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.

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

Meeting The Challenge

A Message from the County Director

2020 was a year few of us will ever forget. What started as a curious illness in a far-off land, quickly spread to every corner of the globe. Life ground to a halt and confusion followed, as the world struggled to come to grips with this unprecedented challenge.

Meanwhile, Extension staff across Illinois did what we always do — worked to make our communities stronger and more resilient. In two days, Extension staff converted to remote work, with calls forwarded directly to staff laptops, resulting in minimal interruption of service. Email, websites, social media, blogs, and traditional news outlets were used to communicate with clients and all educational programming went virtual. While this was no small feat, it was to be expected from an organization that helped pioneer remote learning to bring programs to isolated areas, and has been using digital delivery methods for over a decade.

4-H staff undertook the herculean task of transforming 4-H shows to a virtual format and they made the switch in a matter of weeks. While it wasn’t the same as our beloved, traditional 4-H shows, we couldn’t let down the kids who had already faced a year of disappointments. We found a way and persevered, and so did our 4-H members and volunteers. I can’t fully express my gratitude to the staff, volunteers, and community partners who worked so hard to ensure that the shows would go on.

2020 presented unbelievable challenges and I am proud to say Extension rose to the occasion. Yesterday, today, and tomorrow — with your support — Extension will be there to keep communities strong and meet challenges.

Terri Miller
County Extension Director
Illinois 4-H Foundation 2020 Family Spirit Award

For five generations, the Jerry Theobald family of Sangamon County has supported the 4-H program. The family is the Illinois 4-H Foundation 2020 Family Spirit Award winner.

The family’s 25 alumni have a combined 157 years of 4-H membership, with 75 years of club leadership and 36 years of 4-H volunteerism. Their involvement spans 80 years, beginning with Everett, Jerry’s grandfather.

Everett Theobald was one of the first leaders of the Buffalo Hart Boy’s Ag Club organized in 1927. Everett’s four sons were 4-H members. One of those sons, Ray, married Myrabel, who later became a 4-H leader. The couple supported their children — Jerry, Janis, and Jim — and nieces and nephews in their 4-H work. They became club officers, junior leaders, Federation officers, and state fair delegates.

The fourth generation, six girls and one boy, added new projects to the list of favorites: photography, leather, ceramics, cake decorating, breads, citizenship, and pastry. The activities expanded, too: trips to Washington, D.C., leadership conferences, and camp counselor roles. The fifth generation has even more opportunities, according to Joan Theobald, including specialized clubs focusing on robotics, archery, and rocketry.

“Most all of our career choices were influenced by 4-H membership and projects,” said Joan. “We are farmers, home economics teachers, dieticians, child development specialists, social workers, ag economists, and business owners. And, yes, we still enjoy cake decorating, visual arts, crafts, music, and drama.”

What this fifth generation will choose to do and become, we do not know. One thing is certain, 4-H will always be a valuable, meaningful, and cherished part of their lives.

JOAN THEOBALD

National 4-H Week Highlights: 4-H Alumni Share Advice

4-H alumni have exciting careers and great advice for current 4-H members. During National 4-H Week, alumni from Logan, Menard, and Sangamon counties shared advice and tips for current 4-H members. Kara Martel, a Menard County 4-H alumna pictured above, is the zoological supervisor of rhinos and hoofstock at Busch Gardens in Tampa, Florida.

How did 4-H have an impact on your life?

In so many ways! Not only do I still have amazing friends that I met through 4-H, I have incredible memories of the county and state fairs, skills that I’ve learned through countless projects and animal experience, ideals that I’ve practiced throughout my life, and of course, the endless camp songs that run through my head at random times! 4-H is not just a club you join, it is a life opportunity offering experience in teamwork, public speaking, hard work, time management, and how to determine success — the achievements in the choices we make, the journey we take, and how others are impacted by us. 4-H has offered a vantage point like no other — how one views life and the potential within it. From my start in 4-H, I went on to major in biology, becoming the zoological supervisor of rhinos and all African hooved mammals at Busch Gardens, one of US News’ top-rated zoological facilities. I’m also the park’s representative for the SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund, which donates roughly $1 million annually to conservation projects around the globe. I owe my start in conservation to my first soil and water conservation project in 4-H. My roots in this organization have allowed me the skills and reach to take on more impactful projects with every step in my career. 4-H did that!

