Washington State University Extension Grays Harbor County helps people put research-based knowledge to work, improving their lives, communities, and the environment.

To realize this mission, faculty and staff plan, conduct and evaluate research and experience-based educational programs to improve the lives of Grays Harbor County residents.

WSU Extension Grays Harbor County also employs the assistance of hundreds of volunteers and community partners and provides access to the resources available at Washington State University and the National Land Grant University Extension System.

**Partnerships**

Grays Harbor County and Washington State University have a long-standing partnership in providing educational programs and research-based information to residents throughout the county.

This partnership ensures that resources are committed from Federal allocations and University funds to keep important educational programs available in Grays Harbor County.

Other Grays Harbor County partnerships include:

- Greater Grays Harbor, Inc.
- Early Learning Coalition
- Timberland Regional Library
- Behavioral Health Resources
- Summit Pacific Medical Center
- ARC of Grays Harbor
- Grays Harbor Fairgrounds
- Senior Nutrition Program
- School Districts—Aberdeen, Hoquiam and Elma
- Community Services Office (CSO)
- Grays Harbor Community Hospital
- Grays Harbor Community Foundation
- GH County Public Health and Social Services
- WorkSource of Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties
- WA State Dept. of Agriculture (WSDA)
- Grays Harbor Conservation District
4-H Pumpkin Decorating Contest

With Fall in the air, the Grays Harbor 4-H Program hosted a Pumpkin Decorating Contest and invited 4-H youth members to get creative and carve, paint, or decorate a pumpkin and submit a photo of their creation to be considered for prizes awarded by the Grays Harbor 4-H Council. Youth members from local 4-H clubs aged between five to eighteen years old shared photos of their fun and festive decorated pumpkins, which were also shared with the community on social media in time for the Great Pumpkin to arrive! What a fun way to start off the 4-H year and connect with our community!

Grays Harbor County 4-H Welcome Kits

All new and returning Grays Harbor County 4-H members who complete the 4-H enrollment process this year are eligible to receive a free 4-H Welcome Kit provided by Washington State 4-H while supplies last. The kits include tools to get started with the 4-H year: a 4-H notebook, mood pencil, Sharpie pen, 4-H stickers and a 4-H logo mask cover.
**4-H STAYING CONNECTED**

**4-H Members making homemade horse treats**

**“4-H FOR YOU” AT HOME LEARNING KITS**

With so many youth in our community participating in remote learning through virtual platforms, families are seeking to incorporate hands-on projects that they can do at home with little to no screen time. Providing themed at-home learning kits allows families to request and pick up fun and educational kits and then build them into their individual schedule.

Each grant-funded learning kit has a different theme spanning a broad range of projects sure to keep all participating youth engaged. From Emergency Preparedness (*Surviving a Zombie Apocalypse*) to Crime & Spy Science, these learning kits include developmentally appropriate creative curriculum with most of the supplies needed to complete the lessons covered for the month. For example, the Crime and Spy Science kit featured in October includes the curriculum and a spy kit (magnifying glass, notepad, pencil, flashlight, paintbrush, etc.) as well as the supplies needed to complete the activities focused on hidden messages with invisible ink, finger printing, DNA extraction, and more.

**4-H FINDS CREATIVE WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED**

While 4-H clubs and members have not been meeting in person, creative opportunities to connect virtually have provided a variety of options to stay connected with the 4-H community via Zoom while learning and having fun! For example, Grays Harbor 4-H volunteers hosted a 4-H FOCUS workshop via Zoom where members from three counties gathered to make tasty treats for their equine friends. During December, 4-H families joined in for a cocoa sipping, candy cane crunching good time for CANDY CANES & REINDEER GAMES! 4-H members and families were so excited to connect with 4-H friends via Zoom and have some fun playing holiday movie trivia together while building their sense of belonging.
Where Did 4-H Take You?

While October brings a new 4-H year, it is also time to reflect on the end of a very challenging 4-H year! While the 4-H community missed celebrating the completion of this 4-H year in person at our annual Celebrate Our Kids event we worked together, finding alternative ways to recognize the accomplishments of our 4-H youth members.

Instead of asking 4-H members to submit year-end forms and Record Books to receive a year-end pin, they followed a link and shared some of their biggest 4-H accomplishments for the year and pins were sent in the mail. We are all so proud to hear these stories and are excited to see what they will accomplish next!

“I PLEDGE my HEAD to clearer thinking, my HEART to greater loyalty, my HANDS to larger service and my HEALTH to better living for my club, my community, my country and my world.”
The Challenges Continue

It’s been challenging to connect and work with our partners on the same level as pre-COVID-19. There has been partner staff turnover, reassignments, and reductions. Partner staff have been over-tasked with additional COVID-19 responsibilities, and agency staff aren’t consistently or readily available due to remote teleworking, offices/reservation closures, not responding/infrequent responses via email or returning calls, forwarding remote work contact information lacking, etc. All partnerships have continued, but at a slower engagement rate set by partners’ capacity to engage in the COVID-19 climate.

