McLean County 4-H Member at the Unity Community Center

2016 Impact Report
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION
SERVING LIVINGSTON, MCLEAN & WOODFORD COUNTIES
It is my pleasure to present the 2016 Annual report for the University of Illinois Extension-Livingston, McLean, and Woodford Unit. I am proud to represent the staff and volunteers in our unit who through their hard work make our programming possible.

The state budget crisis has deepened our financial challenges locally, however, University of Illinois Extension has adapted to local needs for more than 100 years. We will continue to serve our local communities for many years to come. While the state budget certainly challenged us, we have continued to provide research-based education in our Unit this past year and are looking forward to continuing our work in 2017!

This annual report highlights just a few of our major accomplishments for 2016. You will find information about 4-H Youth Development, Nutrition and Wellness, Horticulture, Local Food Systems and Small Farms, and Consumer Economics. The programs we provide are innovative, research based, and connect to audiences of all ages.

The accomplishments provided in the annual report were possible because of the contributions of our local county boards, local businesses, private organizations, personal donations and generous volunteers. Please join us in the commitment to our mission of... Extending knowledge and changing lives!

Thanks to everyone who makes Extension successful!

Bobbie Lewis-Sibley, MBA, SHRM-CP  
County Extension Director
Josiah just won the Illinois State 4-H Air Rifle Shoot, but that isn't why his life is changed. His life is changed because of 4-H, one simple year of 4-H.

A year ago, Josiah, 17 years old then, joined the McLean County 4-H Shooting Sports Club so he could learn to shoot air rifles. Up until then, Josiah only ever spoke to members of his family. Period. You see, Josiah is a young man with high-functioning autism. He joined 4-H, and his life changed.

Josiah started in the beginner class last October. Although, his shooting improved, the bigger change came in Josiah’s interaction with the world around him. Josiah began to engage with others.

"I couldn’t believe the change in my child," said his mother, Rene.

In addition to shooting sports, Josiah took up blacksmithing in 4-H, exhibiting this year at the Illinois State Fair. It has led to a new career path for Josiah which his mother said he would not have found without 4-H.

Josiah recently conducted a blacksmithing demonstration where he interacted with the crowd. At one point he turned to the group and said, "Don't be afraid to ask me questions," Rene recalled. "He would never have spoken to anyone before his 4-H experience.

4-H gave us the opportunity for him to do this," Rene said. "I would encourage any parents of special-needs children to consider becoming active in 4-H."

Although Josiah walked away with the championship belt buckle prize Saturday, I’m pretty sure it's everyone else who won the bigger prize that day just by walking the path with a young man named Josiah.

* This was written for release by Illinois 4-H Media & Communications Specialist, Judy Mae Bingman

**STEM**

Adventures in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) projects and clubs were on the rise with growth in all three counties. Grants received in all three counties resulted in the growth of robotics, shooting sports, and gardening. All three counties now have nearly doubled their robotics kits that will be used in schools or by members. McLean County has robotics in the three levels of FIRST (For inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) with the FIRST Lego League, FTC (FIRST Tech Challenge) (two clubs/teams) and FRC (FIRST Robotics Championship). Combined, the clubs participated in 11 competitions around the state and country. We have increased the number of technology kits available for use by clubs and schools by receiving 15 new Lego EV3 kits as well as 15 Lego Expansion kits.
Taking a Look Around 4-H

4-H CLUBS
111 Community & Cloverbud Clubs
21 SPIN Clubs
1,823 Total 4-H Members
*Largest enrollment in Illinois

PROGRAM GROWTH
5,436 Fair Exhibits
73 4-H Federation Members

MULTI COUNTY 4-H ACTION
4-H Learn & Fun Day - 150 Youth
30 Sessions
Science Sleepovers - Outdoor Adventures;
50+ Youth 4-H Officer Training;
30+ Youth

413 4-H Volunteers
Through talks, demonstrations, workshops and interviews, Thaddeus Hughes has engaged more than 6,000 youth in the wonders of science. He has been a mentor for FIRST Lego League and the Illinois 4–H State Robotics Competition for four years. As a mentor, Thad has been responsible for organizing and demonstrating new technologies and the engineering process. Simultaneously, he developed an afterschool program through University of Illinois Extension called Spinning Robots in which he taught 50 middle schoolers basic circuitry and how to build simple robots. He is currently studying engineering at Rose–Hulman Institute of Technology, a top-ranked school in the nation for engineering.