Why should young people join 4-H today?

Of all the ways you can spend your time, 4-H is by FAR an opportunity worth your time investment! 4-H gave me an AMAZING start. That’s what 4-H has done over the generations and what it will continue to do for each awesomely unique individual who opens themselves up to the opportunity. Have fun with it, and I wish you the very best on your journey!

View the Family Spirit Award presentation here: https://youtu.be/YR84RnrPtr4
2020 4-H Hall of Fame Inductees
The Illinois 4-H Foundation annually recognizes 4-H alumni, 4-H volunteers, and former 4-H staff with a track record of extraordinary career achievements, or exemplary service to the Illinois 4-H program by presenting Hall of Fame awards.

Recognized in 2020: Stacie Skelton, Logan County; Jeffrey Sampson, Menard County; and Robert “Woody” Woodruff, Sangamon County.

4-H Youth State Award Winners
Legacy of Leadership
Scholarship Recipients
Rachel Fishburn, Sangamon County
Abigail Steffens, Logan County

State 4-H Award
Rachel Fishburn, Sangamon County — Community Service
Ariana Hinkle, Logan County — Project Mastery
Daniel Kloppe, Sangamon County — Project Mastery
Cavit Schempp, Logan County — Personal Growth

Illinois 4-H Livestock Ambassador Team
Drake Fletcher, Menard County

Youth Leadership Team
Caroline Ahrends, Logan County
Amareon Naudain, Sangamon County
Grace Skelton, Logan County
4-H Builds Stronger Communities Through Service

4-H members pledge to offer their hands to larger service and, each year, 4-H members across our unit work to improve the lives of people in their communities. Examples of 2020 community service projects include:

- Tri-City 4-H Club members Devan and Wyatt Buckles made and donated 35 masks to the Mechanicsburg Fire Department.
- Members of the Atlanta Ag 4-H Club assembled 350 face shields to help protect essential workers.
- Capital Clovers members assisted with packing more than 3,600 meals to help impoverished communities through Midwest Mission.
- The West Menarders spread some holiday cheer to nursing home residents.
- Members of the Town & Country 4-H Club made 12 cheerful pillowcases to be used by patients at St. John’s Children’s Hospital.
- Logan 4-H Ambassadors assisted the Salvation Army by collecting items and creating “home starter kits” for veterans, who were moving and needed assistance.
- Atlanta Ag Club members made fleece tie blankets for the Women, Infants, and Children Center in Logan County.
- Middletown 4-Hers brought holiday cheer to the community by caroling and filling Operation Christmas shoeboxes.
- The Pioneers 4-H Club prepared food for Harvest of Talents and filled shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child.

The 2020 National 4-H Week community service project was a personal hygiene items drive organized by 4-H clubs in Logan, Menard, and Sangamon counties during the month of October. The result was almost 500 personal hygiene items collected and donated to local social service agencies and food pantries at a time when they were desperately needed.
Career Planning & Money Management
Welcome to the Real World teaches students how to pick a career and manage their money, through both classroom and simulation experiences. The partnership between South East High School and University of Illinois Extension has impacted 285 ninth grade students. Additional partnerships include Franklin Middle School, where the program was offered to 275 eighth graders and Riverton Middle School, where 112 eighth graders participated.

I feel like I have more of an understanding of what life is going to be like financially and I am more prepared.
8th GRADER, RIVERTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Virtual Self-Paced Learning Opportunities
4-H Project Learn and Share
Project Learn and Share was launched on Facebook, reaching more than 10,000 people from March through May. The 28-part series included virtual tours; offline project work; and community service ideas in multiple project areas, including swine, visual arts, beef, geology, interior design, and child development. Participants, ages 8-18, were encouraged to share a comment or photo about their past project work, or exploring a new project area. Elliott Jennings, for example, shared his small pets project — a hamster.

Strong Kids: Social-Emotional
Strong Kids was shared on Facebook, reaching a total of 3,371 people in June and July. The five-part series included videos, conversation starters, and learn-by-doing exercises on self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, responsible decision-making, and social awareness geared at families and youth in kindergarten through grade 12.

