

# Taking it to the Streets in Your Local Community: The Impact of the Economy on Families



Ideas for teachers, extension professionals, college faculty, business leaders, retirees and affiliate members on using FCS knowledge, leadership and skills to engage others in helping local families and individuals facing economic challenges

Here are a few thoughts to get you started on engaging your circle of influence (school or workplace, volunteer settings, faith-based organizations, etc.) in the Taking it to the Streets: The Impact of the Economy on Families Campaign.

## Start by researching family and children's greatest needs related to the economy in your community.

Let's make sure our efforts will truly be of benefit to the people we are interested in helping. Connect with different community based organizations. (Don't forget Cooperative Extension!) Their insight might help make you aware of specific needs that aren't currently being addressed by anyone. Students, AAFCS members, or program participants can contact key community organizations and briefly interview staff regarding greatest needs of local families and how to help them by using FCS knowledge and skills. Bring in partners for your project: other educators, community agencies, businesses, retirees and others who support your work. Empower families in need by involving them in these projects and teaching them the skills needed to become more self-sufficient. Below are some ways to make a difference in the lives of financially-stressed families.

- Connect with a community organization to provide a holiday craft workshop for families and children in challenging situations. Ask people to donate their unused craft supplies to your project.
- Encourage association affiliate members and others to de-stash their supplies of certain items such as fabric, yarn or craft supplies and create kits for students to teach younger children to make a useful craft product.
- Take the SNAP Challenge  
<http://feedingamerica.org/get-involved/hunger-action-month/snap-challenge.aspx>
- Have students and affiliate members plan and document meals within certain dollar limits. Ask students or affiliate members to prepare a small recipe booklet focused on low cost meals with photos. These booklets could be sold to raise money to support an organization serving families in need.
- Organize a collection of gently used clothing and toys for children.
- Work with others to create a Repair Fair – people bring in simple items to be fixed (buttons sewn on, hem sewn, lamps rewired, other technical skills taught in your professional setting), take pictures and estimate money saved. This could be done as a service project or to raise funds to support families in need.
- Engage your community in planning a repurpose holiday fair – students take picture of original items and create something new and useful and photograph the result. Spending must be kept to a minimum and documented with receipts. Items are made available for sale.
- Connect with an America Saves Week Campaign which will take place February 24 to March 1, 2014. Go to the America Saves Week website for a listing of organizations participating in America Saves Week in your community, region or state at: <http://www.americasavesweek.org/about/participating-organizations>. Cooperative Extension is often leading or a key partner in these efforts so it's a good idea to contact them. Work with the local coordinator to offer and highlight workshops related to FCS knowledge and skills that save money.
- Survey your community and develop a *Using Resources Wisely Guide* for your community listing places in your area that recycle certain useful products such as: medical equipment closet, resources available through the local library beyond books and media, food pantries, information about where to recycle eyeglasses, cellphones, etc.
- Brainstorm with other FCS professions in and outside your professional setting about possible TIS project ideas appropriate for your local community.

Be sure to label your project or activity you do as an AAFCS Taking it to the Streets: The Impact of the Economy on Families Project. This means to clearly include this information in any announcements, posters, press releases, media interviews and other outreach efforts, Take photos. Seek media support. Share your ideas via print, electronic, and social media.

Report on your efforts and the results to Marilyn Swierk, TIS Campaign Coordinator at [msinnovate@aol.com](mailto:msinnovate@aol.com).

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