



Lifelong Learning. Lifelong Impact.



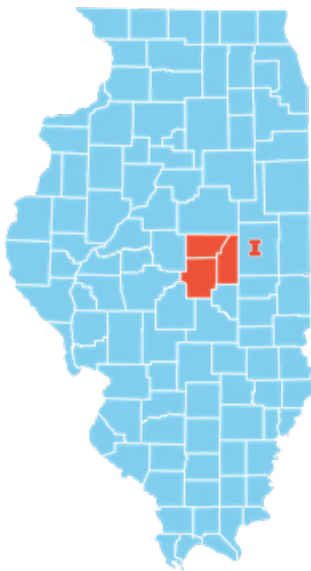
Serving DeWitt, Macon, and Piatt Counties
Illinois Extension Impact Report 2024





Jamie Boas
County Director

Building connections while empowering our communities



We're excited to share the highlights of 2024, focused on people, relationships, and connections. Our mission is to enhance lives and communities through education, resources, and support.

Strong relationships drive our work. Through educational programs, community events, and personal interactions, we strive to create meaningful connections that promote growth, learning, and resilience.

A special thanks go out to our volunteers for extending Extension's reach across our three-

county service area. Your passion, expertise, and dedication are the foundation of our impact, and we're grateful for all you do.

Together, we're building a stronger, more connected community. Let's keep working hand in hand to create opportunities for growth and development. Thank you for being part of the Extension family.

Warm Regards,

Jamie Boas
County Director

Cover photo:
Young gardener waters plant
at Decatur Public Library.

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 eight strategic priorities:



Community



Health



Economy



Partnerships



Environment



Technology and Discovery



Food and Agriculture



Workforce Excellence

2024 Engagement

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

730 Communities Served	805K+ Program Attendees	9.7M+ Webpage Views	22.4M+ Social Media Impressions	2.5M+ YouTube Impressions
547 Educational Sessions/Week (28K+ Annually)	90 Online Courses Accessed by 12K+ People	12,484 Local Government Education Webinar Reach	1,840 4-H Clubs 20,339 Members	67,917 Fair Exhibits 261,012 4-H Experiences

Partnerships

Resource Generation

5,563 Program Volunteers	266 Community Gardens	2,922 School and Community Partners	\$15,735,213 Value of Volunteer Contributions	\$514,316 Value of Donated Produce Grown or Facilitated	\$4.7M+ External Funds Secured for SNAP-Ed Partners
-----------------------------	--------------------------	--	--	--	--



Addressing food insecurity one garden at a time



Southside-Hill Community Garden

Once a vacant lot overgrown with weeds, the Southside-Hill Community Garden is now thriving in Decatur's John's Hill neighborhood. Thanks to community dedication, the garden welcomed its first growing season in 2024. Illinois Extension proudly partnered with the garden to provide Homegrown Harvest workshops, a family-friendly vegetable gardening series addressing gardening topics such as safely harvesting food, pests and diseases, seed saving, weed management, growing pumpkins, and fall crops. The workshops were designed to support gardeners of all skill levels, especially beginners.

Neighborhood families engaged in hands-on learning experiences, and youth discovered unfamiliar vegetables such as Chinese eggplant and purple long beans. Participants enjoyed spending time outdoors in the garden and connecting with other neighborhood residents. Illinois Extension's commitment to providing educational opportunities at the garden inspired residents to grow fresh produce and invest in the garden's future success.



DeWitt, Macon, Piatt
go.illinois.edu/DMP



Volunteers of all ages worked in the garden during the growing season.

Macon County faces a food insecurity rate of 12.5%, ranking it among the top ten counties in Illinois. Additionally, 26% of households in the county are ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) who are struggling to afford the basic necessities despite working. This equates to 1 in 4 families in Macon County. Food insecurity is closely linked to poor physical and mental health as well as academic challenges for children. This issue extends beyond being hungry.

By partnering with the Southside-Hill Community Garden, Illinois Extension is equipping families with the tools needed to grow their own food, improve their health, and strengthen their community.



