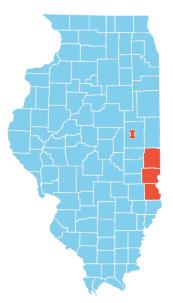
EXTENSION IN ACTIONO

ILLINOIS EXTENSION 2023





Stacy Woodyard County Director



As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with a sense of pride and gratitude for the incredible service that we have been able to provide to our community. It has been a year filled with dedication, hard work, and a shared commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of those we serve.

Throughout the year, we have had the opportunity to embark on various projects and initiatives that have allowed us to address important issues, meet critical needs, and make a lasting impact. From providing essential resources to those in need, to organizing new spark initiatives that promote unity and inclusivity, every service we have performed has been guided by our unwavering dedication to serving others.

We have witnessed firsthand the power of coming together as a community to create positive change. It is through the collective efforts of our staff, volunteers, donors, and supporters that we have been able to achieve our goals and make a difference in the lives of so many. As we look towards the future, we are excited to continue our work and build upon the successes of the past year. Together, we can continue to make a meaningful impact, support those in need, and create a stronger, more resilient community for all.

We are immensely grateful for the opportunity to serve and for the incredible support that we have received from our community. Your dedication, generosity, and commitment have been instrumental in our success, and we could not have achieved all that we have without you.

Thank you for standing with us, believing in our mission, and supporting our efforts to create positive change. We look forward to continuing this journey together and making an even greater impact in the year ahead.

Stacy Woodyard County Extension Director

Cover photo: Mary Liz Wright, Nutrition and Wellness Educator, helping a student crack an egg during a Cooking 101 class.

This page is reserved for statewide Grand Challenge statistics and information

Copy 1-2 of these Grand Challenge arrows that are most relevant to your story and paste them in the margins like in the examples.



Community Economy Environment Food Health

Savannah Caruth, Reserve Grand Champion Junior Showman for Rabbits

CALL FAIR 2022

USC 707

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Oblong Children's Christian Home

The Oblong Children's Christian home is a home offering a safe place for healing and treatment for boys and girls suffering from previous emotional trauma. The home is open to youth 5-16 years old. It provides them with a stable environment in a family style group home. The Children's Home first opened in the 1960s when David and Myrtle Deatherage donated their home and 60 acres to area churches in Crawford County. The initial idea was to create a Christian service camp for the area. After identifying the area had several camps, the churches came together and considered the needs that existed. From this conversation, they realized there was no place for troubled or abused children to go.

The goal of the Oblong Children's Christian home is to reunite children with their families. The length of stay for each child living there is how long it takes the child and their families to achieve the goals that were set when arriving at the facility. The home also works with parents and other siblings on teaching parenting skills and providing counseling.



Savannah Caruth, Dakota Caruth, Isabella Smith, and Jamie Blankenship participating in fairground clean up.

The first tri-level home was built in 1974 and since then, the Children's home has built several other homes for the children, as well as an indoor horse-riding facility and a new school building for their school, New Life Academy. In 2023, the home held its first horse show at the indoor riding facility. The youth invited the community to attend where they could showcase the many things they learned while participating in 4-H, riding, and horse therapy offered at the home.



Sahaj Dhillon, Marieyah Rollins, Jamie Blankenship, and Phillip White exhibited their rabbits at the fair.

2023 was also the year 4-H became a part of their community. After many years of trying to form a club with the Oblong Christian Children's Home, Crawford County 4-H is now a part of their community. After making a connection with former 4-H member Brady Hall, who is currently an administrator at the home, Crawford County 4-H Program Coordinator April was able to show the administrators, house parents, and youth what all 4-H has to offer. At this time, we have reached 14 youth from the Oblong Children's Christian Home. We hope to keep expanding that number. All 14 youth chose at least 1 project and all 14 youth exhibited at the Crawford County 4-H shows. The excitement these youth have is outstanding! They are excited to be a part of something bigger - something that gives them opportunities to try new things, meet new people, and most importantly gives them the chance to be who they are with the confidence to reach for their goals. This is more than we could have ever hoped for when we walked in the door on the very first day. It is our goal to keep expanding their presence in the 4-H program and get them more involved in local, unit, and state events.

Alex Lopes was a standout at the Crawford County Fair this year! He was able to take his Crops Innovation project to the Illinois State Fair where he was named Grand Champion in his division. Lexi and Dakota Caruth were both successful during the 4-H Rabbit Show at the Crawford County Fair this year in their showmanship classes. The members are becoming more confident with their horse projects and we hope that they exhibit at the Crawford County 4-H Shows in 2024.



