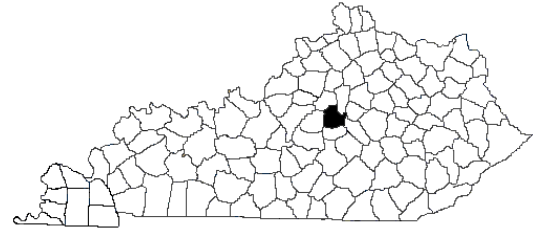


Building Strong Families for Kentucky

..... in Mercer County

Luci Hockersmith, County Extension Agent,
 Family and Consumer Sciences



Family and Consumer Sciences Extension is committed to improving the quality of life for individuals and families in Mercer County resulting in strong families for Kentucky. Educational programs focus on:

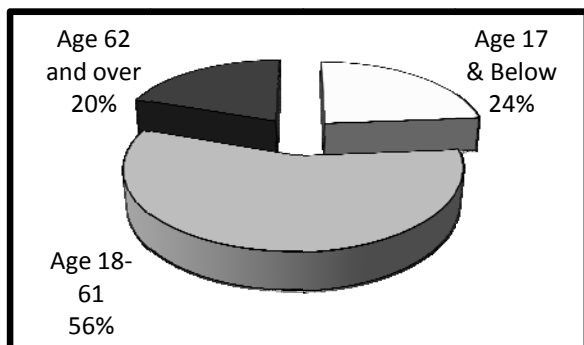
- Making Beneficial Lifestyle Choices***
- Nurturing Families***
- Embracing Life as You Age***
- Securing Financial Stability***
- Promoting Healthy Homes and Communities***
- Accessing Nutritious Food***
- Empowering Community Leaders***

Family and Consumer Sciences Extension made **15,313** contacts with Mercer County families during 2007-2008.¹

Our People

The 2000 U.S. Census reported total population as **20,817**.² The graph below indicates the percentage by age group.

Figure 1. Population by Age Group² (n=20,817)



Spotlight on . . .

Promoting Healthy Homes and Communities



In 2007, Mercer County Extension organized the county's first Martin Luther King Day observance in efforts to reach underserved audiences and further encourage unity as well as make the community aware of Extension's presence, resources, and opportunities. By hosting organizational planning meetings and facilitating volunteer resources, Extension made possible a half day program that included a community pancake breakfast, walk/march, and special program. With 255 attendees, the program included a special presentation by Dr. Aaron Thompson of EKU, recognition of student winners in essay and poster contests, music performances and keynote speaker Alvis Johnson. As a result of MLK Day 2008, Mercer County Extension has seen increased participation of African American residents in other programs.¹

Our Families

Using data from the 2000 U.S. Census, Mercer County families can be described as follows:²

- **6,108** families reside in the county.
- **609** families (**10%**) live below poverty level.
- Median family income is **\$43,121**.
- **163** grandparents are responsible for the care of their grandchildren.

According to the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, **2,758** people in Mercer County receive food stamps. The average family food stamp benefit is **\$213.69** per month.³

In the county, **60** children live in out-of-home care.⁴ In 2004, there were **24** incidents of adult abuse and **68** incidents of child abuse.⁵

As a result of participation in Mercer County Extension programs:¹

- **260** people increased their knowledge and skills related to parenting and personal relationships.
- **164** people adopted money management practices to reduce debt and/or increase savings.
- **331** people gained knowledge about safe storage, handling, and preparation of food.
- **17** people used safe practices to store, handle, and prepare food.

Our Community

Unemployment rates are a key economic indicator. In September 2008, the rate of unemployment in Mercer County was **6.1%**. This represented a **30%** increase from the September 2007 level of **4.7%**.⁶

Mortgage and bank card delinquency rates and foreclosure filings are important financial indicators of community well-being. In Mercer County, 90-day mortgage delinquency rates have increased by **89%** and **1.55%** of bank cards are 60-days delinquent.⁷ In a six-month period (May through October 2008), **39** foreclosures were filed.⁸

Access to health insurance is another important factor contributing to family well-being. In Mercer County, **13%** of the people under age 65 are uninsured.⁹

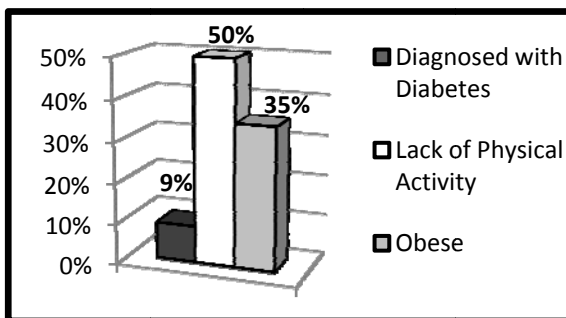
As a result of participation in Mercer County Extension programs:¹

- **1726** adults or youth improved their ability to make informed and effective decisions.
- **420** adults and youth utilized improved communication, problem solving, and group process skills to address community needs.
- Mercer County Extension is involved in **29** community coalitions.

Our Health

The health of our people contributes to quality of life. The chart below illustrates health risks of adults in Mercer County.

Figure 2. Health Risks.⁹



As a result of participation in Mercer County Extension programs:¹

- **146** people increased their use of radon testers, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and other devices to ensure personal safety.
- **22** people made lifestyle changes to improve physical health.
- **28** people implemented new practices to maintain their health and well-being.

Sources

¹ Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, Impacting Reporting, FY2008.

² U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000.

³ Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Data Book, June 2008.

⁴ Annie E. Casey Foundation, Kentucky KIDS COUNT, 2005.

⁵ Kentucky Department for Public Health, County Health Priorities, 2004.

⁶ Kentucky Office of Employment and Training, Kentucky Labor Force Estimates, September 2008.

⁷ TransUnion LLC., Trend Data, Quarter 1 2008.

⁸ Kentucky Administrative Office of the Courts, November, 2008.

⁹ Kentucky Institute of Medicine, The Health of Kentucky: A County Assessment, 2007.