Master Gardeners grow outreach efforts

Illinois Extension Master Gardener volunteers expanded their reach in 2024, connecting with new audiences and forming new partnerships with rural libraries, state parks, churches, and community events and festivals. Passionate volunteers shared their expertise through engaging programs on topics such as cacti and succulents, container gardens, evergreen wreaths, herbs, hydrangeas, orchids, tomatoes, wildlife, beneficial insects and pollinators, and, of course, cicadas.

Master Gardeners in DeWitt County

Volunteer efforts focused on providing education programs and information desks in small communities across DeWitt County. The Sharpen and Grow gardening workshop series, offered at the Outreach in Farmer City, engaged senior citizens and rural residents through sessions on herb gardening and the timely topic of tomato cultivation. Participants appreciated the informative presentations and practical advice shared by experienced Master Gardeners.

Master Gardeners in Piatt County

Piatt County Master Gardeners continued their strong outreach efforts with the monthly Growing Community program series held at the Piatt County Extension Office. A total of 196 community members attended the hour-long programs, which covered a range of horticultural topics, such as soils, orchids, carnivorous plants, and pumpkins. Each session provided resources on gardening with the goal of impacting behaviors that would benefit the environment.

Master Gardeners Combined Efforts Equal Success

DeWitt and Piatt Master Gardeners brought the popular Evergreen Wreath workshop to two locations this year, reaching more than 50 community members. The hands-on workshop provided participants with an opportunity to create a beautiful traditional holiday wreath. Illinois Extension volunteers provided a short educational component about evergreens and then engaged in a step-by-step tutorial for creating the holiday decoration.



It's hard not to smile after creating beautiful holiday wreaths at Master Gardener workshops.

Community garden has successful harvest

The Monticello Community Garden, a collaborative effort between Kirby Medical Center, the City of Monticello, and Illinois Extension, provided a key opportunity for Piatt County Master Gardeners to address food insecurity within the community. This year, volunteers cultivated a demonstration vegetable garden, resulting in a bountiful harvest of 210 pounds of fresh produce, which was donated to local food pantries to support those in need. Additionally, volunteers delivered 34 flower bouquets to nursing and rehabilitation facilities, bringing joy and cheer to the residents. Community members have the opportunity to rent plots within the garden to grow their own produce. Fifteen community members rented plots this year, with 10 returning renters and five new gardeners joining the program.

Food insecurity affects every community in Illinois. Illinois Extension connects youth, volunteers, and partners, working together to address the needs of communities most impacted by food insecurity through research, community service and advocacy.



Illinois Extension Master Gardeners tabling at the Monticello Farmers Market.

Volunteers Find Training Options That Fit Busy Lives

The Illinois Extension Master Gardener program offered flexible training options in 2024, including online self-paced courses and hybrid models combining online and in-person learning. To address travel issues, Piatt County hosted the winter/spring training session at the Piatt County Extension Office, while Macon County hosted fall training at the Decatur Public Library. Piatt County added eight trainees, and Macon County welcomed an additional 10 individuals.



79

DeWitt, Macon, Piatt Master Gardener Volunteers



9,583

Volunteer Hours



\$323,526

Value of Volunteers





Master Gardeners encourage all ages

Willy's Garden Week at the Decatur Public Library has become a popular summer program with Decatur families. This vibrant program invites young minds to engage with Master Gardener volunteers to explore the fascinating world of plants, insects, and wildlife. The 31 young gardeners could not contain their excitement when it was time to get their hands in the dirt on the first day. The laughter and squeals of delight echoed under the library's roof as each flower was placed, sometimes not so carefully, and then watered. The children continued to care for the plants after the initial planting and were encouraged to check on them when they visited the library.

A strong sense of community brings people together to develop shared goals, support one another in times of need and growth, and work together for the good of the whole. Accepting and celebrating differences creates an environment where all voices are recognized and respected. When strong networks of peers and organizations support youth and families, even the most vulnerable community members feel they belong and are valued.



