

KEHA President's Report to NVON

In 2009, as a means of promoting Kentucky's agricultural products and to encourage consumption of local produce, the state's agricultural industry adopted the slogan "Kentucky Proud." However, I am convinced "Kentucky Extension Homemaker Proud" would also be the best way to describe Kentucky Extension Homemakers and their activities. For more than 90 years, our homemakers have provided services which have benefitted their families, their communities, their state and their world.

Although this past year our membership may have edged below 15,000 people, dedicated KEHA members have logged more than 622,000 hours of volunteer service. We have provided Community Baby Showers, Expectant Mother's Nights Out and parenting classes for first time parents. To encourage Kentucky youth, almost every county supports the "Backpack Project", "Angel Tree", "Toys for Tots", 4-H Camp Scholarships and "Project Graduation". Other counties have organized Preschool Literacy Programs, taught Recycling Projects to Grades K-6, hosted "Manners are Cool" for 4th graders, sponsored Teen Clubs in Schools and initiated a Babysitting Club which resulted in a Safe Sitter Certification for participants. We have served as 4-H Sewing Club instructors, made "Project Linus" blankets, organized a Holiday Store (for kids) and collected Coats for Kids.

Homemakers across the state have served their community by raising funds for Food Banks, Shelters for Mothers and Children, and offered assistance programs for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. Our seniors have not been overlooked; we have worked Meals on Wheels, made holiday gifts for assisted living and nursing home residents and made lap throws for Hosparus patients. Some clubs cleaned roadways in the "Adopt a Highway" program, planted trees with 4-Hers for Arbor Day, raised funds for local Fire Departments and Humane Societies. To show our gratitude to those who have served, some of our counties sent Holiday Cards to Active Duty Military men and women, provided activities for military families, prepared Necessity Shoe Boxes for VA patients and held an annual Veterans Day Reception for all who had served.

We have reached out internationally, raising funds to build a library for the Kentucky school in Ghana and supporting "Coins for Change" and the "Water Step" program to fund fresh water programs with the resale of unwanted shoes. We have made pillowcase "Love Dresses" for Haitians girls, and the supported the clean water filter projects originated by our affiliated international organizations.

In response to the health concerns of a state plagued by pockets of poverty, KEHA has been very active in raising money and community awareness for “Relay for Life”, Diabetes Education and “Pocketful of Hope” for assistance to cancer caregivers. Many have participated in the Women’s Health Registry to compile data on pressing health issues.

One of the programs of which I am personally most proud is one that benefits Extension Homemakers plus many of their neighbors and friends. This year marks the fortieth year of the support and cooperative effort between KEHA and the UK Markey Clinic’s trial Ovarian Cancer Screening Program. Initially, the campaign to involve Homemakers was spear-headed by Virginia McCandless, a Mason County homemaker who, although a strong supporter of the screening program, was personally diagnosed too late to save her from the disease. Following her lead, during the ensuing forty years, Extension Homemakers have contributed more than one million dollars to support the program’s expansion to add seven satellite screening stations to the less accessible areas across the state. Even though the program has not yet earned the same general acceptance in the fight against female cancers as mammograms, it has definitely made inroads into earlier detection of one of the deadliest. Since its inception, the program has given more than 280,000 screenings to more than 45,000 women. During the past 12 months, 14,638 have been screened and 103 malignancies have been detected. That means there are 103 mothers, sisters and daughters who, like me, have a far better chance to fight the “silent killer” and enjoy a longer, more productive life. The long term survival rate of those discovered through the UK screening is 85% as compared with a 39% survival rate of patients diagnosed through traditional examinations.

Yes, I am indeed “Kentucky Extension Homemaker Proud” and will be so as long as I live.

Mary Margaret Krahulec, President

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