

# EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit

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Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

## Project spotlight videos created to educate and engage with Master Volunteer projects in the community

It is easy for University of Illinois Extension staff to see the amazing work Extension Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists do in and for the community. It is not always common knowledge for the public to know about all of the projects. Thanks to the work of two interns, 20 Extension Master Volunteer Project Spotlight videos were created this year and are helping to share impact of the volunteer work to a broader audience. These 3-minute videos have been viewed over 5,300 times in 2023.

“The idea for the spotlight videos came from the initial work the interns did conducting Annual Project Reviews,” explained Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle, horticulture educator. “They interviewed the volunteers and documented details about their individual projects, how they were progressing, and best ways staff could support them. Their work is so impressive we wanted to tell everyone about it.”

Videos highlight the work done by Extension Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists in local communities. Through the videos, a wider audience can see the passion volunteers have for their projects, increasing the impact.

Extension Horticulture Program Coordinator Tara Heath says, “The project spotlight videos not only spread the word about the impact of the projects, they highlight the diversity of projects in our unit. The volunteers work on everything from grant writing to prairie installations to food donation gardens and more.”

The two interns instrumental in getting the videos created and shared were Ellie Bourwieg and Maria Gottemoller. These two young ladies stepped into their intern roles with a strong work ethic and excitement for learning. They caught the excitement the Master Volunteers have and were able to leverage it to create informative and engaging videos.

The videos are found on the University of Illinois Fulton, Mason, Peoria, Tazewell YouTube Channel, the U of I ILRiverHort Facebook page and on Instagram.

Plans for the future include creating more Project Spotlight Videos including Conservation@Home members, more Master Volunteer Projects and Master Gardener State Award Winners. A research project about the impact of volunteers on communities and reasons people volunteer is also planned.



Photo by Anita Wilkinson | Illinois Extension

*The native pollinator garden at Morton Public Library was one of 20 selected to launch the Project Spotlight Video series. The video series is an effort to educate a broader audience about the projects led by Extension Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists in our communities.*

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