



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

2021 Addressing Local Needs,
Solving Global Challenges
Henderson, Knox, McDonough, and Warren Counties

A Message from the County Director

As I sit here writing up this introduction of our programming efforts, I can't help but be proud of the U of I Extension staff that serves Henderson, Knox, McDonough, and Warren counties. Have we made everyone happy or served every need, of course not, but we have made a difference in the lives of many of our residents either directly or indirectly. We have formed new partnerships. We have provided technical assistance to other local organizations. We have continued to develop strong leaders. We provided produce to our local food pantries. Finally, we have helped people cope emotionally with the pandemic we have all been living with these past two years.



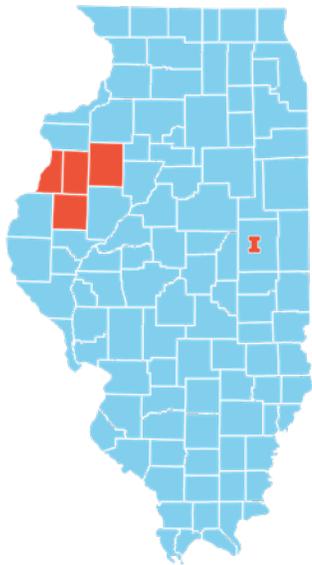
Lisa Torrance
County Director

Yes, our delivery may look a bit different and we miss our face-to-face presentations, but we have adapted and found new ways to bring the research based information developed through the land grant system to the residents of our local communities. While virtual learning may not be everyone's "cup of tea," we are able to deliver more programs to more people in more places.

Please take a few minutes to read about all of our accomplishments within the pages of this report. Hopefully you will see some of your favorite aspects of U of I Extension programming as well as some programs and projects that may be new to you. Thank you for your continued support of Extension, and we look forward to seeing you again soon!

Lisa Torrance
County Extension Director

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Think Global, Act Local

Illinois Extension embodies the land grant mission of University of Illinois, providing applied research and education to address societal grand challenges and local issues.

Community Support Strong and Resilient Youth, Families, and Communities

 Connectedness and Inclusion

 Involvement and Leadership

 Thriving Youth

Economy Grow a Prosperous Economy

 Economic Vitality

 Financial Wellbeing

 Workforce Preparedness/Advancement

Environment Sustain Natural Resources in Home and Public Spaces

 Enhancing and Preserving Natural Resources

 Engagement with Home and Community Landscape

Food Maintain a Safe and Accessible Food Supply

 Food Access

 Food Production

 Food Safety

Health Maximize Physical and Emotional Health for All

 Chronic Disease Prevention and Management

 Social and Emotional Health

 Healthy and Safe Environments

Look for these icons throughout this report to see how Illinois Extension is meeting these grand challenges at a local level.

Illinois Extension 2021 Statewide Highlights

Outreach Provided

565	335	84
Illinois Communities Served	Educational Sessions Per Week	Online Courses

Partnerships Supported

6,445	278	1,000
Adult Volunteers	Community Gardens	School Partnerships

Learners Engaged

8,000,000	14,450	500,000
Website Users	Online Course Users	Educational Program Attendees

Resources Generated

\$14,000,000	\$242,000
Value of Volunteer Contributions	Value of Donated Garden Produce

Extension leaders meet with local stakeholders to define annual priorities that allow us to respond to evolving and emerging needs and make meaningful progress toward important long-term outcomes. This blend of long-range focus and local accountability is a powerful strategy that ensures we stay true to our mission as we serve communities across the state.

I haven't missed a 4-H fair in years, but this year I was stuck in the hospital. Being able to watch the kids show helped boost my spirits so much.
4-H SUPPORTER



Livestream provides another way to cheer on youth.
Photo: Jackie Spence

4-H shows provide valuable learning experiences



The steamy summer months feature events 4-H members and volunteers look forward to every year. The 4-H county fairs provide a learning environment where 4-H'ers enjoy time with their family and friends while they build leadership skills, exhibit mastery of their projects, and develop communication and collaboration skills that will benefit the youth throughout their lives.

Even the youngest 4-H members learn new skills. 5-year-old Cloverbuds learn how to shake hands with a judge, look them in the eye, and speak clearly as they talk about their project. As 4-H members show the projects they have worked on throughout the year, the judging experience allows youth the opportunity to explain project challenges and successes and receive constructive criticism and positive encouragement.

