Hello and Welcome 4-H to the 2010 year!!!! In the blink of an eye the New Year is upon us and for many of you it will start out busy with various activities already planned. Even as we begin this New Year together, take a moment to reflect back on all of your accomplishments from 2009 and build on them for a successful 2010. From all of us at the Extension Office we look forward to another exciting year in the world of 4-H!

ELDER CHEER A GREAT SUCCESS ... Devoted volunteers, both youth and adults, made a call out to the community via newspaper and word of mouth to add resources to an already strong Elder Cheer Project conducted by Onslow 4-H and Department of Social Services Adult Care Unit. Thanks to additional resources and cash contributions. A total of 326 baskets were prepared and delivered to the elderly citizens in seven assisted living and nursing homes in Onslow County. A big Thank You goes out to all who volunteered, donated, and gave of their time to prepare and deliver baskets to our elderly.

4-H COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING... The January meeting will be held on January 14th beginning at 7:00 pm. Please come out and support your newly elected officers. Dates and activities for the remainder of the year will be discussed along with details for the upcoming Favorite Food Show. All clubs are asked to participate.

4-H VOLUNTEER LEADERS BANQUET 2010... On the night of January 19th, the annual 4-H Volunteer Leaders Banquet will be held. The location will be the Onslow County Multipurpose Complex beginning at 7:00 pm. This year’s theme will be “4-H...Let It Grow”. We look forward to having you along with a large crowd of other volunteers who have helped us with 4-H on this very special evening, the presentation of the J. Gregory Clemmons Endowment Scholarship. Please be on the lookout for your invitation.
SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE FOR YOUTH ... If you are a senior in High School and will be graduating in the spring of 2010 please be aware there is some scholarship money available to 4-H members. The North Carolina 4-H Development Fund has several, which youth can apply for ranging in dollar amounts of $500 - $1500. The deadline for these scholarship applications will be January 15th. The paperwork needs to be entered online first and then mailed on to the 4-H Development Fund in Raleigh. The website to retrieve information needed is www.nc4h.org, on left hand side of page click on youth, scroll down page to awards and incentives and then click on scholarship guide and application. The other scholarship is provided by the local Extension and Community Association here in Onslow County. It has a value of $200. Forms for this scholarship can be picked up at the local Extension Office from Ms. Peggie Garner. Deadline for this one is March 1st. So if you need money for college or any additional information please give our office a call at 910.455.5873

ATTENTION HORSE CLUBS ... The District Horse Bowl competition will be held at Mount Olive College in Mount Olive on February 6th. To obtain registration forms and information please contact Eileen Coite at 919.731.1520 or e-mail at Eileen_Coite@ncsu.edu.

CAMP REGISTRATION HAS BEGUN... Onslow County youth ages 8-14 will be heading to the Piedmont part of North Carolina for this year’s summer camping experience. This year’s trip is planned for July 4th - 9th, 2010. The location is the Betsy Jeff Penn 4-H Center on the outskirts of Reidsville, NC. The allotment will be 30 campers, so spots will be on a first come first serve basis. Cost to camp this year will be $275 with $200 due at registration. Don’t delay and be one of the first to sign up. The first day to register will be Monday, January 25th, 2010 at the local 4-H office. Feel free to call us at 910-455-5873 if there are questions.

4-H FAVORITE FOOD SHOW..... The 2010 4-H Favorite Food Show will be held Saturday, January 23rd at 9:00am in the Onslow County Multipurpose Complex in Jacksonville. All 4-Hers are encouraged to participate. Remember clover buds are welcome to participate but will not be judged. Written guidelines and information is available through your club leader and at the 4-H office.

CHARACTER EDUCATION CORNER ... INTEGRITY ...
...Look to have quality inner strength. Be honest. Be true to yourself. Be trustworthy. Be honorable and always do what’s right.

CLUB NEWS - SOUTHWEST AFTERSCHOOL ADVENTURES.....
The Southwest ASA was busy during the month of December. They made 2 dozen penguin pillows and collected money for puzzles to be donated to the Pediatric floor at New Hanover Regional Medical Center. They also made 2 dozen snowflake pillows and collected items for Elder Cheer. The 4-H club had a good time learning how to give to others during the Holiday Season.

CLUB NEWS NEEDED...Any club is invited to send in club news and pictures to be printed in the monthly 4-H newsletter. The newsletter is a great way to let others know what your 4-H club is doing. If you have club news, please turn it in by the 10th of the month. Club news can be submitted to wanda_mills@ncsu.edu.

February 12th - All winning Cumulative Records and Project Records are due back to the 4-H office to be entered for District Judging.

UPCOMING EVENTS

4-H District Council Meeting – January 14
4-H Volunteer Leaders Banquet – January 19
Favorite Food Show – January 23
SPOTLIGHT

Onslow County Master Gardener Volunteer Program

The Master Gardener Volunteer Program is a joint endeavor of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service and volunteers who wish to learn how to be better gardeners and help other gardeners by sharing their knowledge. The program is designed to recruit and train volunteers to help meet the educational needs of the citizens of Onslow County.

