

# What we do & Why it matters

## FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

### UNIT 1: JO DAVIESS, STEPHENSON AND WINNEBAGO COUNTIES

#### **DIANE REINHOLD** (Extension Educator, Nutrition and Wellness)

Diane Reinhold works to improve the overall health of consumers living within the communities that she serves. Using community needs assessments; Diane develops, implements and evaluates nutrition and wellness programming to address those needs in a cost-effective manner. Diane delivers programs reaching across the dimensions of wellness focusing on chronic disease prevention and management, and food safety.

#### **CAROL ERICKSON** (Extension Educator, SNAP-Ed)

Carol Erickson engages local stakeholders to make community changes that make eating healthy and being active the easy choice. She works to increase food access and environmental change in limited-income neighborhoods through assessments, technical assistance, education, coalitions, and assisting partners in implementing programs and policies. Her focus areas include youth and community gardens, SNAP at farmers markets, Breakfast after the Bell, and professional development opportunities for school nutrition staff.

### UNIT 2: BOONE, DEKALB AND OGLE COUNTIES

#### **MARILYN CSERNUS** (Extension Educator, Nutrition and Wellness)

Marilyn Csernus works with individuals and organizations to promote individual and community health and well-being through nutrition and wellness programming. Her interests include chronic disease prevention and management through lifestyle behaviors around dietary patterns and physical activity.

### UNIT 3: LAKE AND MCHENRY COUNTIES

#### **DALE P. KEHR** (Extension Educator, SNAP-Ed)

Dale Kehr engages local stakeholders to implement healthier options for their communities. She uses various assessments such as pantry assessments, smart lunchroom assessments, and preschool assessments. Her strengths are incorporating these assessments into building healthier communities. Her focus areas include school and community gardens, pantry makeovers, and professional development opportunities for school personnel and school wellness polices.

### UNIT 4: CARROLL, LEE AND WHITESIDE COUNTIES

#### **KARLA BELZER** (Extension Educator, Family Life)

Karla Belzer addresses a variety of life issues in the context of family relationships with emphasis on parenting young children, healthy aging, intergenerational relations, adult caregiving, and communication. Her community-based, research-supported programming extends to a variety of diverse audiences, including early childhood and aging professional staff, parents, older adults, family caregivers and others. Through Karla's interactive, facilitative approach, she aims to help people of all ages live their best life.

#### **VERONICA SKARADZINSKI** (visiting Extension Educator, SNAP-Ed)

Veronica Skaradzinski leads, advocates, and implements change related to healthy lifestyles in children and adults in settings such as schools, food pantries, and community partnerships. Her work contributes to shifts in social and cultural norms and values, changing behavior to improve wellbeing through adequate nutrition and increased physical activity.

### UNIT 5: DUPAGE, KANE AND KENDALL COUNTIES

#### **LAURA BARR** (Extension Educator, Nutrition and Wellness)

Laura Barr delivers evidence-based nutrition programs and scientific food handling strategies to the public. Through community partnerships and state and local needs assessments, programs are developed, applied and evaluated. The outcomes include increased consumption of healthy food and physical activity, which can lead to health benefits. Safe food handling outcomes include better time and temperature control for potentially hazardous foods and increased awareness of the importance of personal hygiene for food handlers.

## WHAT WE DO & WHY IT MATTERS, CONT'D

# FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

### **JESSICA GADOMSKI** (Extension Educator, SNAP-Ed)

Jessica Gadomski assists organizations in the creation and support of healthy environments that promote best practices in nutrition and physical activity. Through policy, systems and environmental initiatives, Gadomski facilitates change to help make the healthy choice the easy choice for the SNAP eligible population. Gadomski's work targets a variety of focus areas including: K-12 schools, emergency food, early childhood and community-based groups and coalitions.

### **UNIT 6: COOK COUNTY**

### **SHERRI AMBROSE** (Extension Educator, EFNEP)

Sherri Ambrose leads the Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP) in neighborhoods on the north and west side of Chicago. EFNEP promotes learning through hands on activities, food demonstrations and fun ways to be active. Adults and youth learn how healthy food and physical activity can improve the health of the whole family, as well as how to keep food safe and save money at the grocery store. Ambrose supports the team in empowering families to live their best health.

