

2024-25 Report to the People

Fulton County

 Cooperative
Extension Service



Best Start Family Event

The mission of the Governor's Office of Early Childhood is to provide leadership and direction for the Commonwealth with the goal of maintaining a comprehensive and sustainable prenatal to age five early childhood educational system that ensures a strong foundation for all children. The Four River Counties Regional Collaborative has provided high quality early childhood education for over 20 years in Ballard, Carlisle, Fulton, and Hickman counties. The Best Start Family Event was created with the intention of helping those families from prenatal to age two, as this has always been an underrepresented audience in the work of the collaborative. The goal of this event is to teach families about health and nutrition, parenting, safety, available area resources, and the importance of being kindergarten ready.



In 2024, presenters included UK FCS Specialist Dr. Weisenhorn who spoke on parenting, Johnna Carter with First Steps— Kentucky's Early Intervention System, and Alyssa Taylor from the Fulton City Police Department to discuss car seat safety. There was a total of 16 families present, which is a 220% increase from last year's event. 81% of participants were first time attendees to the event. 94% of all families reported having a greater understanding of the importance of play-based learning. 88% of all families had a greater understanding of how to safely install a car seat and where to go to check about correct installation and expiration dates. 75% of all families reported feeling more confident in being able to see changes in their child when it comes to being school ready.

Celebrating Agriculture 2024: A Growing Legacy

With a staggering \$1 billion impact and \$359,967,000 in products sold across 960 farms, WAVE AG Day 2024 spotlighted the vital role of agriculture in the four river counties. Held at Columbus Belmont State Park, the theme, "Let's Grow With It," continued to inspire the agricultural community.

WAVE AG Day is a collaborative effort, bringing together the four county judge executives, UKY Ag agents, agricultural businesses, County Farm Bureaus, River



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Agriculture and Natural Resources
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4-H Youth Development
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Valley Ag Credit, and many others. Many sponsors supported the event, with platinum sponsors presenting awards: Farmer of the Year, Ag Business of the Year, Friend of Agriculture Award, Young Farmer Award, Outstanding FFA member, and the Legacy Award.

The day began with a breakfast to honor and appreciate the farmers, producers, and agricultural businesses of the region. Over 350 attendees gathered to hear keynote addresses, including a speech by Agriculture Commissioner Jonathan Shell, who spoke on the promising opportunities for agricultural and economic development in the counties.

Attendees explored over forty vendor booths and exhibits that shared the real stories behind agriculture. 100 % of attendees felt the day was a success.

Tri-County 4-H Homeschool Club

According to the National Home Education Research Institute, about 3.1 million homeschooled students in grades K-12 in the United States in 2021- 2022. According to the John Hopkins School of Education, 5% of Kentucky's K-12 students were homeschooled. In Kentucky's far Mississippi River counties, the number of homeschooled students seems to have significantly increased since the COVID-19 pandemic. As this number continues to rise, homeschool families are looking to take advantage of Extension programs offered to the community for fellowship opportunities, strengthening life skills for youth, and expanding knowledge on numerous educational topics.



4-H Youth Development programs in Fulton, Carlisle, and Hickman Counties collaborated to offer monthly positive youth development programming to this new audience. The Tri-County 4-H Homeschool Club was formed and began meeting once per month for a two-hour educational lesson and fellowship. During the first year, the lesson topic focused on each core content area of the Kentucky 4-H program. 100% of members demonstrated a skill they had learned. Five members were elected to leadership roles within the club. Two of them serve in state and regional 4-H teen leadership roles. 100% of members participated in a service activity. 100% worked as a team or group to accomplish a common task/goal.

The Tri-County 4-H Homeschool Club targets families currently homeschooling their children in Fulton, Hickman, and Carlisle Counties. The educational lessons are designed to help school-aged children find their spark and a greater sense of belonging; however, the club welcomes younger Clover Bud participants. The monthly meetings averaged 27 homeschooled students and ten parents in attendance. Families often spend time together during and after the meetings, sharing homeschool tips and planning to spend more time together. Several parents reported finding new friends, mentors and other educational and community engagement opportunities.

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