Serving Edwards, Lawrence, Richland, Wabash, and Wayne Counties

ILLINOIS EXTENSION 2022
Creating better futures for our communities

University of Illinois Extension plays a vital role in building and maintaining strong communities by providing education and information that helps solve problems, develops skills, and creates a better future for our residents and youth. From research information that helps families stay healthy in body and mind to maintaining a safe and accessible food supply, Illinois Extension remains a trusted source to address the most pressing issues in the state of Illinois relating to community, economy, environment, food, and health.

We continue to be thankful for support from our county boards, foundations, local Farm Bureaus, individuals, and businesses who trust us to make a difference in our communities. We are so grateful for our community partners and donors who help provide the resources we need to reach our communities and improve their lives through learning and partnerships that put knowledge to work.

This report reflects the work we do for the citizens in Edwards, Lawrence, Richland, Wabash, and Wayne counties. We are humbled by the opportunity to provide positive change within our community, and we thank you for the support you have provided our organization so that we can continue to do so.

Tara Buerster
County Extension Director
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Illinois Extension Makes an Impact

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's land-grant mission thrives each day through Extension's programs, resources, knowledge, and dedicated staff that are responsive to five grand challenge themes:

- **Community:** Support Strong and Resilient Residents
- **Economy:** Grow a Prosperous Economy
- **Environment:** Sustain Natural Resources at Home and in Public Spaces
- **Food:** Maintain a Safe and Accessible Food Supply
- **Health:** Maximize Physical, Mental, and Emotional Health

### 2022 Engagement

Extension leaders, staff, and stakeholders define priorities that create meaningful, mission-centered outcomes throughout the state:

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<th>2022 Engagement</th>
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Conservation Day is a huge hit

For years, Wayne County 4-H has conducted Conservation Day to all Wayne County sixth grade students. This event is held every year at Sam Dale Lake in Johnsonville, and area conservationist provide break-out sessions.

Five sessions are held in the morning and one session after lunch, which included the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Wayne County Farm Bureau, Pheasants Forever, Quail Forever, and the Natural Resources Conservation Services.

The teachers appreciate this opportunity to give the youth of Wayne County an experiential day of learning. Each station is engaging to the students and easily keeps their interest.

Presenters and program delivered:

- NRCS: Conservation Jeopardy
- IDNR: Illinois Wild Mammals
- Alyssa Short, Wayne County Farm Bureau: Water Conservation
- Caleb Crawford, Farm Bill Biologist, Pheasants Forever, Inc. and Quail Forever: Pollinators
- Steve Liston, retired teacher: Soil Conservation
- IDNR: Fisheries

Sixth graders explore the field.
Container Garden Workshop
Edwards County Master Gardeners hosted a flower container gardening workshop for 14 participants. Topics included choosing plants based on sun or shade needs, choosing planters, arrangements, planting basics, plant maintenance, and tool maintenance. Master Gardeners Debbie Fearn, Darla Bradham, and Ashley Spray were present, along with coordinator Dana Hart.

Edwards County School becomes an oak tree savanna
Albion K-12 School in Edwards County is now home to an oak tree savanna thanks to local youth and community members. The group of 25 oak trees, called a savanna, will bring new life to oak-hickory forests currently under threat in Illinois.

The K-12 school in Albion is a community location where the trees will be visible to traffic and individuals who are visiting the school grounds.

It is hoped the trees will be used as an instructional aide in the future for the students of the school and help restore the oak-hickory forests.

Fourteen youth took part in the planting in Edwards County. Working with the youth were Master Gardeners Debbie Fearn and Darla Bradham, Master Naturalist Bob Shelby, county Extension director Tara Buerster, youth educator Samantha Gaither, Edwards County Soil and Water chairman Matt Lynch, Edwards County Soil and Water administrative coordinator Michelle Piller, as well as many family and community members.
Barrow Booster Show Pig Swine Clinic in Edwards County
Several 4-H members from surrounding counties attended the Barrow Booster Show Pig Swine Clinic at the Edwards County Fairground. They learned valuable information from Jordan and Stephanie Schippert of Milford. Stephanie gave tips on showmanship and demonstrated the proper way to show in the arena and how to position themselves and their pig. The showman should never be between the pig and judge.

Each of the attendees were given the opportunity to try the different techniques. She gave tips on how to practice with their pigs while preparing for their fair shows.

Jordan discussed daily care and nutrition. He told the group the steps and process of getting their animal, feeding, deworming, vaccinations, and the proper care that will make your animal show ready. This clinic helped inform 4-H members not familiar with swine projects about care and showing livestock projects.

