



# Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

## 2021 Annual Report

### **Extension Office Staff:**

**Wendy Herdman**, Unit Coordinator, Extension Agent, 4-H

**Tina Kemp**, Unit Administrative Assistant

**Cindy Franklin**, Program Assistant (youth), Family Nutrition Program – Housed in Westmoreland

**Maria Murillo-Valdez**, Extension Project Coordinator, Rural Opioids Technical Associate-Housed in Lancaster

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If you are a person with a disability and desire assistance or accommodation, please notify this Extension Office at 804-493-8924/TDD\* during business hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

\*TDD number is (800) 828-1120.



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## About Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Cooperative Extension brings the resources of Virginia's land-grant universities, Virginia Tech and Virginia State University, to the people of the commonwealth.

Understanding that knowledge is power, we place that power in the hands of Virginians and help them learn how to use it to improve the quality of their lives. Our Extension agents and specialists form a network of educators whose classrooms are the communities, homes, and businesses of Virginia, where they bring research-based solutions to the problems facing Virginians today.

To better utilize our resources, we form collaborations with hundreds of public and private partners and volunteers, who help us reach larger and more diverse audiences and leverage the impact of our work.

We are a product of cooperation among local, state, and federal governments in partnership with tens of thousands of citizens, who, through local Extension Leadership Councils, help design, implement, and evaluate our needs-driven programs.

We are a dynamic organization that stimulates positive personal and societal change, leading to more productive lives, families, farms, and forests as well as a better environment.

Virginia Cooperative Extension is an educational outreach program of Virginia's land-grant universities: Virginia Tech and Virginia State University, and a part of the National Institute for Food and Agriculture, an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture.

Extension programs are delivered through a network of faculty at 2 universities, 107 county and city offices, 11 agricultural research and Extension centers, and 6 4-H educational centers. Our system incorporates the expertise of faculty in the Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, College of Natural Resources, Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, and the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station; as well as the School of Agriculture at Virginia State University.

The Richmond County Extension Office is one of thirty-three units within the southeast district. The southeast district office is located in Petersburg and is led by:

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# Virginia Cooperative Extension

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## Mission and Vision

### Mission Statement

Virginia Cooperative Extension enables people to improve their lives through an educational process that uses scientific knowledge focused on issues and needs.

### Vision

Building on the strength of our agriculture, natural resource, family and community heritage, we enable people to shape their futures through research based educational programs. Recognizing that knowledge is power, we serve people where they live and work. Audiences are involved in designing, implementing and evaluating needs-driven programs. We are a dynamic organization that stimulates positive personal and societal change leading to more productive lives, families, farms, and forests, as well as a better environment in urban and rural communities.

Our vision is:

- To help clientele improve their lives.
- To use a systems approach to programming, with task-oriented work teams that respond to the needs of individuals, groups and organizations.
- To provide residents prompt access to information and programs through an innovative human and technological system.
- To work with the disenfranchised and underserved who need special attention by targeting certain of our resources to programs for low-income groups, those outside the dominant culture, dysfunctional families, limited-resource farmers, at-risk youth and others.
- To fully integrate a culturally diverse paid and volunteer staff in planning, implementing and evaluating programs
- To collaborate with public and private partners to better utilize our resources, heighten our impact and reach a more diverse audience.
- To capitalize on the respective strengths of Virginia State and Virginia Tech as partners in supporting the extension mission.
- To recruit, manage and reward faculty, support, and volunteer staff to reflect each person's uniqueness and value.
- To have an open and positive administrative environment, based on shared leadership that maintains organizational integrity while providing opportunities for all staff members to fully realize their potential.



# Virginia Cooperative Extension

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## Program Areas

Virginia Cooperative Extension is organized around four main program areas. However, our diverse Extension faculty often delivers educational experiences that are created through collaboration and teamwork that spans organizational lines.

To find specific information about programs in your area, visit your local Virginia Cooperative Extension office.

## Agriculture and Natural Resources

Agriculture and natural resources (ANR) programs help sustain the profitability of agricultural and forestry production and enhance and protect the quality of our land and water resources. We help the agriculture industry use the most current technology and management practices to develop strong businesses that prosper in today's economy. We deliver programs that help put research-based knowledge to work for Virginia's agriculture industry.

