

2025

**FAMILY &  
CONSUMER  
SCIENCES**

*Annual Report*

# PIECING IT ALL TOGETHER

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## MISSION:

To strengthen individuals, families, and communities through education.

## VISION:

Healthy, responsible, productive individuals, families, and communities.



If you would like to help us make an even bigger impact, please use this QR code to donate.

If the past year in the University of Tennessee Extension Family & Consumer Sciences were a theme park, it would be Bollywood—Tennessee’s own treasure. Like the park, our programs reached countless people across the state with meaningful experiences that left a lasting impact. We celebrated moments of joy and discovery, navigated challenges that stretched our skills and perspectives, and worked through the kind of “exhaustion” that comes from giving our all to others.

This year, we also faced hurdles that tested our resilience: grant cuts, budget constraints, and furloughs required us to do more with less, innovate under pressure, and find creative ways to sustain our programs. Much like Bollywood’s award-winning attractions, we adapted to keep our initiatives engaging, effective, and impactful, while maintaining the high standards Tennesseans have come to expect.

Each program offered opportunities to learn, grow, and connect, whether through workshops, community projects, or outreach efforts. Just as every ride at Bollywood stretches your courage and perspective, this year challenged our team to push boundaries, embrace change, and continue delivering meaningful experiences to families and communities across Tennessee.

As you read this report, you’ll see how, despite challenges, the dedication of UT Extension Family & Consumer Sciences turned obstacles into opportunities and ensured that our programs continue to thrive statewide.



*Janet E. Fox*

**Janet E. Fox**  
Assistant Dean, Department Head, and Professor  
UT Extension Family & Consumer Sciences

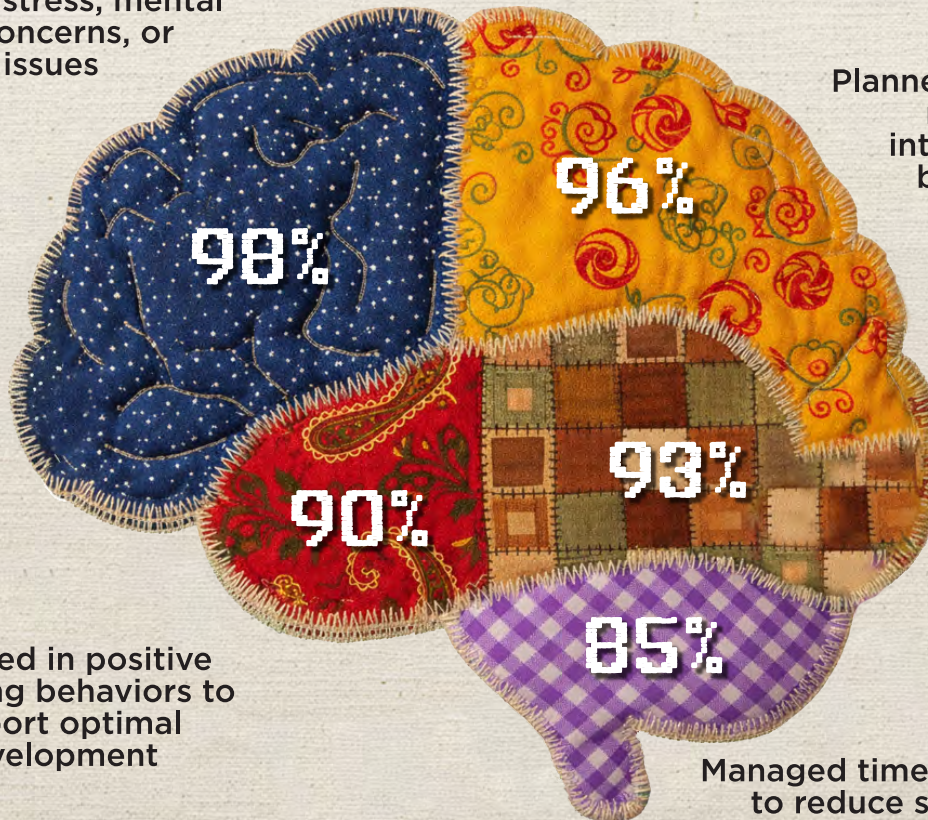
# HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

## 2025 *economic impact*



**\$151,560,735**

Accessed resources to help navigate stress, mental health concerns, or other issues



Planned to decrease negative interpersonal behaviors

Used active listening techniques

Managed time in ways to reduce stress

Engaged in positive parenting behaviors to support optimal development



**53,711**

individuals we reached with human development programs



**39,229**

direct contacts we made through group meetings and site visits



**720,630+**

contacts made through fairs, events, and social media



**VOLUNTEER SPIRIT**

HOURS  
**11,727**

VALUE  
**\$358,260**

## Human Voices, Real Hope – Pat’s Gameplan Wins National Honor

When caregivers share their stories, they create powerful connections that help others feel less alone in the challenges of supporting loved ones with Alzheimer’s disease or dementia. This spirit of connection is at the heart of the “Share My Story” video series featured on the Pat’s Gameplan website. The series received the Outstanding Video Award from the National Extension Association of Family & Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) this year.