DeWitt, Macon, Piatt Master Gardeners
go.illinois.edu/DmpMg



A young gardener tends to plant in daycare garden.

Garden adventure inspires young minds

The Decatur Daycare Garden summer program is a long-standing tradition with the Macon County Master Gardeners. Since 2000, volunteers have hosted a 10-week gardening series for 10 sixth grade students. Under the guidance of these experienced volunteers, students plant and care for a variety of vegetables in raised beds. This hands-on approach encourages students to explore the garden with their senses- tasting, touching, smelling, and observing the plants as they grow. The highlight of the program is a celebratory salsa party where students taste the fruits of their labor by enjoying delicious salsa made with their homegrown produce.

Immersive experiences such as Willy's Garden Week and the Decatur Daycare Garden program instill a love for gardening and also empower youth to become environmental stewards.



Clinton High School has the winning recipe

Gayle Bowman's family and consumer science classes at Clinton High School have been participating in the 4-H Food Challenge since 2019. This exciting and interactive six-week program supplements traditional classroom curriculum with hands-on activities. Each year, Bowman's class rosters have continued to grow as students learn about the uniqueness of the program. In 2024, 75 Clinton High School students participated in the 4-H Food Challenge with the goal of moving on to higher level competitions, and one five person team did just that. With a win at the regional level followed by a win at the state level, Clinton High School claimed a spot to participate in the National 4-H Food Challenge in Dallas, Texas, during the summer.

The 4-H Food Challenge is similar to the television show, Chopped. Students must prepare a dish using all five food groups and three surprise ingredients revealed to them at the competition. The clock is set for 45 minutes and at the end of the time, students present their dish to a panel of judges who taste and provide feedback.

The 4-H Food Challenge is more than cooking and preparing a dish. Students practice food safety and sanitation, demonstrate nutrition knowledge, and work as a team under pressure.



Clinton High School 4-H Food Challenge team planning at the National 4-H Food Challenge in Texas.



For the Clinton High School students, the food challenge experience also provided an opportunity for rural students to navigate airports, dine at restaurants that serve more than fast food, interact with youth from all over the United States, and represent their school and state with pride during the national competition.

"Students have learned important life skills, including time management, public speaking, teamwork, critical thinking, problem-solving, leadership, conflict resolution, decision-making, adaptability, collaboration, and cooperation," says Bowman. "Illinois Extension actively engages students in hands-on, project-based learning that reflects the bastion of knowledge of University of Illinois."

I never thought I could cook something so amazing. I'm proud of what I made, and I learned a lot about teamwork.

4-H Food Challenge Team Member

The Illinois 4-H Food Challenge is supported by the Illinois Soybean Association. In addition to personal growth, this initiative reinforces students' connections to local agriculture, especially soy, promoting enduring positive changes in their lives and communities.



435

DeWitt, Macon, Piatt 4-H Members



79

4-H Volunteers



\$256,036

Value of Volunteers



DeWitt, Macon, Piatt 4-H
go.illinois.edu/Dmp4H



MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS PUT SOFT SKILLS TO THE TEST

Twenty-two middle school students from American Dreamer STEM Academy in Decatur participated in a 4-H leadership club, which culminated in The Amazing Shake Competition. This contest challenged students to navigate a variety of professional and social scenarios, such as giving proper handshakes, maintaining composure under pressure, and other essential interpersonal skills. The students rotated through 17 stations staffed by community leaders, volunteers, and Illinois Extension staff. Each student received a score based on their performance at each station. The highest scorer of the day was recognized by Illinois Extension. By participating in this club and the competition, students developed valuable soft skills that will prepare them for future academic, professional, and social endeavors.



4-H ENCOURAGES CAREER EXPLORATION

Illinois Extension is committed to 4-H workforce development and career exploration. The Basic Tools for Mechanics workshop series, a five-week program offered on the Richland Community College campus, exemplified this commitment. Led by college faculty, middle and high school students toured the Automotive Technology Area and engaged in hands-on activities. Students gained the confidence and knowledge needed to tackle simple automotive maintenance, such as oil changes and tire changes. By learning these fundamental skills, young people can save time, money, and frustration. This program empowered young people to become more independent, explore potential career paths, and better prepare for life's challenges.



