**4-H**

Childhood obesity is a serious problem not only in Georgia but across the United States. Murray County is focused on teaching healthy eating habits as well as exercise. According to the CDC, 19.7 % percent of children and adolescents are affected by obesity in the United States. Research shows that the prevalence of obesity decreased with increasing levels of education among children and adolescents aged 2-19 years. Murray County 4-H offers the Healthy Living Curriculum to educate youth in nutrition education and goal setting. Programming highlights include teaching the Healthy Living Curriculum to every 6th grader in Murray County (438 students) throughout the school year, some of those lessons being taught by our Healthy Living Youth Ambassadors and our Healthy Living day camp hosted at Fort Mountain State Park where our Healthy Living Youth Ambassadors teach lessons to younger youth and adult volunteers assist. The Murray County Healthy Living goal of 25 youth to receive 8 hours of Healthy Living instruction and complete formal evaluations for 2022-2023 was met. Programming highlights include teaching 6 hours of the Healthy Living Curriculum to every 6th grader in Murray County (438 students) throughout the school year**,** some of those lessons being taught by our youth Action Leaders and our Healthy Living day camp hosted at Fort Mountain State Park where our Healthy Living Youth Leaders teach lessons to younger youth and adult leaders assist. One success story shared was one youth’s reaction to the “Less Stress on the Test” lesson. One of our 6th grade 4-H’ers was suffering from anxiety this past year. After class, he said, “I’m going to start using some of the techniques that you taught us in class to help my worrying. I think I’ll start exercising more.” School administrators report positive impacts on their students’ behavior and see the program as meeting a vital need in the school system. Administrators provide ongoing support for our efforts to teach youth how to avoid risky behaviors involving tobacco, alcohol, and drugs.

**ANR**

Gardening is not only good for the soul, it’s good for mental and physical health and well-being. According to Richard Thompson of the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), “There is increasing evidence that exposure to plants and green space, and particularly to gardening, is beneficial to mental and physical health, and so could reduce the pressure on NHS services.” Professor Pamela Bennet of The Ohio State University says that “spending time outside on a sunny day can boost our vitamin D exposure, which in turn can reap both physical and mental benefits. Being outside in the fresh air can lower your blood pressure and affect your sense of well-being.” The topics for the spring gardening series were chosen based on surveys from past attendees: Fescue Lawns, Home Vegetable Gardens, Composting at Home, Warm Season Lawns, and Maintaining Shrubs & Hedges. Classes were offered monthly and the time was changed from the lunch hour to evenings, to improve attendance. Continuing education credits were approved for both the Fescue Lawn and Warm Season Lawn classes.66% of those surveyed said they gained knowledge they didn’t have before the class: how to prepare the garden, test for soil pH, the need for rotating crops, and how to compost, for example. When asked which gardening practices attendees intended to implement when compared to those they already practiced, attendees said: managing weeds and fertilizer, implementing crop rotation, and starting their compost pile. As part of future programming, they said they’d like to see more on the topic of small garden layouts. A comment from the follow-up survey, six months after the gardening series was: “I did use the information from the class and had a more productive garden. It was a smaller garden but it was more than I could use. Thank you for the help.”