

EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit

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Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Garden of Hope and SNAP-Ed work together on health and gardening classes

Gardening is an excellent activity to do for one's health. It combines healthy nutritious food, with outdoor activity. When you add those to a lovely, peaceful environment you have a recipe for success.

University of Illinois Extension's [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—Education \(SNAP-Ed\)](#) teams up with [OSF St. Ann's Garden of Hope](#) to provide classes held in the garden.

"We have had a wonderful summer in Peoria County," commented [Julie Dantone](#), SNAP-Ed instructor and Extension Master Gardener. "We had the pleasure of working with 110 kids, between the ages of 7 and 15, who were participating in YMCA summer program."

During the CATCH curriculum based classes, Julie taught the students lessons about herbs, vegetables, and fruits that can be grown in Illinois. Garden coordinator and [Extension Master Gardener](#) Mike Brooks, along with other Master Gardeners added to the learning by working with the students out in the garden.

"The students also got to plant their own tomato plant and take it home," explained Julie. "As the summer went on, it was fun to hear about their personal gardening experiences with their tomato plants. Some were successfully transplanted and growing, while others met an untimely end due to a lawn mower and a dog."

Partnering with SNAP-Education is just one way that Garden of Hope offers help to the community. It is projected to produce 10,000 pounds of food that is distributed at the garden and through local food pantries. The garden offers opportunities to volunteer, get hands-on learning about growing produce and flowers, and provides a place of peace among the busy city-scape.

"After our lessons the kids loved to play games in the garden," Julie concluded. "One day we held a relay race with a cup of seed corn balanced on their head. That was a lot of fun for everyone participating and the spectators."



Photo by Anna Wilkinson | Illinois Extension

Julie Dantone, SNAP-Ed instructor taught 110 students throughout the summer at the Garden of Hope in Peoria. The lessons combined healthy eating, exercise, and gardening.

Julie Dantone

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