

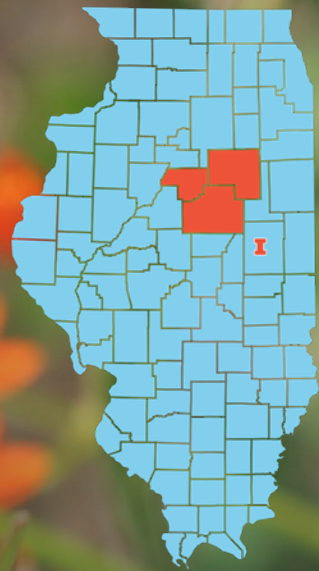


EXTENSION
IN ACTION 

Serving Livingston, McLean,
and Woodford Counties

ILLINOIS EXTENSION 2022





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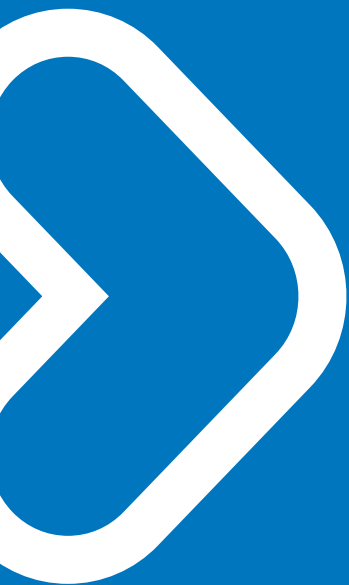
2022 EXTENSION COUNCIL MEMBERS

Dylan Cook
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Lisa Maynard
Pam Meiner

Debbie Ruff
Jackie Schertz (Youth)
Julie Schumacher
Amy Schlipf

Mike Sommer
Michelle Stevenson (Youth)
Jodi Upchurch
Alana Whitfield

Paul Wilkins
Jeff Woodard



Illinois Extension Makes an Impact

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's land-grant mission thrives each day through Extension's programs, resources, knowledge, and dedicated staff that are responsive to five grand challenge themes:



Community:
Support Strong and Resilient Residents



Economy:
Grow a Prosperous Economy



Environment:
Sustain Natural Resources at Home and in Public Spaces



Food:
Maintain a Safe and Accessible Food Supply



Health:
Maximize Physical, Mental, and Emotional Health

2022 Engagement

Extension leaders, staff, and stakeholders define priorities that create meaningful, mission-centered outcomes throughout the state:

643 Communities Served	720K+ Program Attendees	14.5M+ Webpage Views	22.9M+ Social Media Impressions	900K+ YouTube Views
488 Educational Sessions/Week (25K+ Annually)	95 Online Courses Accessed by 12K+ People	7,062 Local Government Education Webinar Reach	1,807 4-H Clubs	178,341 4-H Affiliations

Partnerships

Resource Generation

5,941 Program Volunteers	269 Community Gardens	1,030 School Partners	\$15,732,391 Value of Volunteer Contributions	\$223,639 Value of Donated Garden Produce
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Giving Gardens like this one featured at the Extension office in Pontiac are found throughout Livingston County.





Sunflowers, zinnias, and vegetables, including tomatoes and peppers, were included in the giving back program for the community.



Grow and Give Back donated 1,100 lbs. of food

With a few packets of seed and a little extra space, any gardener can feed their community. The Giving Garden program had 54 blooming and bountiful gardens in Livingston, McLean, and Woodford counties in 2022. Illinois Extension provided a free cut-flower or vegetable Giving Garden kit with season-long educational resources to any gardener who committed to donating at least 50% of the harvest to a local food pantry, care facility, or neighbor in need. A committed group of gardeners, families, and community groups of all ages took the pledge to “Grow and Give Back.”

Over 1,100 pounds of fresh produce and over 300 fresh floral arrangements were donated.