Thad is an alumnus of the SIT Conference as both a participant and presenter. Two years ago, he served as a member of the Steering Committee. An 11-year member of 4–H in McLean County’s Linden Lead’em 4–H Club, he was a charter member of the Metal Cow Robotics Club. He has received numerous awards and represented McLean County and Illinois as the Engineering & Technology State Winner when he attended National 4–H Congress in Atlanta, Georgia.

Thad received a scholarship with his award. McLean County Extension also received funding from the National 4–H Council to help programming as a result of having 4–H member Thaddeus Hughes named a Pillar winner in STEM as part of the Youth in Action program.
Seeing Change

The past 5–7 years, 4–H in Illinois has seen a growth in the non-traditional projects with an emphasis on Science and Technology. We have diligently worked to change the landscape of the program to be more inclusive of youth who may have only viewed 4–H as an organization to join if you lived on a farm. We continue to view Agriculture and Home Economics as cornerstones of the program, and that will not change. As the demographics of the population in Illinois change, so too, must the efforts and focus of 4–H. How?

- Continue & increase supporting all program and project areas
- Increased efforts to assist our members with their college and career preparation.
- Promoting workshops/SPIN Clubs to all youth in all three counties, to ensure the pursuit of all interests including outside the home county.

We know from various national studies that 4–H members that are involved in the leadership responsibilities of their clubs and counties are more successful in college and beyond.

The Livingston, McLean & Woodford Youth Development Team is committed to serving our youth as much as possible to help them reach their potential.

4-H All Inclusive

The McLean County Fair 4–H Show added a few more classes to this year’s horse show line up. But these were not just any classes. The program expanded its assisted riders program to accommodate 4–H members with disabilities to be able to compete in more areas of the show.

- English
- Western
- Horsemanship
- Showmanship
- Trail class

These skill areas are now eligible in the assisted riders program. This program allows members with health conditions such as Autism to compete and demonstrate independence and mastery with an assistant walking near their horse for safety. The growth of the program in 2016 speaks louder than words can. A quote from a 4–H family in the classes embodied the meaning of just what this opportunity opened up.

“The reception that it got from the community is great. It touched a lot of hearts. It embodies what 4–H is about.”
Unity Community Center

The Unity Community Center is our multicultural center that provides programming for youth 5–18 years old from families with limited resources. Unity continues to operate at full capacity with 48 students enrolled each semester. We continue to rely on our volunteers, mostly from Illinois State University, to assist with the tutoring and basic guidance with our youth. We continue to strengthen our ties with the Unit 5 School District, the Town of Normal and State Farm, which are all integral to the success of the program.

A few 2016 updates include:

- Increased day camps from 4–to-5 weeks
- Continued two additional day camps with Children’s Discovery Museum; 20–25 attendees
- Ag & Horticulture summer curriculum continued within garden & produce
- Teen Teachers developed & delivered nutrition & garden lessons with Illinois Jr. Chef program with SNAP – Education overseeing

Spring 2016 Volunteers: 146
Fall 2016 Volunteers: 117

2015-2016 UNITY ENROLLMENT

Ended the year with 48 youth;
- 10% White
- 85% Black/African American
- 2% American Indian
- 2% Two or more races
- 6% Hispanic
- 94% Non-Hispanic
- 62.5% Female
- 37.5% Male

UNITY Community Garden

This was the second summer for our production garden. Unity youth involved in a pilot leadership group, Spark Tank, coordinated a planting party and the garden was planted with approximately 20 youth and adults.

Unity Community Center Garden, Summer 2016

The 60’ by 45’ garden produced approximately 700 pounds of fresh produce, distributed to area residents. Over 200 pounds of sweet potatoes were taken right away!