Funded by the Pat Summitt Foundation, Pat’s Gameplan was developed to support caregivers navigating the realities of dementia care. The website offers research-based guidance, practical tools, and resources designed to help families manage the emotional, financial, and day-to-day challenges of caregiving. At the center of the platform is the “Share My Story” video series, where caregivers speak openly about their experiences. Through these stories, viewers hear reflections on loss, resilience, love, and the unexpected moments of tenderness that can accompany caregiving. Many caregivers say these stories help them recognize their own experiences and remind them they are not alone. As one viewer shared, “The video stories are beyond fantastic.”

The NEAFCS award recognizes not only the quality of the videos but also their meaningful impact on caregiver well-being. By highlighting lived experiences, the series helps reduce stigma surrounding dementia and builds a sense of community among caregivers across Tennessee and beyond.

Looking ahead, the UT Extension Family & Consumer Sciences team plans to expand the storytelling library and develop additional resources addressing the emotional, legal, financial, and practical aspects of caregiving. Through the continued support of the Pat Summitt Foundation, Pat’s Gameplan remains a vital resource—offering caregivers knowledge, encouragement, and a community of understanding.



www  
The Pat’s Gameplan website reaches 563,893+ people.



## Farm Family Health and Wellness

UT Extension Family & Consumer Sciences (FCS) offers Farm Family Health and Wellness Webinars to support the everyday health of Tennessee’s farm families. These virtual sessions cover topics like managing stress, eating well, staying active, and preventing chronic disease—areas that can often be overlooked during busy farming seasons.

The webinars are designed to be easy to join and practical, giving participants simple, realistic tips they can use right away. Sessions are held live and then made available online, allowing Tennesseans to watch at a time that fits their schedule. Whether it’s finding small ways to reduce stress or making healthier food choices, the goal is to meet families where they are.

By offering flexible access, UT Extension makes it easier for farm families to participate without leaving home or interrupting their work. The program has helped connect participants with helpful resources and provided a space to focus on personal and family well-being.



WE BACK PAT!

