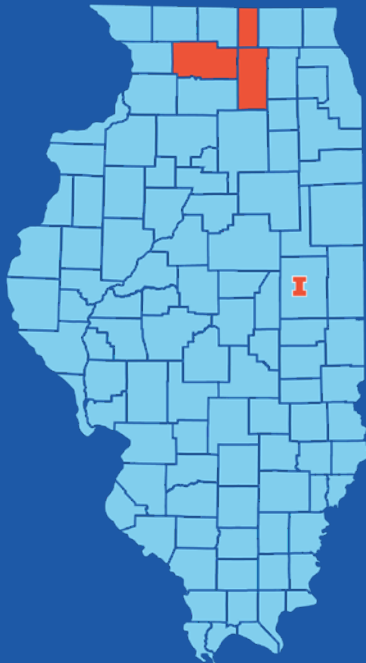


Illinois Extension

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 Note from the County Director

In a year of quarantine, "working with others" may seem like a contradiction, yet it describes the experiences of Extension staff, volunteers, partners, and families over the past year very well.

Restricted from delivering traditional face-to-face programming, staff learned new technologies and revised program content for online delivery. They supported local teachers with live and pre-recorded programs; prepared supply kits for home-based learning; delivered eggs and incubators for embryology students; conducted live, virtual farm tours; and engaged parents and preschoolers on nature walks. They provided nutritional resources for students and families; helped the hungry find local food and community resources; and created statewide webinars, podcasts, and how-to videos for adult populations.

Essential workers and Master Gardener volunteers planted and safely maintained community gardens to ensure local produce was delivered to food pantries when they needed it most.

Stronger together, 4-H staff and volunteers supported youth, clubs, and families with a variety of adaptive programs, culminating for many in virtual 4-H general and livestock shows in Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle counties. Clubs sent cards to rehab centers and delighted nursing home residents with bird feeders. They conducted community food drives and delivered Christmas trees to needy families.

As the director of your local Extension office, I am humbled by these examples of community, innovation, and resiliency. May this snapshot from our journey together reveal a few captured opportunities!

It has been a pleasure to serve you.

Heather Coyle
County Extension Director



Charles Anderson, DeKalb County, participates in the virtual 4-H general show and livestock exhibition from his front yard.

Resiliency — the Name of the Game

When your mission, your daily work, and your contact with the community is derailed, what do you do? If your work is 4-H, you take a deep breath, return to your roots, and let the 4-H mission guide you.

“Life is full of choices and opportunities. What we do with these choices and opportunities can make the journey all the sweeter. In 4-H, we have the pleasure to do work with others that makes us all stronger together,” said Johnna Jennings, 4-H and youth Extension educator.

The 4-H staff, leaders, and volunteers worked hard to set positive examples for youth participating in the programs and clubs offered in 2020. “There weren’t many hiccups in services. We rallied and worked together to find new ways to deliver tried and true programs,” said Melissa Irwin, program coordinator. Program Coordinator Nicole Groezinger added, “We embraced the virtual 4-H show format and learned quickly how to pivot to deliver a great show experience, especially because so many kids work hard year-round to prepare for the summer show.”

“The changes turned into opportunities for us. We conducted Zoom meetings and were able to reach more volunteers. I was excited to see our extended reach,” said Jodi Baumgartner, program coordinator. “We’re looking forward to offering a combination of virtual and in-person programs going forward. 2020 caused us to step out of our comfort zone; we are succeeding.”

In 2020, we proved that we can meet any challenge. We can adapt while continuing to make strides in all program areas.

JOHNNA JENNINGS, 4-H EDUCATOR

Reaching the Latino Population Takes Connection and Communication

Araceli Lopez King, 4-H Latino youth coordinator, uses imagination and relationship building to develop Latino youth involvement in local 4-H programs.

Drawing on her experience as both a school counselor and graduate assistant, King puts herself in the shoes of the youth she comes into contact with. “There is much hesitation in the Latino community before they join unfamiliar events. My goal is to build on the relationships with the families I already have. When they trust me, their enthusiasm grows and they refer me to their family members or tell their friends about our programs,” said King.