Callen Robinson, getting ready for the first annual horse show.



Learn more at go.illinois.edu/cce

New Sparks for 4-H: Building a fiery passion in our youth

Ready. Set. GO! Just like that we took off. Creating new experiences and opportunities for our 4-H members. 4-H uses the term sparks when talking about an interest or passion of youth. Why? Because that spark can ignite into a lifelong learning and even career. We want youth to explore more SPARKS.

Clark County

Clark County 4-H members participated in their 1st Annual Master Showmanship Contest. While this contest isn't new for other counties, this was the first year teenage 4-H members were able to participate in the challenge. Four showman took up the challenge representing the Grand Champion Senior Showman livestock areas: Dalanee Smith, Senior Goat Showman; Lilie Perry, Senior Beef Showman; Ryland Baird, Senior Swine Showman; and Haylee Higgins, Senior Sheep Showman. These youth performed their best, and ultimately Lilie Perry was named Master Showman. She represented Clark County at the Illinois Master Showmanship Contest during the Illinois State Fair in August 2023. This showing opportunity offers our members a way to elevate themselves in their passions.



Lilie Perry, Master Showman, 2023, showing off her belt buckle donated by Clark County Farm Bureau.

Crawford County

Crawford County embarked on a new adventure with Rabbits and Nature! Starting two Special Interest (SPIN) Clubs. SPIN Clubs are dedicated to a specific project area. In this instance, we had two different volunteers who wanted to give our youth the chance at a deeper exploration of their sparks. The Rabbits SPIN Club meets once a month to help members better understand showing their rabbit, supporting all of the rabbits needs, and more. The Nature SPIN meets at the local Sportsman Club to learn more about our environment. Their first lesson they dived into soil. SPIN Clubs are a great way for youth to explore deeper understanding of what they love.



Edgar County

If you were in 4-H as a youth, odds are you experienced record books or some type of recording of your animal project. Times had shifted and communities evolve and Edgar County 4-H was not immune. Prior to 2023, records and awards had not been a part of the program. When Brittany Smith was hired, she wanted to bring this tradition back. Record keeping is a great life skill to have and can assist later in life when you are doing taxes or completing scholarship applications. There was a great response from the youth with several submitting records for the first time!





Unit Wide

At a Unit level – all three counties – we started a new challenge that caters to those with a culinary spark! We had over ten teams across the three counties compete in our first 4-H Food Challenge. This challenge requires teams of youth to create dishes from secret ingredients. No recipes, no assistance. Just pure imagination. Winners from each county competed at the Unit level competition against one another for the grand prize. Each winner received a kitchen appliance. Something that would help them along on their culinary journey.

State Wide

At a state level, our new spark was robotics. We had multiple teams from our counties go to Bloomington to compete in the Illinois 4-H State Robotics competition. The teams worked hard for many weeks leading up to the challenge to meet the criteria for the themed competition: Hydrobot. Some of the challenges included building a bridge and driving their hyrdobot around kelp. The challenge was dedicated to the work that conservationists and oceanographers do to help conserve and clean our oceans. While the teams did not place, they did learn a lot about programming robots. Continuing to build sparks!

You can see 4-H is constantly creating and offering new opportunities and sparks for our members. This gives them the chance to learn and grow.

Jaylynn Schober

Nation Wide

Nationally, we had a youth from Clark County, Gabe Cervantes, attend IGNITE, a National Youth Summit. The National Youth Summit Series is an immersive experience where youth dive into the issues, expand their career horizons and grow as a leader while working with and learning from other teens and experts with shared passions. Agriculture, STEM, and Healthy Living tracks converged at this Super Summit held in Washington DC. Gabe went in the STEM track. He brought back new ideas and experiences he was able to share with his club and county.

All aboard! Teenage 4-H Youth Field Trip

It is a fact that 4-H loses youth as they get older. With jobs and sports to compete with, it can affect enrollments. Our unit wanted to address the issue, and we did through a teen-only field trip. Members from Clark, Crawford, and Edgar counties took a bus to Holiday World. On the way down, they listened to youth from the State leadership Team talk about state 4-H opportunities and leadership groups. Highlighting beyond unit experiences for our youth and ways they can get involved. Once at Holiday World, they had the opportunity to talk to staff about careers in the theme park industry. It was a day balancing learning with fun. A perfect combination intended to help find new sparks and create more opportunities for our teenage members.

