



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

2021 Addressing Local Needs,
Solving Global Challenges
Clay, Effingham, Fayette, and Jasper Counties

A Message from the County Director

The University of Illinois Extension and the staff serving Clay, Effingham, Fayette, and Jasper counties would like to thank you for your continued support.



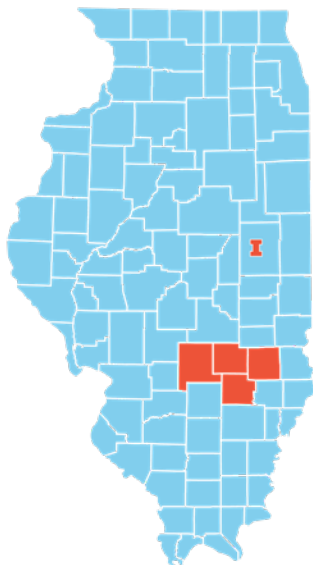
Carl Baker
County Director

University of Illinois Extension remains committed to providing relevant, reliable, and responsive education to improve lives and economies throughout the communities in which we live and work. The beginning of 2021 proved to be interesting as the pandemic continued to have a strong hold on our state impacting many of us. As the year went on, like so many businesses globally, we moved from remote work to back in the office. During 2021, many saw the return of our 4-H exhibitions to in-person versus exhibitions being offered remotely. In person exhibitions were welcomed with open arms after 2020.

Despite the challenges, Extension adapted and moved forward. We continue to offer non-traditional programs throughout our communities to help meet the needs of our four-county region. Our goal at Extension is to be a community partner that the public can turn to for answers and trust the sound research data.

Extension is ever thankful for local support from our county boards, farm bureaus, 4-H and Extension foundations, home and community education associations, individuals, and businesses. We are excited about the upcoming year! Visit extension.illinois.edu/cefj often for upcoming programs and events, news releases, and research-based information you can trust. We look forward to our continued partnership as we build for the future.

Staff Serving Clay, Effingham, Fayette, and Jasper Counties



STAFF

Carl Baker
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Think Global, Act Local

Illinois Extension embodies the land grant mission of University of Illinois, providing applied research and education to address societal grand challenges and local issues.



Community

Support Strong and Resilient Youth, Families, and Communities



Connectedness and Inclusion



Involvement and Leadership



Thriving Youth



Economy

Grow a Prosperous Economy



Economic Vitality



Financial Wellbeing



Workforce Preparedness/Advancement



Environment

Sustain Natural Resources in Home and Public Spaces



Enhancing and Preserving Natural Resources



Engagement with Home and Community Landscape



Food

Maintain a Safe and Accessible Food Supply



Food Access



Food Production



Food Safety



Health

Maximize Physical and Emotional Health for All



Chronic Disease Prevention and Management



Social and Emotional Health



Healthy and Safe Environments

Look for these icons throughout this report to see how Illinois Extension is meeting these grand challenges at a local level.

Illinois Extension 2021

Statewide Highlights

Outreach Provided

565

Illinois
Communities
Served

335

Educational
Sessions Per Week

84

Online Courses

Partnerships Supported

6,445

Adult
Volunteers

278

Community
Gardens

1,000

School Partnerships

Learners Engaged

8,000,000

Website Users

14,450

Online
Course Users

500,000

Educational Program
Attendees

Resources Generated

\$14,000,000

Value of Volunteer
Contributions

\$242,000

Value of Donated
Garden Produce

Extension leaders meet with local stakeholders to define annual priorities that allow us to respond to evolving and emerging needs and make meaningful progress toward important long-term outcomes. This blend of long-range focus and local accountability is a powerful strategy that ensures we stay true to our mission as we serve communities across the state.



The in-person rain garden installation at the University of Illinois Extension Office on October 9, 2021. From left to right, Jennifer Jones, Rita Rhodabarger, Tasha Thompson, Mary Fischer, Barbara Bays, and Linda Heynen.

Purdue Rainscaping Education Program offered in Effingham County

Jennifer Jones, watershed outreach associate, and Mary Fischer, horticulture educator, offered the Purdue Rainscaping Education Program in Effingham County during fall 2021. This program teaches participants about rainscaping, or green infrastructure, practices that can be used to improve urban stormwater quality. Examples of rainscaping practices include redirecting downspouts, rain barrels, rain gardens, permeable pavement, and bioswales.

The focus of the training is to teach participants how to site, size, design, and maintain a rain garden. Jones and Fischer offered this program in a hybrid virtual and in-person format. The first four sessions were completed virtually, while the fifth and final session was in person and included a rain garden installation at the University of Illinois Extension office in Effingham. Four participants completed the entire training. The hope is that they will share their knowledge of rain gardens and rainscaping with other people in the community! Extension extends special thanks to Josh and Amy Tegeler for donating the excavation services needed to dig out the rain garden bed.

Soil Health Check Up video series

Watershed Outreach Associate Jennifer Jones collaborated with Illinois Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Soil Health Specialist Stacy Zuber to create a three-part video series called, "Soil Health Check Up." The videos include information on at-home soil health tests farmers, landowners, or homeowners can use to visually assess the health of their soils. All the tests can be completed utilizing household items.