In addition to the produce garden, the Unity staff strengthened our partnership with the Midwest Food Bank by distributing fresh vegetables, produce, bread, and other foodstuffs to area residents most Tuesdays and Thursdays since July. We estimate we have distributed over 6,000 pounds of food to families in the Northwest part of Normal.

Teen Teachers Program

A growing area of interest for 4-H teens is the Teen Teacher program. McLean 4-H completed its second year of this leadership opportunity by providing the Health Rocks eight-week program at two Bloomington – Normal Housing Authority sites. We also used Teen Teachers to lead five of the seven weeks of day camps at the Unity Community Center. In all, 12 youth, ages 13 – 17 provided lessons from Agriculture to Robotics, Photography and Recreation.
School Nutrition
Illinois State Board of Education has awarded University of Illinois Extension $4.5 million to provide training to school foodservice professionals and to develop strategies to nudge students to choose healthier options and ultimately eat them, decreasing food waste. The Nutrition and Wellness team conducted Smarter Lunchroom Assessments in all four Unit 5 junior high schools and provided professional development training to 109 foodservice staff. In addition, the team conducted Smarter Lunchroom Assessments for all eight schools in Bloomington District 87 with staff training to be given in January 2017. After study, a few of the areas of improvement and suggested changes included creating a process of age appropriate naming and labeling fruits and vegetables. Thinking of fun and creative names will be implemented in 2017 and later reevaluated to show the overall impact on student and staff food choices.

Diabetes
Alpha Gamma Delta Foundation awarded the Livingston, McLean & Woodford Nutrition and Wellness team $1500 to provide diabetes education in all three counties. The “I on Diabetes” program was conducted in Livingston county, targeting low-income and minority audiences, which have a higher prevalence of diabetes. 12 people participated in the four-part series where they developed treatment goals, demonstrated carbohydrate counting, watched food demonstrations and joined in physical activity exercises.

100% reported improved ability to prepare healthy foods easily

100% indicated increased confidence in knowing which foods have carbohydrates

Written comment by a Livingston county participant:

“I lost 5 pounds since the beginning of the program [2 weeks ago].”

Moreover, six weeks after the start of the program the participant stated,

“I lost 10 pounds and my blood sugars are down and test around 120 now. Plus, I even got my husband to eat healthier!”
Food Preservation

Increased public interest in locally grown foods has also generated increased interest in home food preservation. The Nutrition and Wellness team has responded with programs focused on food safety practices to ensure that home preserved food is safe for consumption. 64 people in the Livingston, McLean & Woodford Counties have taken advantage of Extension offerings, including lecture classes, hands-on classes, consumer inquiries and pressure canner gauge testing. This year, a brand new class, “Preserving Practice” was introduced, allowing hands-on application of the lessons learned.

Programs held were Jams and Jellies in McLean County and Tomatoes and Tomato Products in Livingston County. Both programs reached full attendance. A few results of the programs were given as feedback.

88% increased their confidence in their ability to use a boiling water bath canner safely and correctly

100% increased their ability to safely can jams and jellies or tomatoes and tomato products

I enjoyed learning about canning. It’s always been a bit of a “mystery” to me so I feel much more ready and able to can now. Thanks!

PRESERVATION PROGRAM PARTICIPANT
Our Horticulture team has delivered high-impact programming addressing beekeeping and conservation of pollinators this year. Pollinator decline can be halted through educating the public on the importance of insect conservation, creating new habitats, and changes in some horticulture and agriculture practices.

- Presented 16 programs on creating pollinator habitat to 303 attendees.
- Presented 6 programs on how to teach youth about insects to 129 educators.
- Presented 6 programs on changing agriculture and horticulture practices to benefit pollinators to 680 attendees.
- Hosted 7 booths promoting pollinators connecting to 659 local residents.
- Presented 23 youth programs to 1,021 on the importance of pollinators.
- Presented Pollinator decline at Purdue Women in Agriculture conference.
- Presented Gardening with Mother Nature to Illinois Green Industry.
- Presented how to teach insects to youth at American Horticulture Society conference.
- Answered over 100 community questions on insect conservation.

