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Making a Difference

1,356 Master Gardener Volunteers grew, harvested and donated 37 tons of fresh produce to feed Maine's hungry through the Plant-A-Row for the Hungry program. In Maine, this program is critical as:

- 10% of Maine households, representing 141,000 people, are “food insecure” according to the USDA.
- More than 40% of Maine children under the age of 12 show some evidence of hunger.
- 19,325 Maine children are hungry.

Due to an increase in Maine farmer suicides, UMaine Extension offered an online session for local farmers and staff including creation of extension.umaine.edu/agriculture/programs/farmers-under-stress/ with resources to help farmers and their families who are under stress.

Master Food Preserver volunteers offered hands-on food preservation workshops to over 600 participants statewide in 2009. Requests for help with food preservation increased seven-fold last year and volunteers helped meet the need.

Due to many Maine residents having trouble meeting their needs for heating, transportation, and food due to rising prices, University of Maine Cooperative Extension responded with energy education:

- Web site extension.umaine.edu/energy provides research-based information on how to save money through energy conservation and alternative energy sources.
- Energy Savings Fact Sheet series comprised of nine bulletins that can help Mainers increase their home's energy efficiency and safety.
- Energy Education do-it-yourself video series.

A Maine 4-H York County club has harvested more than 6,000 lbs of fresh produce, which they donated to local food pantries. The group also used a donation of fleece from Polartec to make more than 100 blankets for the homeless, and made and served stew at local food pantries. The youth and volunteers have dedicated themselves to helping out during tough economic times.

Extension.umaine.edu/savemoney is a Web based resource on saving money and spending less. It is dedicated to offering ideas, and tools to reduce debt, save money, and make better spending choices.



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