



University of Illinois Extension provides practical education you can trust to help people, businesses, and communities solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future. Based in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, Extension is the statewide outreach program of the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign.



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A Message from the Chancellor

The University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign is an economic engine and a driver of innovation, deeply rooted in the Illinois prairie and engaged statewide, from Cook County to Cairo. Illinois Extension brings the University to your doorstep. Extension educators live and work alongside you in every county, allowing the university to support local leaders, businesses, farmers, and residents to address grand challenges and everyday problems with practical, research-based solutions. As a youth, my own 4-H experience inspired a rewarding career in agricultural research and higher education. Today, it's an honor to lead this great public university and deepen its commitment to serve the people of Illinois.

Robert J. Jones
 Chancellor, University of Illinois



A Message from the County Director

It is my pleasure to represent a staff of outstanding professionals who strive every day to positively impact the lives of the citizens of DeWitt, Macon and Piatt counties. I am continually amazed at the level of innovation and diversity found in our educational programming. I believe the work done by the staff of University of Illinois Extension in DeWitt, Macon, and Piatt counties truly epitomizes Illinois Extension's motto of *Extending Knowledge, Changing Lives*.

Enclosed in this report, you will find evidence of the impact our programs have on our region. Our programming reaches audiences of all ages and addresses the wide variety of community needs in all three counties. There is not enough room in this report to tell the story of all of the innovative and educational outreach presented by the staff, nor of the impact of those programs. I hope you will take the time to learn more about our programs, volunteers, and impact.

Thank you for your continued support of Illinois Extension in DeWitt, Macon, and Piatt counties.

Doug Harlan
 County Extension Director
 dharlan@illinois.edu



DeWitt County 4-H member Maddox Taylo represents the Rebel Riders club at the county horse show in July.

4-H has a longstanding history in DeWitt, Macon, and Piatt counties. The youth programs focus on relevant topics of leadership, STEAM — Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics — performing arts, culinary, and agriculture.

4-H recognizes the changing needs of our youth and introduces programs that encourage them to explore their interests and develop their passions.

“I learned team work is essential, effort is always needed from everyone, and positivity always helps.”

YOU ARE CHALLENGED PARTICIPANT

Growing and Challenging Leaders

You are Challenged was a 4-H leadership training program offered to 4-H members and leaders for the first time. This program focused on officer training by providing a series of challenges in an escape box to complete. Each participant had a specific task to complete before moving on to the next. Some tasks included balancing a checkbook, writing a thank you card, and playing a game as a group.

Meeting Teens at The Vault

This fall, 4-H partnered with The Vault, a community-supported center for teenagers in Clinton, to offer a *Food Challenge* program. Through the program, groups of students visited a grocery store and practiced shopping on a budget.

Following the success of that program, 4-H launched *Adulting 101* to educate teens about topics important for preparing for adulthood. The Clinton YMCA taught job search skills, and Warner Hospital offered CPR and first aid. Baum Chevrolet discussed and demonstrated basic car maintenance in a hands-on workshop and Ts Institute, in partnership with First National Bank and Trust, covered financial basics.

Farm to 4-H with Agucation

Agucation is an annual event hosted by the Farm Bureau that teaches fifth grade students about various careers in agricultural and STEM fields through interactive lessons. Macon County 4-H engaged with more than 600 youth at this event and highlighted careers such as food scientists, agricultural engineers, agricultural marketing, and media professionals.

At the event, students used principles of the engineering design process to create a prototype of an innovative and creative invention.



Dakota Larimore-Lamb, member of Mid-State Marksmen Shooting Sports club, takes his shot at the Illinois State Shotgun competition at Bunker Hill.

Focused Clubs Nurture Unique Interests

The Piatt County 4-H Shooting Sports Club, Mid-State Marksmen, sent two members, Morgan Drozs and Dakota Larimore-Lamb, to the Illinois shotgun competition. Dakota finished 2nd, an improvement from his 5th-place finish in 2018, and he advanced to the national competition.

Q&A with Piatt County Leader of the Year Tommy Bates, Mid-State Marksmen, Piatt County

Were you in 4-H? I was in Midway 4-H Club in the '60s. I had some friends that were in 4-H and they talked me into it. I thought 4-H was just for farmers. Well, I learned it was not.



What projects did you take? I had a vegetable garden project and basic woodworking.

What offices did you hold? As time went by, I was treasurer, vice president, and president.

What do you remember about your 4-H leaders? The Hayes' were our leaders. We would have gatherings on their dairy farm. We would have a fire and roast hot dogs. We always had a great time.