Canning with Confidence

Home food preservation has seen a revival in popularity and Illinois Extension is at the forefront providing information on the most up to date, safe methods to consumers. The Nutrition and Wellness educator team has found that consumers respond well to a digital format. In response to several inquiries, the team created a series of short webinars that featured two new preservation methods (steam and electric boiling water bath canners), as well as the traditional pressure canner. The team worked with the Communications Team to create the "lunch and learn" style webinars, Canning with Confidence, paired with short step by step videos. These webinars received the Illinois Extension Interdisciplinary State Team Award for 2023.

In addition to the webinars, What's Cooking with Mary Liz Wright, home food preservation videos continue to be a welcome resource to our stakeholders with over 125,000 views.

Wright keeps abreast of current science and most up to date methods of food presentation by attending professional development opportunities offered by the National Center for Home Food Preservation.

While digital information is very popular and an essential means of education, Wright continues to offer hands-on food preservation workshops, in 9 counties in 2023. She encourages families to use these workshops as a training for 4-H projects and/or an intergenerational experience.



Mary Liz Wright, Nutrition and Wellness Educator, helps participants in a jam making workshop.

Farm Bureau RFD Radio

Wright has become a regular guest on RFD Today radio with host DeLoss Janke and has also been featured in the weekly publication Farm Week. She offers food safety, budgeting, and cooking tips, and information about Cottage Foods to listeners throughout the state of Illinois.

So, You Want to Sell Your Spaghetti Sauce?

The Illinois Cottage Food Operation Law allows local farmers and food entrepreneurs to prepare food in their home kitchen to sell at Illinois farmers markets, fairs, festivals, their home, and through online sales. It is vital that cottage food operators know how to prepare their products in the safest manner, decreasing the risk of foodborne illness.

Nutrition and Wellness educators, Jenna Smith and Mary Liz Wright, worked with Illinois Extension's Online Learning manager to create the online Cottage Food Operator Training course. This course is designed to help cottage food operators follow food safety guidelines and understand the requirements of the law, which are complex. Illinois Extension believes that encouraging certification of cottage food vendors through an online course will make great strides towards a safer product. By offering this course online, Illinois Extension can reach people "where they are" and improve the health and safety of the operators and their customers. The course received the Illinois Extension 2023 Technology Excellence Award.

Wright and Smith are the state specialists in the Cottage Food arena, the go-to resource for all things Cottage Food. She is deeply involved in the evolution of Cottage Food in Illinois and serves on the Illinois Farmers Market Association board, the Illinois Farmers Market Safety Guide and Cottage Food Guide state committees. Wright has spoken at the Illinois State Master Gardner conference, the Farm Bureau/Illinois Farmers Market Association Food to Flowers conference, Farmers Market Vendor Webinar Series as well as other regional and local meetings both in person and virtually.

Questions from across the state are directed to Wright and her partner and multiple times each week she finds herself speaking with enthusiastic entrepreneurs!

Clark County Farmers Market

The Clark County Farmers Market entered its second year in 2023. Wright has been involved in the market since its inception and was asked to serve on a committee to plan the First Annual Farm to Table Dinner. Wright, as a food safety and Cottage Food expert, was the perfect choice for this committee. Planning and executing this large event was a welcome challenge that proved to be a great success! The menu for the dinner featured local products offered at the weekly Farmers Market. Wright and committee prepared the food in several courses and served them to patrons who enjoyed the evening immensely! The event was so successful that Wright and committee have been asked to speak at the 2024 Farm Bureau/Illinois Farmers Market Association Food to Flowers conference in January 2024.

Teaching Lifelong Healthy Habits

Illinois Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (IL SNAP-Ed) provides community-based nutrition education for individuals and families. It works within communities to prevent obesity and reduce the risk of chronic disease by making nutritious foods and by active living. This program is known as Eat. Move. Save. and is delivered by University of Illinois Extension. Results show that IL SNAP-Ed encourages steps toward health and wellness among Illinois residents.

The SNAP-Ed program plays a critical role in helping people (who are eligible for SNAP benefits) lead healthier lives on a limited budget. SNAP-Ed teaches people how to make their SNAP dollars stretch, shop for and cook healthy meals, and stay physically active. Initiatives include direct nutrition education in communities across the state.

The SNAP-Ed program continues to make a positive impact throughout Illinois by providing nutrition education.

