). The impact of not having a high school education has far reaching effects that not only weigh heavily upon students and their families, but upon the communities in which they live. For example, students that do not graduate from high school are more likely to earn less money in their lifetime and could end up in state or federal prisons. Rand Corporation Policy Researcher Lois Davis reported that the high school dropout rate among inmates was 40% (NPR, 2015). Data from the National Center for Education further indicated that salary levels for full-time young adult workers, age 25-34, who didn't have a high school education was only \$25K compared to young adults of the same age with a high school or bachelor's degree at \$30K and \$52K respectively. High school dropouts were also more likely to experience higher unemployment rates.

The Career Countdown program encourages youth to finish school and to take an active role in developing future career plans. In 2017, approximately 4,521 students participated in program activities, of which 4010 completed an education and a career plan. Post-assessment data among 3,702 students revealed the following:

- 1,962 (53%) reported they had explored new careers.
- 926 (25%) began studying for the ACT.
- 1,666 (45%) studied harder.
- 2,258 (61%) improved grades.
- 111 (3%) applied for postsecondary education institutions.

Career planning motivates students to graduate from high school and achieve higher educational scores that can pave the way for greater academic or job success.

Students that don't graduate high school are more likely to earn less money in their lifetime and could end up in detention centers.



Career Countdown being implemented in Shelby County
Photo Credit: Cynthia Whittaker, Alabama Extension

Family & Child Development

► Equipping parents with the tools they need to successfully teach their child to read

Reading is Fundamental

Reading, writing and arithmetic are all fundamental skills that children and adults need throughout their lives. However, according to the Children's Literacy Foundation, 68% of American kids in the fourth grade are not competent readers. What's even more frightening is that kids who do not read adequately by the third grade are less likely to graduate from high school and could end up being incarcerated. The Alabama Department of Corrections estimates that the state spends approximately \$9,128 to educate a student per year and \$15,500 to care for an inmate. Therefore, poor reading skills do not come without a cost. Even if low literacy youth enter college, they may have to enroll in remedial reading classes in order to catch up, which could potentially add an extra \$1,000 to \$3,000 to annual tuition costs.

The PCREP (Parent-Child Reading Enhancement Program) is designed to teach parents reading strategies to help their child to read or to improve their reading skills. The program is aimed at children 4 to 9 years-of-age and focuses on the

five essential components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. In 2017, 42 parents completed the 6-week program (18 hours per semester) prior to the close of the academic school year in May. After participating in PCREP, parents learned new skills to further engage their child in the reading process. For example, they allowed children to select books to read, to identify photos, to point out words related to the story, or to retell the story in their own words.

On June 10, 2017, PCREP held its annual Family Day of Education and Fun, reaching an estimated 545 adults and more than 300 children. During this event, kids and adults had an opportunity to earn PCREP dollars upon completing educational activities provided by exhibitors. The play money was then used to purchase educational materials at an on-site bookstore. Now in its third year, the Family Day of Education and Fun was voted as the "outstanding project of the year" in 2017 by the Alabama's Mountains, Rivers and Valleys Resource Conservation and Development Council in North Alabama.

Children that are able to read by the third or fourth grade are more likely to finish high school and less likely to enter a juvenile detention center or an adult correctional facility.