Wabash cloverbuds have a great day
Wabash County 4-H hosted its second annual cloverbud camp! They had a day full of fun team-building activities, science experiments, and crafts. There was a great turnout with 16 youth age 4 to 8. It was a great opportunity for the youth to spend the day together getting to know each other and building friendships that will continue to grow through their 4-H career.

Dogs get some training
Richland County offered its first dog obedience class. Classes were held for one hour twice a week for three weeks leading up to the dog obedience show. Classes were held at the Richland County Extension office, and the dog obedience show was held at Olney City Park on June 10. Meghan Anderson, a 4-H alumna from Wayne County, was the volunteer dog obedience teacher. This year, 4-H member Rusty Workman and his dog, Cooler, learned skills, such as sitting, staying, walking together, and recall. This was a great start to the future of the dog project in Richland County.

Lawrenceville High School leadership
New agriculture classes at Lawrenceville High School include an ag leadership and communications class. Last year, this class explored careers and leadership opportunities. In September, Samantha Gaither, 4-H youth development educator, shared an interactive lesson on what makes a good leader. Youth listed qualities that make a good leader and talked about what doesn’t make a good leader. They then got the opportunity to purchase five qualities that the group decided on. Samantha had youth discuss why the quality of communications went higher than the quality of teamwork. Youth wrote a letter to a person they think displays great leadership and told them how much they appreciate them.

High School students learn what it takes to be a good leader.

Eli Hocking is doing his best to not drop his balloon.
Chopped Summer Camp rocked!

Chopped Summer Camp was held at the Bridgeport school’s home economics classroom. Three teams of three to four youth competed for five days. Each day, 4-H teen teachers taught them skills and nutrition lessons, such as knife safety, proper pan preparation skills, how to clean your food properly, types of vitamins we get from different kinds of food, and proper heating temperatures.

The kids were given pantry ingredients to use all five days. Each day, new ingredients were introduced, specific to the dish they were making that day. The five dishes they made were salsa, wraps, dips, salads, and pizza.

Each day the kids had to fill out a recipe card with what they used to make that day and a sheet explaining what food groups they used and the process of cooking their dish. The team presented their dish to the judges and explained what they made and how they made it.

Scores were presented for presentation, teamwork, taste, and cleanliness. A daily winning team was awarded a small prize, such as cutting boards, measuring spoons, or spatulas.

Final prizes were awarded for teamwork, uniqueness, and flavor. The winning team on the final day was awarded a set of three mixing bowls. This was a huge success, and all the kids told us they all wanted to participate again. Parents said they loved the experience and learned a lot.

It’s s’mores time

Have you ever used the sun to bake a s’more or made a tortilla in a bag for a quesadilla? Twenty young Richland County chefs learned the secrets of science behind the food they eat. They learned about solar cooking and using plastic wrap to trap in heat to melt their chocolate and marshmallows for s’mores. They also learned about Illinois crops and products that are raised in Richland County to make tortillas. They smashed and rolled flour, shortening, water, and salt.
4-H Members Learn How to Relax Their Minds

Healthy Living ambassadors Victoria Zwilling and Karlee Piercefield took a morning to teach 4-H members how to use art to relieve stress and relax their minds. Members made Zentangles and Origami Swans and talked about different ways they could apply these skills to their life.

Young Members Learn How to Handle Large Animals

Lawrence County Federation put on a large animal livestock showmanship clinic. Industry leaders from the beef, dairy, swine, sheep, and goat species shared the proper care of animals and showmanship skills. There were live animals for each species in attendance. At the end of the day, livestock care products were awarded to one lucky winner.

Tech Fest Never Disappoints

Wayne County fifth graders participated in the annual Tech Fest in September. All 175 fifth graders from Wayne County schools participated in science technology, engineering, and math activities. Brian Koontz of Elastec Corporation discussed the company’s oil containment booms for cleanup of oil spills. Additional sessions included a boat challenge, marble roller coasters, Eco-Bot challenge, and EV3 robots. The activities helped them develop math skills; learn engineering concepts, Newton’s Laws, and physics; code and program robots; and determine the most effective environmental clean-up solution for a simulated toxic spill.

Pizzas and Pudding

Twenty-five Wabash County youth attended a cooking workshop. They learned the importance of sanitation in the kitchen, how to follow a recipe, how to cook with an oven and stove top, and how to have fun whipping up a new recipe! They made homemade mini pizzas with different toppings; some tried new toppings they didn’t know they liked. They also made “dirt pudding.”
Livestock Judging Team
has successful year
Wabash County 4-H’ers expressed an interest in participating in livestock judging contests. Logan Kennard was instrumental in starting a judging club. This first year, a team of five 4-H’ers, all with little or no knowledge of livestock judging, started with the basics.