## Family and Consumer Sciences

Virginia Cooperative Extension views the family unit as the cornerstone of a healthy community. We strive to improve the well-being of Virginia families through programs that help participants put research-based knowledge to work in their lives.

## Family Nutrition Program (Cindy)

Our FNP program is part of our Family and Consumer Sciences Programs and offers education on a wide variety of topics to help you, your children, your schools, and your communities eat better, move more, and save money. We put research-based information to work.

## 4-H Youth Development (Wendy)

4-H is a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills. 4-H, the largest comprehensive youth development program in the nation, educates young people, ages 5 to 18, through a variety of experiential techniques that encourage hands-on, active learning.

## Community Viability

Community viability programs are dedicated to strengthening communities and their economic viability by creating innovative programs that allow citizens and local governments to respond to local issues. Our faculty can assess community needs, design a plan of action, and determine the appropriate delivery method suitable for various programs.



## 4-H in Richmond County - 2021

Enrolled **166 youth** and **9 volunteers** in Richmond County 4-H programming

Secured **>\$23120 in external funding** to support 4-H programs in Westmoreland & Richmond Counties

### School Enrichment

- Provided SOL correlated lessons via Google Meet for 6<sup>th</sup> grade watershed program at RCMS using individual water kits for each student for hands-on lessons
- Delivered "Learning Eating and Activity for Preschoolers" program virtually for Mackey-Thompson Learning Center
- Provided a hands-on biodiversity field experience for 7<sup>th</sup> grade field trip to Menokin



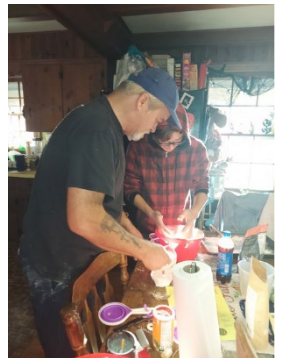
### 4-H Junior Camp

- Held COVID-modified, in-person overnight camp at the Jamestown 4-H Educational Center
- Recruited 3 campers and 1 teen from Richmond County (28 total campers, 6 total teen leaders from Richmond County, Westmoreland, Northumberland, Lancaster & Richmond City)
- Written parent surveys showed –
  - 71% of parents reported that their child felt safe while at camp
  - 100% reported that their child learning something new while at camp
  - 100% of parents reported that their child had fun and made new friends
  - Skillset reported as most improved was self-responsibility
  - 100% reported that they would send their child to camp again



### Fall Ag Bag – Local take-home camp kit to teach agriculture literacy and food safety for youth ages 9-13

- Grant funded
- 11 local participants
- Written surveys showed -
  - 100% of youth agree that agriculture is important in their everyday lives
  - 100% understand that the foods eaten in a Thanksgiving meal are grown on farms
  - 100% agree that food safety is important to them
  - 100% agree that they had more energy and less stress after being physically active
  - 100% understand how farmers grow some of the foods eaten at Thanksgiving
  - One parent whose youth have participated for 2 years wrote on her survey, "I enjoyed learning how and where certain agriculture products come from. The videos were fantastic and I learned new things about growing/raising some of the food we enjoy at Thanksgiving. We love the Ag Bag!"



### Books Across Virginia – Molina Foundation donated 200,000 books for distribution through Virginia 4-H

- 376 more books valued at \$4333.72 were distributed to Richmond County Public Schools
- 24 books valued at \$475.81 were distributed to the Haven Shelter

### Chapter Co-Advisor to Northern Neck Master Naturalists

- Serve as co-advisor to 81 volunteer member chapter
- 2 members are Richmond County residents
- 10 projects/activities are located in Richmond County

### Professional Achievements

- Member of Virginia's Senegal 4-H Team – to deliver Train-the-Trainer program in Senegal (postponed)
- Received Program Excellence Award for Interdisciplinary Program for 4-H Camp Spirit in a Bag
- Received Innovative Programming Award for 4-H Agriculture Literacy Programs

**Wendy R. Herdman, 4-H Youth Development Extension Agent, Westmoreland & Richmond Counties**  
**804-333-3420, cell=804-238-5396, wherdman@vt.edu**

## **Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program**

Enrolled **18 youth** in Richmond County Expanded Food and Nutrition Programming.