- The Livingston County 4-H Federation participated in the program for the second year in a row, creating a strong collective effort by sharing responsibilities in weekly maintenance and harvesting tasks.
- A Woodford County youth made a goal to donate all the produce he and his family grew for the program next year after seeing the need for increased food access at a crowded food pantry in his community.
- Gardeners from McLean County expressed joy and fulfillment after seeing thankful smiles on residents’ faces when gifted fresh floral arrangements at a local care facility.

Through gardening and giving, University of Illinois Extension and a community of gardeners continue to increase the health and well-being of our three-county unit’s neighbors and friends.



Find out more on programs like Giving Gardens go.illinois.edu/LMW



It’s butterfly time, and staff illustrate the importance of butterflies and other pollinators.

Community members transform at Butterfly Festival

Just like us, butterflies need food, water, and a safe, comfortable place to live. Unfortunately, populations are decreasing each year due to environmental stresses like drought and loss of habitat. Illinois Extension staff working in horticulture and 4-H teamed up to celebrate pollinators, including butterflies, in a community-wide event in Pontiac. The collaboration provided actions anyone can take to create healthy and diverse environments for pollinators.

Community partners and organizations led 15 highly engaging activity stations for butterfly enthusiasts of every age. Second-grade 4-H Butterfly Enrichment Program participants were encouraged to bring butterfly art to display.

Over 250 event attendees gave life to cloth wings while acting out the butterfly life cycle, made seed balls with pollinator-friendly plants, discovered the best native plants for a butterfly garden, tested their pollinator knowledge with butterfly trivia, and so much more. They went home with seeds for planting in their own backyards, resources for starting a pollinator garden, butterfly art to proudly display all summer, and inspiration to continue supporting our winged friends at home or in the community.



Historical garden offers rich education and pollinator support in Pontiac

A cottage-style garden with historically relevant plants sits on the grounds of the 19th-century Catherine V. Yost House, a Queen Anne-style Victorian home in Pontiac.

Livingston County Master Gardeners delicately tend a garden of spring-blooming bulbs, herbs, native perennials, and nectar-rich annuals that act as host plants to local pollinators.

The garden is a registered Pollinator Pocket, Monarch Waystation, and Pollinator Pathway. With a wealth of historical plant knowledge, as well as, experience in current gardening practices, the Master Gardeners engage the visitors and residents of Livingston County with educational workshops in the garden, providing practical knowledge for gardening they can use at home.





Nature Trails Day features nature-inspired activities

Nature Trails Day, organized by local Master Naturalists and hosted by Sugar Grove Nature Center, has been the largest local Master Naturalist event of the last several years, and 2022 was no different. Featuring live animal demonstrations, outdoor natural resource-inspired activities, Citizen Science projects, and partner booth displays, Nature Trails Day garnered 417 attendees, more than double the 2021 attendance. The activities were only possible with the help of 28 active Master Naturalists and 12 Master Naturalist trainee volunteers.

Nick Frillman, local food systems and small farms educator, and the Extension team received feedback:

- 71% of responding participants said they were “extremely likely” or “likely” to attend next year.
- 32% of responding participants indicated that no improvements are needed to the event.

New Master Naturalists ready to serve

Combining the best parts of remote learning with critical in-the-field experiences led by regional natural resource educators, Master Naturalist training resumed in the area. The hybrid format helped attract potential applicants who had concern about close contact with individuals, post-pandemic, as well as appealing to applicants who may have had conflicting commitments. The new format was more inclusive than former full-day sessions.

The robust training featured eight local field excursions and one extended adventure with Extension natural resource educators, coupled with up to 60 hours of remote work curriculum during a three-month period ending in November.

Nineteen trainees graduated to intern status, and they have already made a tremendous impact in the unit, providing 223 volunteer hours during their short time as interns and completing 32 hours of continuing education.