SPACE AND BEYOND

Area libraries partnered with Illinois Extension for a 4-H summer space program. The two-session series engaged young minds and deepened their knowledge of how the moon, Earth, and sun rotate and revolve around each other and the conditions that must be met for an eclipse to occur. These young scientists made a constellation viewer to use at home when viewing the night sky. The second session continued with further exploration of space concepts and introduced stomp rockets. Youth discovered how wind, velocity, and aerodynamics affected the launch of their stomp rockets. However, after many attempted launches and modifications, all rockets were successfully launched into the sky.



MINDFULNESS IN THE CLASSROOM

Illinois Extension and 4-H, in partnership with Dennis Lab School and American Dreamer STEM Academy, introduced the Mindful Me program to 93 kindergarten students. This 4-H health and wellness initiative aimed to cultivate mindfulness in young learners, fostering essential skills like stress reduction, improved focus, and positive social interactions. Through practices such as mindful eating, meditation, and yoga, Mindful Me empowers students to develop calming strategies and build self-awareness. One teacher shared that their students enthusiastically embraced yoga, often requesting it as a rejuvenating brain break.





Teen 4-H member delivers arrow to target during the Shooting Sports Spectacular at 4-H Memorial Camp.



4-H aims at growing shooting sports

The goal of 4-H programs is the development of youth as individuals and as responsible citizens. 4-H Shooting Sports clubs are an excellent example of this effort and remain a popular choice when youth consider joining 4-H.

The 4-H Shooting Sports Spectacular targeted youth interested in joining 4-H while also offering current members an opportunity to showcase their skills in archery, shotgun, and air rifle.

The morning featured a friendly competition with individual events designed to mimic state and local club contests. The afternoon included an open shoot, allowing all attendees to try out the discipline of their interest. This event not only showcased the skills of current members but also generated significant interest in 4-H shooting sports among potential new members.



Gardening activities at 4-H camp

Passport to the Outdoors returned for a second year, building upon its success with expanded programming and increased reach. Youth continued to engage in hands-on activities such as fishing and hiking, building a deeper understanding of the importance of respecting our natural resources. The gardening component was enhanced this year. Youth visited the 4-H camp where they had the opportunity to dig up and take home their very own tomato plant, continuing their gardening journey at home. The program also included the harvest of other crops, such as cilantro, okra, and watermelon. A highlight of the program was the connection of culinary skills with gardening, as youth learned to prepare homegrown green beans and okra.

Passport to the Outdoors reached a new audience — Clinton YMCA's summer care program visited Weldon Springs State Park for two sessions. Illinois Extension provided fishing equipment, allowing youth to experience the thrill of fishing firsthand. A guided nature hike encouraged an appreciation for the natural world. A total of 48 youth from the summer care program participated, and 40 of them had never participated in a 4-H program.

4-H encourages cultural understanding

Learning about different cultures is essential for fostering respect, empathy, and better communication in our diverse world. In recognition of Native American Heritage Month, 4-H staff in DeWitt County offered two hands-on workshops for youth centered around the rich traditions of Native American beadwork. The Cultural Connections-Beadwork program explored the significant role that beadwork has played in Indigenous people's culture. During the workshops, youth learned Native American beadwork techniques to create their own beaded project.

One of the workshops included an additional educational component focusing on the "Three Sisters" planting technique. This traditional indigenous agricultural method involves cultivating corn, beans, and squash together. Clinton Elementary students explored this sustainable agriculture method alongside the history of Native American beadwork. This hands-on experience supplemented the traditional classroom curriculum with the "learn by doing" philosophy of 4-H. These engaging workshops provided youth with valuable cultural learning experiences, fostering appreciation for diverse traditions and promoting a deeper understanding of the world around them.