4-H Partners With Community Groups to Deliver Virtual Summer Programs
While some day camps were able to meet in the summer of 2020, outside visitors were not allowed for safety reasons. Extension met the demand for camp education through virtual programs, including:
• Butterfly Workshop — Camp LEAP
• Mindfulness Program — Camp LEAP
• Mindfulness Program — Silverleaf Children’s Academy
• Computer Coding — Kidzeum
• Mindfulness Workshop — Life Skills Camp, Lincoln Park
• Earth Stewardship Day — hosted by the EPA
The Show Must Go On
4-H teaches youth to tackle obstacles, persevere, and find solutions to challenges. These lessons were especially valuable in 2020, helping youth to cope during uncertain times. Virtual 4-H shows allowed youth to share what they learned throughout the year by uploading project photos, videos, and narratives to a digital platform.

4-H members shared what the experience taught them:

You can’t always count on each year being the same when you raise poultry. Instead, every year has its own unique problems and lessons, which helps you and your project grow.
DANIEL KLOPPE, SANGAMON COUNTY

What I learned most was how to stick with my project and not to give up when there was so much uncertainty regarding whether or not we would be able to show.
ELLA BOBELL, LOGAN COUNTY

I learned if you want to do a good job with something, sometimes it takes a lot of time and patience. The end result is better if you have the patience.
DREW ATWATER, MENARD COUNTY

4-H Takes Positive Youth Development Virtual
4-H staff statewide designed and delivered a new suite of online experiences so youth could continue to thrive!

Our 4-H Clubs remained resilient with more than:

- 622 Club Members
- 44 Clubs
- 76 Adult Volunteers
- 78 First Year Members
- 80 Youth Volunteers
- 8,515 4-H Participants

No matter what is happening in the world, 4-H stands ready to innovate to meet the needs of today’s youth!

Race
- 73% Caucasian
- 13% African-American
- 14% Asian, American Indian, Pacific Islander, Two or More Races, or Unknown

Ethnicity
- 97% Non-Hispanic
- 3% Hispanic

Residence
- 35% Small Town <10,000
- 11% Town 10,000-50,000
- 49% Suburb/City 50,000+
Ag in the Classroom Takes Rural Scenes to Computer Screens in 2020

Ag in the Classroom is an educational partnership that provides educators and students resources that help them understand the vital role of agriculture in their lives and society. AITC programming is typically face-to-face in the classroom. In 2020, due to the pandemic, staff moved lessons to a virtual format and made digital materials available to the public. During this time, the AITC Facebook page became a virtual gathering place where educators and parents could find resources, lesson plans, and activities to share with their students.

Even though Extension staff couldn’t physically visit classrooms, they maintained their partnership with teachers, who used the materials provided in their lessons. In November, for example, elementary students learned about turkeys and made a pudding cup turkey in celebration of Thanksgiving.

Ag In The Classroom Partners:

- University of Illinois Extension
- Logan, Menard, and Sangamon Farm Bureaus
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Commodity Groups Throughout the State

Ag in the Classroom would not be possible without the support of local businesses and individuals.

Formed in 2000, the Agricultural Education Partnership focuses on Logan, Menard, and Sangamon counties with the goal of educating students, teachers, and the public about agriculture.

Visit the Ag in the Classroom Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/agintheclassroom/
Partnership With Innovate Springfield Strengthens Business Community

The Illinois Innovation Network includes 15 hubs across the state of Illinois, including Innovate Springfield. Extension’s community and economic development team aims to partner with these hubs by offering research-based programming and expert advice.

Pam Schallhorn, regional Extension specialist in community and economic development, currently sits on iSPI’s Advisory Growth Panel. The panel is designed to offer new and existing businesses professional advice on marketing, finance, legal structure, distribution, social media, and manufacturing processes. Businesses interested in participating go through an application process and are matched with advisors that best meet their needs.

Schallhorn has also developed programs focused on entrepreneurial development. In 2020, she taught Creative Planning, Recognizing and Managing Stress, and Creating a Virtual Pop-Up, which she developed specifically for iSPI. This four-part online program, currently featured on the iSPI website, includes topics such as the virtualized shopping experience, understanding and interacting with the online customer, virtual packaging, and e-commerce site selection. Each topic is covered in a seven to nine minute video.