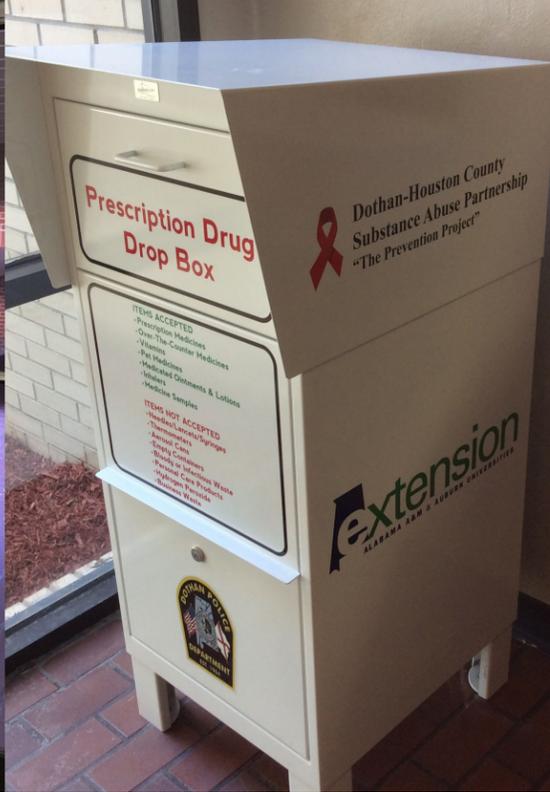


PCREP children and adult participants.
Photo Credit: Ronnie Humphrey, Alabama Extension





Prescription drug drop box at Dothan Police Department in Houston County Photo Credit: Phillip Carter, Alabama Extension



Home Grounds, Gardens & Home Pests

► Educating audiences about the importance of water conservation as it relates to landscaping

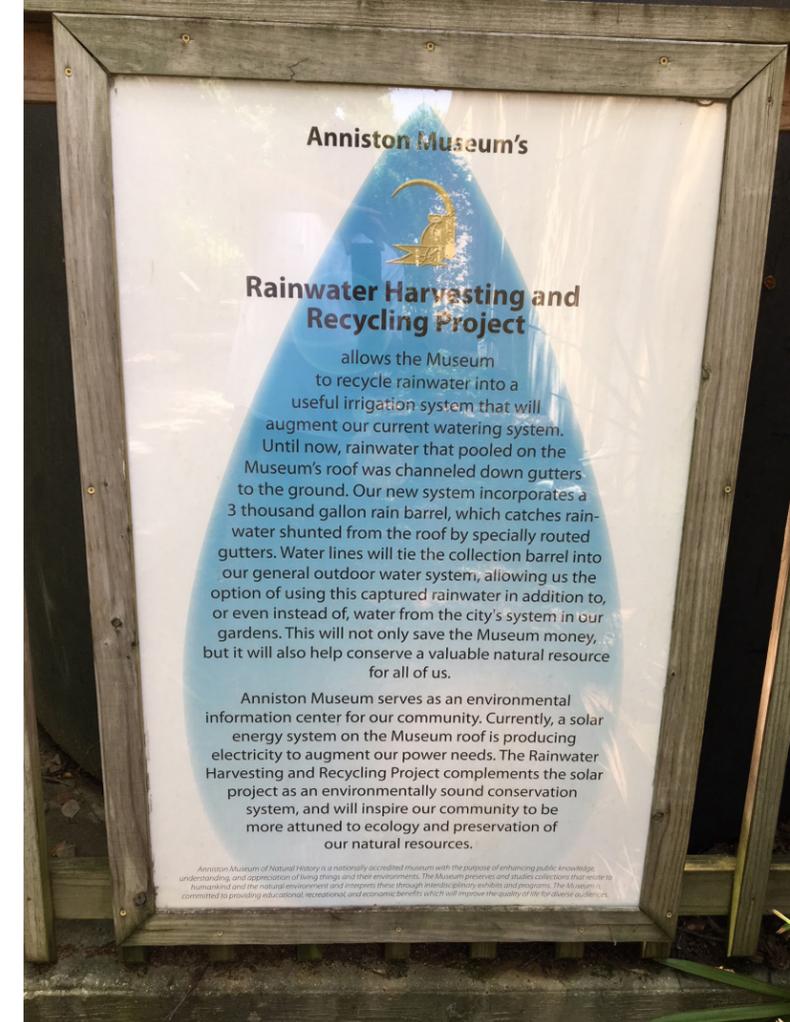
Keeping Drought at Bay

While some animals can survive for years without water, mankind can only survive an average of 3 to 5 days before dehydration sets in (Palmer, 2016). Water, one of the most important natural resources, covers 70% of the planet, yet only 1.2% is fresh water that can be used to support life on Earth. With the average family using about 300 gallons of water daily or 109,500 gallons a year, it's critical that we become better stewards of one of the most precious resources, particularly in a partially drought-stricken state like Alabama.