Find more Extension Master Naturalist programs
extension.illinois.edu/mn



Apples at the Refuge Food Forest (Photo: Nick Frillman)

Refuge Food Forest plays host to agroforestry, specialty crop programs

The Refuge Food Forest is a 1.5-acre interplanting of food-bearing perennial crops, mature trees, windbreaks, and prairie plantings. This community park and food access project is co-managed by U of I Extension and the town of Normal.

In 2022, “A Season of Harvests at the Refuge Food Forest” was reborn with Extension’s leadership. The retooled program series featured specific agroforestry crop education, as well as community service project components. The series concluded with the group harvesting the ripe perennial fruits.

In addition to the 10 “Seasons of Harvests” workshops and five additional single-topic programs, Nick Frillman, local food systems and small farms educator, taught 159 people at the Refuge Food Forest in 2022.

Volunteer speakers available to give community presentations

People are curious about nature. With an increase in requests from community members for presentations about natural resources, the local Extension unit created the “Speakers Series.”

Years of hands-on experience and a strong desire to share their knowledge, the Speakers Series committee of local Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists provides engaging, research-based presentations.

More than 25 presentations have been given. One program on bats, developed and presented by Julie Williamson, has been requested and delivered three times. Contact the Extension office to request a speaker for your community event.





Unit Master Gardeners



126
Volunteers



7,036
Volunteer Hours



1,761
Continuing Education Hours

Unit Master Naturalists



86
Volunteers



841
Continuing
Education



12
Partners/ Projects



3,788
Volunteer Hours

Total Volunteers in Unit



212
Volunteers



10,824
Volunteer Hours



2,602
Continuing Education



Visitors engage every sense at a local herb garden

The stimulating textures and scents of a garden excite our senses while promoting physical health and emotional well-being. At Illinois State University Horticulture Center, the McLean County Master Gardener Herb Garden is an oasis for the senses.

A rounded garden, divided into four quadrants — sensory, fragrance, themed, and culinary — has been a source of community exploration since its adoption by the Master Gardeners in 2014.

An annual selection of engaging activity stations encourages children of all ages to explore with their senses and create beautiful art showcasing the colorful plant material. The theme, “Plant Curiosities: Uncovering the Hidden Wonders of the Hidden World,” offered Master Gardeners exciting opportunities to showcase unique and interesting plants for visitors to discover!

With educational signage always on site, every visit to the sensory garden is an opportunity to learn gardening practices. Grow, harvest, and create — with herbs.



Learn more about Master Gardeners
go.illinois.edu/LMW_MG



♥ Fryers and fermentation: Keeping up with nutrition trends

Extension staff working in nutrition and wellness are staying on top of the latest food and lifestyle trends. Air fryers have become the must-have cooking appliance, allowing for the taste of fried foods without all the fat. Five air fryer workshops were held with 74 people in attendance.

Likewise, more and more people are looking for probiotics to aid in gut and immune health, creating renewed interest in food fermentation preservation. “Lacto-Fermentation 101: DIY Kimchi” provided hands-on instruction on fermentation. Each of the 15 participants took home a jar of kimchi to ferment.



Participants prepare kimchi with local foods small farms and nutrition and wellness educators.

Preventing, managing diabetes

Dietitian consultations for prediabetes are not often covered by insurance, leading to a gap in education around diabetes prevention. Extension staff working in nutrition and wellness partnered with Carle Eureka Hospital’s certified diabetes educator to provide diabetes and prediabetes education through educational programming and a diabetes health and wellness fair.

“1 on Diabetes,” a series of four 3-hour sessions, helps people prevent or manage diabetes. Two participants reported losing 10 pounds during the program.

“I’ve lost 10 pounds since this program started and feel amazing,” a participant said. “I’ve been to a dietitian before but did not get near the information that I have received in this class. I don’t want it to end!”

About 20 people attended the one-hour health fair in Metamora where one attendee was ecstatic to be able to order a continuous glucose monitor from one of the vendors, no longer needing to prick her fingers each day.

