

Winter2023



# Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



## 03. Plant the Moon

4-H members research and experiment to study the feasibility of astronauts growing food on the moon.

## 05. Mindful Mondays

Social Media feature gains traction while sharing financial education with online followers.

## 06. 4-H Team Welcomes New Educator

Amber Heern brings a background of classroom experience and program planning to the youth team.

# Winter2023

Dear Community,

Last year in this report, I described the upcoming spring season for us at Extension as one of renewal and growth. With another spring season upon us, it's exciting to see how that mindset and approach lead us to a refreshed place for greater impact today.

At Illinois Extension, we provide unbiased, research-based solutions to the challenges our community faces. Given the findings in our recent Community Needs Assessment (CNA), we have shifted our laser focus from fighting food insecurity to enhancing financial literacy. This resounding need surfaced through the CNA.

As we continue to address food insecurity and other critical needs in our community, our efforts will be developed and administered through a financial literacy lens. In this issue, you'll see how we've started to prioritize financial education through Mindful Mondays, which has been one of the most engaging campaigns we've seen through our Facebook channel.

As we plan the rest of the year, we want to hear from you; reach out, and let's align on how we'll work together to build prosperity, ignite economic development, nurture health, and safeguard our natural resources.

*Jordee Koehler*

County Extension Director

## our leadership



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## SNAP-ed tackles real world issues

*A client came to an Eat.Move.Save booth at a local food pantry. They had been to the doctor recently and were told to cut out processed grains and replace them with whole grains. They were at a loss on how to know the difference between the two. Our local community outreach worker showed her how to read the food label. They talked about all the different kinds of grain products and how to read the ingredient list. This client was happy to be empowered to make better choices for her health.*



The first 4-H project show of 2023 kicks off on March 21 at Kaskaskia College. The KC Communications department is hosting the 4-H Public Speaking contest for Bond, Clinton, Jefferson, Marion and Washington counties. Judges will select State delegates and alternates for each county from the pool of participants. The State 4-H Public Speaking contest is on April 22 at Parkland Community College.



## LOCAL YOUTH EXPLORE FARMING WITH LUNAR SOIL

Youth in Marion and Jefferson counties have an exciting opportunity this Spring to experiment with lunar and Martian regolith in the Plant the Moon Challenge (PTMC). The program is part of NASA's Artemis program. It encourages youth to do research which will help astronauts grow food on the moon.

Program participants use the scientific method and design process (research, design, plant & monitor, analyze and present) through mid-April to complete various tasks

related to the project. They are currently in the Plant & Monitor phase. They have designed the experiments and planted their crops. Over the next eight weeks they will track the growth and analyze the data to complete a report on their findings.

PTMC is supported by a grant from the IL Space Grant Consortium and is facilitated locally by a partnership between 4-H and Horticulture staff. Follow along with the progress on YouTube at Illinois Extension BCJMW.

## Tree Fruit & Vegetable School

### Reaches growers across multiple states

Commercial fruit and vegetable growers face many uncertainties. The 2023 Southern Illinois Fruit and Vegetable School in Mt. Vernon on February 8 featured four tracks to address vegetable, small fruit, tree fruit, and flower production. The day provided informative, practical, and up-to-date research-based information to address the challenges of growing fruit and vegetables commercially in Southern Illinois.

In between sessions, growers had the opportunity to visit with leading industry experts and vendors. The event drew 125 attendees, with 39 participants in the flower track that was spearheaded by Horticulture Educator Christina Lueking.

Tree fruit and vegetable school is an annual program that draws growers from all over Illinois and Missouri. Starting in 2024 local Extension staff will be taking the lead on this project.



### Cut Flower Featured Speakers

Taylor Sievers, Christina Lueking, and Carrie Koester focused on cut flower production and management.

## Connect with us on Social Media

Are you on social media?  
We are! Let's connect.



/bcjmwu23



@UofIExtBCJMW



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## New Year-New Workshops

### 4-H members find their spark

Many people are familiar with the sights of a 4-H Show, but there are a wide range of 4-H activities happening year round. Winter is

a fantastic time for youth to explore projects through workshops. One of our recent workshops pulled together members from all five coun-



**Mindful Monday**

Growing your Financial Knowledge

**I** Contact 618-526-4551 with questions

**Illinois Extension**

## feature

### Mindful Mondays

A new 'Mindful Mondays' social media spotlight has gained traction over the winter. Educator Jamie Mahlant writes posts on timely finance topics that are featured every Monday on our social media accounts. Interest in the posts is driving the decision on topics for related fact sheets and future blog posts. They are providing valuable insight into the needs of our community members, and have helped increase overall traffic and engagement on our pages.

