

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Grand Challenges

K-State Extension develops and delivers practical, research-based solutions to challenges faced by all Kansans, which includes the grand challenges:

- Global Food Systems
- Water
- Health
- Community Vitality
- Developing Tomorrow's Leaders

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Grand Challenge: Global Food Systems, Water, Community Vitality, Developing Tomorrow's Leaders, Health

Title: SENT Workforce Development Program

Why is this issue important?

Finding your way back into society after incarceration is a difficult transition that over 600,000 Americans find themselves each year (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2022). For these individuals, finding gainful employment can be difficult, with an unemployment rate nearly four times that of a non-incarcerated person. Another worry for these individuals is going back to prison, with 44% of criminals going back to prison. Research from the US Department of Justice (2023) shows that engaging in vocational training after release decreases the recidivism rate by up to 43%.

How did Extension address this issue?

Thanks to grant funding received by SENT, Inc., and the Shawnee County Extension Office, a part of CRC CARE Center @ Avondale East was converted into a community garden space with 16 raised beds. Extension and SENT are partnering on this vocational training with the Working Men of Christ group, giving participants skills that can translate into other work opportunities.

What was the impact?

Over the spring, the Horticulture and EFNEP Nutrition Agent went to SENT twice a month to meet with the Working Men of Christ participants to teach them skills about food production, including characteristics of soil (pictured right is Horticulture Agent Lane Wiens teaching about soil texture), best watering practices, timing of planting, when to properly harvest and store produce. The agents will continue twice monthly through the growing season to teach topics in the areas of plant management, pest and disease scouting, and crop rotation. All produce grown in this space will be donated to the Southside Filling Station food pantry for distribution.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service
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