Social, emotional learning with board games

Across DeWitt, Macon, and Piatt counties, many youth face challenges such as bullying, depression, and academic struggles. Recognizing the increasing need for emotional and social support, 4-H launched Meeple Mayhem, a new family-focused program that addressed these issues by bringing families together to play board games. Meeple Mayhem sessions provided youth and their parents with opportunities to learn new games, develop teamwork and problem-solving skills, and, most importantly, practice good sportsmanship.

One Meeple Mayhem participant shared, "As a parent, I appreciate that Meeple Mayhem has brought kids away from the screen and back to the table to critically think, strategize, learn new ways of play, and make friends along the way."

Meeple Mayhem has reached a total of 191 individuals during the 18 in-person sessions and has demonstrated a positive impact on those families who have attended.





Bringing history to life in the classroom

History comes to life with Eating Through History, a unique and delicious way to supplement classroom education. This innovative 4-H program takes middle school students on a delicious journey through various historical periods, exploring the foods and cultures of different eras.

From the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia to the era of the Vietnam War, classrooms examined the significance of food within each period. For many students, this was their first exposure to cuisine from Egypt, China, Vietnam, and Greece, as well as foods from specific eras such as the Great Depression and the 1950s and 60s.

4-H cooks, delivers, presents, and teaches about foods native to the land both a long time ago and modern day. We've started our third year together.

Andrea Bailey, Educator

Foods such as palak paneer, tikka masala with lentils, and white rice and naan bread for dipping offered a taste of Indian cuisine, while koshari, latkes, and kugels provided a glimpse into other culinary traditions. Civil War-era foods such as Trench Stew and hard tack and Depression-era dessert, "funny cake," which is made without baking soda, butter, and eggs, were given a "thumbs up" by all who sampled.



A crockpot filled with Egyptian Koshary awaits students.

"Students enjoy the food and the lessons, it gives them the opportunity to try new things from different cultures not always readily available or sought after in Central Illinois," says History teacher Jason Navritil.

Educators in Bement, Cerro Gordo, Deland, and Monticello have enthusiastically welcomed Eating Through History into their classrooms. Additional classrooms are added each year as word of its success spreads throughout the school districts.



59
Total Sessions



20
Classrooms



Collaboration benefits food pantries

Meat is an essential source of protein, vitamins, and minerals, but its cost can make it inaccessible for families struggling with food insecurity. In Illinois, many families face this challenge. Hunters Feeding Illinois, formerly known as the Illinois Deer Donation Program, is addressing this critical need and playing a vital role in combating hunger across 16 Illinois counties. During the 2023-24 hunting season, the program made a significant impact in Macon County. Over 1,100 pounds of venison were donated to four local food pantries, providing a valuable source of lean protein to individuals and families facing food insecurity. To further support food pantry guests, the Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Education (SNAP-Ed) Program distributed venison recipe cards, essential food safety information, and helpful kitchen tools. These resources empowered food pantry guests to confidently prepare and enjoy venison at home, improving their nutrition and overall well-being.

By connecting hunters, processors, and food pantries, Hunters Feeding Illinois demonstrates the power of collaboration in addressing food insecurity within our communities and ensures that nutritious protein reaches those who need it most.



Intergenerational workshop makes memories

“Messy Make Memories” was the playful theme of Cooking with Grandma, an intergenerational hands-on workshop offered twice by Illinois Extension and reached 27 families. These workshops invited grandmothers and their grandchildren to participate in a fun-filled afternoon of culinary exploration. Each family engaged in hands-on experiences, such as measuring ingredients for jar mixes and preparing colorful fruit kabobs. Laughter filled the air as ingredients spilled over the top of the jars or lids would not close. During the afternoon, grandmothers shared bits of wisdom, cooking tips, and enjoyed making lasting memories. It was a time for focusing on the learning process and for recognizing that mistakes and mishaps will happen, and that’s ok.

These Cooking with Grandma workshops demonstrated the power of intergenerational learning, providing youth with the unique experience of learning from the wisdom and experience of their elders.