Throughout this stressful time, however, partners have welcomed SNAP-Ed’s continued efforts to adapt and provide relevant nutrition education, health promotion, and community food access resources in electronic formats that allow them to easily share the resources with staff and clients. Our efforts support mutual objectives of encouraging healthy eating and physical activity, making healthy choices the easy choice, and building
equitable access to healthy foods/physical activity opportunities in our community for SNAP-eligible residents.

Most indirect activities (sharing on-line, electronic, and print materials) needed very little or no in-person contact, making it feasible to conduct within COVID-19 control measures. It was also conducive to SNAP-Ed staff, community partner staff, and audience of focus teleworking and/or sheltering at home as most folks had shifted to relying on electronic devices and screens to share and receive information.

We modified many of our health promotion and indirect education materials into electronic formats to include pdfs, URLs, QR scan codes, and YouTube video links for both English and Spanish. Doing so broadened our reach for more participants to be included. Participants could receive the information remotely (free at community/school wi-fi hotspots) and access resources in their preferred language. Our audience could access these materials at their convenience, without having to consider transportation, schedule conflicts, childcare, language, and cost barriers.

Move | Live Well (wasnap-ed.org)

Mover | Vivir bien (wasnap-ed.org)

Similarly, our “remote” indirect education and health promotion materials supported our Policy, Systems & Environmental (PSE) interventions in our communities. Those interventions promote eating fruits and vegetables, choosing healthy foods and beverages, and consuming less unhealthy foods and less sweetened beverages. Increasing physical activity, improving food resource management, and increasing access to healthy foods are our overarching goals for our community.

SNAP-Ed staff have also been busy training in virtual education and PSE strategies. When our school and community partners can afford the time for us to deliver curricula and interventions we will be ready.
The Summer: All in-person programming stopped as of mid-March and we moved as much as possible into a virtual mode of delivery. The Master Gardener training shifted to Zoom sessions with Master Gardener Trainees working on their own in the forests and gardens of the community. A very fun scavenger hunt took place with small groups going into their local areas to identify and discuss the native plants.

Youth Outreach: Master Gardeners are working with the Ocosta School district to develop a collaborative learning experience for students.

Education for Adults: No in-person workshops have happened since the Stay Home, Stay Safe guidelines were established in March. We engaged with 12 seniors at one of the county senior living facilities via Zoom. They learned about and practiced propagation techniques. The Interns who planned this activity created planting kits that were delivered to the site prior to the event.

Grays Harbor Master Gardeners provided education to the readers of local newspapers through regular gardening articles.

Visit our website: pnwmg.org
E-mail: pnwmg@yahoo.com.

Elizabeth Sims
Coordinator
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Co-Coordinator
Interns in the North Beach area have written gardening posts and video gardening lessons for our Facebook page. Three of our new interns have written gardening articles for the regional newspapers.

**Plant Clinic:** Skilled Master Gardeners are continuing to respond to questions submitted through the *Ask a Master Gardener* link on our websites. This has been advertised through newspaper and social media. Questions received through email include velvet grass, garlic, and dahlias, just to name a few.

**Annual Garden Tour:** This year’s Garden Tour was cancelled as Stay Home, Stay Safe guidelines remained in effect and the Harbor saw a spike in cases in July.

**Master Gardener Trainee Graduation:** Two graduation events for the 2020 Master Gardener Training graduates were held. For the first time, the new 2020 class of Master Gardener Trainees attended their “Drive Up Graduation” events scheduled around the county. It was fun to celebrate with them while maintaining social distance, wearing masks, etc.! Additionally, graduates and those having completed their Master Gardener internships were recognized at the virtual *Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties Annual Recognition event held December 12th.*

**Our Current Focus:** Live videos of container planting and growing over the fall and winter season are in process at our North Beach demonstration beds. Watch our Facebook site—the address is on the back page.
“Knotweed has been confirmed in every Washington county. The state agriculture department (WSDA) reports spending $7.5 million since 2004 on controlling it. The USDA estimates federal, state and local spending has totaled $30.4 million between 2004 and 2016.”

Insects are tested for effectiveness against the weed and specificity to the weed to ensure the insect will not attack commercial crops or native species. Insects are not available for use as biological control until they have undergone rigorous testing and have been approved for release by USDA.”

**Noxious Weed Program**

Grays Harbor County Noxious Weed Control Board

The Grays Harbor Noxious Weed Control Board has been busy with 2020 seasonal reports and looking ahead to plan for the 2021 field season.

Partnership collaborations are being formed by way of Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMA). The intent of CWMA’s are for organizations to collaborate together to set up integrated vegetation management plans for specific areas such as the Satsop Watershed. The Satsop CWMA is made up of the Grays Harbor Noxious Weed program, Washington Fish and Wildlife, Grays Harbor and Mason County Conservation Districts, Grays Harbor Stream Team, Washington State Department of Agriculture knotweed program and Grays Harbor County road department. The highest priority for the CWMA is controlling knotweed spp., throughout the Satsop watershed, benefitting private landowners, and supporting three separate restoration projects.