In 2017, Home Grounds Team reached 15,368 participants through its programming efforts, of which 3,219 individuals were engaged through a mobile conservation laboratory called Water Wheels. Water Wheels not only served as a medium to educate school audiences about the importance of water conservation but it educated consumers about water conservation as it relates to landscaping and crop production. As a result of these efforts, fifty 60-gallon rain barrels were sold and installed across the state.

The annual rainfall in Alabama in 2017 was 55 inches, which equates to approximately 165K gallons of rainwater being harvested by Urban Extension conservationists. In addition, the large cistern located at Anniston's Longleaf Botanical Gardens collected and used 35K gallons of rainwater for their operation for a total of 200K gallons of water being collected in 2017. Alabama utility companies charge consumers an average of \$32.80 per 5,000 gallons of water (ADEM, EFC, 2016). Therefore, an estimated \$13,120 was saved in water utility costs.

Water conservation strategies help to reduce waste, save consumers and organizations money, and ensure that man and other living organisms have an adequate water supply in the future.



\$13,120
saved in estimated utility costs



15,368
participants were reached through programming efforts



Rainwater cistern at Longleaf Botanical Gardens in Anniston, AL Photo Credit: Hayes, Alabama Extension

Forestry, Wildlife, & Natural Resources

► One of the growing problems facing our nation today is the rising opioid drug crisis

Fighting the Opioid Crisis in Alabama

One of the growing problems facing our nation today is the rising opioid drug crisis. In 2017, an opioid overdose resulted in approximately 60,000 deaths and public health officials do not see a decline in opioid deaths in the near future. Among the teen population age 14 and older, prescription drugs are commonly misused following alcohol and marijuana. According to the Monitoring the Future Survey Drug Facts survey conducted by the National Institute of Drug Abuse, teens in the twelfth grade are finding it harder to obtain opioid drugs. However, this news may not be so hopeful in Alabama since the state ranks as one of the highest in the nation for writing opioid prescription medications, which led to approximately 736 deaths in 2015. In August 2017, the Governor of Alabama

issued Executive Order 708 to establish the Alabama Opioid Overdose and Addiction Council.

Sadly, approximately 23% of all opioid users become addicted to opioid drugs that often results in high treatment costs. A study of 162 academic hospitals in 44 states led by the Deaconess Medical Center in Boston found that the cost to treat opioid patients had risen from \$58,500 in 2009 to 92,000 in 2015, and it now costs an average of \$2,000 for a 60-day outpatient drug rehabilitation program.

The Synergistic Efforts to Reduce Pharmaceutical Impacts on the Environment program offers resources that enable citizens to protect their home and the environment from pharmaceuticals and personal care products (PPCPs). Approximately 53 activities were conducted in 2017, of which 10 were drug take back programs that resulted in 2.2 tons of PPCPs being diverted from public landfills, water supplies, and the hands of small children and teens. Through these efforts, the Urban Affairs unit reached more than 643 participants at 6 of the 10 drug take back events held in Autauga, Elmore, Madison, Morgan, and Montgomery counties.

Community drug take back drives remain a convenient and non-judgmental way for the public to safely dispose of unwanted and expired medication that often leads to high treatment costs, overdoses, and even death.



2.2 tons
of PPCPs were collected & properly disposed



Adult CHAMPION participants completing program assessment. Photo Credit: Darlene Minniefield, Alabama Extension



Urban SNAP-Ed Educator Kyondria Timmons participants at Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club of South Alabama in Mobile County. Photo Credit: Kyondria Timmons, Alabama Extension

Human Nutrition, Diet & Health

► Health education is critical in helping to relieve chronic diseases that contribute to higher health costs across the nation

Take the Hype out of Hypertension

You've heard the expression "know your numbers!" Those numbers refer to your blood pressure, your cholesterol levels and your waist size. Hypertension is a chronic disease that occurs in 1 in 3 adults in America or an estimated 75 million people (CDC, 2016). When your blood pressure is elevated, it could put you at risk for heart disease and other health problems, including stroke, kidney failure and vision loss. High blood pressure or hypertension is also a chronic disease that occurs as a result of being overweight. As reported in Costhelper.com, a free consumer resource, it costs between \$4-168 for hypertension medication a month. For patients that do not have health insurance, treatment for hypertension could run anywhere from \$740 to \$1,200 a year, averaging about \$861 (\$454 for physician visits and \$407 for prescription costs).