Expanding nutrition programs to all

The Community Health Care Clinic serves several French- and Spanish-speaking individuals with specialized educational language needs.

“Comfort Food Makeovers” was a joint project with Community Health Care Clinic. To meet the needs of the clientele, the team worked with the clinic to adjust the program to be more culturally diverse. Two interns at the clinic translated all the materials in Spanish and French and served as translators for the program.

Thirteen individuals - four French speakers, seven Spanish speakers, and two English speakers - attended the program to learn how to substitute ingredients to make meals healthier. A survey after the class revealed that they wished the classes happened more often so that they can master the content. This has led the nutrition and wellness team to reach out to the partner to discuss ways Extension could be of service and potentially establish a more routine presence at the facility.



Tomato varieties as these were grown and distributed to local families.



Unity Community Center Garden donates 1,100 lbs. of produce

The Unity Community Center Food Giveaway and Demonstration Garden in Normal is used for research, demonstrations, and workshops, but is most-widely used as a production garden and source of fresh food to donate to local families and area food banks.

Many low-income, family housing, and minority populations live near the garden. The garden held potential to increase access to healthy food for these families.

Nick Frillman, local food systems and small farms educator, provided his extensive knowledge of vegetable gardening to turn the potential into reality. His objective for the first year was to grow at least 1,000 pounds of fresh food. A second objective was to provide as much of the produce as possible to the community members who live in close vicinity to the garden.

Extension met and exceeded the goal, growing 1,143 pounds of food. Half of the food was given away at a weekly pop-up distribution site during times when nearby residents were walking home from work. The remaining produce was donated to area food banks.



1,143 lbs.
Food grown and distributed from Unity Garden

The garden allowed Extension to grow fresh food for a population who was experiencing chronic stress from the pandemic and create a relationship with the Unity-area community for the future. In addition to food access, the garden allowed connections and conversations to be made with local community members and Extension staff.

SNAP-Education grows to meet need for more nutrition and health information

New resources have been added to Extension’s SNAP-Ed programming. A new educator will devote their efforts to changing policies, systems, and environments to make it easier for SNAP-eligible families to access healthy foods.

In 2022, the SNAP-Ed educator worked with Midwest Food Bank to implement several changes to its food distribution system, making it easier for their partner pantries to identify healthy options. Green signs were placed on food items that meet the nutrition standards, making it easier for clients to recognize and choose healthy food options.

Midwest Food Bank also worked with the SNAP-Ed educator to create a nutrition policy that will guide the food bank to increase the number of healthy options available in their inventory through food drives and increasing donated items like protein foods. This is a very exciting step forward for the health of the residents in the area we serve!



McLean County 4-H

Ag Innovator Experience teaches ag technology to youth

Ag Innovators Experience is a national 4-H program. Staff across the nation submit proposals for consideration. Katie Buckley, McLean County 4-H youth development educator, submitted a proposal on behalf of Illinois, and her entry was selected as the national experience for 2022.

The experience, “Unlock Ag Innovations Challenge,” explores how different technologies have transformed agriculture and how farmers must continue to innovate, learn, and adopt new technologies to grow more food in a sustainable manner.

Youth participants in the program discovered how individuals who are creative and passionate about innovation in agriculture are needed to develop the new technologies that will allow farmers to continue to care for the land, while increasing yield and streamlining the way farms are operated.

The Experience includes a series of challenges using an escape room format. Youth explore a variety of ag innovations. In small teams, youth work through scenarios to solve situations farmers face. Once all the challenges are unlocked, teams understood why ag innovation matters to all of us.

This program was piloted in six states, including Illinois, and reached more than 6,000 youth. In addition to Buckley, Illinois youth development educators Alcha Corban of Woodford and Livingston counties and Donna Nuger of DuPage, Kane, and Kendall counties created the Ag Innovators Experience lessons.