What did they instill in you? We were all encouraged to lead. As older members, we were asked to help the new members and work with them on some of their projects. At the time I didn't realize how the leadership role I had in the club would help me later in life.

Teen Teachers Pass on Culinary Skills

4-H Teen Teachers taught 187 youth ages 5 to 12 cooking and nutrition in *Cooking 101* programs. Teens taught proper cutting techniques, the 4-H way to crack an egg, and measuring tips. Groups made fruit shakes, Mexican layered dip, salsa, and more!



77% of participants said they learned about healthy food choices



94% of Teen Teachers said 4-H is a place where it's OK to make mistakes



Gracelynn Osborn and Mya Durbin practice measuring at a *Cooking 101* class.



Millikin University student and 4-H volunteer Maya Dougherty leads *Little Dreamers* members in a warm up.

Aspiring Artists Take the Stage

Macon County 4-H and Millikin University's Pipe Dreams Studio partnered on the *Little Dreamers* program. Students were taught various aspects of the theater world, such as acting, producing, and writing. The final session was a public performance of their original script "The Worst in Bestopolis."

4-H Values Community Service

Macon County 4-H always strives to encourage our youth to *make the best better* through excellence in leadership and service. Through their work with 4-H, youth get to experience projects that have local impact and that allow them to see the role community service plays in a high-functioning, resilient community.

Macon County 4-H hosted two service projects in 2019:

- **A Back to School Supply Drive** collected school supplies to support teachers and classrooms.
- **The 4-H Fall Festival and Food Drive** collected non-perishable food items for families and community members in need during the holiday season. Face painting, cookie decorating, and festival games made it a family-friendly event.

 DeWittCounty4H

 PiattCounty4H

 MaconCounty4H

4-H in Decatur Public Schools

Macon County 4-H provides creative and interactive hands-on learning experiences for students, families, and staff. In 2019, Macon County 4-H connected with more than 1,800 youth through interactive and educational experiential learning opportunities. Macon County 4-H gives youth a place to belong and fosters the exploration of individual interests in:

- STEAM
- Performing Arts
- Robotics
- Visual Arts
- Coding
- Cooking
- Food Art

State Recognizes Macon County 4-H

BENJAMIN SUCKOW received the Illinois 4-H Experience Emerald Project Learning award. Experience awards recognize 4-H members who excel in trying new things in project areas and participate in other opportunities in the state and nationwide.



JESSICA ANDERSON received the 4-H State award in Community Service which also included a college scholarship.





SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EDUCATION (SNAP-EDUCATION)

SNAP-Education works with Illinois families in need to make the healthier choice an easier choice where they eat, shop, live, play and learn. Through classes and workshops, and by collaborating with community partners to adopt research-based solutions to encourage healthier nutrition and activity choices, SNAP-Education positively impacts the families and communities we serve.

Serving Local Families



5,221
Total SNAP-Education Participants



4%
Adults



96%
Youth



1% Identified as Hispanic
42% Identified as Non-Hispanic
57% Unknown



- 36% White (1,866)
- 61% Black (3,170)
- 2% American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (148)

Our Community Partners



17
K-12 Schools



7
Youth Centers



12
Early Childhood



11
Community Centers



6
Food Pantries and Food Banks

The Other Side of the Prison Fence

In 2018, the Macon County Master Gardeners piloted a training program for the female inmates at the Decatur Correctional Center. Two of the trainees were released in 2019 and began applying the skills they learned in their communities.

One trainee joined the Master Gardeners for work days at the Decatur Public Library and other community gardens. The trainee, who is not being identified to aid her re-entry into society, said assisting in activities she is comfortable in has given her a positive outlook on life and confidence in growing and harvesting her own produce.

“Now I know why [my family] was in the garden all day, it’s relaxing and helps clear your mind.”

CORRECTIONAL CENTER GRADUATE



75 Master Gardener volunteers

8 New trainees joined the program

Reaching People Where they Are

The Macon County Master Gardeners provide educational programming in the Decatur area with the help of community-based organizations. In 2019, multiple Extension programs and staff collaborated with Crossing Healthcare, a newly expanded community medical care provider. In the first Master Gardener program at the facility, volunteers taught clients how to make a seed bomb, one for the facility’s garden and one to take home. The Master Gardeners provided information on the plants in the seed bombs that would grow and their benefits for bees and other wildlife. Participants made 158 seed bombs and launched half of them into native gardens in the area.