The major barrier to Latino youth participation in community-based organizations is the fact that most parents have no prior experience with youth groups. They lack an understanding of the benefits of such organizations and how to access them, and most importantly, they feel no connection and thus, have no trust in them. The presence of staff with a deep understanding of Latino culture and fluency in Spanish enables 4-H to build the relationships and establish the trust that is needed. This takes sustained effort over time.

King is excited to develop a college boot camp of sorts — teaching Latino students the importance of education. “I want to help the kids learn the nuances of career options depending on their interests. I want to show them how to find money for college, if that’s a problem. Or, give them encouragement to reach their dreams. I want to offer them alternatives to the traditional college track which quite often isn’t an option or interest for them,” said King.



Read the Clover Seed 2020 annual report here:
https://issuu.com/illinois4h/docs/2020_illinois_4h_cloverseed_annual_report



I Pledge ... My Hands to Larger Service ...

Boone County

The annual Military Mailing Project resulted in 2,280 holiday cards sent to U.S. troops — the largest number in the history of the endeavor. Participants buy or decorate their cards and create heartfelt messages. Thank you to all of the clubs and families who donated, and to the 4-H Federation members for taking shifts working at the drive-through.

Clubs conducted community food drives and delivered Christmas trees to needy families. Here, club members deliver trees during Boone County's Home Town Christmas Tree event.



DeKalb County

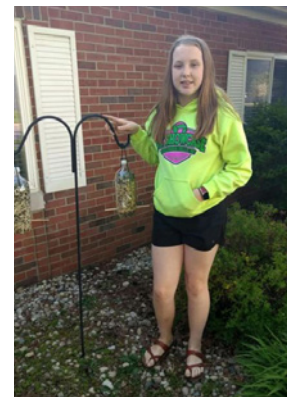
The Random Acts of Kindness group brainstormed a new idea to help a local business. A scavenger hunt to collect items for the Barn on Baseline Animal Shelter in DeKalb garnered impressive community support. Items gathered included paper towels, dog and cat food, cleaning supplies, dish soap, printer ink, and many more.



Ogle County

Cheyenne and Cole Somers (pictured left) sewed cloth face masks for residents of Pinecrest Manor Nursing Home in Mt. Morris. The facility provides skilled and intermediate care, as well as short-term rehabilitation.

4-H staff and volunteers supported youth, clubs, and families with a variety of programs. Clubs also delighted nursing home residents with bird feeders. Cassidy Vincent (pictured right) shows her project outside Pine Crest Manor.





Creating Relationships to Solve Problems

Relationships are the cornerstone of every community program and Mike Delany is enthusiastic about creating those connections. Mike joined Illinois Extension in mid-August as a community and economic development educator serving Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside counties. He works to develop and deliver research-based programs, collaborate with community partners, and extend University resources in northwestern Illinois.



Workforce development will be my primary focus as I build relationships and garner a comprehensive view of the needs of the region. Acting as a resource for the communities, I will work to provide businesses, families, and agricultural producers with practical tools to solve their community problems.

MIKE DELANY, EXTENSION EDUCATOR

Delany is based in the Extension office in Oregon, Illinois, and can be reached at mdelany2@illinois.edu.



LGE Local Government Education

Our local government education programs increased outreach in response to the COVID-19 crisis and developed a critical partnership with the Illinois Office of Broadband's initiative to extend high-speed internet access across the state.



go.illinois.edu/communitybroadband

The 2020 Leadership Academy pivoted to a virtual platform, offering county officials online workshops on a variety of topics, including crisis communications, managing economic development initiatives, finding and using data, leadership styles, managing change, ethical considerations, fiscal and economic impacts of COVID-19, and reversing population decline.



go.illinois.edu/leadershipacademy

Statewide Webinar Reach



37
Webinars in 2020



1,706
Reached In Community Involvement
and Leadership Webinars



926
Reached in Diversity, Equity,
and Inclusion Webinars



5,182
Reached in Economic and
Financial Stability Webinars



1,115
Reached in Community Resiliency Webinars

The University of Illinois Extension's community and economic development team helps communities build capacity for creative and informed decision-making to enhance their quality of life.