>> *continued from page 4*

ties came together at Kaskaskia College for Theatre Arts, Communication and Public Speaking. The workshop was led by Theatre Professor Kevin McCarty and Speech Professor Brandi Wilkins, with help from theatre student

Alyssa Lurkins (Clinton Co 4-H alumni). 4-H members participated in activities to increase confidence and understanding of both verbal and non-verbal communication skills.



## shout outs

### Thank You Kaskaskia College

for hosting the Theatre Arts and Communication 4-H workshop along with hosting and judging the 4-H Public Speaking Competition.

### Thank You 4-H Animal Science

**Volunteers** for your cooperation and hard work at 4-H beef weigh-in days.

### Thank You Clinton County Farm

**Bureau** for your partnership with the Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists to support pollinator and garden plots at local schools.

# Staff Update

## Welcome New Staff!

The new year started with a new staff member joining the 4-H team. Amber Heern, Youth Development Educator, has hit the ground running. Amber is based in the Washington County Office and will primarily serve as 4-H program support for Bond, Clinton and Washington counties. Amber comes to us with a background in elementary education. She has years of experience both in the classroom and coordinating after-school programs. Amber has a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education, along with a master's degree as a reading specialist. In 2020 she obtained her National Board Certification. Amber is passionate about helping others, and is excited to have the opportunity to impact lives in our communities.



Amber Heern,  
Youth Development Educator

## Current Openings.

We are seeking a full time Agriculture and Natural Resources Program Coordinator based in the Salem office. This position will support and assist in the management of Master Gardener volunteer programs and other horticulture related programs for adults and youth. This posting will close on April 7 and can be found online at [go.illinois.edu/JobOpenings](http://go.illinois.edu/JobOpenings).

## 4-H Horse Judging

Three 4-H members from Bond and Marion counties attended the State 4-H Horse Judging Competition at Black Hawk College-East Campus on Saturday February 18.

All three participants finished in the top ten out of more than 45 participants. Avery Hunter (Bond Co) placed 6th, Kylee Hutchinson (Marion Co) was 8th and Kristi Moody (Marion Co) was 10th.

Later this month several horse project participants will travel to Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIUC) to compete in the regional horse bowl and hippology competitions. The regional competition at SIUC is a qualifier for the State contests in April at University of Illinois.



## Livestock in Paradise Jr. Livestock Conference

Seven local 4-H members (five Marion Co and two Clinton Co) gained hands-on experience in the livestock field at this year's Illinois 4-H Junior Livestock Conference held Jan. 21-22 at the Decatur Hotel & Conference Center.

This year's conference theme was "Livestock in Paradise." The event focused on education, but also created great opportunities to build camaraderie and a sense of teamwork around a shared passion for the livestock industry.



## at a glance here's what's next

### March

- 16** Master Gardener Training
- 21** Master Gardener Training
- 21** Private Pesticide Testing, Breese
- 21** 4-H Public Speaking, Kaskaskia College
- 23** Master Gardener Training
- 25** Regional 4-H Horse Bowl & Hippology
- 28** Master Gardener Training
- 30** Master Gardener Training

### April

- 1** State 4-H Awards Banquet
- 4** Master Gardener Training
- 6** Master Gardener Training
- 11** Master Gardener Training
- 11** 4-H Leadership Workshop, Kaskaskia College
- 17** Volunteer Appreciation Carry-Out Dinner
- 18** Master Gardener Training
- 20** Master Gardener Training
- 21** 4-H Passport Party, Centralia
- 22** State 4-H Public Speaking Contest
- 29** Master Gardener Graduation

### May

- 13** 4-H Showmanship Clinic
- 13** 4-H State Robotics Competition
- 17** Advisory Council Meeting, Salem
- 29** Memorial Day, Offices Closed

### See our full calendar online

Find details on these programs, plus new events being added and online opportunities at [extension.illinois.edu/bcjmw/events](https://extension.illinois.edu/bcjmw/events).

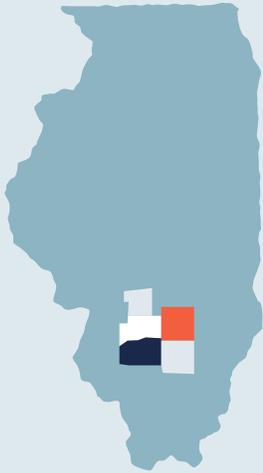
You can also call 618-327-8881 for information or registration.

# BUSINESS HOURS

Monday through Friday  
8 AM - 12 PM & 1 - 4:30 PM



**Illinois Extension**  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



**Bond.  
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## Find us online.



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