### **VERONICA ARANDA** (Extension Educator, Community Health)

Veronica Aranda communicates health information in a way that will help and encourage community members to make informed decisions about their health. She provides comprehensive health education programs in English and Spanish within Cook County for diverse populations across the lifespan. Her efforts focus on sexual and reproductive health, reducing the risk of chronic disease, health literacy, mental health, and interpersonal violence.

### **ARUNA P. BUDHRAM** (Extension Educator, EFNEP)

Aruna Budhram leads an Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) team focusing on the south side of Chicago. This team promotes healthy lifestyles among low-income families and youth by applying nutrition and physical activity knowledge. Through community-based education approaches, we help improve the overall health and longevity of these individuals by addressing different challenges related to obesity, food insecurity and socioeconomic status.

### **MICHELE CRAWFORD** (Extension Educator, Community Health)

Michele Crawford develops, implements, and evaluates health education programs delivered in community outreach settings. Her current work includes programs in the fields of trauma informed care, teen dating violence prevention, healthy relationships for diverse learners, sexual and reproductive health and chronic disease prevention. By providing research-based information and strategies, Michele provides Cook County residents with the tools they need to cultivate healthy lifestyles.

### **DOMINIQUE HARRIS** (Extension Educator, SNAP-Ed)

Dominique Harris supports nutrition education for SNAP-eligible participants by promoting healthy nutrition policies, systems, and environmental supports. By working with local community partners, including schools, food pantries, and corner stores, she aids in ensuring access to healthy food options. While continuous nutrition education is important, it is also imperative that local supportive environments are in place to drive positive nutrition choices and change, leading to the ultimate goal of obesity prevention within the community.

### **MOLLY HOFER** (Extension Educator, Family Life)

Molly Hofer addresses a variety of life issues in the context of family relationships with emphasis on parenting young children, healthy aging, intergenerational relations, adult caregiving, and family communication. Her community-based, research-supported workshops extend to a variety of audiences in Cook County, including early childhood and aging professional staff, parents, older adults, family caregivers and others. Through Molly's interactive, facilitative approach to teaching life skills to others, she aims to promote healthy lifestyle decisions, effective family communication, and management of life transitions.

### **SONIA LOPEZ** (Extension Educator, Community Health)

Sonia Lopez fosters physical and mental wellbeing, resilience, and social connections through health education programs aimed at reducing health disparities among Hispanic families. She contributes to the field of public health by sharing program evaluation results with colleagues and key stakeholders.

## WHAT WE DO & WHY IT MATTERS, CONT'D

# FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

### **ASHLEY PHILLIPS** (Extension Educator, Community Health)

Ashley Phillips provides quality, evidence-based health education to the residents of Cook County on topics including chronic disease, mental health, and healthy relationships. These efforts are geared to improve the health of Cook County communities by equipping residents to make healthier choices.

### **UNIT 7: HENRY, MERCER, ROCK ISLAND AND STARK COUNTIES**

### **KRISTIN BOGDONAS** (Extension Educator, Nutrition and Wellness)

Kristin Bogdonas leads direct health education programs that address chronic disease, worksite wellness, mindful eating, healthy lifestyles, the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement, and food safety. She authors a health column in Quad City Times and two health blogs, Turnip the Beet! and Illinois Nutrition Edition, reaching over 175,000 people annually.

### **UNIT 8: BUREAU, LASALLE, MARSHALL AND PUTNAM COUNTIES**

### **SUSAN GLASSMAN** (Extension Educator, Nutrition and Wellness)

Susan Glassman empowers people who are trying to prevent or manage chronic disease and obesity through promoting the dietary guidelines. Susan also provides Extension and USDA programming for safe food preservation to help decrease foodborne illness in our communities.

### **VICKI GERBERICH** (Extension Educator, SNAP-Ed)

Vicki Gerberich leads local SNAP-Ed program planning to improve health and wellness outcomes for at-risk and low income individuals. She uses multi-level educational interventions with a focus on policy, system, and environmental methods to develop sustainable and feasible options for schools, community wellness organizations, youth centers, and food distribution sites, resulting in positive opportunities for individuals and families.

### **UNIT 9: GRUNDY, KANKAKEE AND WILL COUNTIES**

### **DRUSILLA BANKS** (Extension Educator, Nutrition and Wellness)

Drusilla Banks translates research-based information into educational programs that are clear and useful. She teaches classes on Food Service Sanitation Managers Certification, managing chronic illness such as diabetes, safe home food preservation, and consuming more locally grown foods to help people improve their daily lives.