Alabama Extension's CHAMPION program (Community Health, Aerobics and Motivational Program Initiating Optimal Nutrition) has proven itself to be a useful resource in taking the "hype" out of hypertension. It is designed to

combat chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and hypertension by providing interactive education focusing on healthy eating and increasing physical activity as effective tools to decrease chronic disease risk factors.

Last year CHAMPION reached approximately 1,059 adults. Pre- and post-test surveys collected from 1,042 adults revealed an increased knowledge of nutrition, chronic diseases, and physical activity. In addition, behavior assessed among 632 adults 3 to 6 months after the training indicated that 455 (72%) participants consumed 1-2 cups of fruit daily; 367 (58%) consumed 1-2 cups of vegetables daily; and 278 (44%) engaged in physical activity for 3-5 days per week for at least 30 minutes.



1059

were reached by CHAMPION program efforts in 2017



44%

of attendees increased physical actives after participating

► Reducing drinks with high sugar content can minimize the potential health risks associated with diet-related illnesses

Reducing the Intake of Sugary Drinks

The 2016 report titled *Food Typically Purchased by Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Households* published by the United States Department of Agriculture found that sugary drinks accounted for 7% of America's grocery budget. This report sounded an urgent alarm for a department that is a big proponent of helping America to eat healthier through its starship Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, better known as SNAP. The study compared SNAP and non-SNAP participants across all income levels and found that SNAP households spent 9.3% on sugary drinks while non-SNAP households spent 7.1% on these products. The study also came at a time when drinking sugar-added soft drinks and juices is being discouraged since they are factors in raising America's obesity rate for both youth and adults. Alabama ranks third in the nation for obesity among the adult population. But just as the report indicated, there has been a national decrease in the purchase and consumption of drinks with high sugar content.

The Urban SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education), the educational outreach component of SNAP, encourages participants to stretch the monthly food budget, practice food safety, engage in regular physical activity, and to cook and eat healthy meals

and snacks, which includes reducing their intake of sugary drinks. During 2017, USNAP-Ed reached a total of 2,694 adult and 2,299 youth participants. Assessment data taken among 1,436 adults and 2,299 youth indicated that both groups increased their consumption of fruits, vegetables, grains, lean meats, and low-fat or fat-free dairy products, while decreasing their consumption of fats, salt, and sugar.

Post-assessment data also indicated that the number of adult participants who engaged in some type of physical activity each day, such as walking, jogging, or swimming increased 25% among a total of 1,436 respondents from 876 (61%) to 1,235 (86%). Youth activities also increased 17% from 1,310 (57%) to 1,701 (74%) among 2,299 respondents. Additionally, plain water consumption increased by 26% from 1,081 (47%) to 1,678 (73%), and drinking sugary beverages decreased by 17% from 713 (31%) to 322 (14%).

Reducing drinks with high sugar content, eating a healthy diet and increasing physical activity can minimize weight gain and potential health risks associated with diet-related illnesses.



17%

decrease in drinking sugary drinks

26%

increase in drinking plain water

4-H Youth Development & Volunteerism

► Avoiding the use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco can improve health & wellness and save consumers money

Kicking the Tobacco Habit

The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids estimates that 36,000 (14%) of high school students smoke in Alabama and at least 25% of these students use electronic vapor cigarettes or e-cigarettes. Unfortunately, research funded by the National Institutes of Health and the Food and Drug Administration revealed that teens who use e-cigarettes were more likely to try a regular cigarette a year later (NIDA, 2018). The Centers for Disease and Prevention (CDC) reported that most adult smokers (90%) started smoking before the age of 19. Furthermore, if today's youth continue smoking at their current rate, nearly 6 million under the age of 18 could die from a smoking-related illness.

Not only are cigarettes harmful to a person's health, but they are also expensive. Alabamians spend an average of \$5.36 per pack of cigarettes and as much as \$1,840 a year (CTFK, 2018). That's why programs like Alabama 4-H Health Rocks!® that provide health education and include the involvement of family and community members, are effective in discouraging tobacco habits and the use of alcohol and illicit drugs among teens.