The most important things adults learned:

- · Watched their health and cooked more healthily
- Ate less fat that is unhealthy, after learning about saturated fats
- Ate more fruits and vegetables
- Engage in more physical activity

Meanwhile, SNAP-Ed efforts in schools teach children the importance of fitness and keeping their bodies healthy.

The program provides children and low-income people access to food, a healthy diet and nutrition education in a manner that supports American agriculture and inspires public confidence.



Hope Dennis, SNAP-Ed Community Worker, introduces students to her partner, Bob, from the Organise Guys program.





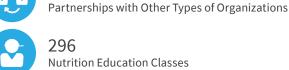




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5 Partnerships with K-12 Schools

Partnerships with Emergency Food Sites



296

Nutrition Education Classes

621 Nutrition Education Participants



Teen Teachers/Cooking 101-Palestine

Palestine High School Foods 1 & 2 students "measured up" to the challenge! Youth Educator Jaylynn Schober and Crawford 4-H Coordinator April Knoblett paired up with Foods teacher Mrs. Holly Inboden at Palestine High School for a new adventure exploring Teens as Teachers. The classes participated in a training engaging them in how to act, think, and prepare like a teacher. Once they had their training, they put it into practice! There were three sessions held - one for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades. In their sessions, youth learned basic cooking skills such as measuring, cutting, and cooking as well as their food groups. The goal of these sessions was to help youth feel more empowered and knowledgeable when cooking in a kitchen with the hopes they prepare nutritious meals for their families. Everyone went home with a chef's hat, recipe booklet, and 4-H potholder to start them on their own culinary journey. We cannot wait to see what other adventures these 4-H Teen Teachers provide!



for youth felt more confident in the ability to cook in the kitchen

Cooking 101-Paris



How often do your youth cook when at home? Once a week?

Once a month? Do they cook at all? Illinois Extension partnered

with the Paris Carnegie Library to help increase the number of youths in kitchens. Youth enrolled in the Cooking 101 series

attended four sessions where they learned how to cook four

meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks. Nutrition and

Wellness Educator Mary Liz Wright and Youth Development

Educator Jaylynn Schober taught the youth cooking basics, tips

and tricks for healthier meals, and the influence cultures have on the food we eat all while helping youth's confidence grow in

their culinary abilities. Highlights included the avocado toast

and create healthier meals for themselves and their families.

for breakfast and the tortilla hand pies. After the four sessions,

GEM: Get Experience in Mindfullness Marshall Sophomore iGrow Workshop

Merriam-Webster defines mindfulness as a practice of maintaining a nonjudgmental state of heightened awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, or experiences in the present. Mindfulness is the basis of the GEM: Get Experience in Mindfulness program. Marshall High Sophomores learned about being mindful in the iGrow workshop. There was a 53% increase in students understanding what mindfulness is and how it relates to our health and wellness. Each session focused on incorporating a new way to be mindful and a calm down technique to help them center themselves. Because of this, there was a 47% increase in students' ability to identify specific areas of their personal health and wellness that need improvement. Mental health and wellness are a growing topic today, especially in how it relates to our younger generations. Through the GEM program, sophomores continued the journey of self-discovery and self-regulation to help them be healthier, happier individuals.



After the Get Experience in Mindfulness Program. Marshall sophomores engaged with a panel of local supporters who have specialties in mindfulness and mental health.



During the communication and relationships session, students worked in groups of three to spell out listen with a series of challenges that pushed the youth to be creative.



Marshall 8th graders picked out entertainment costs at the Welcome to the Real World simulation.

Welcome to the Real World

Your grandparents sent you \$100 for your birthday. You have a flat tire. Pay \$25 to have the hole patched. Both are Chance cards in the Welcome to the Real World program. This Illinois Extension created program delivers firsthand financial literacy experience in an impactful way. Casey, Marshall, and Martinsville 8th graders explored their future careers and how they fit into their current lifestyle. Students began by choosing a career, and then incurred all expenses for a month: housing, transportation, insurance, taxes, food, utilities and more. This simulation of real life helps youth understand the importance of setting goals, planning for your future, and understanding finances that lead to making fiscally responsible decisions. Eighty-six percent of students who participated found the activity useful. One student said, "I will watch what I spend my money on more closely." Another said, "I have more respect for my parents who deal with it now." This eye-opening experience helps youth understand the role finances play in our future. Only 68% of students had enough money to meet their expenses. The largest surprise for the students was how much each expense was. They did not expect to pay such staggering prices for things like housing and cars. Amongst things learned, opening a savings account was the biggest skill learned with balancing income and expenses close behind. One volunteer said, "The kids realizing that their choices matter financially," when asked what went well with the program. Overall, this program demonstrates the need in our community to continue providing financial literacy education for future generations to help them succeed in being fiscally-responsible adults.



