



IMPROVING THE LIVES, COMMUNITIES, AND ECONOMY IN MARICOPA COUNTY

IN THIS ISSUE

## Volunteers

### Making Maricopa County Cooperative Extension Better

By Ed Martin

Each year, we start off our series of newsletters with the first one being dedicated to the volunteers that work with MCCE. Much of what we do would not get done if it wasn't for our volunteers. They help increase our capacity to serve the people of Maricopa County through many ways, in many programs. Our 4-H volunteers go through a rigorous background check and receive training before they are able to work with our 4-H youth. But with their help, we have reached so many in the county as our 4-H program begins to grow and our club members continue to exceed at the State and National levels. I cannot thank enough our dedicated 4-H volunteers for their service to our program and for their love and support of our youth. Equally impressive are our Master Gardener (MG) volunteers who work hard, day in and day out, to help save water, improve quality of life, and help so many in the Valley of the Sun learn how to tend their gardens and landscapes properly. Over 2,000 calls and emails come directly to the office through

our MG Help Desk, and many more questions are answered at speaking events, Home & Garden shows, walk-ins at the office, and at community meetings around the county. The dedication of our MG keeps MCCE as one of the county's premiere programs for getting answers and learning more about how, what, where, and when to grow in the Sonoran Desert! In addition, we have countless volunteers at schools helping coordinate our SNAP-Ed and EFNEP programs and assist with helping introduce agriculture into the classroom. It is difficult to express the gratitude that everyone in the office has for the hundreds of volunteers that help Maricopa County Cooperative Extension engage with people through applied research and education to improve lives, families, communities, the environment, and economies in Arizona and beyond. It may be simply, but it is heartfelt – thank you.



Gratitude



MG Volunteer Spotlight



4-H Volunteer Spotlight

# Volunteer Spotlight: Ken Smith

By March Allen Fliescher

What makes a Master Gardener perform 873 volunteer hours since first becoming certified back in 2014?

For Ken Smith, it is his love of connecting with people through plants. Because of his passion for gardening, he knew he could also meet nice folks like himself. Ken doesn't just love gardening, he thrives because of it!

Rain or shine, on any given Tuesday afternoon, you are likely to find him in the demonstration garden cutting, grooming, and planting to his heart's desire. He believes that the most important aspect is the learning. "The first thing I realized was I didn't know anything, and in order to not forget what I learned, I needed to become a mentor to others," Ken says.

This "old farm boy," as he likes to describe himself, has always loved to be out working the land. In fact, being outside for so much of his life may have contributed to a melanoma that unfortunately showed up on a PET scan as stage 4 cancer, which has metastasized in his liver and lungs. Ken is presently receiving treatment, but he can't do as much as he once could. "I get tired fast, so I try and get as much done as I can. But you won't see me feeling sorry for myself because gardening is my best therapy, it helps my sanity, and it allows me to stay under the radar."



How inspiring it is to see the dedication he puts into the Master Gardener program. We all learn from each other and over the course of nearly five years, Ken Smith continues to shine as a bright light for all those who admire his contributions and enjoy his friendship. Something tells me that farm boy who is all grown up is going to be in the garden for many more years to come!



# 4-H Volunteer Spotlight: Cody Jennings

By Jenna Mennetti

Cody Jennings's has been a dedicated member of 4-H. Since starting 10 years ago, Cody has participated in horse, small stock, dairy heifer, shooting sports, entrepreneurship, small engine, leather craft and much more. Cody started as an AmeriCorps roughly one year ago and has since made an impact across Arizona. He started by assisting with the Community Service Day 2018 and then moved to planning an 'All about 4-H' day camp. Towards the end of 2018, he started focusing on serving the military and their families. With the help of Jenna Mennetti, a day camp was created at Luke Air Force Base called Ag at Luke. This camp taught kids about various animals that are typically shown in 4-H. They would bring real animals in base allowing these kids to truly experience these animals for the first time in their lives. Then Cody helped with planning a Winter Community Service Day that helped provide blankets, dog toys, and ornaments for those in need. Cody leaves us to pursue higher education in Tennessee. He will be studying Large Animal Veterinary Medicine at the University of Tennessee in the spring.



# The Director's Cut

By Ed Martin



In many ways, this is my favorite newsletter of the year. Dedicated to the volunteers who make MCCE so much more than just a county or university office but make it a place where people come together to work on helping others. Just about every day, I see someone working in the office who isn't here for a paycheck but rather is here to help. These truly extraordinary individuals come from all walks of life and give so much, and have so much to offer. Recently, we had a trio of MG volunteers

that stuck with me on a county program for over a year, working with youth at the Durango Juvenile Detention Center. The results are youth learning about gardening, irrigation, and the enjoyment of tasting the fruits of their labor. That program would not have been possible without volunteers and our MG Coordinator, Yvonne Cooper. I also see many of our 4-H volunteers at the office, usually in the evening or on the weekends. These parents, many with children of their own, give their time to work with our 4-H youth. Their commitment to the program is exceptional. Between the shows, the club meetings, all the paperwork the University requires, this volunteer group's commitment is impressive. As I look forward to 2019, I'm looking forward to continuing our work with our volunteers and hopefully recruiting some new ones into the program. I am truly grateful for all they do for our programs and for the people of Maricopa County. If you have some time and want to make a difference, stop on by and see the opportunities we have for you. Happy New Year to everyone and thank you all for your continued support of your Maricopa County Cooperative Extension.

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## ABOUT TOWN

### Connect2STEM

**When:** Jan 26 10:00am - 3:00pm  
**Where:** U of A College of Medicine - Phx  
**More Information:**  
<https://extension.arizona.edu/events/2019-01-26/connect2stem-2>

### DIG - Roses: The Good, the Bad, the Ugly

**When:** Jan 17 6:00pm - 8:00pm  
**Where:** Maricopa County Cooperative Extension  
**More Information:**  
<https://extension.arizona.edu/events/2019-01-17/dig-roses-good-bad-ugly>

### Citrus Clinic - Surprise, AZ

**When:** Jan 19 9:00am - 12:00pm  
**Where:** Justice Brothers U-Pick  
**More Information:**  
<https://extension.arizona.edu/events/2019-01-19/citrus-clinic-surprise-az>

### Smartscape

**When:** Feb 5 - Mar 7 3:00pm - 6:00pm (Tues & Thur)  
**Where:** Maricopa County Cooperative Extension  
**More Information:**  
<https://extension.arizona.edu/events/2019-02-05/smartscape>

### DIG - Grow Organic Vegetables Year-Round

**When:** Feb 7 6:00pm - 8:00pm  
**Where:** Maricopa County Cooperative Extension  
**More Information:**  
<https://extension.arizona.edu/events/2019-02-07/dig-grow-organic-vegetables-year-round>

### Master Gardener Plant Clinic

(3rd Wednesday of Every Month)  
**Where:** Maricopa County Cooperative Extension  
**More Information:**  
<https://extension.arizona.edu/events/809-master-gardener-monthly-plant-clinic>

## Maricopa County Cooperative Extension Monthly Event Calendar

<http://extension.arizona.edu/maricopa>



Check us out at:

<https://www.facebook.com/MaricopaCountyCooperativeExtension>

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