

## **Engaging Youth as Consumers at Farmers' Market**

Farmers markets can be an exciting social event in a community and provide a tool to teach about local agriculture. A Junior Farmers Market was conducted 13 times in two counties for elementary students. The goal of the grant-funded markets was to provide opportunities for youth to make healthy food choices, try new vegetables, be introduced to shopping at farmers markets, encourage healthy purchasing habits and make connections with local producers. The markets were located on school grounds and attempted to replicate the atmosphere of a traditional farmers market. The youth interacted with local farmers at stations where fresh produce was available to "purchase" with wooden market coins. Partner agencies presented topics such as encouraging healthy drinks, hands-on activities for youth to explore where their food comes from and tasting new vegetables.

All programs were evaluated via surveys completed by the student, teachers, and parents. At one site a formal student evaluation was gathered utilizing a web-based survey administered to the students (n=137). Results of the survey showed 81% of the students ate produce purchased from the market and 58% stated they were excited about eating fruits and vegetables since participating in the Farmers Market and nearly 76% tried a new food at the market. Sixty-one percent responded they plan to attend a local farmer's market. An additional teacher survey revealed 100% agreed the program was a valuable tool in strengthening curriculum and one commented the event was a "great opportunity to promote agriculture in Ohio."



### **Amanda Bennett**

Amanda has been the Agriculture and Natural Resource Educator in Miami County, Ohio for the past seven years. She specializes in farm management, food production, safety and insecurity and has a particular passion for dispelling myths about "big agriculture" and putting people in touch with how and where their food is grown.

### **Marcus McCartney**

Marcus became the Agriculture and Natural Resource Educator in Washington County in 2015. While working for Washington County, he actively engages with clientele, implements agriculture and horticulture program for youth and adults, coordinates the OSU Master Gardener program, participates in state-wide studies and research, and serves on local and state-wide committees. His specialization is soils, small ruminants, and horticulture. Marcus is a member of the GAP (Good Agriculture Practices) team, Beef Team, and the Master Gardener Volunteer State Advisory Committee.

### **Alisha Barton**

Alisha Barton, Extension Educator, M.S., Ohio State University Extension, Miami County. Alisha's specialization is nutrition and wellness. She works to increase education, awareness, and healthy

food access to residents through a variety of programs. She enjoys teaching independent living skills such as cooking, gardening and encouraging participants to try/prepare new foods.

**Amanda Bohlen**

Amanda Bohlen is the Extension Educator, M.Ed., Ohio State University Extension, Washington County. Her specialization is nutrition, health and food safety. Her teaching efforts focus on diabetes education, worksite wellness and healthy eating. Her passion lies with cooking and teaching others that good food doesn't have to taste bland. Amanda is married and has three children and enjoys having them help in the kitchen. In her spare time she bakes and decorates cakes.