They participated in four contests. The Lake Land College contest was a rainy, miserable day, but the team still placed 11th out of 62 teams. The team paced second overall at the Joliet Junior College contest, earning high team in sheep and goats, third in swine, and second in questions. Gage Kennard, received second-high individual overall and placed fifth in sheep and goats, fourth in swine, and second in questions.

The Lincoln Land College contest provided a great learning experience and taught them that just because they placed high at their previous contest, that doesn’t mean they are guaranteed first place at the next. They were determined to put in the work and stay active.

The final contest was at Murray in Kentucky. The team was tasked with giving their first set of reasons. This was a great learning experience for them.

Fall Fun Fest successful!
Wabash County 4-H hosted its annual 4-H Fall Fun Fest during National 4-H week. It was great to see so many of Wabash County 4-H’s and some new faces. We talked about the Wabash County 4-H program and all the different opportunities youth can participate in. The youth got to make caramel apples, enjoy hotdogs, and participate in hands-on activity booths. Members had to use their thinking caps when building their creations.

Summer library program draws a crowd
4-H member and Federation president Sara McGehee brought her alpacas, Apollo and Winston, to the summer library program. She taught the kids about alpaca fiber and felting. She showed various 4-H projects made with the fiber, including a visual arts figurine, a table runner, and a scarf. Cloverbud member Lincoln Murphy (above) enjoyed meeting Apollo and Winston.
4-H members win state awards

Lauren Luker of Edwards County and Victoria Zwilling of Richland County received recognition as state award winners and recipients of a $1,000 scholarship.

Lauren won in the STEM and robotics category. Lauren’s community service work serves as inspiration for her art and actions. Every year, she helps set up a flag display on her community square for important holidays, helping to coordinate the display of hundreds of donated flags. Lauren is currently enrolled in a certified nursing assistant program at Frontier Community College and is a senior at Edwards County High School. After high school, she will work as a nursing assistant while attending Purdue University to receive her bachelor’s in nursing. She would like to work in the emergency room or in the intensive care unit before returning to school to earn her master’s degree to become a nurse practitioner.

Victoria’s award was in the area of healthy living and nutrition. As vice president of her local 4-H club, Victoria helped organize many club activities, including food drives and an adopt-a-family service project. She participated in the National 4-H Healthy Living Summit and is part of the Illinois 4-H Healthy Living Ambassadors Team. She created and presented programs to promote healthy living to elementary and middle school children. Victoria is interested in environmental science and ecology.

“4-H is a community that works together to help each individual cultivate their interests in order to serve their community and prepare for their career,” says Victoria. “It inspires kids to use their talents to serve others.”
Edwards County 4-H’ers advocate for food access

Illinois 4-H is investing in the next generation of leaders to promote food security in their communities.

The Blue Ribbon, Yankees, and the Bone Gap Cardinals 4-H clubs are hoping to create positive change in their community. Each clubs received $1,000 from the Illinois 4-H Food Advocacy Grant, funded by the Illinois 4-H Foundation, the Brandt Foundation, and Compeer Financial.

The Yankees 4-H Club created the Lunch Buddies project in West Salem. The Yankees are led by Derra Williams and Jordan McWhirter.

The Blue Ribbon 4-H Club distributed food at the Albion WADI food pantry. Debbie and Neil Fearn and Haley and Drake Kelsey lead the Blue Ribbon Club.

The Bone Gap Cardinals will use the funding for their Zion Food Pantry project in West Salem. Matthew Bare applied for the grant on behalf of the club. Norma Hamilton is the club’s leader.

Matt Bare: A personal reflection

In my time as a 4-H member, I have taken many projects, participated in many events and received some awards along the way. I have held a few offices in my 4-H club and volunteered in my community.

I have learned and grown with each project that I have taken. Some of those projects have been poultry, woodworking, sportfishing, rabbits, and cooking. My favorite project is poultry. I enjoy seeing the different breeds of chickens with all of their unique coloring and fluffiness. I also like that we get eggs to eat from them.

Events are the highlight of 4-H. Whether it is shooting sports on Saturday mornings or the week of fair, events are what make being in 4-H fun.

I have participated in all different kinds of events with 4-H. AGventure is always fun. We teach younger kids about our animal we are taking to the fair. The 4-H Olympics was a blast; I drank a glass of milk in 3 seconds! The speech contest was not my favorite, but it’s an experience that all kids should do. State Fair, on the other hand, is awesome and something that all 4-H’ers should experience at some point in their 4-H career.