76%

of students said participating in this program will help them in the future.

Over 60% of youth who participated learned how to open a savings account.

Work at Schwartz Park

The Master Gardens of Edgar County worked to remove invasive plants and overgrowth at Schwartz Park in Paris. Volunteers worked to remove honeysuckle, tree of heaven and more while educating about proper removal techniques, pruning tips and more.



Master Gardeners Receive State Awards Edgar County Master Gardener, Trudy Wilson, was selected as an outstanding master gardener at the 2023 Illinois State Master Gardener Conference in East Peoria. The Edgar County Master Gardeners received the Teamwork Award at the conference for their work and restructuring of their annual garden seminar, April in Paris.



April in Paris

Edgar County Master Gardeners held their 21st annual gardening seminar, April in Paris, on April 13, 2023. 121 guests attended the seminar which featured gardening education, vendors, food, and fun. Master Gardener's and Master Naturalist's attending the event received three hours of continuining education.

Soil Testing

In April, our offices collected 16 soil samples to be tested. After collection, samples were sent to KSI Laboratore for analyzing. Master gardeners were contacted by those who submitted samples to interpret the lab's results.





































关 Unit Highlights



15,299 Local Website Users

509 Educational Sessions

22,061 Educational Direct Contacts

100 Extension Volunteers

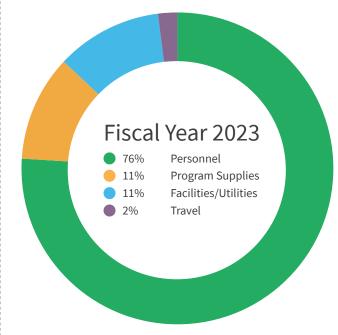
47 4-H Clubs

865 4-H Club Members

27 Master Gardener & Master Naturalist Volunteers

878 Hours donated by Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists

\$191,829 Volunteer Valuation (MG, MN, and 4-H Volunteers)



Clark, Crawford, and Edgar County Extension is funded through a combination of federal dollars (23%), state dollars (30%), and local dollars (47%), which are returned to the community through educational programming.

Today's Illinois Extension

Illinois Extension serves as a regional network with a presence in every Illinois county. We link communities, businesses, and the general population to the research and development and technical resources of the university and its partners. Illinos Extension is also a provider of 4-H youth development and leadership services, helping to provide the next generation of workers, leaders, and responsible citizens.

STAFF

Stacy Woodyard County Director

Tiffany Macke Educator, Community and Economic Development

Jaylynn Schober Educator, 4-H Youth Development

Mary Liz Wright Educator, Nutrition and Wellness Jennifer Bishop Program Coordinator, 4-H Youth Development

Tiffany Cervantes Program Coordinator, College and Career Readiness and Leadership

April Knoblett Program Coordinator, 4-H Youth Development

Brittany Smith Program Coordinator, 4-H Youth Development Korina Allen Office Support

Christina Morgan Office Support

Rebecca Schiver Office Support

Summer Walker Office Support Abby Boerner Marketing Coordinator

Hope Dennis Community Worker, SNAP-Ed

EXTENSION COUNCIL

Dustin Atkins	Erica Hatfield	Randy Allen Peterson	Lendzy Stewart
Keith Crouch	Linda Lane	Dallas Richardson	Capi Stone
Denise Frey	Molly Morecraft	Mallory Simonton	
Chandra Gerberding	Taylor Nethery	Reuben Stence	

OFFICE INFORMATION

Clark County Extension 15493 N. State Hwy 1 Marshall, IL 62441 (217) 826-5422 uie-cce@illinos.edu Mon - Fri, 8 am - 4:30 pm

Crawford County Extension

216 S. Cross St. Robinson, IL 62454 (618) 546-1549 uie-cce@illinois.edu Mon - Fri, 8 am - 4:30 pm

Edgar County Extension

210 W. Washington St. Paris, IL 61944 (217) 465-8585 uie-cce@illinois.edu Mon - Fri, 8 am - 4:30 pm

ONLINE





What's Cooking with Mary Liz Wright



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.

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.

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