EXTENSION COUNCIL MEETING

SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

MINUTES

**Present**: Amber Daulbaugh, Larissa Goodman, Lisa Hoelscher, Sarah Kinkade, Barb McGrew, Norbert Soltwedle, Jason Warfel and Carl Baker

**Minutes:** from the May 2021 meeting were approved, Motion by Warfel, Second by McGrew

Baker welcomed everyone to the first Extension Council meeting of the 2021 – 2022 program year. In attendance were three new members to Extension Council. Baker gave an overiew of the programs that are in the works throughout the four county unit:

**4-H Youth Development:**

The Unit has hired a new 4-H Youth Development Educator that is set to start on October 5. Kasey Sanders has been hired to take the place of Dana Homann who retired on June 30. Kasey brings a passion for 4-H, being a 4-H alumni herself. Also, a survey has been sent out to 4-H youth, parents and club leaders to assess what clubs and youth would like to see here in Clay, Effingham, Fayette, and Clay Counties.

**SNAP-Ed:**

The Unit is still trying to fill a vacancy within the Effingham Office. Baker is trying to fill the SNAP-Ed Community Worker position. There has been 3 failed searches as it is hard to get people to apply for the position. The SNAP-Ed Community Workers in Fayette and Clay have been assisting when they can to fill the void and in between their respective county programs. Reach out work to Brownstown School District to install a Blessing Box has not been successful as the school district has not returned calls or emails. We will be reaching out to Ramsey School District and St. Elmo to see if they would be interested in having a Blessing Box installed at their school. It was discussed that maybe the Building Trades Program for the County located at Vandalia High School may be willing to contruct the boxes for us. Students from the other county schools attend the building trades program at Vandalia High School.

**Horticulture:**

**Library STEM Kits**

In August 2021, a video was recorded at the Effingham Public Library. The video was released to all libraries in Unit 21 (Flora Public Library (Clay Co.), Newton Public Library (Jasper Co.), and Evans Public Library (Fayette Co.). The video was the start of creating interest for future STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) kits that Unit 21 (Clay, Effingham, Fayette and Jasper Co.) was planning to release. The kits were a hit! Over 160 kits were given out to the libraries as well as Montessori Kids Universe.

In September 2021, a “teaser” video (this will be monthly) was recorded at the Effingham Public Library and released to the other libraries in the Unit. Response has been well-received. To date, over 256 STEM kits have been distributed in our first official month of STEM kits. Our kits are being received by schools, day-cares, early education centers, and the libraries. Our Unit has been interviewed by WTIM and promoted on WNOI radio. We had a request from Teutopolis Elementary for 80 kits this last week but were unable to fill due to lack of extra supplies. This is a first come, first serve basis while we ramp up our process to have 400 kits available each month. We have orders for over 335 kits for the October STEM kits.

**Senior Adult and Assisted-Living Programs**

Seniors at Villas of Holly Brook in Effingham and Newton, Heritage Woods (Flora), Guardian Angel Adult Day Care (Teutopolis), and Newton Care Center (Newton) have been enjoying learning about the language of flowers. All had a good time laughing over “messages” a modern-day bouquet of flowers would relay to a person from Victorian times when flowers where the Emojis of the day.

Seniors at these facilities also played aroma therapy bingo. Can you nose “remember” certain scents? What memories do those scents invoke? Seniors often had very fond memories of certain scents and were introduced to new scents. They all said they learned very interesting facts about the scents used.

Butterfly kits have been very well-watched activities as well as the receipt of raised beds and seeds to garden indoors. Seniors often comment on missing these simple activities.

Activities at the senior and assisted-living programs are geared for seniors and focus fun, information, and re-connecting with the outside world and promoting memory and sensory connections.

**Montessori Kids Universe**

The STEM kits have been very well received at the Montessori Kids Universe. Montessori is a very experiential teaching program. The teachers are thrilled with the kits often saying, “This is so Montessori!” The teachers have said they will use the kits in their classrooms. Their school is also expanding by November 2021 and will have the potential for another 40 students.

**Additional Educational Programs**

The STEM kits are also being used in after-school programs through Effingham Public Library and a STEM program at the Evans Public Library. Homeschoolers using the Newton Public Library will have access to the STEM kits. ERBA (Embarrass River Basin Area) Head-Start in Newton is using the kits at two locations. Early Educations Centers are interested in using the STEM kits in their classrooms as well. Teutopolis Elementary School (T-town) will be using the kits in a STEM-related program for K-3 students on Fridays starting with the October kit.

**Watershed Outreach:**

The Watershed Outreach Program has scheduled a Rainscaping Garden training program for the first two weeks in October. The trainings will be conducted via Zoom and will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays with an installation of a rainscape garden at the Effingham County Office which will be used a teaching and education tool for the Master Garden Program.

**Signatorie Card Approval** – **Amendment**

Baker asked the Extension Council to vote on and approve and amended Signatorie Card list due to the recent retirement of Dana Homann. He asked that Dana Homann be removed and replaced with Ms. Kasey Sanders. The Council approved with unanimous.

* 1. Clay – Carl Baker, Michelle Fombelle, Jennifer Jones, Larissa Goodman add Kasey Sanders
  2. Effingham – Carl Baker, Michelle Fombelle, Jennifer Jones, Sandy Croft add Kasey Sanders
  3. Fayette – Carl Baker, Michelle Fombelle, Jennifer Jones, Ben Fraizer add Kasey Sanders
  4. Jasper – Carl Baker, Michelle Fombelle, Jennifer Jones, Jason Warfel add Kasey Sanders

**Other Comments:**

Baker informed the Council that in the near future there will be some trainings on diversity and inclusion. He stated that this is an important topic to the University and one that the local unit will be doing some additional work. Council member Soltwedle commented that there is a strong Hispanic population in Effingham County and that would be a good place to start when looking at how Extension can expand programing to diverse audiences. Another place to look is at CASP which has a focus base on underserved and underrepresented populations based on a host of needs one being Social Economic Status (SES). CASP serves Effingham, Interagency Council serves Fayette County and Jasper county as an interagency coalition as well. Jasper counties group meets every other month while Effingham and Fayette meet monthly.

The Unit has also purchased drones in which the educators are looking at starting programming on drones by the end of the year. The Unit has two certified drone pilots, Mary Fischer, and Jennifer Jones. It was asked if this is a program that can also be tailored to adults and farming as agriculture continues to evolve with technology. Baker indicated that we can look into a program that will be beneficial to adults and farmers. Also the next meeting will start with the 4-H Expansion and Review Committee.

**Future Meeting Dates**: NOVEMBER 30, 2021, JANUARY, 31, 2022, MARCH 31, 2022, and MAY 31, 2022

**Adjourn**: