

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND
EXTENSION

GARRETT COUNTY PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

2024

Phone :
301-334-6960

1916 GARRETT HWY, SUITE A
MT LAKE PARK, MD 21550

<https://extension.umd.edu/locations/garrett-county/>





Jennifer Bentlejewski

We are thrilled to unveil our 2024 UME-Garrett County Program Highlights. Our diverse array of educational initiatives empowers individuals to revolutionize agricultural practices and food systems, cultivate leadership among our youth, and support the growth of 4-H and Master Gardener volunteers. We are dedicated to enhancing health and wellness, promoting financial literacy, and much more.

Our programs tackle the most pressing challenges of our time through trusted, research-based education accessible to all. This mission is supported by our dedicated 4-H and Master Gardener volunteers, who continue to be the invaluable backbone of our efforts. We appreciate our robust partnerships with the UMD College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, USDA, and Garrett County Government, whose unwavering support has been instrumental in our success.

As we look forward to 2025, we are eager to deliver another year of groundbreaking programs aimed at enriching lives. UME is embarking on a comprehensive strategic planning process to develop its next roadmap for the future. Involving you is a priority, as we seek to ensure that our programs and services reflect the needs of our communities. Please reach out with any insights or suggestions on how we might enhance our efforts. In addition, feel free to contact me if you would like to learn more about our Garrett County Extension Advisory Committee.

Dr. Jennifer Bentlejewski
Area Extension Director- Western Maryland
jthorn@umd.edu



Lacie Ashby



Karen Wood

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Garrett County 4-H helps young people explore interests through hands-on projects in agriculture, science, technology, and the arts. This builds essential life skills like leadership and teamwork. Members gain valuable experiences that prepare them for academic and personal success.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- 19 Garrett County 4-H community clubs, led by trained volunteers who plan and deliver hands-on, interactive learning experiences and engage with youth and clover members.
- 129 youth attended 4-H Camp Algawa during the summer to learn valuable leadership skills, teamwork, belonging, independence, and communication with the support of a dedicated team of volunteers.
- 4-H educators and volunteers coordinated events, contests, and activities throughout the year. Many events happen during the Garrett County Fair, which offers opportunities for 4-H youth to display their hard work and participate in friendly competitions.
- UME was proud to join the long-standing *College and Me* program for 5th-grade Garrett County Public School students. Reaching 150 students, Educators from 4-H and Master Gardeners co-taught this year's lesson plan, *Exploring Plant Science through 3-D Printing*.
- Partnerships within the community extend the reach of 4-H experiences thanks to 15 in-school, after-school, and library sites.



4-H BY THE NUMBERS

1,432

total contacts with participants

359

youth enrolled in community clubs

119

volunteers trained

743

total contacts with schools and communities



Ashley Bodkins

ENVIRONMENTAL, NATURAL RESOURCES AND SEA GRANT (ENRSG)

Garrett County ENRSG provides leadership and coordination for the Maryland Master Gardener program, education for residential horticulture with a focus on promoting native plants, vegetable gardening, and preserving natural resources and ecosystems.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- 15 Master Gardener volunteers provided 677 volunteer hours valued at \$22,673 in volunteer time, reached 500 contacts, and gave away 250 free tomato plants.
- Wrote 7 new Blogs for Maryland Grows that received 6,616 views.
- Assisted 80 clients answer questions related to home horticulture, entomology, plant pathology, native plants, soil sampling, and soil amendment recommendations through phone calls, office visits, or emails.
- Created a new pollinator/native plant garden at the Garrett County Extension office by removing all prior plants that were 85% invasive species.
- Provided 45 families with a free Geobin composting system valued at \$1,545, which means that these families had to invest \$0 to start a new way of reducing waste and were also educated on the proper way to compost.



