



Maryland Cooperative Extension ***New Communities Project***

Maryland Cooperative Extension (MCE) has been conducting CYFAR projects since early 1990. We have received funding for Youth at Risk (YAR) and State Strengthening (STST) projects that have been sustained by Cooperative Extension, community members, and collaborative partners. Maryland Cooperative Extension has a long history of delivering effective educational programs to youth and adults in communities in need, such as the Expanded Food and Nutrition Program. More recently, MCE has stepped up efforts to meet the needs of children, youth and families at risk by securing funds to support Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program outreach education, engaging in rural Welfare to Work programming, and launching Dads Make A Difference, a paternity education project for high school and middle school youth at risk of becoming parents. Each of these projects capitalizes on the talents of Extension field faculty, faculty from academic units at the University Maryland, College Park or Eastern Shore, community professionals, and community members.

In 2003, MCE completed a statewide strategic planning process that affirmed our organization's mission and commitment to engaging communities in decision-making to achieve quality of life, economic prosperity, and stewardship of resources. The strategic plan affirms that individuals and communities possess assets and knowledge to meet community needs. In 2002, the MCE 4-H Youth Development program completed a strategic plan "4-H in a Changing World" that serves as a guide for our work with youth and their families. The plan includes five goals that reflect the CYFAR principles of active involvement, supportive relationships, community-based programming, collaboration, accessibility, asset development, diversity and developing effective programs that address complex conditions. One of the five goals of the Maryland 4-H strategic plan is to increase the participation of underserved and under-represented youth and adults in our programs.

In communities, extension staff are looked to for their expertise in child care provider training to increase the quality of care, nutrition and financial education for low income/at-risk audiences, knowledge of youth development issues and training for youth workers, community-building and group facilitation. They are valued partners with county and state government agencies (including Child Care Administration, Department of Education, Department of Human Resources, local housing authorities, local education authorities and local management boards), youth organizations (including Boys and Girls Club, YMCA and community-based youth groups), and non-profit organizations.

Our primary objective in the New Communities Project grant is to enhance youth development programming in underserved areas of our state through innovative, collaborative practices. Each of the three counties selected for the project have demonstrated a commitment to the CYFAR principles, ability to develop community partnerships and collaborative relationships and willingness to sustain the project beyond the grant funded period.

Frederick County

Project Title: Sagner and Hillcrest Technology After-School Centers

Location: Police Activity League (PAL), Frederick, Maryland
Hillcrest Elementary School, Frederick, Maryland

Program Purpose:

To provide youth in the Sagner and Hillcrest Communities access to computers for schoolwork and technology-based learning opportunities at the Police Activity League (PAL) facility and to support a 4-H afterschool technology program at Hillcrest Elementary School.

Program Design

The PAL Center Technology Club primarily serves children between the ages of 7-12 who live in the Sagner housing units where the PAL Center is located. (The PAL Center is a police-staffed recreation center with a computer lab.) A 4-H educator provides informal instruction to youth on software applications and educational computer games from 4-8 p.m. Tuesdays-Fridays. The Hillcrest Computer Lab is a joint effort between the Frederick City Housing Authority HOPE VI Project, Frederick City Police, and the 4-H program. Beginning October 2005, one day per week, a 4-H educator is providing instruction in basic computer literacy at the Hillcrest Elementary School Computer Lab. **County Staff:** Rebecca Davis, Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development rdavis3@umd.edu

Garrett County

Project Title: After-school Extension Enhancement

Location: The towns of Kitzmiller, Friendsville, Loch Lynn and Grantsville have local Title I elementary and middle schools where after-school activities are based.

Program Purpose:

The CYFAR NCP in Garrett County meets an identified need for academic enrichment by bringing the resources of Extension into the new system of after-school programs across the county. The resources made available include use of an outdoor education center, computer lab, youth development/life skills curricula, and the expertise of the 4-H Youth Development educator and program assistant. After school youth benefit from a variety of experiential education sessions, agriculture education with farm tours, and interactive programming at the after-school sites.

Program Design:

- Environmental education at the Western Maryland 4-H Education Center, which offers low-ropes course, canoeing, overnight camping, drumming, and nature study.
- On-site entrepreneurship, science, environmental science and exercise/nutrition programs.
- Field trips to working farms to teach ag-literacy topics.

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Somerset County Site

Project Title: Cyber-Town at the Wilson Center

Location: Woodrow Wilson Community Center, Crisfield, MD

Purpose: To provide safe and productive learning, research and training opportunities for the children, youth and adults living in Woodrow Wilson Housing, in the city of Crisfield

Program Design:

Cyber-town at the Wilson Center is the educational hub of the community, providing a safe and productive learning center for the families living in Woodrow Wilson Housing Authority. "Cyber-Town at the Wilson Center" is an educational core the focus of this project is to increase reading skills in school age youth through technology. Research studies indicate that computer instruction is effective in teaching a wide variety of reading skill and concept areas. The focus of year three is the increase the number of youth utilizing computer aided instruction to enrich their reading ability.

The Cyber-town learning center will operate Monday through Friday during the school year and throughout the summer.

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