**Approximately 10 students** graduated the program. The decrease in our numbers were attributed to the circumstance of the Covid 19 pandemic.

### **Programming** (Cuddle bugs)

- Provided approximately 36 hours of nutrition/physical education classroom hours utilizing curriculum in compliance with the USDA summer Health and Physical Education Program
- Provided students with individual activities from the Summer Foods Summer Moves Program curriculum for students K-6th grade that went with our lesson each day.
- Students gained knowledge about how to choose a healthy snack or beverage and the importance of making a healthy choice.
- All students had the opportunity to receive a healthy treat tastings
- Students understand the importance of planning their meals using the five food groups from My Plate
- Students understand the importance of physical activity

### **Impacts**

- Students learned that it is their responsibility to make healthy choices in food safety, good food choices and physical fitness
- Students are encouraged to develop better eating habits and increase physical fitness goals
- Students are encouraged to spread their newly found information with others.

Cindy Franklin, EFNEP Program Assistant, Northern Neck, 804-493-8924 [rfcynt1@vt.edu](mailto:rfcynt1@vt.edu)



**2021 Summary Efforts**  
**Rural Opioid Technical Assistance Project (ROTA)**  
**Maria Murillo-Valdez, Coordinator**

**Richmond County**

2021 was a difficult year for school and community programming, however all efforts possible were implemented, schedules were flexible and readily adapted to offer educational programming to schools in Richmond County. Due to the high cases of COVID-19 the schools decided to opt out of participating in the Curriculum. However, the teachers are set to receive the middle school training in 2022, in hopes of offering the course the upcoming school year.

Due to COVID-19 all parenting groups were postponed and will begin again in 2022. As of now, I have a parenting group composed of Head Start parents from the NNK area including Richmond County set to begin in March of 2022. The Boys and Girls Club have adapted the Botvin Life skills Program and are set to start the program January 26. Due to COVID-19, I will be implementing the program this year with around 15 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders. Technical assistance was provided to the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) during their Drive-Thru COVID-19 tests and vaccination sites in Richmond County throughout the year in response to the current community needs. I virtually attended local coalitions; Northern Neck Resource Council and the Opioid Taskforce meetings provided by the MPNNK CSB as well.

Despite the limitations, I continued to address community needs by offering technical assistance to local organizations. I collaborated with the Bay Rivers Telehealth Alliance by translating their “Rx Drop Box” posters into Spanish and making the community more aware of this program thru flyers, social media and community advocacy within the community in Richmond County. I also Assisted the Bay Rivers Telehealth Alliance with translating their HIPAA documents in Spanish for their Telehealth program; where students get mental health and primary care treatments without missing class. This program has helped tremendously the community by allowing students to get medical/mental health services without leaving school and allow parents to keep their work schedules uninterrupted and pick up the students’ prescriptions without missing work. 2021 brought a year of uncertainty and constant changes but it gave us the amazing skill of creativity and flexibility; giving us the opportunity of collaborating with new organizations and testing new methods of programming.

## 2021 COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic for Agriculture and Natural Resources Workers

Wendy Herdman, Stephanie Romelczyk, Trent Jones, Robbie Longest, Frank Long

### Relevance

When COVID-19 vaccines became available in early 2021, the Virginia Department of Health assigned eligibility for vaccination based on age, pre-existing conditions, and place or type of employment. Workers in agriculture and natural resources industries were considered essential and became eligible for vaccination in the 1B class because they were considered essential to the functioning of society, at substantially higher risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2, and could not work remotely. Unfortunately, vaccines were not readily available and registering through the [vaccinate.virginia.gov](https://vaccinate.virginia.gov) portal was not helping this group gain access to the vaccine.