ENRSG BY THE NUMBERS

55

ENRSG Programs

1,949

total contacts with participants including

995

adults

954

youth



William Lantz

AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS (AgFS)

Garrett County AgFS plays a crucial role in enhancing the agricultural sector by focusing on increasing profitability and resource conservation. Educational programs equip farmers with the necessary skills to adopt sustainable practices.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Collaborated with Nourishing Neighbors and Mt. Laurel Medical Center to secure a grant from the Maryland Department of Agriculture to provide over 2,000 local produce food boxes to food-insecure populations in Garrett and Allegany County, MD and Preston County, WV.
- Assisted with Maryland Healthy Soil Competitive Fund Grant to Garrett Growers Cooperative which included a field day at a producer's farm.
- Conducted 4-H Engineering and Robotics Contests at the county and state level for over 100 4-H members.
- Chaired the newly formed Appalachian Farm and Food Alliance, a federal 501c3 non-profit promoting agriculture in Western Maryland and the surrounding area.
- Led the Western Maryland Food Council which assisted community school specialists with providing 155 bags of food for the Christmas holiday break at a value of over \$6,000.



AgFS BY THE NUMBERS

8

AgFS Programs

265

total contacts

157

**received pesticide
recertification credits**

89

**received nutrient
management credits**



Andrea Uphold

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT (NM)

The Garrett County Agricultural Nutrient Management Program provides farmers with annual plans to balance nutrient inputs with crop requirements while optimizing crop production, increasing profitability, and minimizing nutrient losses to the environment.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Maryland law requires agricultural producers grossing at least \$2,500 or farmers with more than 8,000 lbs of livestock to follow nutrient management plans when applying nutrients.
- University of Maryland Extension nutrient management plans are written by certified nutrient management consultants using specialized software.
- Plans include map and field information, soil analysis, manure analysis for on-farm/imported nutrient sources, animal information, nutrient recommendations for organic and commercial sources, nutrient application requirements, record-keeping templates, principles of nutrient management, and a guide to farming with your nutrient management plan.
- Updated analysis from 618 soil and 50 manure samples directly influenced nutrient management recommendations in 2024. Soil samples remain valid for three years and manure samples for up to two years.



**NM BY THE
NUMBERS**

110
plans

16,364
total acreage

65
manure plans

50
multi-year plans



Jesse Ketterman

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES (FCS)

Western Maryland Financial Wellness programs strive to ensure that all residents are economically successful at every stage of life through education, research, and outreach programs.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- The Health Insurance Literacy Initiative seeks to reduce confusion and increase confidence in selecting and using health insurance. The educator taught 15 workshops reaching 122 participants.
- Farm Stress, Resiliency, and Mental Health programs seek to support our rural partners with programs that promote mental health and stress reduction. The educator taught 10 programs reaching 116 participants.
- Understanding Credit and Credit Reports is an important element of creating financial stability. The educator offered 11 workshops reaching 511 participants.
- The Personal Finance Seminar for Professionals provided relevant and timely financial information for professionals in financial counseling and education. The seminar had 114 participants with a potential reach of 162,000 individuals.
- College students seek financial literacy and education as they move into adulthood. The educator offered 5 workshops reaching 55 college-age students.



FCS BY THE NUMBERS

72

Programs

1,395

total contacts with participants, including

1,079

adults

316

youth



Lisa McCoy

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES (FCS)

Western Maryland’s Nutrition, Health, and Wellness Programs focus on reducing health risk factors and promoting wellness, which results in a long-term impact on the community.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Programs included Dining with Diabetes, Stress Management, DASH Plus for hypertension management, food canning, and healthy eating.
- Partners included Garrett County Head Start, Allegany County Senior Center, Bishop Walsh School, Frostburg Heights Senior Apartments, Zion Baptist Church, Fort Ritchie Community Center, Washington County Senior Center, Meritus Health, and HUB labels.
- Other outreach included monthly radio programs, news articles, magazine features, and social media posts.