Confidence can be seen in the show ring as members show their livestock and exhibit the best features of that animal. Youth purchase their livestock and supplies, help with veterinary visits, as well as dispense needed medications. Countless hours are spent on the daily tasks to feed and water, clean pens and stalls, groom, determine feed rations, and keep track of expenses and profits. These tasks help youth develop responsibility as they receive support from other club members and their family.

4-H members who finished first in their local contest earned a chance to represent their counties at the Illinois State Master Showmanship Contest. 4-H members Dayne Gittings (Henderson), Hayden Beard (Knox), Carter Hoge (McDonough), and Aubrey Killey (Warren) competed at the state fair in August.

McDonough County 4-H member Carter Hoge took second runner up in the Illinois State Master Showmanship Contest. Youth in the contest showcased their skills in showing sheep, swine, and cattle, and were placed on their ability as an overall show person. Carter, a member of Scotland Clever Clovers, earned his placing by earning 259 out of 300 possible points.



View the 2021 4-H Shows
go.illinois.edu/2021Livestream



Carter Hoge receiving his awards at the state contest.
Photo: Catrina Rawson, Illinois Farm Bureau

Strong leadership skills seen in local youth



The Illinois 4-H Youth Leadership Team is made up of 20 4-H members and recent alumni. Emma Coursey (Warren), Ross Vancil (Henderson), and Molly Warner (Knox) were selected to serve on the state team, showcasing their strong ability to lead by example. The Team tackles projects, such as hosting the annual Teen Leadership Conference, as well as providing youth-led programming on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Team members assist behind the scenes in events at the Illinois State Fair and Illini Summer Academies, serve as the training team for the Speaking for Illinois 4-H program, and serve on various statewide 4-H committees and boards, such as the Illinois 4-H Foundation Board of Directors, Illinois Farm Bureau Youth Education Committee. Among other duties, YLT members work with staff in the Illinois 4-H state and local offices to plan and improve programming that will continue to help our youth become future leaders within their communities.

Long-standing program continues in a new way



Welcome to the Real World is a financial literacy program with a long history of being a local favorite. In the past, youth from many area schools gathered in person to work through a simulation that mirrors a month as an adult in the real world. To comply with COVID-19 policies that were in place, the experience was offered in a way that had not been done before to meet the needs of local school policies and hybrid schedules.

Extension staff joined individual classes remotely reaching about 400 student participants throughout the spring. Students were able to select a career and pretend they were living on their own. They were responsible for a month's worth of bills with part of the simulation having the students write checks and keep an accurate account balance in a check register.

I'm so glad we can still make Welcome to the Real World work this year. Our kids learned so much from participating in the past.
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR



Like 4-H on Facebook
@Henderson4H, @Knox4H,
@McDonough4H, @4HWarren



Follow 4-H on Instagram
4h_hkmw



Snap us
4H_HKMW



Illinois Superior Young 4-H Livestock Producers competition challenged members' knowledge of livestock production including beef, swine, and sheep. Local recipients were Anna Curley (McDonough) and Jack Link (Knox).

4-H is Growing True Leaders

4-H youth programs are empowering and preparing Illinois youth for success both now and in the future.



131,628
Youth Affiliations



6,192
Adult Volunteers



1,597
Clubs



47,556
Fair Exhibits



2,159
Programs



2,257
Youth in Leadership Projects & Programs

Opportunity4All

Advancing the mission for all youth in Illinois to be empowered and prepared for success.



24%
Minority Members



12%
Hispanic Members



788
Virtual Programs



142
New Program Sites





Supporting a community need

In the midst of dealing with the global pandemic, the Henderson County Health Department needed to update its Illinois Project for Local Assessment of Needs (I-Plan), as well as a health improvement plan. Community Development Educator Carrie McKillip, with assistance from Family Life Educator Tessa Hobbs-Curley, facilitated the assessment and plan to help the understaffed health department.

Staff from the health department and Extension creatively adapted the process to meet safety needs during the ongoing health emergency. In normal times, the planning process can be challenging. Converting the process to virtual can be daunting which is where the experienced staff from Extension stepped in.

Extension was involved in creating a health needs survey, two virtual planning and priority setting meetings, as well as an intervention strategy meeting with health department staff. Illinois Extension staff were assisted by a student worker, Aidan Berg, who is currently completing his degree in public health at University of Illinois.