The term ‘gardening’ is used in a broad sense. It includes, vegetables, fruits, lawn grasses, shrubs, flowers and trees. The training focuses on developing diagnostic skills for insects and diseases of plants. Classes are also given on landscaping for water quality, soils, composting, propagation, wildlife control and much, much more!

As a Master Gardener, you will receive 40 hours of intensive horticultural training. After graduation you will be expected to provide an equivalent amount of volunteer work in the community. Examples of the types of activities that you can choose to perform are: answering homeowner inquiries at the Extension Office; mailing out information bulletins to homeowners, conducting plant clinics, working with elementary school children on special horticultural projects, talking to Garden Clubs, advising on community beautification projects and writing newsletter articles.

The volunteer work is fun and interesting, and you will not be required to do anything with which you are not comfortable. Master Gardeners make ‘friends for life’ and enjoy working and learning together.

The 2010 Master Gardener course will begin February 16th and end March 18th. Classes normally will be taught Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 9:00 - Noon. Cost for the course is $100.00 which includes a comprehensive Master Gardener Manual that you keep.

If you would be interested in receiving an application for the 2010 course, please call the North Carolina Cooperative Extension - Onslow County Center at (910) 455-5873, and leave your name, address and phone number. Enrollment will be limited, so inquire early.

Operation Medicine Cabinet ...

What: Come dispose of your unused and expired medications

When: Saturday, January 30, 2010 from 10 am to 2 pm

Where: Any Food Lion parking lot in Onslow County

Why: Safely dispose of medications while also protecting our children and our environment

Operation Medicine Cabinet is a local effort to provide a safe means for disposing unused and expired medications. Abuse of these drugs by our youth is a growing problem. The drugs are often readily accessible, since they may be found in home medicine cabinets. The child might ingest the medicines, share them with friends, or sell them. Reports indicate that as many as 20% of teens have taken prescription medications that weren’t their own. Over-dosing, addiction, and harmful interactions are possible outcomes from children experimenting with medicines.

With the rising cost of both prescription medications and over-the-counter drugs, people often hang on to medicines “just in case.” So, are expired medications safe to use? A quick web search with this question brought up a lot of responses. The news was mixed. Taking medications past their expiration date can be very dangerous. Some medications, such as tetracycline, can become toxic. Others may lose their effectiveness. For example, the active ingredient in aspirin turns into acetic acid, which makes the pills smell or taste like vinegar.

Manufacturers set the expiration date on packaged drugs. In effect, they are certifying that the drug will retain 90% of its original potency until that date. How long the drug retains its potency past that date is not evaluated. The date on individual prescriptions, however, it set by the pharmacist as a “use-by date.” The US Pharmacopeia requires a one-year or less “use-by date” on repackaged medications.

In 1985, the Air Force had a stockpile of medications that were about to expire. They wanted to know if the drugs were still safe, so they asked the Food & Drug Administration (FDA)
to check them for safety and effectiveness. From that, the Shelf Life Extension Program (SLEP) was created. Drug stockpiles from each military branch are now evaluated and the expiration dates adjusted.

This program has saved the military (and the taxpayers) millions of dollars; however, these medications are stored in original packaging under controlled temperature and humidity. Home bathroom medicine cabinets are one of the worst places to store medication. Medicines should be stored in a cool, dry location. If in doubt about the safety or effectiveness of an expired medication, dispose of the medicine or speak with your pharmacist.

Recommendations for the proper disposal of medication have changed over the years. In the past, many of us were told to flush medications down the drain or toilet. That is no longer recommended, except for a very few specific medications. If you are on a septic system, the medications may adversely impact the system’s function. Medications and their breakdown products can also pass through the system and end up in ground water, ditches, and streams. If you are on a sewer system, the medications can disrupt the wastewater treatment plant’s operation. As with septic systems, medications and their breakdown products can pass through the treatment plant and be discharged to local waterways.

So, how should we dispose of medications? The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the American Pharmacists Association, and the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America have created the SMAR'T DISPOSAL campaign to educate consumers on disposing of medicines in a safe and environmentally protective manner. Their website is located at: http://www.smarxtdisposal.net/

The FDA has a telephone number that people can call to ask about proper disposal methods: 1-888-463-6332.

The current recommendations are:

Turn in the unused medications at a medication collection event (such as Operation Medicine Cabinet). The medications are then destroyed, usually by incineration.

If accepted, turn in unused medications at a hazardous household waste collection event (be sure to remove all personal information from the labels).

Dispose of the medications in the trash by following these steps:

Remove or destroy all personal information on the bottle label.

Crush or dissolve the medicine, if it’s a solid.

Add sawdust, salt, kitty litter, used coffee grounds or other materials that will make the drugs less attractive to pets or children.

Seal the medication in a non-transparent container and place in the trash.