I am currently serving my second year as the president of the Bone Gap Cardinals. Being president is something I enjoy, but also take very seriously. It’s a good feeling to know that I am leading the younger kids in our club and setting a good example for them. Our club is good at helping our community. We put on an Easter egg hunt, Santa visit, and Halloween costume contest for the kids in our community. I’ve also been involved in community services, such as helping the local fire departments’ fundraising meals and cleaning up parks and the train depot.

Outside of 4-H, I enjoy archery, running the Facebook camera at church, fishing, Parkour games, leatherworking, “Bongoball” at youth group, woodworking, and taking care of my chickens, ducks and turkeys. Wait, that’s a lot of the things I do for 4-H! I guess I live 4-H all of the time. I hope everyone that reads this agrees that 4-H is awesome or is even inspired to join 4-H!
SEVENTH GRADERS EATFIT!
Jeff Baker, physical education teacher at Cisne Middle School, worked with Illinois Extension nutrition community worker Jane Jones to offer a nutrition and physical education program to the school’s seventh grade students. The EatFit curriculum teaches junior high students the value of setting and meeting food and fitness goals. This program focuses on learning to take ownership of individual choices. Students build confidence in their decisionmaking as they attain minor goals that develop into major goals. The students learn the value of setting and attaining goals they carry into adulthood. The EatFit curriculum sets a foundation toward developing positive, lifelong nutrition and fitness habits.

GRAYSN TRIES NEW FOODS
Graysn attended Illinois Junior Chef Cooking school for the first time in June of 2022. The first day, she was hesitant to participate or try the foods that were prepared in class; however, as the week progressed, she was open to trying new things and realized healthy food can taste good, too. Graysn really enjoyed learning new cooking techniques and was excited about the new kitchen utensils she received at the cooking school. She has found some new recipes for foods she already likes to eat that are a healthier version and provides more ingredient variety.

Graysn is not a food experimenter, and this class helped her a lot to try new things.
Graysn’s Mom

ORGAN WISE GUY, HARDY HEART IS A BIG HIT WITH KINDERGARTNERS
Organ Wise Guys lessons discuss organs of the body. Several of the kindergartners were able to tell facts about the heart:
• It is a muscle
• It’s as big as your fist
• It pumps blood throughout your body
• It is in the middle of your chest.
Although the real thing does not look like Hardy Heart, they wish it did!

KIDS REALIZE EATING PROTEIN HELPS YOU BUILD MUSCLES AND RUN FAST
Third graders designed healthy food posters as part of their My Plate lesson. One of the boys said he was drawing food with protein. He said he ate a lot of protein because it was good for his muscles and helped him run fast. This group made several fruits and vegetables, too, because they have vitamins good for your body and keep you healthy.
COMMUNITY MEMBERS LEARN TO MAKE THE MOST OF THEIR PANTRIES WITH HEALTHY CENTS CLASSES
Fairfield's Feed My Sheep Soup Kitchen coordinator Lois Dishman Cooper and University of Illinois Extension community worker Jane Jones offered nutrition education to community members. Those participating in the program studied multiple facets of food management, including the five food groups and how to make healthier choices with their eating. Members explored meal planning, food needs and wants, food budgeting, and other food management skills. Illinois Extension offered eight Healthy Cents classes focused on how to make healthy choices on a limited food budget. This program provides consumers with practical tips to managing our food resources.

IMPORTANCE OF KNIFE SAFETY
During Illinois Junior Chef Cooking School, Extension community workers taught about different types of kitchen knives, knife safety, and cutting techniques. For example, when cutting, one should cut away from themselves. On knife safety day, students also learned about fruit and made apple crisp. While students worked with volunteers, one student noticed an adult volunteer cutting their apple core toward themselves instead of the proper way and stopped the volunteer. It was an excellent learning opportunity and demonstrated that students were paying close attention and learning all the proper techniques.

FAMILIES LEARN ABOUT IMPORTANCE OF EATING VEGGIES
This brother and sister team enjoyed the EATPLAYGROW class about vegetables. Kirby Hunt, SNAP-Ed community worker, taught this class at the Olney Public Library where kids learned why it’s important to eat lots of different vegetables. They had a fun-filled hour, creating an art project, doing exercises, listening to a story, and eating a yummy, healthy snack.

