

This past year offered many opportunities for Sedgwick County Extension to evaluate and reinvent itself due to limitations and changes caused by the Coronavirus pandemic.

Staff development was a focus in 2021. Through the Clifton Strengths program, we were able to understand our own strengths and how we can work most efficiently with team members who have different strengths. The second goal was to create a comprehensive Strategic Plan for 2022 that aligned with strengths and goals. The plan identifies four distinct perspectives: financial goals, customer goals, process goals, and people (learning and growth) goals. The specific plan may be found at the end of this report.

With input from the K-State Research and Extension (KSRE) administrative office, and along with Board approval, a DEI statement was created and will continue to be shared and discussed as we welcome new volunteers each year. A copy of the DEI Statement is also at the end of this report.

Budgeting and seeking additional funding has been a success story for our Center in 2021. After being a host site for COVID testing and vaccinations for a quarter of the year, we were able to market our room rental opportunities and bring in close to \$50,000 from room rental income. Through our Extension Education Foundation, we continue to work with two different federal grants to fund our SHICK (Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas) and the Growing Growers farmer training program which provide employee salaries as well as compensation for volunteer work. We also received additional grants from local and statewide supporters totaling over \$155,861 and sponsorships and memorials that provided over \$9,900 to support Extension programming. This year, we also implemented campaigns to support the overall Extension operations through Amazon Smile and Dillons Rewards programs as well as our first general appeal campaign in November. We look forward to reaching out to more people this next year as we will be able to create a more robust and comprehensive appeal plan.

Not only were we able to think strategically as a full staff, we were able to pivot and create new programming that continued to serve the public within each of the areas. We hosted many new and innovative events and collaborations throughout the year.

4-H

Sedgwick County 4-H clubs hosted 363 youth in sixteen community clubs. Some highlights were:

- A bilingual club, Futures Emprendedores ICT was formed and received their Charter.
- A club at McConnell Air Force Base was supported with positive youth development strategies.
 - In partnership with state 4-H, a grant was submitted and awarded to fund 35 military connected youth to attend Rock Springs Ranch this summer for a camp experience.
- A new Photography project club joins Shooting Sports as project club options in the County.

Some of the events to note that 4-H youth participated in 2021 included 4-H County Camp, 4-H Food Challenge, Sedgwick County Fair, and the 4-H Achievement Banquet.

Alternatively, a major focus of this program year was to engage urban schools who are not historically the traditional audience for 4-H programming. The “Lifecycle Miracle” program which teaches the butterfly lifecycle to students grades K-4 was delivered virtually to over 4500 students in partnership with USD 259. A new hands-on “Soil Science” program for students grades 3-5 was also implemented and reached over 1000 students both virtually and in-person. Also, a new and innovative initiative for school outreach has been the implementation of “Mindful Me,” a primary aged Mindfulness program that teaches basic social emotional concepts to students K-2. Through pre and post evaluations of students, it was learned that students are completing the program with improved social emotional and interpersonal skills. Teachers are also reporting indicators of long-term behavior change after the program has completed. Sedgwick County 4-H also developed a career development and shadowing program for high school-aged black and brown youth. Finally, a partnership was also initiated with Envision pre-k- serving blind and visually impaired as well as typically sighted children through monthly hands on environmental education lessons.

Agriculture

Over 75% of the land area in Sedgwick County is farmland. 496,568 acres of farms. 82% of the land in farms is for crop production and another 15% for pastureland. With the bulk of our land dedicated to crop, hay, and livestock production, agriculture is extremely important in our community.

Through crop schools, pre-plant meetings, workshops, demonstration plots, field visits, and one-on-one meetings with farmers, Sedgwick County Extension has been able to provide the agriculture industry with accurate, research-based information. Specifically, the wheat plots grown by Sedgwick County Extension educate wheat growers on the numerous wheat varieties marketed in South-Central Kansas, which, in 2021, there were 30 different varieties. To serve farmers unable to attend the in-person workshops, an Interactive Wheat Plot was created. This tool is available online and allows farmers to choose a variety, hear audio comments from specialists, access past and present yield data, and receive information provided by the seed companies and K-State.

Family and Consumer Sciences

Family Resources and Bilingual Outreach has been thriving in 2021. In partnership with the Wichita Police Department, Bonding Thru Board Games was continued. Because of their unwavering support of Sedgwick County Extension, the WPD was recognized at a recent state KSRE event as a partner of the year. Classes such as Better Brains for Babies and Budgeting Basics were also offered in English and Spanish. Other partners for events were La Familia Senior/Community Center, PANDO, Hispanic Women Network, Evergreen Community Center, Asian Wellness, Asian Outreach, Go Red Por Tu Corazon – American Heart Association, Hispanic Radio – Radio Lobo 106.5, Univision, Telemundo, KWCH, and El Perico (Hispanic Bilingual Newspaper).