<https://go.illinois.edu/LGE>



Agriculture + Daily Life = Making Connections

Astro turf, paint balls, chewing gum, stain for your deck, crayons, and even the hydraulic elevator inside the Statue of Liberty runs on it.

What is it? Soybeans!

Making connections between agriculture and daily life is a task taken seriously by Melinda Charbonneau, program coordinator for Ag in the Classroom. Charbonneau is continually stretching for new ideas to keep students engaged and interested in agricultural science.

The bright spot is that COVID has challenged and empowered each of us to try new ideas.
MELINDA CHARBONNEAU, AITC COORDINATOR

Ag in the Classroom is a statewide educational program. Its goal is to help students, teachers, and the general public gain a greater awareness of the role of agriculture in the economy and society. Ag in the Classroom is offered through University of Illinois Extension in Ogle and Carroll counties in partnership with Ogle County Farm Bureau, Carroll County Farm Bureau, Ogle County Soil & Water, and Carroll County Soil & Water.

Charbonneau creatively structures her lessons to incorporate fun, hands-on activities to increase curiosity in the students of the 13 school districts she serves. In response to schools switching to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, Charbonneau created Ag Bags filled with supplies and lessons, which she delivered to teachers looking for learning alternatives.



Check out this fantastic video of a working dairy farm.
<https://go.illinois.edu/AgDayDairy>



The positive relationships Charbonneau built with school district personnel, principals, and teachers over her 13-year tenure helped with acceptance of the virtual lessons she fashioned. “It was tough when remote learning started because most of my schools had different processes. Many separate schools had me juggling guidelines and policies,” said Charbonneau.

She created videos; she brainstormed ideas and secured equipment to improve quality; she used Google Meet and Zoom, depending on the needs of each teacher. “Technology has been a blessing and I’m still learning how to improve my videos,” said Charbonneau.

One video, “Live at Hunter Haven Farm,” featuring Doug Block from Pearl City, follows a day at a dairy farm. Block takes viewers on an extensive tour of the milking facility where 900 cows are rotated through the milking process. Students get a close look at a newly born calf, one learning to stand, and cows eating their breakfast. They learn the ingredients of the food cows eat and the material they sleep on. Block wraps up the approximately 30-minute lesson talking about how the animals’ food is stored.



Live at the Bee Hive with Jeff Ludwig is an exciting look at the secret life of bees. Ludwig opens a hive while explaining how honey bees live.



Remote projects are effective in teaching agricultural concepts during pandemic alternative learning.

“Live at the Bee Hive,” with Jeff Ludwig from Byron, is an exciting look at the secret life of bees. Ludwig opens a bee hive while explaining how honey bees live, impact our food system, and gather pollen. He offers tips on handling bees, finding the queen bee in the hive, and marking her for future reference.

Other videos educated students on corn and wheat harvesting. They see what it is like to ride in a combine. Charbonneau walks the students through a virtual Q&A and also answers the students’ questions in real time.

“One of the bright spots in the year has been the grace of experimentation. We’re all in the same boat, so I think that has empowered each of us to try or suggest new ideas,” said Charbonneau. “We realize it’s okay to try new techniques and if they don’t work, then create something else. That’s how we’re all succeeding, sharing to benefit the students.”



A fun and educational video on bees — It’s the bee’s knees! <https://go.illinois.edu/Livebees>



Connie Handel and Judy Hodge, program coordinators, collaborate on virtual meetings for Master Gardeners.

Communities Continue to Reap Program Benefits

Many hands make light work. With the help of volunteers, an impressive amount of food was grown in community gardens throughout Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle counties. “We are blessed with a large number of people in our Master Gardener group — close to 50,” said Judy Hodge, program coordinator.

Community gardeners worked throughout the summer to grow and harvest food. The garden initiative is funded by Illinois Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education and, in part, by funding from the Growing Together Illinois Grant. The grant provides funds to address food insecurity for residents in Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle counties. “Between two gardens, over 700 pounds of vegetables were harvested during the 2020 growing season,” said Hodge. “We followed social distancing guidelines, while tending the gardens and harvesting. Many Master Gardeners participated this year.”