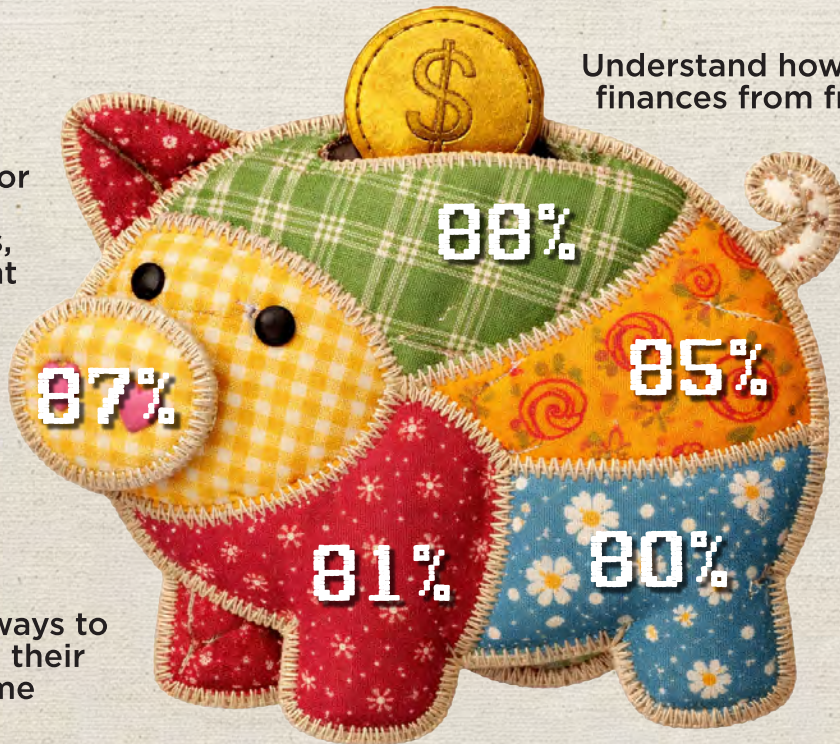
# CONSUMER ECONOMICS

## 2025 *economic impact*



**\$112,308,408**

Made plans for savings, investments, or retirement



Understand how to protect their finances from fraud and scams

Improved their financial management skills

Learned ways to increase their income

Understand how to protect their finances for retirement



**75,116**

individuals we reached with consumer economics programs



**64,738**

direct contacts we made through group meetings and site visits



**460,803+**

contacts made through fairs, events, and social media



**VOLUNTEER SPIRIT**

HOURS  
**3,735**

VALUE  
**\$114,104**

## Skill Up Tennessee Recovery Initiative

The Skill Up Tennessee Recovery Initiative, funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission's INSPIRE program, expands UT Extension's Skill Up Tennessee effort in partnership with the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The program equips eligible participants with the skills, knowledge, and industry-recognized credentials needed to secure employment and achieve long-term self-sufficiency.

Serving individuals with or at risk of substance use disorder in 27 targeted counties, the initiative builds on strong partnerships with workforce agencies, training providers, and community organizations. These collaborations strengthen local recovery ecosystems while connecting participants to meaningful employment opportunities.

The program emphasizes vocational and technical training for in-demand careers, alongside work readiness, job search, and job retention support. Participants engage in short-term training programs designed to quickly build skills and credentials that enhance employability.

To reduce barriers, the initiative provides wraparound services, such as tuition assistance, textbooks, testing fees, tools, transportation support, and childcare referrals.

By strengthening workforce partnerships and expanding local capacity, Skill Up Tennessee supports both individual recovery and economic stability, helping communities meet workforce needs while creating pathways to sustainable employment.



## TIME TO TALK: Helping Patients and Providers Discuss Health Care Costs

Rising health care costs continue to challenge access to care and financial well-being, even for insured individuals. To help address this, UT Extension Family & Consumer Sciences, in partnership with the UT College of Nursing, developed Time to Talk, a community-based program designed to help older adults feel more confident discussing health care costs with their providers. The program was funded by USDA-NIFA through the Rural Health and Safety Education Program.

Time to Talk provides practical tools to support cost-of-care conversations, including a patient guide, resource cards, and community-based information participants can continue using after the program. Thirty-three Extension educators delivered the program across 23 counties, reaching 463 participants through in-person sessions.

Evaluation results show a strong impact. Among participants surveyed, 94% reported feeling more comfortable discussing costs with providers, 82% improved their understanding of insurance, and 94% gained greater awareness of community resources. Follow-up data showed continued success, with 59% initiating additional conversations with providers and 67% continuing to use program materials. Many participants also shared resources with family and friends, extending the program's reach.



# FCS is strengthening Tennessee

Homebuyer  
Education  
**\$109,132,102**



Group Exercise  
Program  
**\$14,453,775**



Federal Nutrition  
Education Programs  
**\$64,977,714**



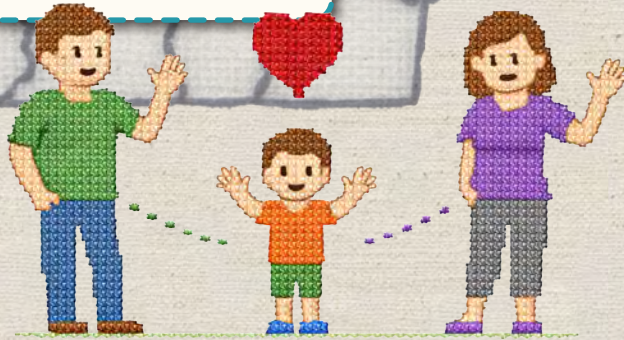
Afterschool  
Programs  
**\$150,800,235**



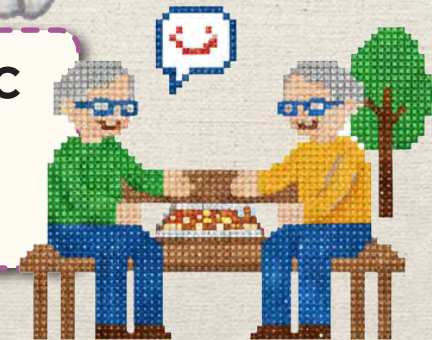
one stitch at a time.