3,503
completed 10 hrs of
4-H Health Rocks!®
training in 2017



89%
of participants intended
to avoid drug and
tobacco use

In 2017, 3,503 urban youth completed 10 hours or more training in Health Rocks!®. After participating in the program, 3,258 (93%) of youth participants learned that people who smoke or do drugs can have serious health and relationship problems, are more likely to suffer from delusions, and could make poor decisions. Nearly 3,118 (89%) of youth participants disapproved of engaging in risky behaviors related to substance use and intended to avoid tobacco even under stressful conditions. They also felt confident enough to avoid using drugs if offered by peers



Extension programs like TMI help youth to make sound decisions, including wise decisions when it comes to healthy living.



TMI students learn about healthy living year round and visit the University of Alabama in Huntsville's College of Nursing. Photo Credit: Dr. Andrea Morris, Alabama Extension

► Helping youth engage in healthier lifestyle eating and exercise habits can help reduce their chances of becoming overweight adults

Combating Childhood Obesity in Alabama

Many people know that 4-H programs comprise much of the Extension youth development programs today, but few people may be aware that 4-H stands for a head for clearer thinking, a heart for greater loyalty, hands for larger service, and health for better living. 4-H and youth development programs like Teens Making Impact (TMI) are helping teens to improve their overall health.

According to the disease prevention organization Trust for America's Health (2017), about 90% of American children have poor diets and 35.5% of Alabama children are overweight or obese, placing Alabama sixth in the nation as having higher incidences of overweight and obese children ages 10 to 17. Unfortunately, obese children are more likely to be obese as adults. Extension programs like TMI help youth to make sound decisions, including wise decisions when it comes to healthy living.

In 2017, 818 urban youth completed a series of five lessons in the TMI curriculum. As a result of participation in TMI, post-assessment data among 439 students revealed the following:

- The number of participants that improved their knowledge of exercising increased from 176 (40%) to 255 (58%).
- The number of participants that improved their knowledge of choosing a career increased from 171 (39%) to 259 (59%).
- The number of participants that improved their knowledge of choosing healthy snacks increased from 146 (33.3%) to 244 (55.5%).

At program exit among 439 youth, 189 (43%) reported engaging in physical activity for 30-60 minutes a day. In addition, 193 (44%) ate fruit for a dessert or snack instead of cookies or cakes. Increasing physical activity not only combats obesity but guards against diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, arthritis, and obesity-related cancer.



Tuscaloosa County Health Rocks!® youth with Urban Regional Extension Agent Chante Myles and members of the West Alabama Narcotics Task Force during Red Ribbon Week. Red Ribbon Week helps to raise awareness about the need for alcohol, tobacco, drug, and violence prevention in America. Photo Credit: Chante Myles, Alabama Extension

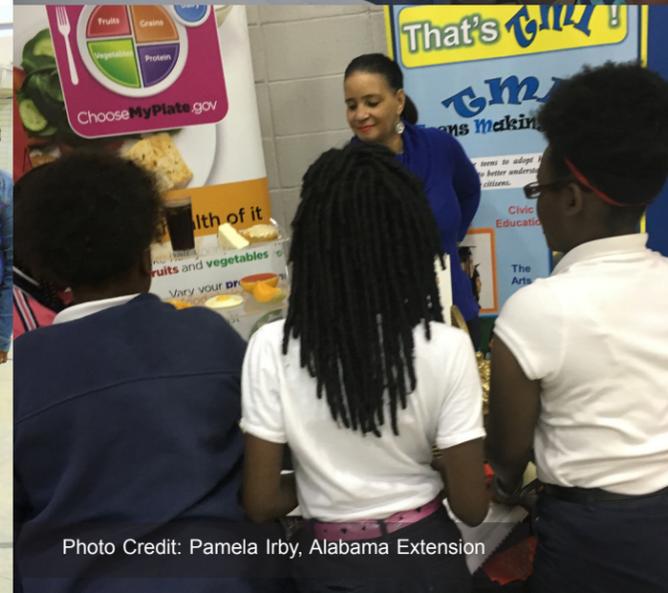


Photo Credit: Pamela Irby, Alabama Extension

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