



LGFCU
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

2015
**EXCELLENCE IN
INNOVATION**
Awards Program

recognizes the

**Cumberland County
Cooperative Extension**

for development and implementation of

Extension Outreach to the Military Community

Team Members:

**Lisa Childers, Jessica Drake, Patti Turner, Liz Joseph
Lahti, Kenny Bailey, Keith Walters, Becky Spearman,
Captain Sarah Luciano, Amy Stidham, Jack Dewar, Mike
Newman, Bob Fox, Bill Pollitt, Beth Nelson**

LGFCU Excellence in Innovation Award Project Evaluation

Project Number	PIP-6
Title of Program	Extension Outreach to the Military Community
Program Category	Public Information/Participation
Submission Date	6/19/2015 3:21:00 PM
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Implementation Date	2/15/2014
FLSA Designation	Exempt
Project Team Members	<p>4-H: Jessica Drake, Cumberland County Cooperative Extension, Patti Turner, Fort Bragg Chief, Youth & School Age Services</p> <p>Civil Affairs Agricultural Training: Liz Joseph Lahti, Cumberland and Hoke County Cooperative Extension, Kenny Bailey, Cumberland County Cooperative Extension, Keith Walters, NC Cooperative Extension, Becky Spearman, Bladen County Cooperative Extension, and Captain Sarah Luciano U.S. Army.</p> <p>Warrior Transition Battalion Tranquility Garden: Kenny Bailey, Cumberland County Cooperative Extension, Amy Stidham, Extension Master Gardener Volunteer, Jack Dewar, Extension Master Gardener Volunteer, Mike Newman, Extension Master Gardener Volunteer, Bob Fox, Extension Master Gardener Volunteer, Bill Pollitt, Extension Master Gardener Volunteer and Beth Nelson, Extension Master Gardener Volunteer.</p>

Description of Productivity Improvement

Cumberland County Government is proud to be a partner with Fort Bragg in supporting our soldiers and their families. We are profoundly grateful for their service to our country. Through a three prong approach, Cumberland County Cooperative Extension is reaching out and serving our military community through 4-H Youth Development programs, Agricultural Training for active military service members, and with the establishment of the Warrior Transition Battalion Tranquility Garden for wounded warriors and/or transitioning soldiers to enjoy. The garden provides an opportunity for the soldiers to participate in horticultural therapy activities that can enhance recovery.

Description of why this project was initiated

Fort Bragg is home to the largest military installation in the world with over 58,000 troops. Military bases worldwide deliver 4-H programming to give military youth an opportunity to participate in 4-H as they continuously relocate. With such a diverse group of young people coming to Fort Bragg with a variety of interests, it is imperative that we offer an array of new and exciting opportunities. In past efforts, 4-H strives to encourage military youth to participate in civilian youth activities; however, there has been a lack of participation in off-base 4-H activities. Cumberland County Cooperative Extension provided training, site visits, technical assistance, and daily support to our military youth sites in an effort to increase participation and youth engagement. Through 4-H programming, participants are challenged to explore new topics areas by which they discover a sense of consistency and belonging. Focusing on nurturing youth's life skill development is what sets 4-H apart from other extra-curricular opportunities.

Leaders of U.S. Army Civil Affairs units had a need to train soldiers in basic agriculture production. Civil Affairs soldiers are often called to help indigenous populations to rebuild or improve their quality of living in war-torn regions. One area that they may be called on to help with is food production or farming. Although these soldiers often come from various backgrounds, few have any agricultural knowledge. The Army contacted Cumberland County Cooperative Extension to provide basic agricultural training to these soldiers so they will have some agricultural experience. The training gave the soldiers resources and knowledge about agriculture they can take with them when they are deployed. The trainings consisted of an overview of agriculture and agricultural practices, followed by field trips to local farms that were similar to those that the soldiers would most likely encounter during their deployments. Training consisted of hands-on experience in inspecting sheep and goats for parasites and disease and observing small scale vegetable production practices.

The garden located at the Warrior Transition Battalion Headquarters on Fort Bragg was in need of renovation. The wife of the battalion commander saw a need to restore the garden and the potential for the battalion soldiers to use it as a therapeutic activity. As a former Extension Master Gardener, she sought the expertise of Cumberland County Cooperative Extension and the Extension Master Gardeners in renovating this garden and teaching the soldiers how to care for it. This garden serves the purpose of rehabilitating and providing wounded and injured service men and women with an occupational skill through their recovery.

Quantifiable results (sustainability, cost savings, cost avoidance and/or a higher level of service).

Indication of what resources were used and what was done with any accrued time savings

As a result of the training provided to staff at the youth centers, site visits made, technical assistance provided, and the daily support to our military youth sites, 4-H saw program improvements with over forty-two 4-H clubs getting chartered at five sites, sixty-five 4-H volunteers were trained, and 517 youth enrolled as club members for 2014. All clubs have become very active with members present at meetings. In addition, military youth took part in our County Fair and earned top prizes in educational exhibits and their craft items entered. Clubs that cover a variety of youth interest are meeting in the youth sites which include: gardening, sewing, fine arts, cooking, photography, technology, science, and many more. These 4-H clubs provide stability, belonging, and purpose to many military youth who look forward each week to attending their next 4-H club meeting.

As a result of the Agriculture Training, sixty Civil Affairs Battalion soldiers learned from subject area experts and created new connections with Cooperative Extension. Cumberland County Extension provided this training at no cost to the Army, while still providing quality educational training. In addition, we reached out to Hoke County and Bladen County Cooperative Extension to assist with the training sessions. The feedback from the soldiers and leaders stated that the training they received in Cumberland County will be extremely beneficial on their future deployments when they are called upon to provide agricultural assistance to the local people.

As a result of the Warrior Transition Battalion Tranquility Garden, soldiers were able to participate in horticultural therapy activities to aid in their healing process. Subject area experts provided training at no cost to the Army. Some of the soldiers that participated in the garden went on to complete a Horticulture Training program at the Cape Fear Botanical Garden for transitioning soldiers to either return to their unit or separate from service. Supplies to include plants and mulch for the garden were provided by the U.S. Army and through various donations.

Other descriptive information

4-H Clubs are established on military installations worldwide in order to provide youth with opportunities to participate in 4-H regardless of which state or country they reside.

Training for Civil Affairs service members was so successful that we are currently in the process of scheduling and planning trainings for additional battalions.

The Warrior Transition Battalion Tranquility Garden is located at Womack Army Medical Center. The garden is 1/8th of an acre and consist of various trees, shrubs, and herbaceous ornamental plants. Currently, the Extension Master Gardeners maintain the garden alongside the wounded warriors. It is a place where wounded soldiers can relax and the garden aids with the healing process by providing occupational therapy.