| Master Gardener Statistics |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 142 | Master Gardeners |
| 11,170 | Volunteer Hours |
| 1,717.55 | Continuing Education Hours |
| 29 | Jr. MG & MG Comm. Projects |
| $263,165 | Value to Communities |
A Blooming Partnership

McLean County Master Gardeners created an oasis of peace at the Community Cancer Center in Normal for cancer patients, their families, staff and the community at large. The **10,000** square foot Healing Garden consists of a Terrace Garden, Labyrinth (meditative walkway) and Butterfly Garden. Cat Woods, Director of Business and Financial Operation at Community Cancer Center, was thrilled when Master Gardeners wanted to be involved with the design, installation and maintenance of the project. **30** Master Gardeners, along with several community members, contributed over **500** hours in 2016 to develop the tranquility filled outdoor setting. In the spring, a monarch butterfly release was coordinated to introduce the garden to the public. A horticultural therapy workshop is scheduled for June 10 on the healing properties of gardening to continue growth with the project and the community.
Woodford County Master Gardeners

Nine trainees participated in the first ever Master Gardener training conducted in Woodford County. They join a group of 15 active Master Gardeners. These members were active in 2016 on a few new projects.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS:
ICC Demonstration Gardens
Hosta Garden
Gazebo Garden
Woodford County Courthouse Herb Garden
Washburn Memorial Gardens
Germantown Hills Middle School Garden
El Paso Library Pollinator Garden

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS:
Eureka Library programs
Client Services/Outreach
Master Gardener Booths
Plant Science tables
Gardeners’ Gathering Plant Sale
Webinars

Livingston County Master Gardeners

Master Gardeners connected to over 200 2nd and 5th grade students in Livingston County through a school enrichment program.

Master Gardeners set learning objectives, designed curriculum, and trained fellow master gardeners on presenting to youth on seed germination, insects, pollination, plant adaptations, and the web of life.

In their third year of visiting the schools, they have created new lessons and expanded their reach to introducing gardening to the 2nd grade.

Community Projects:
4-H Park Gardens
Dargan Park
Yost House Gardens
Poor Farm Cemetery
Village of Flanagan

Jr. Master Gardener Projects:
Youth Enrichment Lessons
Flanagan School gardens

Educational Programs:
A Day in the Garden Patch
Client Services/Outreach
Master Gardener Help Desk
Pontiac Farmers Market & Booths

Livingston Master Gardeners help out at Learn and Fun Day 2016
2016 for the Illinois Grand Prairie Master Naturalists consisted of some key areas of improvement. These included working with continuing education outlets, overall Master Naturalist service hours, gaining active partners, and public programming. All throughout the counties they spent hours spread over land stewardship, invasive species removal, educational outreach, and program administration to reach their goals.

Continuing Education Outlets
- Lake Bloomington Watershed Quality
- Soil and Water Conservation
- Fracking
- Weather Lore

Master Naturalist Statistics
- 79 Master Naturalists
- 4,576 Volunteer Hours
- 856 Continuing Education Hours
- $155,971 Value to Communities

In 2016, Illinois Grand Prairie Master Naturalists met a goal of over $500,000 of value from hours to the community with $544,699.94 from 2012–2016!
2016 brought a milestone to the Barn Quilt committee as we oversaw the installation of Barn Quilt number 52 of the McLean County Barn Quilt Heritage Trail. This number helped to exceed the goal set by our founders in 2012 of having 50 Barn Quilts in 5 years.

Sites include several installations on or near historic areas like Rt. 66, David Davis Mansion, and several century farms as well as century barns. This even includes the farm that hosted the 1970 Kickapoo Creek Rock Festival.

Founding co-chairs Kay Henrichs and Karen Gottlieb were honored at the 2016 Opening Event, which also marked their retirement from the committee.

Adding 10 new Barn Quilts to the tour and expanding our community outreach through new marketing efforts are the McLean County Barn Quilt committees’ goals.
WHAT WE DO
Help farmers produce diverse, nutrient dense crops for local markets, while using sustainable techniques.

WE BELIEVE
Supporting the development of new markets for locally grown staple crops like grains, dry beans and oil seeds as one of the best ways to help farmers improve sales, and help consumers access fresh, healthy, local food.