Total 2025 FCS Economic Impact  
**\$394,110,991**

Parenting  
Apart  
**\$648,916**



Managing Chronic  
Conditions  
**\$13,085,436**



----- FCE Volunteerism -----



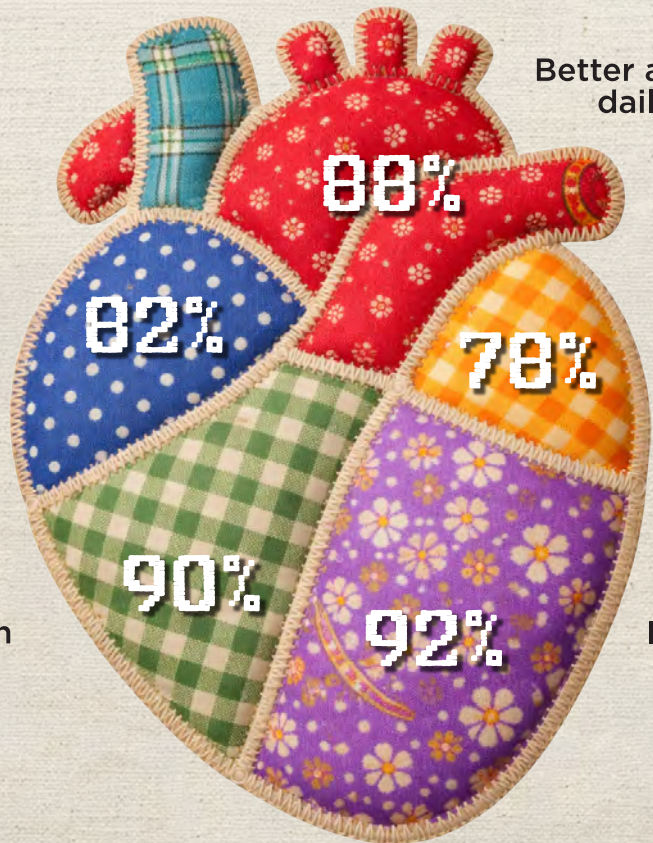
293,900 hours  
*valued at*  
**\$9,842,711**



# COMMUNITY HEALTH 2025 *economic impact*



**\$33,809,364**



Better able to perform daily functions

88%

Are exercising more often

82%

Managed chronic conditions

78%

Improved overall health

90%

Increased knowledge of healthy behaviors

92%



**147,396**

individuals we reached with community health programs



**116,822**

direct contacts we made through group meetings and site visits



**1,681,894**

contacts made through fairs, events, and social media



**VOLUNTEER SPIRIT**

HOURS  
**4,969**

VALUE  
**\$151,803**

## CHAIR YOGA: Promoting Movement for All Abilities

Staying physically active can become challenging for older adults and individuals with limited mobility. Programs that offer safe and accessible physical activity options help participants maintain strength, flexibility, and independence.

Chair Yoga provides a gentle form of exercise that focuses on stretching, balance, breathing techniques, and relaxation while seated or using a chair for support. The program creates a supportive environment where participants can improve physical activity levels while also connecting socially with others in their community.

Participants reported improvements in flexibility, reduced joint stiffness, and better balance. Many also shared that the program helped reduce stress and increase confidence in their ability to stay active despite mobility challenges.



Chair Yoga Adult Participants



## Walk Across Tennessee

Physical inactivity remains a major health concern across Tennessee. More than 60% of Tennesseans are overweight or have obesity, increasing the risk of chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure. Walk Across Tennessee encourages residents to become more physically active while building healthier habits.

The program is a team-based physical activity challenge that encourages participants to accumulate miles over eight weeks while virtually traveling the 500-mile distance across the state. Teams of eight participants log miles through walking, jogging, biking, gardening, or other forms of movement, making the program flexible and accessible for people of all activity levels.

Family & Consumer Sciences Extension agents partnered with local organizations to deliver the program in 34 counties across Tennessee. Participants collectively logged an impressive 381,866 miles—far exceeding the distance across the state.

Participants also reported significant personal benefits. Together they reported a total weight loss of 1,786 pounds, along with improvements in mobility, stress management, and sleep quality. Most importantly, 87% of participants reported plans to continue being physically active after completing the program.



