December 3, 2009

Dear Friends of UT Extension – Blount County:

Greetings from The University of Tennessee Extension – Blount County!

From Homebuyer Education to Food Safety classes, 2009 has been yet another busy, productive year for Family and Consumer Sciences Programming in Blount County. Since January, over 7600 direct educational contacts have been made by the Family and Consumer Sciences program.

The impact from these educational contacts is vast. However, our greatest impact continues to be the economic impact Extension Family and Consumer Sciences programming provides for Blount County. I invite you to consider the following:

- $984,378 in total home-loan volume was produced by Extension home-buyer education classes. (Source: Tennessee Housing Development Agency, September 2009)

- Extension’s TNCEP Program is projected to return benefits of $255,360 in reduced long-term health care costs. (Based on FY 2009 program expenditure of $24,000)

- 125 individuals participating in Extension financial education programming saved an average of $4421 per month. (Source: Participant follow-up surveys)

As you review the enclosed report, I am sure you will agree the long-term impact of Extension Family and Consumer Sciences programming is an economic one!

Wishing you all the best in 2010,

Christopher T. Sneed, MS
Extension Agent II
The University of Tennessee Extension – Blount County

CTS/ss
This report is designed to highlight Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) programming in Blount County. FCS Programs are focused on family economics, health and safety, human development, and nutrition and food safety education. You’ll see some key numbers in this report. But, numbers don’t show the people or complete impact of our work. For that, you have to see the faces behind some of those numbers.

Empowering Women in Business and Agriculture:
Homefront to Heartland: Financial Education for Women

Women play a significant role in today’s business. Their involvement in decision-making and financial management is critical, necessitating a need for thorough knowledge and skills of how to approach these tasks effectively.

Homefront to Heartland, an intensive one-day conference was held in Spring, 2009 to provide women in small business and agriculture tools for success in business and their personal lives. During the conference, ten educational programs were offered.

Programs focused on estate planning, personal financial management, small business management, and healthy living.

Of the 41 participants attending:

- 94% improved their financial record-keeping system.
- 88% are working toward a new savings and/or investment goal.
- 41% implemented a financial record-keeping system.

Educating First-Time Homeowners

In partnership with the Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA), UT Extension offers monthly homebuyer education courses. In the course, new homeowners learn how to shop for a home, negotiate a purchase contract, and develop skills in home maintenance.

In 2009, 57 individuals successfully completed homebuyer education courses offered by UT Extension - Blount County.
Partnering for Good Nutrition

Over 15 partners form the TNCEP Coalition of Blount County. The TNCEP Coalition works to teach limited-resource families how to prepare nutritionally adequate diets and help them feel empowered to move toward self-sufficiency.

UT Extension Program Assistant Mary Morse partners with classroom teachers to deliver monthly, nutrition programs. In FFY 2009, over $24,000 was invested by UT Extension on nutrition education in Blount County. Over 7,000 were reached through direct and in-direct educational contacts. As a result of the programs:

- 70% of participants are eating more fruits and vegetables.
- 86% of participants are physically active at least 30 minutes, five times per week.

Keeping our Food Safe

Food safety is of particular concern when it comes to preserving foods at home. In partnership with the Maryville Farmer’s Market, one Canning College program was offered in 2009. The program, designed to teach participants basic food preservation principles, uses a variety of teaching techniques including hands-on canning experience.

Of the 21 individuals completing the program in 2009:

- 94% feel more confident in their abilities to preserve foods safely at home.

Getting Fit, Improving Health

In partnership with Everett Senior Center, three exercise programs - Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program, Master Your Body, and Tai Chi were offered in 2009. All programs are designed to aid participants in learning exercise routines which can easily be replicated at home. Improved mobility, balance, and relaxation are just a few of the impacts reported by participants.

Of the 47 participants:

- 91% improved flexibility.
- 88% improved performance of daily activities.
- 81% improved balance.

“Participating in the exercise course strengthened and enabled me to walk in the house more freely. At the same time, I have had no buckling of my ankle and knees.”

Feedback from Tai Chi Exercise Participant, 2009.