Extension’s partnership with iSPI provides extended outreach opportunities into the business community with iSPI helping to market foundational Extension programs, like How to Finance a Business, throughout the region. Other recent collaborations have included community planning activities, such as the Local Food, Local Places workshop and efforts to develop a commercial kitchen in downtown Springfield.
Master Naturalists make a difference in our environment through education and data collection.

Ag & Natural Resources

The healing power of plants. The healing power of food.

In 2020, many people turned to cultivating plants and enjoying nature as they spent more time closer to home. Home gardeners expanded their food production, and farmers—large and small—worked tirelessly to ensure a steady food supply during a time of uncertainty. Extension was there to help residents and agricultural producers surround themselves with thriving plants, get more out of their time in natural areas, and maximize their food production.

I took the Master Naturalist training because I wanted to learn more about our local natural areas and how we can help.

KATHY HERRON
ILLINOIS MASTER NATURALIST VOLUNTEER

There are 41 trained Master Naturalist volunteers in Logan, Menard, and Sangamon counties. These volunteers actively educate the public about native plant selections and identification of invasive species. Typical projects include a native plant demonstration garden at Lincoln Memorial Garden, trail hikes to educate youth and adults about the process of making maple syrup, tree identification, feeder watch and bird surveys, and environmental stewardship practices.

Program partners include Adams Wildlife Sanctuary, Lincoln Memorial Garden, Friends of Sangamon Valley, Logan County Park and Trails Foundation—Kickapoo Creek Park, and Illinois Extension.

Access to Statewide Programs

- 5,720 ANR Program Attendance
- 136 Master Gardener Volunteers
- 41 Master Naturalist Volunteers
- 841 Pounds of Food Donated
- 15 Expert Consultations

Webinar series, conferences, and trainings included:
- Master Gardener Online Training
- Four Seasons Gardening
- Everyday Environment
- Small Farms Webinar Series
- Pesticide Safety Education Program
- Invasive Species Conference
- Virtual Field Days

Explore our comprehensive collection of online educational resources for commercial agriculture:
extension.illinois.edu/global/commercial-agriculture

Learn more about the Master Naturalist program:
extension.illinois.edu/lms/master-naturalists
Master Gardeners share their love and knowledge of gardening with others.

You, too, can become a Master Gardener if:
- You have some knowledge or experience in gardening or landscape management. You do not need to be an expert.
- You are willing to learn about horticulture and share this knowledge with others.
- You are accepted into the training program and can volunteer time conducting horticulture education programming, coordinated by Extension.

Providing Virtual Assistance to First-Time Gardeners

In 2020, there were 136 Master Gardener volunteers in Logan, Menard, and Sangamon counties. Volunteer projects include maintaining demonstration gardens, answering questions at farmers markets, teaching in-person workshops, and much more.

The pandemic prevented many of the typical Master Gardener activities in 2020; however, volunteers adjusted to the situation and were able to safely maintain demonstration gardens, participate in virtual educational workshops, and respond to the large number of requests for gardening information. Many questions came from novice gardeners looking for an activity they could do safely from home.

2020 Master Gardener Graduates

Carol Coleman
Cathy Dennis
Linda Jump
Patricia McCrea
Susie Powell
Jan Rigney
Stacy Sutton
Kitty Wrigley

Master Gardeners are adult volunteers of all ages, who love gardening and have completed the program training.

Learn more at: https://extension.illinois.edu/lms/master-gardeners
Gardening Gets “Social” with Virtual Programs, Blogs, and Social Media

The pandemic greatly restricted face-to-face programs. In response to this challenge, the Extension horticulture team quickly pivoted delivery methods to make information accessible online. Many virtual options offered on-demand learning. Below are just some of the online resources available.