### **SASHA GRABENSTETTER** (Extension Educator, Consumer Economics)

Sasha Grabenstetter provides financial education research and resources to the counties of Grundy, Will and Kankakee through group presentations, articles, blog posts and webinars. She also is an advocate for financial wellness, creating curriculum with the consumer economics team to reach low-resource audiences.

### **DELORIS WALKER** (Extension Educator, SNAP-Ed)

Deloris works to create policy, systems, and environmental change in nutrition education for low-income and low-resource audiences in Will, Kankakee, and Grundy Counties. Through strategic partnerships with local coalitions, schools, and food pantries, Deloris is helping to reduce food insecurity, increase healthy food access, and create healthier environments to make the healthy choice the easier choice for marginalized communities.

### **UNIT 10: HENDERSON, KNOX, MCDONOUGH AND WARREN COUNTIES**

### **TESSA HOBBS-CURLEY** (Extension Educator, Family Life)

Tessa Hobbs-Curley has a wealth of experience working with youth and adult audiences. She offers programs emphasizing on family relationship, communication, caregiving, and human development thru the life span. Tessa's genuine presentation style engages all ages in her programs.

## WHAT WE DO & WHY IT MATTERS, CONT'D

# FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

### UNIT 11: FULTON, MASON, PEORIA AND TAZEVELL COUNTIES

#### **MARGARET COVER** (Extension Educator, EFNEP)

Margaret Cover supervises nine EFNEP staff who provide nutrition education to low-income families with children and programs for youth, including summer cooking schools. She also serves as teacher for dietetic interns from Bradley University, Illinois State University, University of Illinois, and OSF St. Francis Medical Center.

#### **KAITLYN STREITMATTER** (Extension Educator, SNAP-Ed)

Kaitlyn Streitmatter implements policy, systems and environmental change in order to encourage the community of Fulton, Mason, Peoria and Tazewell counties to lead healthier lives. She collaborates with community partners and organizations to provide technical assistance and nutrition education for limited resource families and communities.

### UNIT 12: LIVINGSTON, MCLEAN AND WOODFORD COUNTIES

#### **JENNA SMITH** (Extension Educator, Nutrition and Wellness)

Jenna Smith delivers cutting-edge educational programs with an emphasis on food safety certification for food service personnel, food preservation, and diabetes and cardiovascular disease prevention and management. Her work empowers individuals to incorporate healthy lifestyle behaviors to improve quality of life.

#### **CAMAYA WALLACE BECHARD** (Extension Educator, Consumer Economics)

Camaya Wallace Bechard provides research-based financial education programs to help individuals, families, and communities establish healthy financial lives. She adopts family life course and family resilience approaches to deliver information through multiple educational settings such as group presentations, webinars, articles, blogs, and community collaborations.

### UNIT 13: CHAMPAIGN, FORD, IROQUOIS AND VERMILION COUNTIES

#### **BETTY GAVIN** (Extension Educator, SNAP-Ed)

Betty Gavin provides training and support to all SNAP-Ed staff in the eastern Illinois region. This training helps SNAP-Ed staff assist limited resource families in making healthier nutrition and wellness choices for themselves, their families and their communities.

#### **CHELSEY BYERS GERSTENECKER** (Extension Educator, Family Life)

Chelsey Beyers promotes healthy lifestyle decisions, effective family communication, and management of life transitions for individuals and families. Her programs emphasize stress management, brain health, healthy aging, intergenerational relations, adult caregiving, and family communication.

#### **CAITLIN KOWNACKI** (Extension Educator, SNAP-Ed)

As SNAP-Ed educator, Caitlin Kownacki helps local agencies serving low income adults and children implement changes to promote health and wellness, so that healthy choices are easy choices. This builds healthier communities with greater food security, stronger economies, and more resilient citizens.

#### **MELISSA SCHUMACHER** (Extension Educator, EFNEP)

As an Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program educator, Melissa Schumacher trains and supports community educators who provide nutrition education to underserved populations in Champaign and Vermilion counties. Through a hands-on, relationship-based approach, Schumacher impacts economic, health and food insecurity challenges in the communities she serves.

#### **KATHY SWEEDLER** (consumer economics educator)

Kathy Sweedler provides motivation and research-based strategies to help people manage their money and make informed decisions that lead to long-term financial security. She develops in-person consultations, online courses, social media and volunteer-based programs on personal finance education to help improve people's financial wellbeing.