Diabetes meal planning education

Recognizing that approximately 1 in 10 adults in Illinois live with diabetes, Illinois Extension prioritized delivering free meal planning educational programs to the community. These eight classes, offered at area libraries, Kirby Medical Center, and Warner Hospital and Health Services, assisted adults, family members, and caregivers in understanding how to use the Plate Method and Carbohydrate Counting for effective blood sugar management.

A total of 48 participants benefited from the Balancing Blood Sugar: Diabetes Meal Planning programs, and most importantly, 96% of attendees reported that they would use the information learned to improve their meal planning, and 82% indicated that the information presented was new to them.

By providing accessible and engaging diabetes education, Illinois Extension empowers individuals with the knowledge and tools to effectively manage their diabetes.

Learning how to cook offers many benefits

Youth who learn to cook gain a wide range of valuable skills. Not only do they learn about fractions, how to read recipes, and develop fine motor skills, but they are also more likely to make healthier food choices. Illinois Extension’s Fun in the Kitchen program provided the opportunity to develop these skills through an engaging hands-on workshop.



14
Total Classes



154
Total Youth

Youth learned how to read recipes, use correct measuring tools, and practice safe knife handling while preparing delicious dishes such as fruit pizza, homemade salsa, and fruit kabobs. Illinois Extension engaged a diverse youth audience, including youth from ABC Preschool’s summer program, a local Girl Scout troop, Waynesville Township Library, and Homework Hangout.



Girl Scouts practicing knife skills at Fun in the Kitchen.



Illinois Extension empowers growers



Illinois Extension remains dedicated to providing educational programs that empower growers of all levels- from large commercial operations to small farms and backyard gardens. Whether cultivating produce, crops, or livestock, growers benefit from effective, efficient, and sustainable approaches that feed their families, communities, and world. Several topics attracted eager learners throughout the year, such as pawpaws, selling meats in Illinois, and trees for bees.

Pawpaw: Illinois' Tropical Fruit

An introduction to the pawpaw tree, its fruit, cultivars, management, and processing of the fruit brought an enthusiastic audience to the Allerton Public Library. Participants took notes during the presentation and asked questions to further understand the needs of this interesting fruit. A highlight of the program was a sample of homemade pawpaw bread, which the majority of participants had not tasted before. Pawpaw production continues to pique the interest of both home gardeners and commercial producers, spurred by the potential of this underappreciated fruit and the diverse range of products that can be crafted from it.



25
Program Participants



100%
Gained Knowledge



Program Educates Beekeepers

Trees for Bees welcomed 45 beekeepers to learn more about improving honey bee health. The training focused on the role of trees and shrubs as essential sources of early-season pollen and nectar for honey bees. This is particularly important for honey bee survival during the challenging overwintering months. The program stressed the importance of including flowering plants such as trees and shrubs in home landscapes to create a diverse and sustainable habitat for bees.

Webinar Equips Producers to Successfully Navigate Market

Illinois Extension hosted Selling Meats in Illinois, a webinar that attracted 26 people to the live presentation and an additional 220 views on YouTube after the event. The program covered essential topics for producers, such as rules and regulations, cold storage requirements, meat packaging materials, the importance of a farm label, the need for a website, and the requirements for an Illinois Meat Brokers license.

Producers expressed an appreciation for this valuable resource, and 100% reported that they had gained new knowledge on the rules and regulations of selling farm-produced meats to consumers.



Know How Know More Blog
go.illinois.edu/KHKM



Connecting communities with nature

Illinois Extension has continued its commitment to connecting individuals with nature through environmental education and community engagement efforts in DeWitt, Macon, and Piatt counties. Master Gardener and Master Naturalist volunteers have fostered a deeper connection with the natural world by leading urban forest walks and participating in various community events.

Illuminating the Forest

Six dedicated Master Gardener and Master Naturalist volunteers from Piatt County completed an online Urban Tree Health course, which led to an exciting project for the Piatt County Forest Preserve in Monticello. These volunteers identified and installed markers for twenty-one trees within the preserve.