Grab a book, get a lesson

A needs assessment, informed by local organizations, revealed a need for McLean County 4-H to be more readily available in the communities they serve.

Katie Buckley partnered with the Bloomington Public Library and its Bookmobile to do onsite programming at their stops throughout Bloomington. She worked with Bookmobile staff to determine what stops had the most foot traffic and diverse backgrounds.

Buckley attended six stops and saw over 75 youth. In spring, Buckley expanded her partnership with the Bookmobile by including Master Gardeners who provided horticulture activities for youth. An additional 100 youth participated in activities with both 4-H and horticulture. This partnership has proven valuable and will continue in the future.

Bookmobile Program



6
Book Stop Events



175
Youth

2021-22 Unity Enrollment



90%
Black or African American



10%
Caucasian



52%
Male



48%
Female



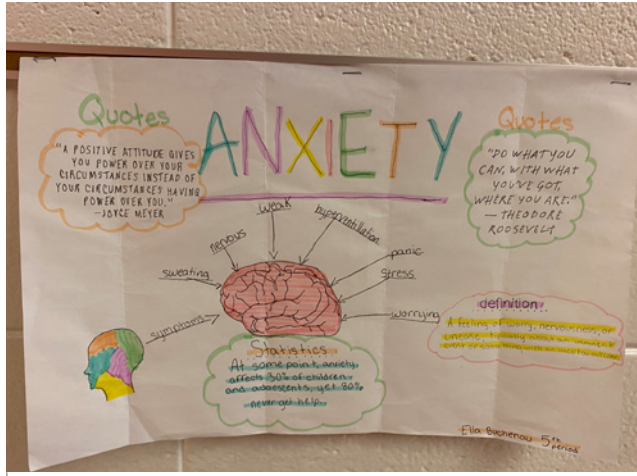
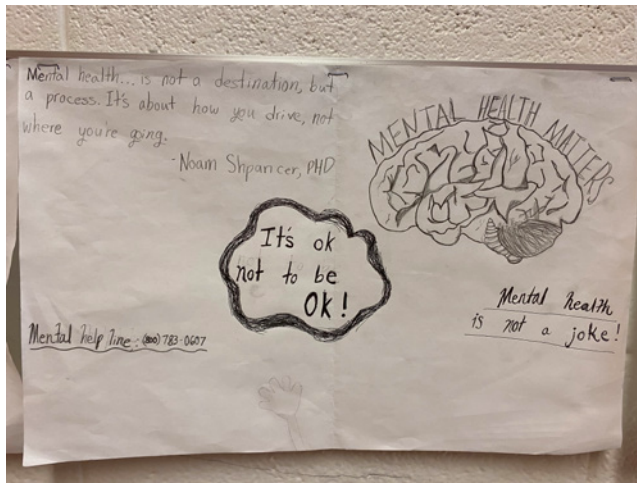


Livingston County 4-H

Your Thoughts Matter

Seventh grade students at Pontiac Junior High explored mental health concerns through the “Your Thoughts Matter” Extension program. The six-week program reached 110 students weekly, with a goal for youth to identify the difference among some common but serious mental health disorders, understand how society communicates about this issue in casual speech and in the media, identify strategies for self-help, and identify ways to be part of the solution.

For their final project, students created mental health awareness posters that were put up around the school to share the knowledge they gained with their peers. The program will return to PJHS in the fall and reach over 100 youth.



Youth share what it means to have their thoughts highlighted



4-H program coordinator Sara Attig demonstrates the importance of butterflies at the first Butterfly Festival in Pontiac.



Livingston County 4-H partnered with local Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, Pontiac Parks and Rec, Everyone's Collective, Wild Ones, Livingston County Arts Council, Pontiac Public Library, and Livingston County Soil and Water Conservation District for the Butterfly Festival.