## WHAT WE DO & WHY IT MATTERS, CONT'D

# FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

### UNIT 14: ADAMS, BROWN, HANCOCK, PIKE AND SCHUYLER COUNTIES

#### LEAH ERKE (visiting outreach associate)

Leah Erke educates school food service personnel by providing on-site professional standards training, with the goal of increasing the number of children eating nutritious school meals and decreasing the amount of food being thrown away. Using resources from USDA, she helps schools with menu planning, meal production, and increased awareness of healthy eating habits.

#### AKINWALE AKINGBULE (Extension Educator, SNAP-Ed)

Akinwale Akingbule works with community leaders and citizens to help them live healthy lives and make healthy choices. Akinwale works closely with schools, food pantries, local stores, and other community organizations on education and policy changes to help residents in these communities achieve a better, healthier life.

#### BRENDA DERRICK (Extension Educator, SNAP-Education)

Brenda Derrick provides leadership and support to SNAP-Education staff who 1) assist low-income citizens of Illinois to Eat Healthy, Move More, and Shop Smart and 2) engages partner agencies to create healthier Illinois communities.

### UNIT 16: LOGAN, MENARD AND SANGAMON COUNTIES

#### KAYLA SWAAR (Extension Educator, SNAP-Education)

Kayla Swaar works with low-income audiences in the implementation of policy, system, and environment changes in school, food pantries, and early childhood centers. She aims to make the healthy choice the easy choice by increasing healthy food access, providing professional development opportunities, and conducting environmental assessments. She collaborates with community organizations and partners in order to reach a larger number of limited resource families.

### UNIT 17: DEWITT, MACON AND PIATT COUNTIES

#### CAITLIN HUTH (Extension Educator, Nutrition and Wellness)

Caitlin Huth provides nutrition education programs on chronic disease, food safety, food preparation and cooking. She encourages skills and behaviors to help individuals, groups, worksites and families work toward healthier, more nutritious lifestyles.

#### STACI COUSSENS (Extension Educator, SNAP-Ed)

Staci Coussens works with local agencies – including schools, food pantries and homeless shelters– to make the healthy choice the easy choice for limited resource audiences. Healthy adults and children learn better and are productive members of society.

### UNIT 18: CHRISTIAN, JERSEY, MACOUPIN AND MONTGOMERY COUNTIES

#### LISA PETERSON (Extension Educator, Nutrition and Wellness)

Lisa Peterson develops programs to address local needs in health, food security, and food safety. Her program areas include preparing and preserving locally produced food, preventing and delaying chronic disease through diet management, implementing wellness in the workplace, and promoting careers in agricultural science.

### UNIT 19: COLES, CUMBERLAND, DOUGLAS, MOULTRIE AND SHELBY COUNTIES

#### CHERI BURCHAM (Extension Educator, Family Life)

Cheri Burcham emphasizes healthy lifestyles throughout the lifespan, including programs on family relationships, communication, caregiving and human development including early childhood, and healthy aging. Through Cheri's interactive style, she aims to promote healthy lifestyle decisions and management of life transitions.

### UNIT 20: CLARK, CRAWFORD AND EDGAR COUNTIES

#### MARY LIZ WRIGHT (Extension Educator, Nutrition and Wellness)

Mary Liz Wright leads programs on food safety, food preservation and basic nutrition. Her programs aim to improve health outcomes for participants, and improve performance in school and the workplace.

## WHAT WE DO & WHY IT MATTERS, CONT'D

# FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

### **UNIT 21: CLAY, EFFINGHAM, FAYETTE AND JASPER COUNTIES**

#### **MICHELLE FOMBELLE** (Extension Educator, SNAP-Ed)

Michelle Fombelle works with the low-income community to promote healthy choices through change in policy, structure, and environment. Michelle provide education and tools to low income sites such as schools, Head Start programs, and food pantries to ensure everyone has access to healthy choices.

### **UNIT 22: MADISON, MONROE AND ST. CLAIR COUNTIES**

#### **AMY FUNK** (Extension Educator, SNAP-Ed)

Amy Funk provides nutrition education to low income families while supporting and promoting changes in communities to support healthy eating and active living. These programs improve health outcomes and quality of life.