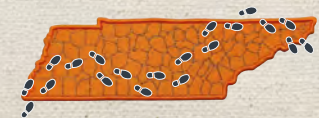
WALK ACROSS

**TENNESSEE**

**381,866 total miles**



**15.3x  
Around the World**



**868x  
Across Tennessee**

# NUTRITION & FOOD SAFETY

## 2025 *economic impact*



**220,629**

individuals we reached with nutrition and food safety programs

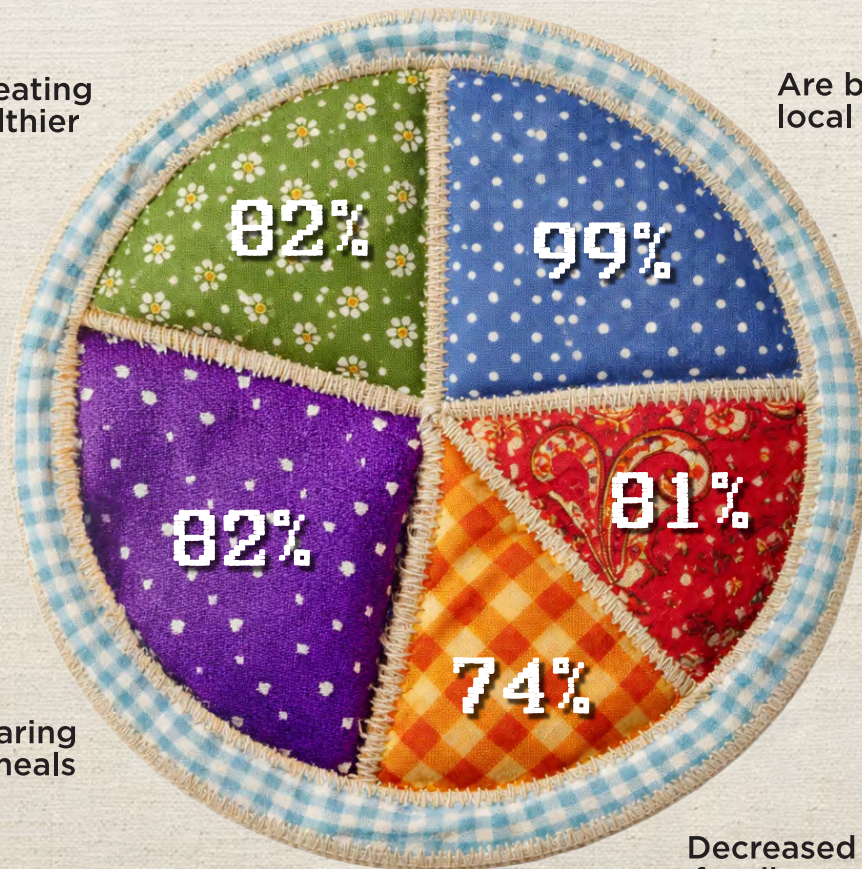
**\$86,589,773**



**141,078**

direct contacts we made through group meetings and site visits

Are eating healthier



Are buying local foods

Are saving money on food through planning and budgeting

Are preparing healthy meals

Decreased risk for foodborne illness



**2,047,101**

contacts made through fairs, events, and social media



**VOLUNTEER SPIRIT**

HOURS  
**4,100**

VALUE  
**\$125,255**

## Nourish Recovery Pilot Launches

Nourish Recovery is transforming how Tennessee supports individuals rebuilding their lives after addiction. As one of the few nutrition education programs in the nation designed specifically for adults in recovery—and among even fewer using a trauma-informed approach—it addresses the critical role nutrition, stress, and emotional regulation play in long-term recovery.

By focusing on both immediate nutritional needs and long-term self-sufficiency, the program helps participants restore physical stability and build habits that support sustained sobriety. Supported by the UT Grand Challenge, Nourish Recovery reflects strong multidisciplinary collaboration among nutrition experts, human development specialists, substance use researchers, and Extension professionals. Together, they created a flexible, evidence-based curriculum grounded in psychological safety, empowerment, and real-world application.

The program includes five key components: food safety, cooking skills, recovery-focused nutrition, household resource management, and resilience-building strategies. Participants learn to prepare affordable meals, manage food budgets, access assistance programs, and apply mindfulness techniques that support healthy decision-making.

Launched in seven counties in fall 2025, the pilot program is delivered through trusted community partnerships. Early projections show improved nutrition knowledge, increased confidence, and healthier daily habits. With an estimated 600% return on investment, Nourish Recovery demonstrates strong potential to improve lives while reducing long-term healthcare and societal costs.



## BUILDING HEALTHIER FAMILIES: EFNEP in Tennessee

Many families face challenges in accessing nutritious foods, managing food budgets, and preparing healthy meals. The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) helps address these challenges by providing practical, hands-on education that supports healthier lifestyles.

Delivered by UT Extension across 11 counties, EFNEP serves parents, caregivers, and youth by teaching essential skills in nutrition, food safety, cooking, and resource management. A key strength of the program is its use of peer educators—trusted community members who connect with participants through shared experiences and deliver interactive, relatable lessons.

Participants gain real-world skills they can immediately apply, leading to meaningful behavior change. In 2025, 75% of participants increased vegetable intake, 57% ate more fruit, and nearly half reported increased physical activity. More than 90% improved food budgeting skills, and 72% enhanced cooking abilities—helping reduce food insecurity and improve overall health.

Through partnerships with schools and community organizations, EFNEP continues to extend its reach and reinforce healthy habits across Tennessee. With an estimated \$21.68 million in long-term healthcare cost savings, the program remains a cornerstone of nutrition education and a powerful driver of healthier communities.