DMPHorticulture



Sensory Garden Engages Children

All gardens engage the senses, but a sensory garden immerses you in plants that stimulate your sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch. Brush past a mint plant and its fresh scent fills the air. Touching the soft leaf of a lamb's ear usually elicits a surprised gasp. And nothing tastes quite as sweet as a fresh strawberry. In the spring of 2019, Piatt County Master Gardeners and Monticello High School Horticulture and FFA students teamed up to create an interactive children's sensory garden at the Monticello Area Community Garden. Led by the Master Gardeners, the students learned about garden design, seed starting, planting, maintenance, and seed saving.

The community garden is located on the campus of Kirby Hospital along with a Pollinator Pocket garden bordering a wellness trail. The garden was expanded with support from the Illinois Prairie chapter of Wild Ones. This garden's flowers bloom spring to fall, providing food sources for a variety of pollinators.

Connect, Learn and Grow

This year was the inaugural *From the Ground Up* educational gardening day hosted by the Piatt County Master Gardeners at Allerton Park. Central Illinois plant lovers of all ages and skill levels came together to enjoy engaging sessions and network with area gardeners.



Question? Ask-a-Master Gardener!

DeWitt County launched an Ask-a-Master Gardener help desk in 2019 staffed throughout the growing season at the Extension office.

The Piatt County Master Gardeners also set up a mobile help desk at the weekly farmers market providing horticulture information and answering questions for shoppers.



293
Horticulture
questions answered



Glacier's Edge Master Naturalists



2,100
Hours
volunteered



\$53,000
In donated
services



29%
Increase
in volunteers

The Sweet Side: Managing Bee Hives

The Local Foods Small Farms program hosted a "Bee Production Management" meeting with an Illinois beekeeper focused on best management practices for healthy hives. Of the 27 participants, 88% said they would use at least one new management tactic.

Love Local, Eat Local Valentine Menu

Do you know where your food comes from? A Valentine weekend winter harvest farm-to-table dinner *Love Local* answered that question with a meal featuring foods from within 30 miles of Decatur. Students in Richland Community College's culinary arts program designed the menu and a local farmer spoke about how the food was grown.



UIExtenDMPLocalFoodSmallFarms
UIExtensionDMPmn



Podcast: Out Standing in the Field



Former Crossing Healthcare Garden Manager Bertha Nance worked to provide inner-city patients with fresh produce.

Inner City Garden Feeds Patients

Tucked on the north side of downtown Decatur, on what was once an industrial site, you can now find dozens of organic, raised garden beds and a 100-tree fruit orchard that feeds 200 people. These are the gardens of Crossing Healthcare, a community medical care provider, which Extension has partnered with since its inception in 2017. Local Foods educator Doug Gucker visits monthly for training and to advise on harvest scheduling, soil contaminants, and organic pest management.



Don't Be a Number: Eating to Avoid Diabetes

More than 1 in 3 adults in Illinois have prediabetes, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health, raising their risk of type 2 diabetes as well as heart disease and stroke.

In spring 2019, Illinois Extension partnered with four locations in Macon County to offer a prediabetes workshop. Participants learned about how individual components of foods, such as carbohydrates, impact blood glucose. Participants compared different meals to predict how blood glucose would rise and fall.



1 in 3
Illinois adults
have prediabetes



50
Community
participants

NutritionDMP



"I wouldn't even have known about area farms without *Get Fresh*."

PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

Gathering Around Local Foods

The inaugural CSA Insider program returned in 2019 as *Get Fresh*. Fifty-two participants from around Illinois learned about local agriculture and food preparation and preservation based on a community supported agriculture (CSA) share.



Over the growing season, participants received 11 e-newsletters, five new blog posts, and five new CSA-inspired recipes. On the *Get Fresh* Facebook group, 40 Illinois Extension staff and group members shared and discussed recipes, videos, and local food events. Over the growing season, the group shared 58 posts totaling 1,073 views.



59% increase
In *Get Fresh* participants

Getting Hands On in the Kitchen

More than tasting a recipe or watching a cooking demonstration, participants in Extension's hands-on cooking classes learn more by making recipes themselves. Scholarly research shows that people who know more about nutrition eat a healthier mix of vegetables than people with less nutrition education.

In DeWitt, Macon and Piatt counties, 102 participants read recipes, chopped ingredients, cooked, and tried a variety of healthy recipes. Many recipes introduced new foods and provided an opportunity to practice kitchen skills. Some classes were open to youth and adults, which provided an opportunity for families to cook together.