HOW WE DO IT
Community-based interactive and social platforms to connect growers & consumers.

WARTHOG WHEAT HARVEST
Grand Prairie Grain Guild
Harold Wilken, Danforth, IL, a farmer involved with the Grand Prairie Grain Guild variety trials, yielded 43,000 bushels of food grade wheat for the Chicago market, including Hewn Bakery and Eataly Chicago. Wilken harvested 7,000 bushels of hard red winter wheat, demonstrating production viability in Illinois.

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSIONS
Regenerate Illinois
We brought together new partners and funders with faculty and staff from University of Illinois to establish Regenerate Illinois. The goal is to develop a private organic research farm to study crop rotation, soil health, variety trials, and breeding. Funders include Prairie Rivers Network, Lumpkin Family Foundation, and Fresh Taste.
**REFUGE FOOD FOREST**  
*Normal, IL*

In the project’s first productive year, bountiful cane fruit harvest was available to the public. The yields and diversity will increase over 4–6 years. The first tree fruit harvest, including hazelnuts and chestnuts, is anticipated in 2017. The Town of Normal, a partner in the development and maintenance of The Refuge Food Forest, received a $2500 sustainability award from Corn Belt Electric to design and build an elaborate insect hotel to provide habitat for pollinators at the site.

**2016 Food Forest Harvest**

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<td>Raspberries</td>
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<td>Currants</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Asparagus</td>
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<td>Herbs</td>
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**ESTABLISHED SEED LIBRARIES**

Extension consulted with Rebecca Osland, Attorney and Illinois Stewardship Alliance Policy Associate, in work with Illinois Department of Agriculture and Illinois Farm Bureau to reach a compromise agreement to update Illinois Seed Law. The new law allows for seed libraries and seed exchanges. Such programs promote gardening, provide free seed, and embrace a cross-section of the community, drawing multigenerational and multicultural audiences. Established in both Normal & Eureka, IL libraries, University of Illinois Extension partners to raise awareness about gardening and its tie to local food. This provides gardeners with more choices in seed use while also encouraging local adaptations.

**PARTICIPATORY PLANT BREEDING WORSHOP**

A workshop held at the Library for the College of Agriculture, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences at University of Illinois, drew potential to generate new varieties and introduce more genetic diversity into grand and staple crops in the Midwest. Included farmers and plant breeders from universities in Illinois, Wisconsin, New York, Iowa, Minnesota, and North Dakota, as well as private plant breeders.
AG in the Classroom

The McLean County Ag in the Classroom reached over **5,200** youth in elementary schools in 2016. The most popular program, Chick it Out, was in **165** classrooms throughout McLean County.

SNAP-Ed Curriculum
LIVINGSTON, MCLEAN & WOODFORD

PRE-K—KINDERGARTEN
Color Me Healthy
It’s Fun to be Healthy

KINDERGARTEN — 2ND GRADE
Organ Wise Guys

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS: K—5th
CATCH
SPARK

GRADE SCHOOL
IL Jr. Chef

ADULT PROGRAMMING
Eating Smart, Being Active
My Plate for My Family

SENIORS
Eat Smart, Live Strong

ACTIVITY STATIONS
Stations on locations as food banks, grocery stores, family events, etc. for all ages

Livingston and McLean Counties

SNAP-Education helps those in need make healthier choices by reaching people where they are in their communities with education and hand-on skill building activities.

Program Reach

- **3,629** Total Individuals Reached
- **480 (13%)** Participants identify as Hispanic
- **24%** Adults
- **76%** Youth

Demographic

- **70%** Caucasian (2544)
- **26%** African American (953)
- **4%** Asian American, American Indian, or Pacific Islander (132)

Programming Provided at the Following Site Types:

- **18** K-12 Schools
- **2** Stores or Markets
- **16** Early Childhood
- **3** Youth Centers
- **3** Agencies or Community Centers
- **5** Emergency Food Sites
Trained volunteers who meet one-on-one with people who have a financial challenge, whether that is saving money, reducing debt, or recalculating spending plans because of a change in income either up or down. Currently we have mentors in all three counties, looking to help just one person with their financial challenges. In 2016, we teamed up with State Farm Bank to train a large group of potential mentors that will allow us to double the number of citizens in the program in the coming year. When mentees apply to the program, they are asked to rank their top 5 financial priorities.