Two gardens produced over 700 pounds of vegetables during the 2020 growing season. We worked hard together to make it happen.
JUDY HODGE, PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Master Gardeners met monthly with virtual and in-person options. “With virtual options, we can provide multiple opportunities for offering programs. Now we can offer programs in the convenience of your own home,” said Connie Handel, program coordinator. “It’s amazing to reach such huge audiences. It’s exciting to pivot to include, for instance, hearing impaired audiences. It’s easier for people to attend and they are now making the time to attend. It was a different feel with the pandemic restrictions, but the positive impact on communities is still there,” said Hodge.



Virtual meetings kept Master Gardeners connected while learning.



Peggy Doty Receives Extension Excellence Award

Peggy Doty, energy and environmental stewardship educator, serving Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle counties, received the 2020 Extension Excellence Award for her many years teaching research-based environmental education to youth and adults, locally and throughout the state. Peggy’s passion resonates as she helps translate science-based information into terms easily understood by her participants.

“I have taught generations, many from the same families, and I look forward to continuing my work helping people understand their role in the natural world,” Doty said.

In response to COVID-19, her statewide EES team offered a weekly webinar series called Everyday Environments, with each member delivering educational material from their specialty. The webinars, now monthly, provide information on natural resources and teach the public how to make small lifestyle changes that have a positive impact on the environment.

“We offered everything from weather and waste to wildlife and ponds. Being virtual gave us the opportunity to reach large numbers of participants. I had hundreds of people register and attend my coyote and Illinois woodpecker programs. We never have had that level of reach before,” said Doty.

Doty’s Extension career spans over 21 years. “I am blessed with so many opportunities to share what I know with the public and help them make research-based decisions in their communities,” she said.



Everyday Environments: Coyote by Peggy Doty
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJFOALLMxr0>



The Find Food IL Community Food Map combines area resources into one simple tool to help people find food assistance.

A Game Changer

Find Food IL Community Food Map Rolled Out Summer 2020

Helping people lead healthier lives has Veronica Skaradzinski on a mission. As an Extension educator for SNAP-Ed, working a territory of six counties in northern Illinois, her position keeps her on the move.

“This year, with local food pantry sites closed or limiting hours of operation, I’ve been working on resources to support food access on a regional and state level,” said Skaradzinski.

For example, she worked to promote the Find Food IL Community Food Map — a new Illinois community food locator that’s a resource for people to find food assistance near where they live. Residents who count on SNAP and other nutrition assistance programs, such as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, typically search multiple, specific websites to find the resources they need. The comprehensive new Find Food IL Community Food Map combines all resources in one geolocation mapping tool, making it particularly convenient for those with limited access to transportation.

“The map was launched this summer. Two other educators and I conducted a webinar on using the map. It’s a game changer for reaching people in need, especially since numbers of those in need have risen since the pandemic began,” said Skaradzinski.

It’s a game changer for reaching people in need, especially since numbers of those in hardship have risen since the pandemic began.

VERONICA SKARADZINSKI, SNAP-ED EDUCATOR

In her role, Skaradzinski provides professional development opportunities for school wellness committees, school nutrition programs, food pantry volunteers, and community coalitions serving low-income families. “It’s been a busy year behind the scenes, but all this work is benefiting the people who need the most help,” she said.

Find Food IL
COMMUNITY FOOD MAP

SNAP • LINK • WIC

- School & Summer Meal Sites
- Food Pantries
- Grocery Stores
- Farmers Markets
- SNAP & WIC Offices
- Senior Food Resources

ILLINOIS Extension COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

UIC

EAT. DRINK. & BE MERRY.

Finding food resources closest to your home is just a click away. Use our community food map to locate food pantries and grocery stores in your area that accept SNAP and WIC benefits.



Check out the Find Food IL Community Food Map at: go.illinois.edu/FindFoodIL



Natalie Coy, SNAP-Ed community worker, teaches the OrganWise Guys program to kindergarten and first grade students through virtual learning tools.

OrganWise Guys

Teaching Kids How to Live Healthy Lifestyles

Learning new words, like toxin or pepsin, or finding out where your kidneys are in your body while trying to remember what they do, is a tall order for school-aged kids. OrganWise Guys brings it all together in a fun format that kids can relate to and understand. By using videos, games, songs, and most importantly puppets, SNAP-Ed community workers have an easier time conveying science and healthy concepts to young students.