102

Youth and adults
learned and applied
basic kitchen skills

Basic kitchen skill demonstration videos, such as this one on breaking down a whole chicken, were shared online.

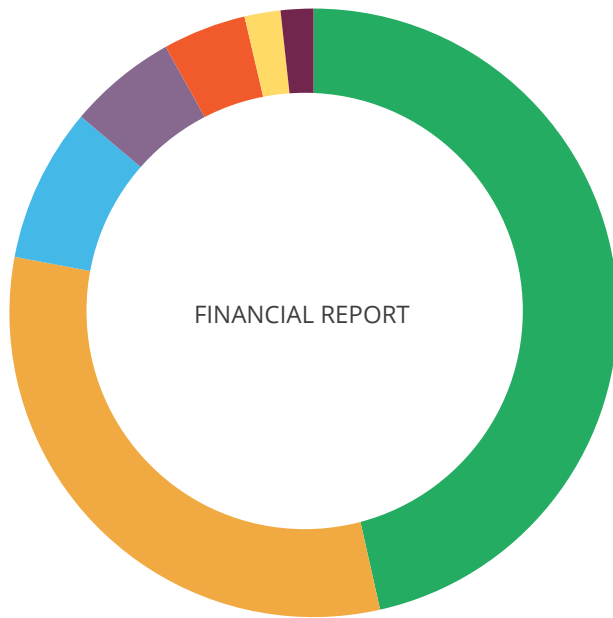




Community Partners & Sponsors

4-H Memorial Camp
 A Small Hand – Piatt County Cares
 ABC Preschool
 Agriculture Watershed Institute
 Allerton Library
 Allerton Park & Retreat Center
 Anna Waters Head Start
 Archer Daniels Midland
 Argenta-Oreana School District
 Baby TALK Early Head Start
 Bement Chamber of Commerce
 Bement Public Library
 Bement School District
 Bergie's - The Occasional Place
 Blue Mound Memorial Library
 Blue Ridge School District
 Blue Ridge Township Library
 Boys & Girls Club of Decatur
 Bryant Cottage
 C.H. Moore Homestead DeWitt County
 Carriage House Apartments
 Caterpillar
 Central Illinois Aerospace
 Cerro Gordo Library
 Cerro Gordo School District
 Chi Xi Omega
 Cisco Community Center
 City of Monticello
 Clinton Community School District
 Clinton Journal
 Clinton Community YMCA
 Connie's Country Greenhouse
 County Market
 Country Journal Publishing Co.
 Crossing Healthcare
 Decatur Day Care Center
 Decatur Housing Authority
 Decatur Park District
 Decatur Public Library
 Decatur Public Schools
 Decatur Public Schools Foundation
 Decatur Family YMCA
 Decatur-Macon County Opportunities
 DeWitt County 4-H Foundation
 DeWitt County Coalition
 DeWitt County Farm Bureau
 DeWitt County Friendship Center
 DeWitt County Housing Authority
 DeWitt County SWCD
 DeWitt-Piatt Bi-County Health Department
 DOVE, Inc.
 East Park Baptist Church
 Exelon
 Faith in Action
 Family Community Resource Center
 Farm Progress Show
 Farmer City Public Library
 First Christian Church, Monticello
 First Baptist Church
 First Mid-Illinois Bank, Monticello
 First National Bank, Clinton
 First State Bank, Monticello
 Forsyth Public Library
 Fox Run Farms
 Good Samaritan Inn/Mercy Gardens
 Girl Scouts
 The Herald & Review

Hertz Farm Management
 Homework Hangout
 Illinois Association of Home and Community Extension
 Illinois 4-H Foundation
 Illinois Public Media
 Kirby Medical Center
 Lake Fork Sportsman Club
 Macon County 4-H & Extension Foundation
 Macon County Ag in the Classroom
 Macon County Conservation District
 Macon County Fairgrounds
 Macon County Farm Bureau
 Macon County Obesity Prevention Coalition
 Macon County SWCD
 Macon Resources, Inc.
 Maddox Sweet Corn Farm
 Maroa Public Library
 Meridian School District
 Millikin University
 Mothers of Preschoolers
 Monticello Christian Academy
 Monticello Farmer's Market
 Monticello School District
 Moundford Food Pantry
 Mt. Zion District Library
 New Salem Baptist Church
 Northeast Community Fund
 Argenta-Oreana Elementary
 Oxford House
 Piatt County Farm Bureau
 Piatt County Journal-Republican
 Piatt Mental Health Center
 Piatt County SWCD
 Pipe Dreams Studio Theatre
 PrairiErth
 Primrose Retirement Community
 Reasonable Services Food Pantry
 RFD Radio Network
 Richland Community College
 Richland Workforce Consortium
 Rural King
 Salvation Army
 Southern Piatt Record-Herald
 South Macon Public Library
 Spring Creek Apartments
 State Bank of Bement
 Take Off Pounds Sensibly
 Topflight Grain Co-operative
 Triple M Farm
 U of I Plant Biology Greenhouse
 The Vault
 Vespasian Warner Public Library
 WAND TV
 Warner Hospital and Health Services
 Water Street Mission
 WCIA TV
 Webster-Cantrell Hall
 Wee Folks Daycare
 Weldon Library
 Weldon Springs State Park
 WHOW Radio
 WILL Urbana
 Wild Ones, Illinois Prairie Chapter
 The Woods Apartments
 WPXN Radio
 Youth with a Positive Direction