## Feel the Beat of Cardio Drumming

*Story contributed by Lacey Yeley, Carroll County Extension Agent*

Finding enjoyable ways to stay physically active can help individuals build lasting healthy habits. Programs that combine exercise with fun and social engagement often increase participation and motivation.

Cardio Drumming offers a high-energy workout that combines aerobic exercise with music and rhythm. Participants use drumsticks and exercise balls or buckets to perform choreographed routines that improve endurance, coordination, and cardiovascular health.

The program provides a welcoming environment for individuals of all fitness levels while encouraging movement and community connection.

Participants reported increased energy levels, reduced stress, and greater motivation to remain physically active. By making exercise fun and accessible, Cardio Drumming helps participants build healthier lifestyles and sustain long-term physical activity habits.



*Cardio Drumming youth participants*

## BOBCAT BITES: Nutrition Education in Action

*Story contributed by Lauren Patterson, Robertson County Extension Agent*

Helping youth develop healthy eating habits early in life supports lifelong health and wellness. Hands-on learning experiences can make nutrition education more engaging and meaningful for students.

Bobcat Bites combines nutrition education with practical application by giving students the opportunity to prepare and promote healthier snack options. Students learn about food safety, nutrition, and healthy food choices while gaining experience with teamwork and leadership.

Through hands-on activities, students build confidence in preparing nutritious foods and making healthier snack choices.

The program encourages youth to develop healthy habits while reinforcing the importance of balanced nutrition and active lifestyles.



*Bobcat Bites student participants*

# APPALACHIAN FARMACY: Connecting Food and Health

*Story contributed by Elizabeth Renfro, Washington County Extension Agent*

Access to fresh, nutritious foods plays a vital role in preventing and managing chronic disease. In many communities, barriers such as cost and availability can limit access, making partnerships between healthcare providers, farmers, and educators essential to improving health outcomes.

Appalachian Farmacy connects participants with locally grown fruits and vegetables through produce prescriptions and farmers market vouchers, increasing access to healthy foods. The program also offers cooking classes and wellness activities that help participants build confidence in preparing nutritious meals and developing sustainable habits.

Through partnerships with healthcare providers, farmers markets, and community organizations, participants gain both access to fresh foods and the skills needed to use them.

As a result, many report improved eating habits, increased fruit and vegetable consumption, and greater confidence in making healthy choices.

By linking food access with education and community support, Appalachian Farmacy promotes healthier lifestyles while strengthening local agriculture and regional food systems.



*Washington County Extension Agent, Elizabeth Renfro helps prepare healthy food options for participants*

## Health Extension for Diabetes (HED)

Diabetes continues to impact many Tennesseans, particularly in rural communities where access to health education and support services may be limited. Managing diabetes requires knowledge, confidence, and ongoing support.

Health Extension for Diabetes (HED) is an American Diabetes Association-recognized program that helps adults with Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes strengthen their self-management skills. Delivered through a partnership between UT Extension and clinical providers, the program provides education on nutrition, medication management, blood glucose monitoring, and lifestyle strategies that support long-term health.

Family & Consumer Sciences Extension agents delivered the program in Hawkins, Hancock, Greene, Shelby, and Sullivan counties in partnership with the Sullivan County Regional Health Department and East Tennessee State University.