OrganWise Guys offers various programs for children in elementary schools and summer camps, and for parents and health educators using an evidence-based, healthy lifestyle curriculum. The lessons are linked to STEM, health, and physical education to deliver nutrition, physical activity, and healthy living lessons to students.

“Learning about science and body parts is a big deal for young students. In the second grade classes, we used the puppet Organ Annie to tell the stories of how certain organs work. Every story incorporates workbooks, as well as videos,” said Brianne Gugerty, community worker for SNAP-Ed.

Community Worker Jan Saglier recorded various lessons for use in virtual classrooms to continue health-related programs in the schools SNAP-Ed serves. “As a team, we’ve created more than eight pre-recorded programs to use in the schools and 50 videos on other topics. We are able to create what our community needs, despite the shutdowns. That’s exciting to me. We’re the whole package for SNAP-Ed in our three-county area,” she said.

Learning about science and body parts is a big deal for young students. In the second grade classes, we used the puppet Organ Annie to tell the stories of how certain organs work.

BRIANNE GUGERTY, COMMUNITY WORKER



Heather Coyle
County Director



Rosa Borjon
Office Support



Jenny Kvamme
Office Support



Amy Miller
Office Support



Kelli Morrow
Office Support



Johnna Jennings
*Extension Educator
4-H Youth Development*



Jodi Baumgartner
*Program Coordinator
4-H Youth Development*



Nicole Groezinger
*Program Coordinator
4-H Youth Development*



Melissa Irwin
*Program Coordinator
4-H Youth Development*



Araceli Lopez
*Program Coordinator
4-H Latino Development*



Veronica Skaradzinski
*Extension Educator
SNAP-Ed*



Natalie Coy
*Community Worker
SNAP-Ed*



Brianne Gugerty
*Community Worker
SNAP-Ed*



Tracy Marcus
*Community Worker
SNAP-Ed*



Jan Saglier
*Community Worker
SNAP-Ed*



Melinda Charbonneau
*Coordinator
Ag in the Classroom*



Michael Delany
*Extension Educator
Comm/Econ Development*



Peggy Doty
*Stewardship Educator
Energy/Environment*



Connie Handel
ANR Coordinator



Judy Hodge
ANR Coordinator

EXTENSION COUNCIL

Boone County

Cherie Bartelt
Ellen Genrich
Bill Hall
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Dekalb County

Sally DeFauw
Emily Plapp
Roy Plote
Toney Xidis

Ogle County

Dan Dietrich
Rick Fritz
Julia Heller
Lisa Hinrichs
Lyle Hopkins
Marty Typer

OFFICE INFORMATION

Boone County Extension

205 Cadillac Court, Suite 3
Belevidere, IL 61008-1733
(815) 544-3710
Mon. - Fri., 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

DeKalb County Extension

1350 West Prairie Drive
Sycamore, IL 60178-3166
(815) 758-8194
Mon. - Fri., 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Ogle County Extension

421 West Pines Road, Suite 10
Oregon, IL 61061-9003
(815) 732-2191
Mon. - Fri., 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Natural Resource Education Center

11750 State Route 72
Genoa, IL 60135
(815) 784-2000



Faith Comstock, SNAP-Ed virtual Organ
Wise Guys program



Felipe Hernandez, Mano a Mano 4-H Club

ONLINE



@UoflExtensionBDO



extension.illinois.edu/bdo



uie-bdo@illinois.edu

Cover photos: (top left) Marin family, Inspire Kids to Do Challenge; (top right) Willard Rozanas, Boone Community Service Fall Food Shower; (bottom right) Dibblee family, 4-H Spirit Week; (bottom left) Braden Diskin and Cindee Robinson, Super Saturday.

Illinois Extension

College of Agricultural, Consumer & Environmental Sciences

University of Illinois, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Local Extension Councils Cooperating.
University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.



If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate, please contact the event coordinator. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your needs.

The Illinois Nutrition Education Programs are funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

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