“Aidan did the bulk of the secondary data research that was necessary for the plan,” says McKillip. “He was also instrumental in developing and writing the final I-Plan. It was great to not only meet the needs of Henderson County, but also provide real world experience to a student at University of Illinois.”

The team worked through the process of data collection while engaging community participation. In the end, the information was submitted to the state, allowing the health department to become compliant and have new strategies in place. Henderson County Health Department can now look beyond the pandemic to help make the health and life of their county residents better.



As COVID-19 continued to impact governments, businesses, and communities, Illinois Extension’s Local Government Education program increased its outreach aimed at economic investment and community vitality, workforce development, leadership, policy, equity, and resiliency. By partnering with state leadership and organizations in Illinois, the Illinois Extension Community and Economic Development team has provided outreach aimed to help local governments and residents build capacity to strengthen their communities and organizations and improve public services.



Access past and future programs
<https://go.illinois.edu/LGE>

Statewide Webinar Reach



60
Webinars in 2021



2,003
Individuals Learned about Leadership, Public Service, and Community Involvement



1,094
Individuals Learned about Meeting Needs of Diverse or Vulnerable Populations



3,955
Individuals Reached in Economic and Financial Stability Webinars



1,043
Reached in Economic Vitality and Community Resiliency Webinars

Community-Driven Broadband Reach



1,228
Community Leaders Educated on Broadband Expansion Opportunities



714
Participants Educated on Obtaining Funding and Needs Assessment



416
Individuals Reached on Broadband Project Management

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.



Explore career paths virtually

For over 30 years, Extension has helped high school youth in Henderson and Warren counties explore a career they are interested in pursuing after they graduate. This year, with schools on hybrid schedules and businesses and organizations having restrictions due to COVID-19, Extension staff held virtual experiences: Career Exploration and Field Trip Friday.

Focus for the experiences were agriculture, trades, and health occupations. The event was opened to all high school students throughout Illinois and the country.

The Career Exploration Agriculture sessions kicked off with production ag and ag sales. The remaining sessions covered ag companies, veterinary medicine, and ag education and outreach. These sessions allowed students a behind-the-scenes glance at the wide range of potential careers within agriculture.

Not all high school students plan to attend college. Guidance counselors talk to students about the vast number of potential careers in trade fields. To help meet that need, Extension staff talked with regional trade unions and developed a Career Exploration Trades session.

To help youth explore one of the fastest growing career fields and the numerous professional pathways in health sciences, Extension staff joined SIU School of Medicine, Western Illinois Area Health Education Centers, and Spoon River College for a virtual Field Trip Friday. In these sessions, students listened as health professionals talked about their experiences in health care and the numerous paths the professionals took to get to their current career.

The virtual sessions for Career Exploration and Field Trip Fridays gave students insight into potential career paths, allowed students to personally ask questions of the panelists, and allowed them to gain access to resources for taking their next steps towards a future career.



Watch the virtual sessions
go.illinois.edu/CareerExploration

Creating success in the workforce

We know how important it is to succeed. That's why Illinois Extension offers tools to help businesses and organizations succeed. A five-session series demonstrated how internal and external forces shape behavior, as well as adaptive approaches in communication and motivation based on these differences.

In the first session, participants took the COLORS matrix personality inventory to help understand how to communicate better. The Age Matters program helps participants gain insight about all the generations currently in the workforce and explore ways each generation prefers to communicate, receive feedback, and be motivated. Next, participants explored personal and cultural values, biases, prejudices, and views in a multi-cultural workplace. The programs teaches how to provide excellent customer service (in a changing world) to all groups rather than a "one size fits all" approach. These sessions help business owners create workable customer service plans specific to their business or organization.

Carrie McKillip, community and economic development educator, and Tessa Hobbs-Curley, family life educator, partner together to offer the Project Success series to bring awareness and create success.





The heart of a community - volunteering

Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists share their passion and knowledge throughout the local communities. They spend many volunteer hours providing programs, working in gardens, and sharing their knowledge to give back to their community.

Over 1,600 Take Home Kits were distributed throughout Henderson, Knox, McDonough, and Warren counties this year. Parents, grandparents, teachers, and social organizations enjoyed the opportunity to provide a quality learning experience to the children in their lives. Students explore the world around them through hands-on activities. Master Gardener Bill Wallace used the learning kits with participants at the Warren County Public Library.