Woodford County 4-H

Project Workshops

Projects are a great way for youth to explore careers and find new interests that spark their curiosity. Several project workshops were offered for 4-H members and youth new to 4-H, including cooking, horticulture, paper crafts, consumer education, and leadership. Cloverbud workshops for youth ages 5 to 7 introduce them to gardening, science, and forestry. As a result of these workshops, the number of Cloverbud members jumped from 18 in 2020 to 57 in 2022. In total, 73 youth attended these county workshops.

Library Partnership

4-H staff elevated their programming at Woodford County Library. A new partnership with the Illinois Prairie District Libraries, specifically in Germantown Hills and Roanoke, was created. Five programs reaching 64 youth were presented at these two new locations. Extension also held two workshops at the El Paso library reaching 13 youth.

Our 4-H Involvement: Developing Leaders the World Needs Today



1,945
4-H Club Members



8,741
4-H Affiliations



126
4-H Clubs



2,504
Fair Exhibits



19%
Minority Youth Engaged in 4-H



9%
Hispanic Youth Engaged in 4-H

Additional 4-H youth development educator joins Unity Center staff

New educator Jeffery Pegram oversees all youth and 4-H youth developing programming at Unity. Prior to joining Extension, Jeffrey worked internationally as a K-12 art educator and administrator in the People’s Republic of China and in the United Arab Emirates. Prior to his international work, Jeffrey taught visual art in Iowa; served as a coordinator of undergraduate research and ESL instructor at several community colleges in North Carolina and New Jersey; and held various roles as an assistant professor of education at Hartwick College in upstate New York.

Jeffrey holds a bachelor’s degree in visual art from Morehouse College, a master’s degree in art education from University of Iowa, and a doctorate in education policy from University of Maryland-College Park, with a concentration in sociological and philosophical foundations of education.

Jeffrey grew up on Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation land presently called Durham, North Carolina. He is an artist, and educator whose interdisciplinary interests include the moral lives of children, a pedagogy of PLAY, and education for citizenship.

An example of his programming includes the Unity Gives celebration which featured a youth fashion show. The youth made decoration and choreographed a special dance. The Sunset Rotary Club of Bloomington-Normal provided the meals and serving of the dinner.

2022 Income and 2022 Expenses



- 44% County Board Levies
- 28% State Match
- 25% Federal Funds
- 3% Gifts/Donations



- 66% Salaries
- 20% Rent/Leases/Utilities
- 6% General Services
- 5% Program Educational Services & Supplies
- 4% Equipment Maintenance
- 2% Travel
- 2% Accommodation Expenses



4-H educators receives national recognition for innovation

Five University of Illinois Extension 4-H youth development staff received recognition for innovation with their program, “Culture, Cuisine, and Conversation.”

Alcha Corban (second from left), Extension 4-H youth development educator for Livingston and Woodford counties helped develop a program that explores cooking and cuisine traditions of six countries all on a virtual platform. Corban says her mission is to empower youth to discover their passions, achieve their goals, and give back to their communities through 4-H programs that promote personal growth, team building, leadership, and service-learning opportunities.



Unity Team receives recognition for diversity and excellence

The Unity Center is a multicultural center providing free educational programs for youth and families in the community. The Center provides academic support, enrichment, and positive youth development programming for families with limited resources immigrant families, and English-language youth learners through the local school district. The center received University of Illinois Extension’s Team Award for Excellence in Diversity programming for its support of diversity, pluralism, innovation, and building organizational change.

The Unity Center team recognized include Bobbie Lewis-Sibley, Alcha Corban, Afiwa TETE, and Natalie Grider.

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4-H STEAM in the Classroom
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Unity Community Center
facebook.com/UoflExtensionUnity



Main Office
youtube.com/user/UIExtensionUnit12

Cover photo: Extension does important work at the Refuge Food Forest.



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

College of Agricultural, Consumer & Environmental Sciences

University of Illinois, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Local Extension Councils Cooperating.
University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate, please contact the event coordinator. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your needs.

The Illinois Nutrition Education Programs are funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

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