

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Grand Challenges

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Grand Challenge: Community Vitality

Title: VITA Program has new Partnership With CRC Care Center at Lundgren School

Why is this issue important?

The VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program offers free tax help to people who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns including:

- People who generally make \$60,000 or less
- Persons with disabilities
- Limited English-speaking taxpayers

Without VITA services, some taxpayers would opt out of filing taxes altogether and not get the refund they are entitled to.

How did Extension address this issue?

Susan Fangman, Family & Consumer Sciences Agent, leads the IRS VITA partnership in Shawnee County. The partnership includes several educational, government and social service agencies that provide space and materials for the approximately 40 trained volunteers to help taxpayers. In growing partnerships, like that with CRC, the program is able to have a broader reach helping more residents.

What was the impact?

Last year VITA volunteers filed 1528 federal tax returns, with a similar number of state returns. Free tax assistance saved Shawnee County taxpayers approximately \$344,000 in tax preparation fees (Source: IRS).



As the VITA program grows, the new partnership with CRC will help volunteers to reach those that live in the Oakland neighborhood as well as provide space and time to serve more people in the entire county. CRC has graciously agreed to make appointments with VITA clients at two of the sites ensuring clients and volunteers are making the best use of their time. In the past most sites have operated on a first come first served basis, that often resulted in hours long waits for clients.

We are excited about the possibilities this new partnership provides.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service
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