### Response

Virginia Cooperative Extension in the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula partnered with the Three Rivers Health District, Richmond County Emergency Services, and the Northern Neck Soil and Water Conservation District to determine the interest level in a vaccination clinic for agriculture and natural resources workers in the ten counties that comprise the Health District. The team identified and contacted farmers, farm and nursery workers, nurserymen, watermen, loggers, saw mills, agribusinesses, and others in the industry to determine interest in receiving the vaccine. The interest survey was delivered online, by email, over the phone and in-person. Based on the overwhelming interest in receiving the vaccine, a two-dose Moderna vaccination clinic was set up in Warsaw. All respondents indicating interest from the initial survey were contacted by Extension staff to arrange an appointment for the first dose. Additionally, since many agriculture and natural resources employees are Spanish-speaking, special effort was taken with the Three Rivers Health District to ensure that there were Spanish-speaking workers available for translation needs at the vaccination clinic. After the first dose clinic, Extension staff reached out again to schedule second doses.

### Results

Three hundred fifty-three people responded to the interest survey and 80% were interested in receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. The clinic, which was held over a month after the survey was completed, provided vaccination for over 100 agriculture and natural resources workers in the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula. Many of the participants were employed by farms or nurseries in the area and the timing of the clinic helped reach arriving H2A workers. One vegetable farmer had brought her H2A workers to multiple vaccination centers as opportunities became available. She commented that this clinic was the most organized of those she had brought workers to and that her employees were glad to speak with a Spanish-speaking health district employee that helped explain the vaccination process. In speaking with a large nursery in the area, having Spanish-speakers at the vaccination clinic really helped his employees navigate the clinic and made the vaccination process run smoothly. Many farming and commercial fishing operations are family businesses. Several people said they were grateful that this event gave access to the vaccine for their whole age-eligible family.

# Improving wellbeing in RICHMOND COUNTY

## COMMUNITY VOICES

"We were thankful to have Cindy Franklin from Extension's Family Nutrition Program come and work with the children. We noticed the children were more willing to try new foods and were more conscious of making sure they drank water. Thank you for providing such a great program!"



**Sara Carroll**

Owner/Director/Teacher, Cuddlebugs  
Child Development Center

## PARTNERS FOR SOLUTIONS

"After a year with no 4-H Camp, we were excited to offer an overnight camp option in 2021. Parents reported that their campers gained self-responsibility, teamwork, and leadership skills. Campers shared that they enjoyed bonding with friends, trying new things like archery, and making banana boats to eat."



**Wendy Herdman**

Senior Extension Agent

## SHARING KNOWLEDGE




Frog and salamander eggs found during the 2021 Richmond County vernal pool census.

For several years, Northern Neck Virginia Master Naturalists have worked with the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge to survey vernal pools on selected refuge properties in Richmond and Westmoreland counties.

Vernal pools are temporary ponds that fill with water in the spring and dry up within weeks. They are critical breeding habitats for amphibians with aquatic egg-larvae stages. These are endangered habitats due to draining and land development, and wood frogs and spotted salamanders are exhibiting a concerning decline.

The Master Naturalists have surveyed the same pools at three sites over two months on a regular basis. Egg/larvae are identified and counted, and data are forwarded to the U.S. Geological Survey, which collects this data throughout the Eastern U.S. to analyze the current status.

## GET IN TOUCH

460 Main St., Warsaw, VA 22572  
[richmond.ext.vt.edu](http://richmond.ext.vt.edu) | 804-333-3420 | 



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# Virginia Master Naturalist Northern Neck Chapter



2021  
Chapter  
Accomplishments

The Virginia Master Naturalist program is a statewide corps of trained volunteers providing natural resource education, citizen science, and stewardship in their communities.



**47  
Members**

achieved **Certified  
Virginia Master  
Naturalist** status

**11,123  
Contacts**

made through 3,157  
hours of **education  
& outreach**



**26  
Outdoor Sites**

improved through  
**stewardship**  
activities at parks  
and natural areas



**17  
Scientific Studies**

supported through **citizen  
science projects**

**12  
Trainees**

**graduated** from the  
basic training course



## Engaging the Public

Volunteers provided educational programming at five public events, sharing information on invasive species, creating habitat for birds, spotted lanternfly, and other natural resource topics.

## Maintaining Nature Trails

Volunteers helped keep nature trails in the region ready for the increased number of people using them since the beginning of the pandemic. Their work at state parks, state forests, natural area preserves, and other locations allows the public to safely access and enjoy nature.