



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Illinois 4-H Alumni Recognition Program honors Mason County volunteer Barb Knake

Honored with the [Illinois 4-H Alumni Award](#), Mason County volunteer Barb Knake, is an absolute example of the award's ideals—good citizenship.

The 4-H Alumni Award provides recognition to 4-H Alumni whose contributions to society exemplify effective citizenship and leadership, success in their chosen careers, and a sustaining interest in 4-H and similar worthy community endeavors.

While a 4-H member in McLean County, Barb Knake learned from her 4-H club leader, who was her neighbor and active in community endeavors; and her mother, who was a constant source of inspiration and support. Barb's participation in 4-H Foods Projects, Fine Arts, and Sewing & Textiles, led her to project mastery and exhibition at the county 4-H Show and Illinois State Fair.

"My 4-H experiences with public speaking and foods/nutrition projects helped lead me to my field of study and career choice," Barb shared. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Science from [Eastern Illinois University](#) and Masters degree in Health Administration from [Ball State University](#). Her professional positions have included Director of the [Mason County Health Department](#), substitute teacher, and Health & Nutrition educator at [Spoon River College](#).

Barb is married and has two children who participated in [Mason 4-H](#). Thanks to her own 4-H experience, she helped them navigate through the principles of clearer thinking, greater loyalty, larger service, and better living, as expressed in the 4-H Pledge.

4-H alumni benefit significantly from their 4-H experience over the course of their lives — including socially, physically, emotionally and economically. This evidence is described in a national survey of more than 6,000 former 4-H members conducted by Edge Research.

Barb Knake's volunteerism with 4-H and Extension has spanned over twenty-four years. She has served as an Extension Council member, auditing committee member, 4-H Show judge and superintendent, and 4-H club assistant. Her model provides current 4-H youth with a living example of dependable, purposeful citizenship, as well as affords her the opportunity to share with 4-H youth how to continue with their interest in 4-H and Extension programs.

Barb's contributions reflect many of the survey conclusions which show 4-H Alumni are community advocates. They are far more likely to donate, volunteer regularly, be involved with faith or politics, support higher education, and support funding for public universities. Assessments show 4-H Alumni allegiance to 4-H remains strong throughout life. Even those who are somewhat disconnected still rate 4-H positively.



Photo by Joli Pierson | Illinois Extension

Barb Knake (center) with her husband Bill (left) and her mother Martha Schoen (right), was presented with the 4-H Alumni Award. Her model of 4-H participation and volunteerism, along with her personal accomplishments including completion of higher education and career success, exemplify citizenship, leadership, community and public service which all meet the ideals of the award.

Joli Pierson
Mason County
4-H Program Coordinator
jkpierse@illinois.edu

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, CONSUMER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

University of Illinois—US Dept. of Agriculture—Local Extension Councils Cooperating

University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the US Department of Agriculture by the Director, Cooperative Extension Service, and University of Illinois.