

# Making a Difference

2015 – 2016



## Grand Challenges

K-State Research and Extension: providing education you can trust to help people, businesses, and communities solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future.

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## Adult Development and Aging Program Focus Team Working to Improve Health, Wellness, and Attitudes toward Aging in Kansas

### Situation

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that nearly 25 percent of Kansans will be older than 60 by the year 2030, a 32 percent increase since 2012. As the state and nation's Baby Boomer generation, those born between 1946 and 1964, age, they are more likely to experience disability and chronic diseases. This demographic shift will have significant consequences for the health and wellness of the aging population and the economy.

### What We Did

K-State Research and Extension Adult Development and Aging Program Focus Team used three different curricula to focus on emerging health and wellness issues: *Know the 10 Signs of Alzheimer's*, *Keys to Embracing Aging*, and *Gray for a Day*. Each lesson helped agents educate their communities on important aging issues.

### Outcomes

Between February and July 2016, more than 500 individuals participated in the *Know the 10 Signs* program. Through evaluation, 97 percent of participants reported they increased their understanding of the 10 signs of Alzheimer's.

*Of those who participated in the Keys to Embracing Aging program, 96 percent of participants indicated they "would make a behavioral change to better their overall health and wellness in order to promote increased independence and longevity."*

Both youth and adults participated in *Gray for a Day*. Of the youth that participated, 88 percent indicated they plan to take better care of their bodies to age healthfully. Ninety-three percent of adult participants said they plan to improve their lifestyle in order to improve their sensory functional well-being in the future.

### Success Story

Kansas youth who participated in *Gray for a Day* overwhelmingly demonstrated they had developed empathy, understanding, and patience for and toward older adults who may be struggling with age-related sensory loss in their daily life. One 4-H member said, "Now I understand why my Mamaw struggles so much in the grocery store. After learning what I did today, I'm going to make sure I help her instead of getting frustrated or being mean." Youth also learned the importance of taking care of your body throughout your lifespan; one 7 year-old participant wrote, "I learned I need to take care of my body. And my elders." Through small strides such as these, Kansas youth can make big changes in their families and communities.



4-H members attending Discovery Days participate in *Gray for a Day*, an experience designed to simulate age-related sensory decline.