“Many hands make for light work, and we had many individuals involved,” says Mike Randall, Illinois Extension volunteer.

Each marker features a QR code providing access to information such as common and scientific names, along with other pertinent species details. This initiative serves as a valuable educational resource for individuals of all ages.

The project was showcased during the Fall Tree Crawl at the Piatt County Forest Preserve, an event that invited community members to participate in a guided tour led by staff and volunteers. Participants learned how to utilize the QR codes to access additional information at each marked tree. This event successfully attracted tree enthusiasts, families, and other park visitors, promoting a greater appreciation for local tree species.

I loved the Fall Tree Crawl and learned lots of new info. What a great area for learning and to bring kids.

Program Participant



DeWitt, Macon, Piatt Master Naturalists
go.illinois.edu/DmpMn



Illinois Extension volunteer shares species information at Piatt County's Fall Tree Crawl.

A Smashing Community Event

Master Naturalists hosted their first Pumpkin Smash at Rock Springs Nature Center in Macon County. Families arrived carrying their uniquely decorated pumpkins and promptly picked up baseball bats to gleefully destroy the orange holiday decorations. When bats didn't achieve the desired level of demolition, a simple pick-up and drop approach or swift kick was used to help with the “smashing.” In addition to the smashing, kids were invited to toss smaller pumpkins at a target and watch as the airborne objects hit the solid surface and splattered before hitting the ground. Pumpkin Smash provided a fun and unique way to responsibly recycle pumpkins rather than sending them to a landfill.

Growing Stewardship: Master Naturalist Training

Reflecting a growing interest in environmental stewardship, Illinois Extension welcomed its largest Master Naturalist class to date for DeWitt, Macon, and Piatt counties. Nineteen individuals completed the 12-week in-person training program supplemented with an interest-based internship. These interns will continue their community engagement by educating others about best practices in environmental stewardship.



55
Master Naturalist Volunteers



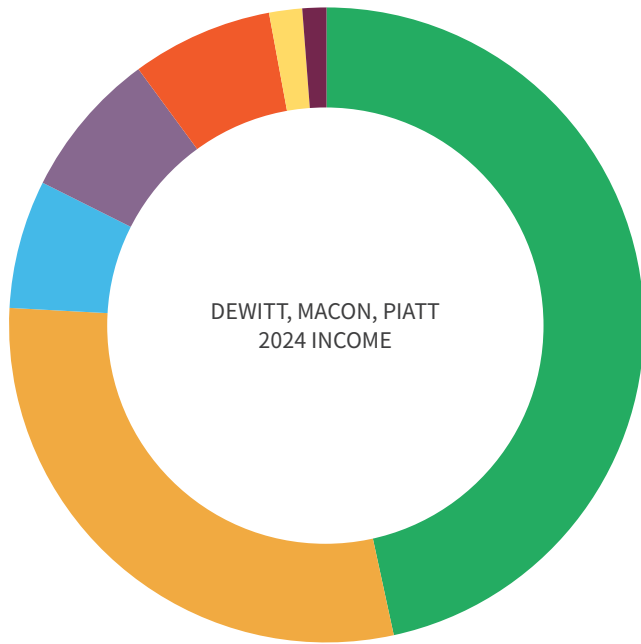
4,398
Volunteer Hours



\$148,468
Volunteer Value

Funding and Outreach

Funding for Illinois Extension comes from a combination of local, county, state, and federal dollars returned to the community through educational programming.