In McDonough County, Master Gardeners harvested produce from the GIFT Garden which they donated to local food pantries. The group of local experts also hosted a stop at the Discovery Demonstration Garden during the Macomb Beautiful Garden Walk. This event showcased the different demonstration gardens around the Macomb Extension office. Attendees to the event gave high praise of the gardens and noted the plant labels were great for learning more about what plants worked in the different types of gardens.



Find out more about Take Home Kits
go.illinois.edu/TakeHomeKits

The Knox County Master Gardeners worked throughout the summer at the Carl Sandburg College Community Garden to grow fresh produce to donate to the local FISH Food Pantry and Salvation Army. The gardeners also helped care for the Knox County Nursing Home floral garden. One resident's family member expressed her gratitude to the nursing home for the work that the expert gardeners do to maintain the beautiful garden.

Three River Master Naturalists hosted a successful Monarch Migration Festival. The event offered visitors a chance to learn about tagging Monarchs to help scientists track and gather data on the colorful pollinator, as well as multiple learning stations. The naturalists also helped maintain Blackthorn Hills Nature Preserve adding more biodiversity and removing invasive species, Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops travel to the preserve to learn naturalist skills from these local experts. Last year, this group collected seeds from Illinois' native prairie plants to help others add to the diversity of their gardens.



75

Master Gardener and Master Naturalist Volunteers



2,990

Hours Volunteered



\$87,816

Volunteer Value



Fresh food grown for a cause

Research has drawn a strong connection between food insecurity and poor health and even academic outcomes of children. Food insecurity is not just about hunger. It's also about lacking access to the food options that provide adequate nutrition, particularly important for limited resourced individuals and families. Extension's network of volunteers and community partners create opportunities to address food insecurity in locally relevant ways.

Extension Master Gardeners address a small portion of the food insecurity problem throughout the summer months with hands on learning opportunities that happened at the Carl Sandburg College Community Garden. Community members and youth program participants worked alongside Master Gardeners developing a plan, growing, and harvesting fresh vegetables. Volunteers to the garden helped provide a huge amount of fresh food that is given to low-income families.

Volunteers worked in two community gardens, as well as their personal gardens, to donate 3,415 pounds of food to local food banks. Families using their area food bank were able to choose fresh foods instead of unhealthy, packaged foods.



Gain knowledge through videos

Five billion YouTube videos are watched every day. The Good Growing team, Christopher Enroth, Ken Johnson, and Katie Parker, have expanded to a new weekly videocast to reach new audiences. They have also made significant progress expanding topics of interest and having state wide experts be guests on the show.

Each week's podcast provides information on a wide variety of gardening topics, from planting garlic, and lawn care tasks and tips, to talking about cicadas. This year, 51 videos were created. The top viewed video was *Talking Native Plant Favorites*.

Watch the Good Growing videocasts
go.illinois.edu/GGVideos



Nurturing enthusiasm for the outdoors

Illinois Extension partnered with the Regional Office of Education 33 to conduct a series of programs on container gardening in Henderson, Knox, Mercer, and Warren counties. Jessica Donaldson, ROE, arranged the locations and supplies for these hands-on family-oriented classes.

Christopher Enroth, horticulture educator, was the instructor for the Henderson, Knox, and Warren county sessions. The class was praised for its education and fun approach. Enroth spent the first few minutes discussing the basics of container gardening including soil mixes, fertilizers, plants, and proper placement. He then showed pictures for inspiration in the second half of the class in which participants potted their own containers to take home.

Even though anyone could attend these free classes, it was designed specifically for families. A family that attended the Warren County session enjoyed it so much they attended the same class in Knox County. The partnership between Illinois Extension and ROE 33 continues to be a success and is a valuable relationship for future programming.





Supporting our farm community

Mental health has been a growing concern across the life span and all walks of life. The global pandemic has magnified this crisis with additional social, economic, and life challenges. Illinois residents need to know where to turn for strategies and resources to help them and their families cope with the myriad of stressors that threatened mental health.

Farmers put in long hours taking care of their livestock and their crops, but they may not always take the time they need to care for themselves. Nearly one in five U.S. adults is living with a mental illness, according to the National Institute of Mental Health.

I am feeling more confident about my abilities to help someone.