#### **LINDA CRAWL JACKSON** (Extension Educator, EFNEP)

Linda Crawl Jackson empowers limited income families to better choose, buy, prepare and eat nutrient dense foods for better health. She equips a staff of individuals to take this message of basic nutrition to neighborhoods that need assistance in metropolitan areas. Chronic health issues are lessened, thereby reducing health care cost for the country.

### **UNIT 23: BOND, CLINTON, JEFFERSON, MARION, AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES**

#### **ASHLEY HOFFMAN** (Extension Educator, SNAP-Ed)

Ashley Hoffman provides professional development trainings to school nutrition professionals so that they have the knowledge and skills to perform their job duties well and to meet their professional goals. Ashley also conducts Smarter Lunchroom makeovers in K-12 schools to transform the lunchroom environment and nudge students to make healthier eating choices.

### **UNIT 26: FRANKLIN, JACKSON, PERRY, RANDOLPH AND WILLIAMSON COUNTIES**

#### **TRINITY ALLISON** (Extension Educator, SNAP-Ed)

Trinity Allison provides targeted, interactive nutrition education to limited resource participants and engages partner agencies to create healthier environments. By giving people the skills needed to make healthier choices and creating environments to support those choices we can have maximum impact in making the healthy choice the easy choice.

#### **SUSAN SLOOP** (Extension Educator, Family Life)

Susan Sloop provides educational programs to inspire a culture of healthy families, workplaces and communities. She partners with local agencies to provide educational programs that focus on health, parenting, child development, professional development and personal growth.

#### **TONI KAY WRIGHT** (Extension Educator, SNAP-Ed)

Toni Kay supports local schools, childcare centers, and other agencies serving limited resource individuals to make the healthy choice the easy choice, all in an effort to build healthier communities. She offers evidenced-based nutrition and obesity prevention programs, including through teacher training, school wellness committees and collaboration with farmer's markets.

### **STATEWIDE**

#### **ZAHIEDA DARVESH** (Evaluation Specialist, Family and Consumer Sciences)

As an Evaluation Specialist, Zaheeda Darvesh translates the work done by Family and Consumer Sciences field staff to create accessible, readable and interpretable documents, reports, and visualization tools. Using modern-day tools of the trade such as Arc GIS, Tableau, Advanced Excel, InDesign, etc., she uses quantitative data to tell compelling and impactful stories that reach, hence affect, a diverse group of individuals thereby informing them of the work Extension does in facilitating Industry-University collaboration.

## WHAT WE DO & WHY IT MATTERS, CONT'D

# FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

### **BETH PERALTA (Media Communications Specialist, Family and Consumer Sciences)**

Beth Peralta serves as the Media Communications Specialist for the Illinois Nutrition Education Programs in University of Illinois Extension. As a registered dietitian, she is able to utilize her background in nutrition education to reach and influence limited-resource Illinois residents via online and nontraditional platforms, such as social media, web, text messaging, and e-newsletters. Additionally, Beth shares the impact of Illinois Nutrition Education Programs on families through effective stakeholder messaging strategies.

### **EMILY LOEHMER (Coordinator of Programming and Evaluation, Family and Consumer Sciences)**

Emily Loehmer coordinates the collection and analysis of Family and Consumer Sciences program data to be able to communicate the impact of consumer economics, family life, nutrition and wellness and the Illinois Nutrition Education Programs efforts to various stakeholders. She also trains staff teams to train staff to be able to use reporting systems efficiently, and works one-on-one with staff to develop their own program evaluations to demonstrate how their programs are positively affecting local communities.

### **VICTORIA ROWE (Coordinator of Curriculum and Training, Illinois Nutrition Education Programs)**

Victoria Rowe leads curriculum selection, development, and training for SNAP-Education staff members around the state. By selecting curriculum and education for adults and youth that is evidence-based and uses current best practices, she ensures that limited-resource Illinois residents receive high-quality instruction that makes a difference in their lives and communities.

### **WHITNEY AJIE (Extension Educator, ABCs of School Nutrition)**

Whitney Ajie coordinates a statewide program to support school nutrition professionals throughout Illinois. With a team of Extension staff around the state, Whitney leads efforts to provide continuing education to school foodservice staff about nutrition and school meal requirements through online and face-to-face classes. With quality training and support, school nutrition programs will continue to be an important aspect of supporting healthy lifestyles for Illinois students.