Amount	Source
\$713,022	County Board
\$447,602	CBM
\$100,000	Federal Income
\$115,000	Program Income
\$110,000	State Income
\$25,750	Local Income
\$18,688	4-H Premiums

2023-2024 EXTENSION COUNCIL MEMBERS

Sonya Anthony <i>Macon County</i>	Kathie Drozs <i>DeWitt County</i>	Tayisha Nelson <i>Macon County</i>
Janet Boomer <i>Macon County</i>	Wayne Dunning <i>Macon County</i>	Mike Randall <i>Piatt County</i>
Brooks Brown <i>Macon County</i>	Jerry Edwards <i>Piatt County</i>	Cheryl Sample <i>Piatt County</i>
Grace Clark <i>DeWitt County</i>	April Gum <i>DeWitt County</i>	Sydnee Shafer <i>Piatt County</i>
Cassie Crouch <i>Macon County</i>	Todd Hendricks <i>Piatt County</i>	Kaydance Wooten <i>Piatt County</i>
Taylor Crouch <i>Macon County</i>	Merry Lanker <i>Macon County</i>	

Committed to sharing resources

Illinois Extension is dedicated to translating university research into educational programs and training for adults and youth across Illinois and beyond. By combining print and digital marketing efforts, Illinois Extension effectively reaches both urban and rural populations.

Maintaining a consistent presence in two weekly publications, *Wheels and Deals* and *TV Revue*, has significantly expanded marketing reach. Both magazines are free to the public and distributed in various locations throughout DeWitt, Macon, and Piatt counties. Additionally, *Wheels and Deals* has a website that receives an estimated 5,000 views each month.

Throughout the year, a robust digital media strategy contributed to the growth of all social media pages, and a monthly newsletter was sent to subscribers, along with weekly e-updates specifically for 4-H programs.

To further promote programs, Illinois Extension also utilized paid radio spots and on-air interviews.



4-H member holds poultry project at the DeWitt, Macon, and Piatt 4-H Poultry Show.



STAFF

Jamie Boas
County Director

Whitney Allison
Program Coordinator,
Horticulture

Cortney Benton
Program Coordinator,
Marketing and
Communications

Shannon Bridges
Office Support Assistant,
Macon County

Tamera Buse
Program Coordinator,
Nutrition and Wellness

Marisa Capps
Program Coordinator,
4-H Youth Development

Henry Craft
Educator, 4-H Youth
Development
DeWitt and Piatt Counties

Rachel Davidson
Program Coordinator,
4-H Youth Development

Eric Eickmeier
Program Coordinator,
4-H Youth Development

Jeralee Funk
Business Manager

Doug Gucker
Educator, Local Food Systems
and Small Farms

Stephanie Hale
Program Coordinator,
Agriculture

Anay Hunt
Program Coordinator,
4-H Youth Development

Haley Jones
Educator, 4-H Youth
Development
Macon County

Maria Lightner
Program Coordinator,
Marketing and
Communications

Caitlin Mellendorf
Educator, Nutrition and
Wellness

Beth Miglin
Program Coordinator,
Horticulture

Holly Murphy
Office Support Assistant,
DeWitt County

Stacy Nichols
Office Support Specialist,
DeWitt County

Anne Reinbold
Program Coordinator,
4-H Youth Development

Toma Romero
Community Outreach Worker,
SNAP-Ed

Anna Ruckman
Community Outreach Worker,
SNAP-Ed

Nicole Thomas
Office Support Assistant,
Piatt County

Sarah Vogel
Educator, Horticulture and
Natural Resources

Kendra Wallace
Program Coordinator,
4-H Youth Development

OFFICE INFORMATION

DeWitt County Extension

1160 IL-54, Suite B
Clinton, IL 61727
(217) 935-5764
Mon - Fri, 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Closed for lunch 12-1 PM

Macon County Extension

3351 N. President Howard Brown Blvd.
Decatur, IL 62521
(217) 877-6042
Mon - Fri, 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Closed for lunch 12-1 PM

Piatt County Extension

210 S. Market St.
Monticello, IL 61856
(217) 762-2191
Mon - Fri, 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Closed for lunch 12-1 PM

ONLINE



facebook.com/UIExtensionDMP



instagram.com/uiexten_dmp



youtube.com/universityofillinoisextens9848



Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

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.

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.

The Illinois Nutrition Education Programs are funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture by the Director, Cooperative Extension Service, and University of Illinois.