WEBINAR PARTICIPANT

Illinois Extension has made it easier for friends, family, and community members to not feel overwhelmed. Mental Health First Aid, a skill-based program, helps participants discover how they can respond in a helpful way. Using a five-step action plan, participants learn to identify common signs and symptoms of someone coping with mental health or substance use problem and how to help.



Taking steps to improve health

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, more than half of Illinois adults have a known chronic health condition, in part due to risky health behaviors. People of all ages need trusted and reliable research-based information and strategies to make healthy decisions that improve quality of life for individuals and families. Creative solutions are needed to ensure that these supports are available when and where people need them.

Participants in a new virtual program, Take Charge of Your Health, learned to thrive, not just survive, their ongoing health issues. Throughout the six-week series, program participants discovered healthy ways to live with chronic conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, and heart disease.

They found practical ways to deal with pain and fatigue, discovered better nutrition and exercise choices, explored new treatment choices, and learned better ways to talk with their doctors and family about their health.

One participant stated that the most valuable thing about the program was “the sharing of experiences with others who are struggling with chronic health issues, as well as the educational information provided by the instructors.”

Because of their participation in the Take Charge of Your Health program, participants are taking steps to improve their health.

SNAP-ED works with partners to increase healthy options



Food plays a substantial role in living healthy, active lives. Tara Chenoweth and Amy Finley, SNAP-Ed community workers, work with local schools and organizations, encouraging others to make healthier food choices.

The OrganWise Guys curriculum and puppets help students in kindergarten, first, and second-grade classrooms understand what their bodies need to stay healthy. Each lesson includes physical activities, games, stories, songs, and videos to help children remember how important their organs and their health are.

Healthy Cents is a program offered to adults in the community. The program teaches young adults and parents how to spot budget-friendly choices at the grocery store, as well as how to prepare healthy, delicious meals with the foods purchased. The program is presented at agencies throughout the communities. By working through local schools, WIC, food pantries, churches, senior centers, and local agencies, the SNAP-Ed staff promote healthy choices for every generation.





Health: Maximizing physical and emotional health for all



3,354
Attended programs



119
Educational sessions



94
Online learning sessions



Building relationships

Maintaining a strong relationship with a spouse or romantic partner can be a challenge. When help is needed, finding trustworthy and effective relationship support can be equally difficult. Illinois Extension’s Strong Couples program helps.

Through a collaborative effort between family studies researchers at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Illinois Extension family life educators, the program provides free, proven online help for local couples.

Every couple has challenges in their relationship they must work through. Some couples want to build greater intimacy and connection, while others seek help to communicate more effectively. Some couples may be contemplating divorce. In Illinois Strong Couples, partners learn how to work through issues using new, trusted ways of thinking and interacting that strengthens their relationship.

“My wife and I really communicate much better,” one man said. Illinois Strong Couples is available to Illinois couples who wish greater connection, improved communication, or renewed dedication to their relationships.

Dealing with difficult situations



Many have been challenged by a tough situation at some time in our lives. Feeling overwhelmed, fatigued, and stressed due to difficult situations around us has become more frequent in our personal lives the past couple years.

Resilience is not something people have or don’t have, nor is it something we are born with. Resilience is a skill that is learned that helps people cope with the uncertainties and challenges in life. Highly resilient people have the ability to adapt, recover, and grow stronger from difficult situations.

The program, How High Do You Bounce: Building Resiliency in Yourself and Your Organization, was presented to 110 participants by Extension educators Cheri Burcham and Tessa Hobbs-Curley as part of the Lessons for Living webinar series.

The evaluation showed that 85% of attendees learned something during the program they plan to use in their work or personal life. Some of the actions participants intend to take as a result of the workshop include practicing positive communication habits, having a more positive outlook for myself and others I, and viewing adversity as a opportunity.”

I really like this way of learning for our organization. Thank you for an excellent lesson.

WEBINAR PARTICIPANT



Illinois Strong Couples
go.illinois.edu/ILStrongCouples

OFFICE INFORMATION

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Cover photos: (top left) Working on a grain bin in McDonough County. Photo: Jackie Spence. (top right) With a can of Pringles, potential as a leader can be unlocked. Photo: Shelby Carlson. (bottom left) The summer take home kit project was a huge hit. Photo: Mike and Mary Panther. (bottom right) Master Naturalist Rhonda Brady talking about Monarch butterflies. Photo: Jackie Spence.

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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