WEST SALEM GRADE SCHOOL INCORPORATES SNAP EDUCATION PROGRAMS
West Salem Grade School partners with Illinois Extension on nutrition education programs for students. Students in kindergarten through second grade learn the function of body organs and how to keep these valuable organs healthy through the Organ Wise Guys curriculum. Third through fifth grade classes are learning about serving sizes and healthy foods using the Serving Up My Plate curriculum. Interactive hands-on activities build off the My Plate concepts to make this a fun way for students to learn healthy eating habits and choices. The nutrition education materials are taught monthly to students throughout the school year.
Illinois Extension, in partnership with the Richland County Homemakers Education Association, hosted a four-part estate planning series in Richland County. “Preparing for End-of-Life Issues” included local experts who discussed hospice care, funeral preparation, investments, vehicle titles, identity protection, legal documents, insurance, banking, and taxes. The series was well attended each week, with those in attendance learning about things they need to be doing or updating so their loved ones are not left with a lot to deal with after they are gone.

About a year ago after my husband death, I was dealing with a lot of issues. My husband thought he had everything done if one of us left this earth, but that was not the case! I found out a lot of things that I did not know and understand that was needed to be done. Our HEA Board contacted the Extension office and asked for assistance putting together this seminar series so others don’t go through the struggles I did. Our meetings were well attended, and a lot of great information was shared. This seminar series was really a great program, and other counties have asked about it. We appreciate Illinois Extension putting this together and helping those in our communities.

Pat Foust, Richland County HEA board member

The “Planning for End of Life Issues” series of seminars was outstanding. The speakers were knowledgeable and very willing to answer questions. There are so many things to consider as I get older, including gathering all my financial, medical, and insurance information together in one place for my heirs and possible caregivers, writing down all my passwords, and updating my will and funeral wishes.

The presentation by the representative from the Secretary of State’s office brought up a host of questions one never thinks about, including vehicle titles and gun ownership by a surviving spouse. I’m a member of the Richland County HEA board that worked with county director Tara Buerster to plan these local seminars. We had a lot of positive feedback from attendees, plus comments from members of the community who couldn’t attend, that they would like to see us repeat the seminars.

Janet Jones, RCHEA Board member
MEET LOGAN KENNARD, WABASH COUNTY 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT EXTENSION PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Logan Kennard is the 4-H Extension program coordinator for Wabash County. He has a bachelor’s degree in agriculture education, with a minor in animal science from Southern Illinois University. Logan has a long history in agriculture, growing up on a row crop farm and showing livestock. He was a very active 4-H and FFA member.

Logan was a public school eighth grade science and high school agriculture teacher. He now resides in Mount Carmel where, in his free time, he raises Dorper sheep and coaches youth with their livestock projects.

Logan says he is excited to work with the community to continue to grow an already strong 4-H program and use his expertise in education and agriculture to further develop local youth.

MEET MAISIE MCCLURE: LAWRENCE COUNTY 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT EXTENSION PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Maisie McClure is the 4-H program coordinator for Extension in Lawrence County. She has a bachelor’s degree in animal science from Western Illinois University. McClure comes from an extensive agriculture background, specifically the livestock industry. She grew up showing pigs and cattle on the county, state, and national level. She was a member of 4-H her entire show career and enjoyed exhibiting livestock and general projects.

McClure resides in Billett with her husband, Eric, where they own and operate Four Corners Farms, an operation that raises elite show heifers. McClure has a passion for working with the youth who purchase these cattle and helps educate them on all aspects of the operation, from showmanship to everyday feeding and care. Her other hobbies include owning and operating an online clothing boutique, baking, and spending as much time as possible with her friends and family. McClure is extremely excited to work with the youth in the community and hopes to bring a fresh perspective and new programs for youth.

MEET RYAN LITTLEJOHN: WAYNE COUNTY 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT EXTENSION PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Ryan has worked for Illinois Extension for one year and initiated a lot of new and exciting things for Richland County 4-H. He transferred to Wayne County 4-H. He is a third-generation 4-H member and Kansas 4-H alumni. He has an extensive background in agriculture and working with volunteers. Born and raised in Kansas, Ryan was an active member of Harvey County 4-H, working with large animal livestock, general projects, and leadership. He was involved in local and state 4-H programs.

Ryan has served as a project leader, superintendent, fair board member, and livestock judging team coach. He lives in Olney with his wife, Hallie, who is a native of Wayne County. Together they help run Anderson Farms with Hallie’s family. Ryan and Hallie met at Kansas State University while studying animal science and have been heavily involved in Kansas and Illinois 4-H. Ryan says he is ecstatic to work with youth and volunteers in Wayne County where he hopes to bring new ideas and programming to the county.
Cover photo: Dane, Oakley, and Kwade Sawyer participated in the Green Tree Program and helped plant trees at the Albion K-12 school in Edwards County.