The Grays Harbor Noxious Weed Control program coordinated efforts with the Audubon society and the WSU bio-control program to release knotweed bio-controls for the first research trials in Washington State in 2020. The results of the first year, evaluated this winter, were potentially the most effective knotweed control by the psyllid *Aphalara itadori* in the United States, according to WSU bio-control researcher Jen Andreas.

Kiley Smith
Coordinator
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Responsible for encouraging control of noxious weeds and promoting awareness of invasive plants to the public for economic and environmental health
$125 for a 9-week course offered fully online through Zoom!

Starts February 2nd running through March 30th, 2021

Class meets every Tuesday from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

In late October, Grays Harbor and Mason County Small Farms programs teamed up to host “Cultivating Success: Whole Farm Planning”. The online course was every Tuesday evening each week for nine weeks. Statewide the class had 160 attendees and the Mason/Grays Harbor cohort hosted 12 students. The students learned about sustainability concepts, resource assessment, soil ecology, integrated pest management and more. During the final class, students presented their whole farm plan.

The Grays Harbor and Mason County Small Farms programs will team up again to host the online course “Cultivating Success: Agricultural Entrepreneurship”, starting in February for nine weeks. The Grays Harbor/Mason cohort has 16 students. Several beginning farmers in Grays Harbor are gearing up to write business plans for vegetable, livestock, and cider production.

The Southwest Washington Food Hub is planning for their second season. Efforts are underway to recruit Grays Harbor farmers to join the regional food hub that will open up broader wholesale markets, supporting agricultural viability. Along with farmer recruitment, institutional buyer accounts will be sought out to purchase local products through the Southwest Washington Food Hub.

Kiley Smith
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Supporting small local farmers through education, marketing support, and statewide program implementation
The WSU Extension Grays Harbor County Diabetes Prevention Program was again awarded Full Recognition by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The recognition will be valid through May 2023. We were also selected by the CDC to participate in a national focus group to help them improve the usefulness of the National Diabetes Prevention Program web site.

Three Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) series were completed this fall. The year long series of meetings switched from in-person to Zoom. Despite the difficulties with moving from in-person to online meetings, more than half of the participants finished the series.

Participants continued into the fall. Lifestyle coaches used alternate contact methods for those challenged by technology or bandwidth. Most program participants continue to engage in well more than 150 minutes of physical activity a week, creating new habits of becoming active. As often occurs, participants who enter the program with elevated A1c readings, bordering on diabetes, report drops, leaving them free from prediabetes.

We again offered two opportunities for the yearlong series starting in February of 2021. Series sessions are provided exclusively using Zoom with the hope of reaching rural county residents for whom travel would hinder participation.

This spring we will be offering two new programs virtually, through Extension Family Living. The National Council on Aging’s Aging Mastery Program, functions much like a book club with five weekly discussion meetings based on readings. The second virtual program is Walk with Ease, created by the Arthritis Foundation and designed as a six-week walking program for sedentary adults who wish to become more active.
57 Pressure Canner Gauges tested in 2020, following COVID-19 safety protocols

64 Food safety and preservation information phone calls—a 45% increase

42 female callers
22 male callers
858 minutes total—a 70% increase
Average 14 minutes per call

Consumer food safety notices and recalls were shared to our Facebook page from Dr. Stephanie Smith, WSU Consumer Food Safety Specialist

Pressure Gauge Testing & Food Safety Calls

People were anxiously waiting for us to begin pressure canner gauge testing once our COVID-19 safety protocols were in place. We were pleased to continue this important community service for fifty-seven grateful clients. The majority of people were new to us, reporting that either being unemployed or working from home allowed them the opportunity to plant a garden and time to come in for gauge testing so they could safely preserve their summer bounty. We stressed the importance of making this an annual visit and that we were only a phone call or email away from answering food safety/preservation questions.

We logged 64 food safety/preservation inquiries in 2020. All of the extra gardening during the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic helped create a worldwide shortage of canning lids and we were part of a WSU research study on that subject. We participated in monthly WSU Consumer Food Safety Zoom meetings to discuss new discoveries/research, new problems and solutions. One of our Grays Harbor inquiries was discussed at one of these Zoom meetings and her question will be included in a WSU canning publication currently under revision. We get all types of calls, here are some recent examples: Help—I have two pressure canners full of salmon and they are locked shut—for several days now; I am tired of cooking and peeling beets all day—can I pick this up again tomorrow; can I preserve cured ham; can I reprocess my split pea soup—my canner failed with 15 minutes to go; can I use canning lids that were sterilized but not used; I have leftover processed nacho cheese—can I preserve this; am I supposed to use a diffuser to pressure can on a propane camp stove; I just found a box of green beans under the bed that I canned two years ago with some liquid loss—are they safe to eat? Every question is taken seriously, and we strive to deliver the most current information and the best customer service.