

By Diane L. Burnett, K-State Research & Extension, Marais des Cygnes District - District Director and Family & Consumer Sciences Agent

K-State Research & Extension is looking for Master Food Volunteer program class members! Those who like to cook, preserve food and share their knowledge with others are welcome to apply for the Extension Master Food Volunteer Program. This will be the 16th year for the program. Miami and Linn Counties currently have approximately 17 active Master Food Volunteers but more are needed especially in Linn County for the many food and nutrition programs that could be held in the Extension District. These volunteers are involved in food related educational programs/lessons for all ages and areas of Linn and Miami Counties.

Who can become an Extension Master Food Volunteer? Anyone who loves to cook and preserve food and has an interest in food safety and food science can apply for the program in the Kansas counties of Johnson, Miami, Linn, Wyandotte, and Douglas counties for the new class to begin in February.

The Kansas Master Food Volunteer Program provides a foundation of knowledge and extensive training in food safety, food science, food preparation and food preservation and allows people with an interest in cooking and nutrition to take their cooking expertise to a higher level, while developing new avenues for helping the community. K-State Research and Extension Food and Nutrition programs will be enhanced by involving experienced and professionally trained volunteers at the county level.

Training classes are taught by County Extension professionals, Extension specialists and industry and business professionals. Participants will complete a 40-hour training course on Wednesdays and Thursdays over four weeks starting February 15, 2017. The training sessions will be held at the K-State Olathe campus in Johnson County.

What will be required of me? Following the initial 40 hours of training, volunteer opportunities are many and range from sharing their knowledge by teaching food and nutrition education or food preparation or food preservation classes, staffing educational displays at grocery stores or answering questions on a telephone hot line. Any activity to promote food preparation, safety, or preservation could be a part of the volunteer's pay back hours and volunteers will complete certification by contributing a minimum of 40 hours of approved service back to the community. A high school diploma or equivalent is required.

Trainees who complete the Marais des Cygnes Extension District program requirements become part of a volunteer team supervised by Diane Burnett, Family and Consumer Sciences agent. All activities are geared toward the single purpose of educating the public, and enhancing health and well-being. Teaching classes, leading after-school programs, demonstrating cooking techniques - at monthly Knowledge @ Noon classes and creating educational displays are some of the activities volunteers participate in.

An informational brochure and application forms are available by calling or visiting either Marais des Cygnes Extension District office at Paola (913-294-4306) or Mound City (913-795-2829) or online at www.maraisdescygn.es.ksu.edu. The application deadline is January 27th. A fee that includes notebooks, training materials and supplies will be charged for the program. For more information, call Diane Burnett, Marais des Cygnes Extension District Director and Family & Consumer Sciences Agent, at 294-4306 or write to: dburnett@ksu.edu