The 2019 operating budget was \$1.5 million. Extension is funded through a combination of local, county, state, and federal dollars*, which are returned to the community through educational programming.

■ \$708,161	County Board
■ \$479,239	State County Board Match
■ \$125,000	Program Income
■ \$87,959	State Income
■ \$67,500	Gifts/Donations/Grants
■ \$29,130	Local Sources
■ \$26,402	4-H Premiums

*No Federal funds were budgeted for use in 2019

Online Outreach



24
Educational blogs



3,580
Followers of eight Facebook pages



324
Hours of video watched



3,340
Recipients of 72 Extension and 4-H e-newsletters



39,700
Website views in 2019

Extension's mission is to extend knowledge to our communities in a variety of formats. This includes digital outreach using our website, e-newsletters, videos, social media, and the *Out Standing in the Field* agricultural podcast. New projects included 4-H Snapchat filters and accounts, a local foods community Facebook group, and a tri-county monthly e-newsletter with seasonal information and upcoming programs.

The website for Extension in DeWitt, Macon and Piatt counties is the second most viewed local site, and there was a 20% increase in total social media followers to 4,530. In 2019, staff produced 43 original videos.



2019-20 Extension Council Members

Jo Bauer, Macon County
Janell Baum Thomas, DeWitt County
Stephanie Block, Piatt County
Nancy Derby, Macon County
Jake Franklin, DeWitt County
Matthew Franklin, DeWitt County

Corissa Godbee, Piatt County
Zach Howell, DeWitt County
Dale Lattz, Piatt County
Trinity Mata, Macon County
Dave Mills, DeWitt County
Kristi Pyatt, Piatt County
Maria Robinson, Macon County

Katie Sellmeyer, Macon County
Ray Spencer, Piatt County
Robin Stapf, Piatt County
Jennifer Suckow, Macon County
Dannika Young, Macon County
David White, Piatt County

Extension Staff

County Extension Director

Doug Harlan

Program Coordinators

Lindsey Burden, *4-H Youth Development*

Rey Dalitto, *SNAP-Ed*

Rachel Davidson, *4-H Youth Development*

Dena Hyde, *Agriculture*

Beth Miglin, *Horticulture*

Vasthi Schwarz, *Horticulture*

Jenna Ward, *4-H Youth Development*

Olivia Warren, *4-H Youth Development*

Jan Wenke, *4-H Youth Development*

Charles Young, *4-H Youth Development*

Community Workers

Tamera Buse, *SNAP-Ed*

Sara Cochran, *SNAP-Ed*

Educators

Jamie Boas, *4-H Youth Development*

Stacie Coussens, *SNAP-Ed*

Doug Gucker, *Local Food Systems and Small Farms*

Trinity Johnson, *4-H Youth Development*

Caitlin Mellendorf, *Nutrition and Wellness*

Office Support

Laura Crider, *Macon County*

Jeralee Funk, *Macon and Piatt County*

Julia Gilmartin-Stewart, *Macon County*

Diana Leischner, *Piatt County*

Peggy Mechling, *Macon County*

Stacy Ann Nichols, *DeWitt County*

Diana Tibbs, *DeWitt County*

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Maria Lightner

Emily Steele

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Cover photos: (top left) Volunteers tour Scovill Zoo in Decatur during the Illinois Master Naturalist Conference in October; (top right) Monticello High School FFA members plant marigolds in a children's sensory garden; (bottom left) Macon County 4-H members celebrate *International Day*; and (bottom right) a *Gardening Insights* attendee makes a rain barrel to take home.

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ILLINOIS EXTENSION
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER
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