Mentees often share their successes to their mentors in different ways such as:

- Creating a budget to pay down debt in one year
- Returning rental furniture and investing when discovering real costs
- Meal Planning & Shopping Lists to maintain food budgets

### Financial Concerns of Mentees

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<tr>
<td>Change in Income</td>
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<td>Paying Bills on Time</td>
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<td>Saving and Getting Ahead</td>
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<tr>
<td>Budgeting and Money Management</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Results show the most requested topics by Mentees from April 2014—2016
All My Money

The All My Money: Change for the Better curriculum is revised and on sale. This update of an award-winning curriculum aimed at limited resourced audiences includes special features as:

► 75% New Material
► Experimental & Hands on Activities
► Created for any & all financial skillsets
► Trains one or adaptable to group teach

This curriculum includes a resource box which helps when training groups. With that exclusive, we are able to expand the reach of Extension educators exponentially. Since the curriculum was printed in October, **85** copies have been sold and two large scale training sessions held:

► Annual Symposium of the Association of Financial Counselors and Planners Education (National Audience)
► University of Illinois Chicago Center for Literacy.

**21** individuals has been already trained, and several more training sessions are planned for 2017 to expand the reach to a variety of social service agencies and governmental groups, such as county probation departments.

It is all in an effort to prevent people from returning to bad financial habits.

Money Smart Week is an annual, National & educational event, created by the Chicago Federal Reserve Bank and hosted locally by a planning team in Bloomington-Normal.

MSW is run entirely by money donated by sponsors of local businesses and the donation of time by local financial professionals teaching classes & programming around town.

Entering its tenth year locally, MSW seeks to provide area residents with a variety of free financial education classes for every general need. Classes include a variety on:

► Investing
► Retirement
► Wills and Estates,
► Reducing food budgets
► Gardening
► Small business topics.
► Buying or Selling a House

With activities for every age, from reading events for youth at local libraries, to budgeting & retirement programs. Money Smart Week provides thousands of dollars of information free to all. Chaired this year by University of Illinois Extension Economic Educator, Pam Atkinson, Money Smart Week 2016 results showed:

► **Social media “likes” increased** by **14%**
► **Average class size increased** by nearly **30%**
► **Total attendance increased** by **5%**
Livingston, McLean & Woodford Counties 2016

Thank You!
Directory

**County Director**
Bobbie Lewis-Sibley

**Business Manager**
Sara Halihan

**Extension Educators**
Kelly Allsup, *Horticulture*

Pam Atkinson, *Consumer Economics*

Alcha Corban, 4-H — *Livingston & Woodford*

Bill Davison, *Local Food Systems & Small Farms*

Carolyn Hansen, 4-H — *Metro & McLean County*

Jenna Smith, *Nutrition & Wellness*

**Program Coordinators**
Sara Attig, 4-H — *Livingston*

Jenna Braasch, *Publicity & Promotions Specialist*

Staci Coussens, *Nutrition & Wellness*

Callie Cummings, 4-H — *McLean County*

Brittnay Haag, *Horticulture*

Laura Holland, 4-H — *Metro/Unity*

Elizabeth Repplinger, 4-H — *Unity*

Emily Saddler, 4-H — *STEAM*

Leah Street, 4-H — *McLean County*

Afiwa Tete, 4-H — *Unity*

Reid Young, *Local Food Systems & Small Farms*

**Community Workers**
Beth Kraft, SNAP-Ed — *McLean*

Beverly Long, SNAP-Ed — *Livingston*

**Office Support Associate**
Erin Estes, *Livingston, McLean & Woodford*

**Office Support Assistants**
Rosemarie Carter, *McLean County*

Cindy Kinate, *Livingston County*

Paige Wood, *Woodford County*

**ONLINE**
http://go.illinois.edu/LMW

UofIExtensionMcLeanLivingstonWoodfordCounties

UIExtensionUnit12
4-H Member with his livestock project at the county fair