FCS BY THE NUMBERS

49

Programs

758

total contacts with participants, including

408

adults

350

youth



Shelita Jackson

DIGITAL LITERACY PROJECT



The Digital Literacy Project is an initiative that aims to bridge the digital divide throughout Maryland. Our mission is to provide resources and education to help guide communities through the process of increased digital literacy.

DIGITAL LITERACY BY THE NUMBERS

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Our Western Maryland team partnered with county government, county libraries, and the State Office of Broadband to distribute over 10,000 free Chromebooks in Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties through a state-funded grant.
- Free tech support was offered to each Chromebook recipient through a combination of in-person, virtual, and over-the-phone call center support.
- Partner organizations included Garrett County Government, Garrett County Public Library, Western Maryland Consortium, Allegany County Government, Allegany Public Library, Washington County Government, Washinton County Free Public Library, Community Action Council of Washington County, America's Hauling for Hope, Refugee Network of Washington County, Hagerstown Housing Authority, and Girls Inc. of Washington County.

9
Digital Literacy classes empowering

3,962
Western Marylanders with

10,000+
free Chromebooks in Western Maryland at

40
device distribution locations



Mary Helbig



MARYLAND SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EDUCATION (SNAP-ED)

Garrett County SNAP-ED empowers low-income families to adopt healthier lifestyles. It offers programs that improve food access, nutrition quality, and physical activity through workshops, cooking demonstrations, and community events. By collaborating with local organizations and schools, SNAP-ED effectively reaches those in need, promoting wellness and health equity.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- SNAP-ED in Garrett County worked with 7 local partners. Partners included Broadford, Friendsville, Grantsville, and Crellin Elementary Schools, Garrett County Head Start, Garrett County Judy Center, and Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County.
- An example of a collaborative program was with the 300 youth at the Yough Glades Elementary School Yogurt Parfait Event.



MARYLAND SNAP-ED BY THE NUMBERS

42
SNAP-Ed Programs

981
total contacts including

128
adults and

853
youth

Our Staff

Dr. Jennifer Bentlejewski

Area Extension Director
Western Maryland Cluster
jthorn@umd.edu

Lacie Ashby

4-H Youth Development
Principal Agent
lashby@umd.edu

Karen Wood

4-H Youth Development
Senior Agent Associate
kwood125@umd.edu

William Lantz

Agriculture & Food Systems
Principal Agent
wlantz@umd.edu

Andrea Uphold

Nutrient Management Program
Coordinator
auphold@umd.edu

Ashley Bachtel-Bodkins

Environmental, Natural Resources and
Sea Grant
Master Gardener Coordinator
Senior Agent Associate
abachtel@umd.edu

Dr. Lisa McCoy

Family & Consumer Sciences
Senior Agent
lmccoy@umd.edu

Dr. Jesse Ketterman

Family & Consumer Sciences
Senior Agent
jketterman@umd.edu

Shelita Jackson

Digital Literacy
Tech Extension Educator
sjack111@umd.edu

Roberta Cvetnick

Program Management Specialist
rcvetnic@umd.edu

Jessica McClurg

Business Service Specialist
jmccclurg@umd.edu

Mary Helbig

Maryland SNAP Ed
Program Assistant
mhelbig@umd.edu

Our Extension Advisory Committee is a diverse group of professionals, community leaders, and stakeholders dedicated to informing program development, assisting with outreach efforts, and identifying community needs by helping the UME faculty with overall advisory services to support program determination and issues. These members represent various partnerships and institutions, bringing their expertise, resources, and perspectives to support UME's mission. Their contributions ensure that programs and strategies are inclusive, relevant, and impactful. Our current Garrett County EAC comprises individuals from these organizations, partnerships, and backgrounds:

- Garrett County Public Schools
- Garrett County Community Action
- 4-H Representatives
- Small Business Owners
- Garrett County Master Gardener Volunteers
- Community Members/Stakeholders with agricultural background and experience
- Community Members/Stakeholders with social services background and experience