



Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

—*Children, Youth & Families At-Risk 2003*

Putting Knowledge to Work for Georgia Families

The University of Georgia

Cooperative Extension Service

The Problem

- Many Georgia children are living in at-risk environments. Nationally, Georgia ranks 41st in overall child well-being, based on 10 indicators tracked by Kids Count. Indicators include teen deaths, births to teen parents, juvenile violent crime, and percent of children in poverty.
- Georgia ranks 44th for rate of teen child bearing (Georgia Kids Count fact book 2003).

Research-based Solutions

- Programming that emphasizes positive youth development builds resiliency in at-risk children and youth.
- The most effective interventions target children at young ages and provide long-term support and education.
- Effective programming for children at risk intentionally involves their families and communities at all levels.

Extension's Role

- Conduct educational programs for parents, helping them to acquire skills in positive parenting.
- Use the 4-H youth development delivery system to provide positive development opportunities for youth in high-risk circumstances.
- Collaborate within the community to design programs which target children, youth or families at-risk and provide education, support and services which lead to positive outcomes.

Extension's Contribution to Solving the Problem

- The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service initiated two New Community Projects in Candler and Colquitt Counties in 2003. These New Community Projects integrate the children, youth, and families at risk (CYFAR) programming philosophy and ideas into the University of Georgia Extension programs. The total value of the USDA funded project is \$500,000 for the five-year period.
- The Candler County CYFAR project is "Building Our Youths Skills" (BOYS) and it provides educational and enrichment opportunities to help increase academic success and leadership development, while supporting parents, teachers, and community leaders in creating a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment for 31 low income pre-adolescent males. The BOYS program provided 33 after-school tutoring and enrichment sessions in fall 2003.
- The Colquitt County CYFAR project is called "Voz de la Familia" or "Voice of the Family." This project is a comprehensive family centered community outreach program especially designed to help migrant farm workers build healthy, strong, and self-sufficient families for rural Georgia. Voz de la Familia is a collaborative program of the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, Ellenton Farm Workers Health Clinic, Moultrie Technical College, Telamon Corporation, and Communities in Schools. The project started with eleven migrant farm worker families in 2003.
- The Rowel Welcome to the State of Poverty Simulation workshop was conducted to over 470 community leaders and service providers to help them better serve the needs of the people live in poverty.
- More than 63% of all Family and Consumer Sciences Extension programs in 2003 were conducted with audiences estimated to be at risk (low-income, illegal activity, or lack of school success).

Impact on Georgians

- Over 55% of the community leaders and service providers who participated in the Welcome to the State of Poverty Simulation workshop realized the problems and constraints faced by the people living in poverty and developed positive attitudes towards them. For example a participant said that *“This workshop was a real eye opener, the simulation provided very real circumstances so we could experience the abundant difficulties persons in poverty situations are faced with. It was frightening.”* At the end of the workshop, 95% of the participants said that they intend to view people living in poverty differently to better serve their needs and 89% of the participants said that they plan to work with other related community resources to assist people who live in poverty.

Contact

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