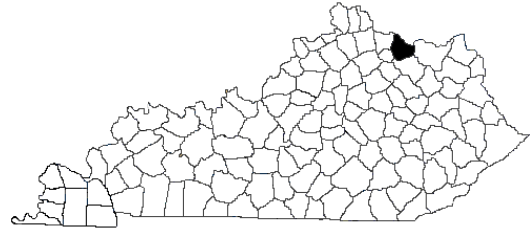


Building Strong Families for Kentucky

..... in Mason County

Debra Cotterill, 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 Mason County resulting in strong families for Kentucky. Educational programs focus on:

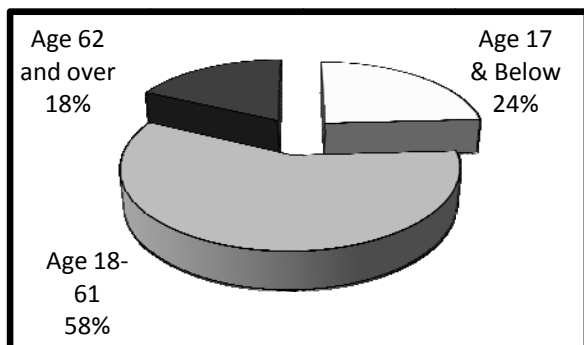
- Making Beneficial Lifestyle Choices***
- Nurturing Families***
- Embracing Life as You Age***
- Securing Financial Stability***
- Promoting Healthy Homes and Communities***
- Accessing Nutritious Food***
- Empowering Community Leaders***

Family and Consumer Sciences Extension made **10,583** contacts with Mason County families during 2007-2008.¹

Our People

The 2000 U.S. Census reported total population as **16,800**.² The graph below indicates the percentage by age group.

Figure 1. Population by Age Group² (n=16,800)



Spotlight on . . .

Securing Financial Stability



Mason County has comparatively low unemployment, but a high percentage of individuals below the poverty level. Due to our area's high use of credit, merchandise rental businesses, check cashing services, and Master Commissioner Sales, the Mason County Extension volunteers and Extension staff used the Money Crunch and Small Steps to Health and Wealth curricula to assist individuals and families with financial security. A phone survey of participants found 80% reported improving financial management skills including making a budget or spending plan. All participants reached confirmed becoming aware of the importance of starting to save and invest early in life and have identified personal or family investment goals.¹

Our Families

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

- **4,743** families reside in the county.
- **610** families (**12.9%**) live below poverty level.
- Median family income is **\$37,257**.
- **140** grandparents are responsible for the care of their grandchildren.

According to the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, **3,264** people in Mason County receive food stamps. The average family food stamp benefit is **\$222.32** per month.³

In the county, **34** children live in out-of-home care.⁴ In 2004, there were **5** incidents of adult abuse and **27** incidents of child abuse.⁵

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

- **50** people increased their knowledge and skills related to parenting and personal relationships.
- **27** adult, dependent, and child care providers increased their care giving knowledge.
- **236** people used safe practices to store, handle, and prepare food.
- **100%** of food stamp recipients or eligible recipients enrolled in the nutrition education program improved their diet.

Our Community

Unemployment rates are a key economic indicator. In September 2008, the rate of unemployment in Mason County was **6.8%**. This represented a **51%** increase from the September 2007 level of **4.5%**.⁶

Mortgage and bank card delinquency rates and foreclosure filings are important financial indicators of community well-being. In Mason County, **2.35%** of mortgages are 90-days delinquent and 60-day bank card delinquency rates have increased by **28%**.⁷ In a six-month period (May through October 2008), **20** foreclosures were filed.⁸

Access to health insurance is another important factor contributing to family well-being. In Mason County, **14%** of the people under age 65 are uninsured.⁹

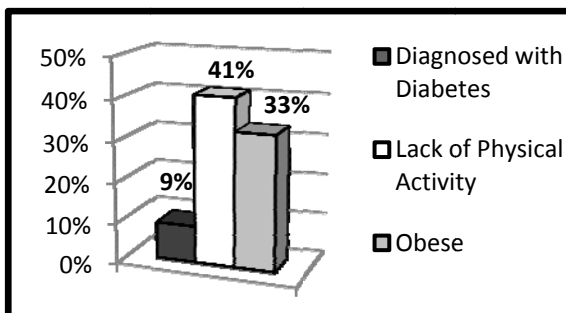
As a result of participation in Mason County Extension programs:¹

- **62** people adopted money management practices to reduce debt and/or increase savings.
- **209** adults or youth improved their ability to make informed and effective decisions.
- **128** adults and youth utilized improved communication, problem solving, and group process skills to address community needs.

Our Health

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

Figure 2. Health Risks.⁹



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

- **38** people increased their use of radon testers, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and other devices to ensure personal safety.
- **222** people made lifestyle changes to improve physical health.
- **1,231** 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.