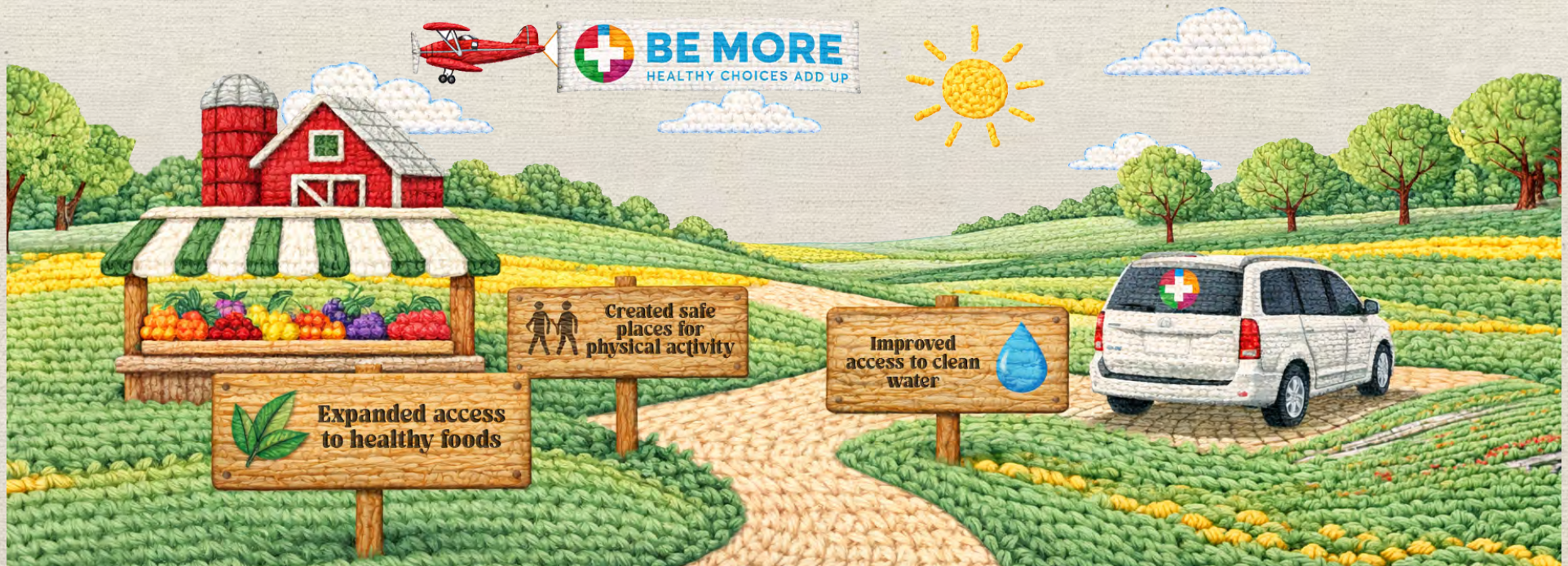
Participants reported improvements in diabetes knowledge, confidence in managing their condition, and healthy eating behaviors, including increased fruit and vegetable consumption. The program's success was also recognized nationally when related work was selected as a winning entry in the 2025 Rural Health Association Academic Poster Contest.

## Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice in Rural Tennessee

Obesity continues to be a major public health concern across the United States. From 2021 to 2023, adult obesity prevalence reached 40.3% nationwide, with Tennessee reporting a rate of 37.6% in 2023. Obesity is linked to increased risk of chronic conditions including Type 2 Diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and certain cancers.

The High Obesity Program (HOP), a partnership between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and land-grant universities, focuses on counties where adult obesity rates are 40% or higher. Since 2014, UT Extension Family & Consumer Sciences has received three funding cycles to support this effort. Tennessee's initiative, Be More Tennessee, serves seven rural counties: Clay, Crockett, Decatur, Hardeman, Haywood, Hancock, and Henderson.

The program uses policy, systems, and environmental strategies to improve access to healthy foods and safe places for physical activity. From the program's inception in 2023, as part of the 2023–2028 funding cycle, more than 900 partner engagements were completed through collaborations with the Tennessee Department of Health and local leaders. In 2025, partnerships with the Appalachian RC&D Farmacy Fit Program and Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee expanded access to healthy foods through farmers markets and a mobile market, reaching 757 residents. Additional efforts across three counties improved access to clean water, nutritious foods, and opportunities for physical activity.





# 2025 Awards & Recognition



## EXTENSION COMMITTEE ON ORGANIZATION AND POLICY & USDA NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

**National Excellence in Extension Award:** Dr. Christopher Sneed

## AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

**Food & Nutrition Section, Mary C. Egan Award:** Dr. Soghra Jarvandi

## UTIA AWARDS

**Faculty Global Excellence Award:** Dr. Kristin Johnson

**William Bishop Outstanding Service Award:** Shelly Barnes

**Professional/Academic Award:** Clint Cummings

**Mildred Pendergrass Outstanding Service Award:** Cristopher Miramontes

**Webster Pendergrass Outstanding Service Award:** Dr. Matt Devereaux

## PROMOTIONS

**Carla Bush:** Extension Program Leader I to Extension Program Leader II

**Dr. Karen Franck:** Assistant Professor to Associate Professor

**Dr. Heather Sedges:** Associate Professor to Professor

**Jeanmarie Salie:** Extension Specialist I to Extension Specialist II

**Dr. Jennfer Ward:** Extension Specialist II to Extension Specialist III

## 2025 JUANITA H. FASOLA GRANT WINNERS

**Kristen Jones, Cannon County** - Youth Sewing Group

**Lacy Yeley, Carroll County** - Easy Eats: Meal Prep Series

**Amanda Huggins, Coker County** - Making Affordable Meals from Around the World While in Rural Parts of Coker County

**Allyson Harmon, Dickson County** - Early Childhood Professionals Academy

**Jasmine Patton, Fayette County** - ACE in the Kitchen

**Stacy Clark, Lawrence County** - Strength in Motion: Promoting Cooking & Fitness for All Abilities

**Terri Orr, Marshall County** - Marshall County Financial Education Simulation

**Starla Hardin, Maury County** - Intergenerational Sewing

**Shavetta Davis, Rutherford County** - Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS)

**Kaysie Adkins, Sevier County** - 4-H FCS Club

**Joy Powell, Wayne County** - Therapeutic Gardening, Movement, and Nutrition



*UTIA Award Recipients from left: Shelly Barnes, Dr. Matt Devereaux, Clint Cummings, Cristopher Miramontes, and Dr. Kristen Johnson*