**Social Media:**
Logan, Menard & Sangamon Horticulture Facebook Page

University of Illinois Extension Facebook Page
facebook.com/UIExtension

**Blogs/Articles:**
Prairies to Perennials Blog
extension.illinois.edu/blogs/prairies-perennials

**Virtual Programs/On-Demand Learning:**
Online Webinar Recordings and Podcasts Archive
extension.illinois.edu/global/home-and-community-gardens-and-landscapes

Four Seasons Gardening Series
extension.illinois.edu/global/four-seasons-gardening-webinar-series

**University of Illinois Plant Clinic:**
web.extension.illinois.edu/plantclinic/

Beekeeping Program Completes 13th Year
Since its initial offering in 2008, more than 480 participants have attended the Introduction to Beekeeping program. Extension, Sangamon County Farm Bureau, and volunteers from Prairie State Beekeepers partner to offer this 15-hour, five-course series.

Participants learn about gardening for pollinators, the life of a honeybee, and steps to start a beehive. After completing the program, many go on to become beekeepers.

In 2020, the pandemic broke just as the program was nearing completion. Staff and the volunteer presenters were able to offer the final lessons virtually in order to complete the training.

Find out more about our horticulture programs at:
https://extension.illinois.edu/lms/horticulture
SNAP-Ed Adapts to the Virtual World

2020 turned out to be a year full of change, innovation, creativity, and learning. At the beginning of the year, SNAP-Ed staff were busy presenting health, nutrition, and fitness education, such as OrganWise Guys at local elementary schools, nutrition education activity booths at local food pantries, and adult health and nutrition classes using the My Plate for My Family curriculum, which is based on the USDA MyPlate nutrition guide.

Then, COVID-19 changed everything. In March, the SNAP-Ed team quickly identified ways to work with community partners virtually. Staff encouraged their partners to visit the COVID-19 resource page on the Extension website and to share the information with their clients.

Existing nutrition programming was transitioned to a virtual format. This process created a unique opportunity for SNAP-Ed staff members, located throughout Illinois, to work together in ways they had never been able to before. These new collaborations led to innovative and engaging presentations for participants.

When the new SNAP-Ed programming year began, community partners were contacted and the new virtual curricula were put into action. Hoping for the best, but preparing for the worst, SNAP-Ed staff have continued preparing new programming for 2021, which is intended for in-person delivery, but includes built-in, virtual adaptations if distance learning continues to be the norm.

SNAP-Ed Community Partnerships

- 20 K-12 Schools
- 4 Agencies or Community Centers
- 6 Emergency Food Sites
We would like to thank the individuals who serve on our Extension Council. They generously sacrifice their time in order to help Extension remain vibrant, relevant, and in touch with the needs of the communities we serve. Their dedication is very much appreciated.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS 2019-20**

Bill Bree  
Nancy Dixon  
Gary Letterly  
Colleen Martin  
Dave Opperman  
Brian Satorius  
Phil Sidles  
Jennifer Taylor-Brown

**COUNTY EXTENSION BOARD**

Janet Estill  
Craig Hall  
David Mendenhall  
Charles Ruben  
Ed Whitcomb, Jr.

**YOUTH MEMBERS**

Zach Dixon  
Rachel Fishburn  
Amareon Naudain  
Ruthie Ruhl
The show must go on! Sangamon/Menard 4-H Ambassadors get a backstage tour of UIS Performing Arts Center, prior to COVID.

OFFICE INFORMATION

Logan County Extension
980 N. Postville Rd.
Lincoln, IL 62656
(217) 732-8289
Mon. - Fri., 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Closed noon - 1 p.m.

Menard County Extension
420 S. 7th St.
Petersburg, IL 62675
(217) 632-7491
Mon. & Wed., 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Closed noon - 1 p.m.
Email: uie-lms@illinois.edu

Sangamon County Extension
700 S. Airport Dr.
Springfield, IL 62707
(217) 782-4617
Mon. - Fri., 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Closed noon - 1 p.m.

ONLINE

/ExtensionLMS

@ExtensionUnit16

/UIExtension

Cover photos: (top left) 4-H member Carter McCarty and the coffeecake she virtually exhibited; (top right) 4-H member Paige Finchum with her beef project; (bottom left) 4-H member Faith Sanders with the sewing project she virtually exhibited; (bottom right) 4-H Cloverbud member Brantley Conrady with his virtual exhibit of decorated animal cupcakes.

(NOTE: Many photos in this report were taken prior to COVID –19 and any face covering requirements.)