



# Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

## 2024 Annual Report - Richmond County

### Extension Personnel Serving Richmond County:

**Wendy Herdman**, Unit Coordinator, Senior Extension Agent, 4-H Youth Development

**Tina Kemp**, Administrative Fiscal Assistant

**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 Extension Office in Richmond County is one of twenty-five units within the Virginia Cooperative Extension Northeast District. The Northeast District office is located in Richmond 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 resources, 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 with 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 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.



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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 (Vacant)

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. ANR programs benefit all Virginians by helping citizens learn about maintaining a healthy home environment, create sustainable rural or urban landscapes, protect water resources, grow a garden, and properly manage pests and wildlife. Virginia Cooperative Extension strives to improve the well-being of Virginians and increase producers' profitability through programs that help put research-based knowledge to work in people's lives.

**Family and Consumer Sciences (There is currently no FCS position that serves Westmoreland or Richmond County)** 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.

### 4-H Youth Development (Wendy Herdman)

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 (Specialists Only)

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 Youth Development in Richmond County 2024

285 youth enrolled



24 volunteers enrolled

## 4-H School Enrichment Programs – 257 youth

Literacy, Eating & Activity for Preschoolers - Pre-K @ MTLC  
Watershed Ed – 6<sup>th</sup> grade science  
Health Rocks! – 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> grade health – grant funded  
Reality Store financial literacy – 7<sup>th</sup> grade



## Safety Day @ Richmond Co Fair

5 nights of the fair  
6 Extension staff & 18 volunteers  
72 adult participants  
92 youth participants  
Safety Lessons: helmets, fire, weather, lawn maintenance, food, sun, hydration, first aid kits, water safety



## 4-H Jr Camp - 13 Richmond County youth

VCE provided scholarships for 4 campers  
100% had fun and felt safe  
92% made new friends & learned something new  
Fav classes: archery, making box braids, kayaking, paddle boarding, singing, fishing & animal identification

## 4-H Cloverbud Special Interest Club

5 young people and parents attended 6 mtgs  
Hands-on lessons included: balloon rockets, agriculture, food science, gratitude, energy science



## 4-H Pizza Camp - 3 day agriculture literacy & health living daycamp– 9 youth

67% agree that agriculture is important in his/her everyday life  
78% agree that farming is a major industry in the Northern Neck  
89% understand the different food groups represented by the ingredients in a pizza  
100% agree that they should be active for at least 60 minutes each day



**\$18,249 raised in competitive grants, in-kind donations & community donations to support local programming**



# Collaborative Opioid Prevention Education Program(COPE)- 2024 Richmond County

## What is Collaborative Opioid Prevention Education (COPE)?

COPE is a 5- year grant that funds 4 regional coordinators statewide at Virginia Tech thru the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority at Extension. VCE-COPE coordinators are supporting Virginia communities by engagement thru schools, faith-based organizations, community service organizations and VCE clients. The coordinators work as a team supporting each other's efforts in all regions. This has allowed for a diverse and inclusive discussion around the effects of the opioid crisis on the state, and created a forum where stigma is reduced around mental health and wellbeing.

## Programs Available

- **Botvin Lifeskills Program(LST):** A comprehensive and developmentally designed to promote positive youth development. In addition to helping kids resist drug, alcohol, and tobacco use, the LifeSkills Training Middle School program is also designed to support the reduction of violence and other high-risk behaviors.
- **Botvin Parenting Program:** This program contains materials and exercises that help parents teach their children the skills that help them resist the threats of tobacco, drugs, and violence. These tools help parents prepare their children for a successful transition from adolescence to early adulthood.
- **EXCITE Vaccine Education:** Workshops/Sessions to educate the community about all the adult and youth vaccines recommended by the CDC.

## Outcomes in Richmond County:

- 2 teachers trained to implement LST for 2024-2025 elementary./middle school year. Including implementing program for the next 3 years. All trained teachers received additional stipend to implement programs
- Parenting Programs at the Northern Neck Regional Jail; 6 total participants graduated from program(male and females). Program will begin 2<sup>nd</sup> cohort in hopefully March-April 2025
- Vaccine Education Workshop; 5 received the educational session about all adult and youth vaccines.



# Virginia Master Naturalists

Northern Neck Chapter

**2024 in Review**



**69**  
volunteers

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



**6,237**  
service hours,  
valued at \$208K

As part of their many activities in 2024, Northern Neck Master Naturalist volunteers:



**30**  
sites stewarded



Photo credit: Ellen Hunter

**Conducted cleanups, habitat restoration, and trail work in parks and natural areas**

*Highlight: Volunteers assisted the Rappahannock Tribe with a survey for invasive plants at Fones Cliffs.*



**17+**  
scientific, monitoring,  
and inventory studies  
supported



Photo credit: Betsy Maddux

**Contributed data to dozens of wildlife studies**

*Highlight: Volunteers helped conduct a study of box turtles on the Northern Neck and also raised awareness about wildlife collisions on roadways.*



**9,727**  
contacts made  
through education &  
outreach



**28**  
partnerships with  
local organizations



Photo credit: Marty Hill

**Gave the community new opportunities to learn about nature from knowledgeable leaders and to spend guided time outdoors**

*Highlight: Volunteers led monthly nature walks at Belle Isle State Park.*

## State Sponsors



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# Richmond County

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## Community Voices



"The Cloverbud Club in Warsaw, albeit just a few months long, provided my 7-year-old son with age-appropriate activities that

made him enjoy learning about science and agriculture. He loved the hands-on fun that was provided, and I loved that it was local to our home."

**Laura Thomas**

Parent of a Cloverbud Member

# 1,510

Hours of positive  
youth development  
programming delivered

## Partners for Solutions



"Richmond County sixth and seventh graders completed more than 10 hours of 4-H Health Rocks! programming, gaining

confidence and communication skills for responsible decision-making. After the program, 95% of students plan to avoid underage tobacco use, and 83% disapprove of risky behavior, fulfilling a portion of the 4-H Pledge: I pledge my health to better living."

**Wendy Herdman**

Agent



Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge butterfly count team.

## Sharing Knowledge

Virginia Master Naturalists participated in several census programs to better understand the wildlife in Richmond County and portions of adjacent Westmoreland and Essex counties. These citizen science projects submitted data to national sponsoring organizations that compile results for an ongoing analysis of yearly trends.

From January through May, Master Naturalists sampled vernal pools for amphibians for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. In February, a group of 15 Master Naturalists spent the day performing a winter waterfowl count along the Rappahannock River.

Three times during the year, Master Naturalists spent a day searching for, identifying, and counting butterflies. All data were submitted to the sponsoring agency for analysis.