## NATIONAL EXTENSION ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES - NATIONAL AWARD RECIPIENTS

**Program Excellence Through Research Award (1st Place):** Dr. Christopher Sneed led the development of Time to Talk, a new health care cost program based on 2022 patient and provider surveys. Team members include Ann Berry, Annette Cole, Rachel Erwin, Karen Franck, Mary Beth Henley, Sarah Kite, Rebecca Layman, Cristopher Miramontes, Michelle Parrott, Deanna Poole, Rebecca Seratt, Lisa Washburn, Amanda Woody and Terri Orr.

**Innovative Youth Development Programming Award (1st Place):** Lacy Yeley was honored for Cardio Drumming for Youth, an inclusive program blending music, movement, and rhythm to promote physical fitness and self-expression for all ages.

**Educational Curriculum Package Award (1st Place):** Dr. Christopher Sneed. This award recognized the work of a multi-state team working to address the impact of climate on personal finances.

**SNAP-Ed/EFNEP Educational Program Award (2nd Place):** Elizabeth Renfro and her team advanced Appalachian Farmacy, increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables for limited-resource families to improve community health outcomes. Key contributors included Elizabeth Renfro, Ashley Cavendar, Bethany Gray, Makayla Phipps, Lamanda Weston, Monique Richard, & Veronica Jaynes.

**Environmental Education Package Award (2nd Place):** Dr. Christopher Sneed. This award recognized the work of a multi-state team working to address the impact of climate on personal finances.

**School Wellness Award (2nd Place):** Lacy Yeley received recognition for Cardio Drumming, a school-based program fostering physical activity, emotional wellness, and social connection through rhythmic movement.

**Communications Television/Video Award (3rd Place):** Pat's Gameplan for Caregivers Share My Story, a video series supporting caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's and Dementia, promoting empathy and preserving memories. Key contributors included Dr. Ann Berry, Joel Clark, Dr. Matthew Devereaux, Dr. Karen Franck, Dr. Janet Fox, Dr. Kristen Johnson, Cris Miramontes, Casey Roberts, and Jessica Taylor.

## NATIONAL EXTENSION ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES - REGIONAL AWARD RECIPIENTS

**Communications Educational Publications Award (2nd Place):** Deanna Poole, Sarah Poole, Rebecca Seratt, Rachel Erwin, Priscilla Short, Lauren Wells, and Jenny Smith created daily fact sheets for Food Waste Prevention Week, raising awareness across West Tennessee.

**Florence Hall Award (2nd Place): Lacy Yeley & Tenille Short led Fostering Empathy and Action:** Empowering Communities Through the Poverty Simulation, a program that immerses participants in poverty challenges, inspiring change for over 1,178 individuals statewide.

**Excellence in Teamwork Award (2nd Place):** Sarah Poole spearheaded the County Administrative Support Team (CAST), enhancing leadership and morale among County Directors and staff across UT Extension. Collaborators included Kane Reeves, Michele Atkins, Heather Smith, Rebecca Seratt, and others.

**Human Development/Family Relationships Award (3rd Place):** Jenny Smith developed Tech Goes Home, a digital inclusion initiative providing technology training and access to rural senior citizens.

**Social Media Education Award (3rd Place):** Jenny Smith's Family Cooking Solutions Facebook Page empowers families with practical cooking tips, healthy recipes, and money-saving advice for daily meal challenges.

**Communications Television/Video Award (3rd Place):** Lydia Hoskins created Managing Diabetes Made Simple: Practical Tips with the Diabetes Plate Method, reaching 14,000 households monthly in the Tri-Cities area to promote diabetes management through balanced nutrition and lifestyle changes.

**Community Partnership Award (3rd Place):** Dr. Kristen Johnson led Tennessee Food Waste Prevention Week, partnering with state agencies and organizations to reduce food waste and insecurity across Tennessee.

**Food Safety Award (3rd Place):** Jacklyn Blair & Abigail Thomas implemented the Multi-County Deer and Venison Food Safety Program, educating hunters on safe handling and processing to ensure safe consumption and reduce health risks.



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