The *Kitchen Restore* program is a community donation initiative that provides “starter kits” consisting of gently used or new household kitchen tools and equipment to at-risk individuals and families. Approximately 13% of adults and 19.2% of children in Sedgwick County are food insecure (a lack of consistent access to adequate food for an active, healthy lifestyle), which is associated with poor health outcomes and morbidity. The unavailability of equipment and cooking utensils, inadequate kitchen space, and limited knowledge are limitations to an individual's ability to prepare a healthful meal. Therefore, kits include items like measuring utensils, mixing bowls and pots, as well as other basic, starter items to stock a kitchen. Each kit includes approximately \$100 of cooking equipment

and supplies. Extension has held two donation drives and received grants totaling approximately \$8,000 from Blue Cross Blue Shield, Cargill and Credit Union of America to purchase the items that were not received from donations. Additionally, Extension has partnered with several agencies within Sedgwick County to provide kits to support their programs, they include: the Department of Children and Families, United Methodist Open Door, Robert Dole VA Homeless Veteran's Program, and HumanKind Ministries. Once the partnering agencies identify a family or individual transitioning into a new home or in need, the kits are delivered within 3-5 days. At this time, 47 kits have been distributed within the community, which is approximately \$4,700 worth of kitchen equipment and supplies.

Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas (SHICK) is a free program offered by K-State Research and Extension-Sedgwick County to Butler, Harvey and Sedgwick counties. SHICK provides an opportunity to speak with a trained volunteer to get answers to your questions about Medicare and the other insurance that works with Medicare. SHICK helps people to stay informed of changes to Medicare and to help cut through the confusion.

SHICK Volunteers

Number of volunteers: 90

Number of Medicare Options Classes: 12

Number of volunteer Hours: 1772.75

2021 Open Enrollment Savings: \$1,209,351.63

Number of Contacts: 4,492

Average savings per beneficiary that changed plans during Open Enrollment: \$606

SHICK Success Story: *(These are some snips from surveys)*

- *“My interaction with government agencies are typically disappointing. Not so with SHICK. This is one of the most helpful government sponsored program I've ever dealt with. Extremely insightful. I've already recommended it to a friend that is having difficulty making Medicare-related choices. Great job everyone involved.”*
- *“It was the best information we could have received. By discussing we were able to wade thru all the choices with a much clearer view than before. Teresa Hatfield was most helpful and we could not have figured this out without her help and guidance.”*
- *“This was an amazing opportunity. It was good to speak to someone who had no vested interest in my decision and could give me unbiased factual information. Thank you.”*

Horticulture

In 2021, the K-State Garden Hour program was developed. Over 16,326 viewers participated from 39 states, 4 continents, and 5 international countries. While the webinars garnered international attention, over 20% of the live audience participated from Sedgwick County. The success of the 2021 K-State Garden Hour was recognized nationally with an award from the American Society for Horticultural Science as a winner of their Extension Educational Materials Award for the Extension Division.

Additional new programs in 2021 include the Spring Break Activity Kits and the expansion of Growing Growers. The Spring Break Kits were created for families that were facing yet another “at home” spring break, but were running out of steam and tired of “online” options. Two hundred kits containing 24 activities were used by 350 children. Six county agents provided activities in the kits creating a successful transdisciplinary event. Next, Growing Growers ICT is a grant-funded, new

farmer training program. Eighteen community education events were hosted in partnership with ten producers that reached 185 adults and 342 children with education about locally produced fruits and vegetables, where 76% of participants reported learning something new. One student participant shared, “I learned that girls can be farmers and that I want to be a farmer.”

Sedgwick County Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Impacts:

2021 marked the 34th year of the Extension Master Gardener Volunteer program in Sedgwick County. Throughout the year, a total of 325 Sedgwick County Extension Master Gardeners shared their training and education with over 34,082 residents of Sedgwick County through various public events and workshops.

Altogether, the Sedgwick County Extension Master Gardeners recorded a total of 15,697 hours of service to the Sedgwick County community in 2021. This level of service from the Master Gardeners equates to a dollar value of over \$447,992.38*, and is the equivalent of more than 7.5 full time Extension Agents serving the Sedgwick County community. To do this, volunteers on the Garden Hotline answered calls and questions from over 3,407 residents of Sedgwick County. They also provided many community presentations, including gardening presentations to more than 1,121 participants at the Fall Gardening series classes in partnership with the Wichita Public Library.

Sedgwick County Extension Agents

- Jennifer Brantley, PhD, Director/Community vitality
- Nicole Biery, 4-H Agent/ School enrichment and outreach
- Elizabeth Brunscheen-Cartagena, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent/Home and family life/Bilingual outreach
- Teresa Hatfield, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent/Aging and Medicare
- Stephanie Lopez, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent/ EFNEP and SNAP-Ed
- Matthew McKernan, Horticulture Agent/ Landscape and ornamentals
- Rebecca McMahan, Horticulture Agent/Food systems
- Sara Sawyer, Family and Consumer Science Agent/Health and nutrition
- Jeff Seiler, Agriculture Agent
- Alexandria Ware, 4-H Agent/ Community clubs and outreach

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