One video features a homemade rainfall simulator that shows soil's ability to resist erosion and crusting from excess precipitation. Another video demonstrates the slake and slump tests to show soil aggregate stability. The third video, Soil Your Undies, illustrates the popular challenge originally coined by NRCS. A pair of clean, cotton underwear is buried horizontally in the ground for 60 days and then dug up. The more decomposed the underwear is, the more microbial activity is present in the soil, indicating a healthier soil. Jones completed the Soil Your Undies Challenge on an Effingham County farm during the 2021 growing season! You can check out the Soil Health Check Up video series on University of Illinois Extension's YouTube channel.



Jones holding up decomposed underwear after being buried on an Effingham County farm for 60 days. This pair of underwear was buried on a farm that has used cover crops and no-tillage for several years.



SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS (STEM) KITS

What an honor! The Effingham Public Library invited Mary Fischer, horticulture educator, and Jennifer Jones, watershed outreach, to visit the library to film educational videos. The videos will be used for Effingham Library's Youth STEM/STEAM outreach programs. Effingham Public Library has also shared the educational videos with Newton Public Library, Flora Public Library, and Vandalia's Evans Public Library.

In September 2021, Fischer, began offering Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics kits on a monthly basis to libraries, schools, daycares, and early childhood education centers to help fill science and environmental educational voids associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Demand for the kits grew by 60% in one month to 85% in the second month. Approximately 500 kits are created and distributed each month.



Jennifer Jones, Watershed Outreach, and Mary Fischer, Horticulture Educator prepare educational videos at Effingham Public Library



MISSION: EXPLORE

The Mission: Explore! kits were designed for first through eighth grades. Each kit contains materials to create a journal for drawing; making notes or recording observations; pressing plant, leaf or flower specimens; and making rubbings. Materials for monthly themed activities are included with the kits. There are additional activities suggested for older students. Topics range from nature journaling to the science of fall colors to pinecone hygrometers. Junior Mission: Explore! kits were created for children aged 4 to 5 years of age. Each kit contains a ready-made journal for drawing; pressing plants, leaves or flowers; or making rubbings. Materials for monthly themed activities are included with the kits. Topics range from my nature book to fall mask-a-rade to pinecone weather stations. Pre-schoolers are not left out! They enjoy simpler versions of the monthly themed kits as well. STEM kits have been well-received by the communities and are eagerly anticipated.

EFFINGHAM COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

The Effingham County Master Gardeners assisted 180 children and adults plant tulip bulbs at the annual "Hometown Christmas" held at the Effingham County Museum. Participants received directions for forcing the bulbs to bloom for Valentine's Day. The event was well attended and is expected to be even larger next year! Fayette Master Gardeners were on hand at the Vandalia Farmers Market to promote gardening with kids. Each child selected a pumpkin or sunflower variety that they wanted to grow, learned how to plant the seed, and received complete growing instructions caring for their seed. Kids and families alike enjoyed the activity, as well as the Master Gardeners. The Fayette County Master Gardeners contributed a total of 3,057.25 pounds of produce from Vandalia's Little Community Garden during 2021. Twenty-four individuals helped at various times during the year. The unit has received and answered 58 requests from clients ranging from Army worms and tomato problems to fruit production issues and establishing new lawns. Whether in person, on the phone, via email, clients receive the best available answers to their questions in a timely manner.



Fayette County Master Gardener Randy Harrison discusses seed selection with a family visiting the Vandalia Farmer's Market



This Tower Garden is a great learning tool for grades K-8

HYDROPONIC GARDENING GOES TO SCHOOL

Two local Effingham schools, Discovery Christian School and Montessori Kids Universe, have received loans of two University of Illinois Extension Tower Gardens for their schools to use during the school year. The Tower Gardens will be available to all schools within the unit on a first-come, first-serve basis. Each garden comes with a complete K-8th grade curriculum, growing media, seeds, and all the necessary materials to produce indoor fruit, such as strawberries and vegetables. These are great teaching tools for horticulture, Ag in the Classroom, and 4-H collaborations in the growth, production and harvesting of hydroponically raised vegetables.

Adult Program Activities

Several assisted living centers, nursing homes, and adult daycare facilities participated in Extension gardening programs.

Seniors looked forward to learning about the language of flowers, with discussions of the meaning of not only the type of flowers, but also the color of those flowers. A good laugh was had by all at some of the mixed messages a modern bouquet of flowers can send to a recipient.

Games stimulating memory is especially important to older individuals. "Name That Vegetable" reaches into the long-term memory about vegetables individuals would eat at holidays, how those vegetables were prepared, and personal likes and dislikes.

Aroma therapy bingo challenged the seniors to use their senses to identify certain scents. Some scents were new, and some were familiar to the participants. Discussions into the uses of certain scents surprised participants.

Butterfly kits were a huge success with seniors. Seniors stated that they really enjoyed watching the caterpillars spin the chrysalis, keeping an eye on the chrysalis daily for changes, and watching the butterflies emerge. Seniors gathered to release the butterflies.

Two senior facilities, Guardian Angel Adult Day Care in Teutopolis and Newton Care Center in Newton, received raised bed planters for their residents.

The planters, which are self-contained, allow residents to continue to enjoy the joys of planting and tending a garden at a height best suited for them. Additionally, the planters can be moved indoors for the continued enjoyment of the residents and staff alike.



Two local senior facilities in Unit 21 received raised bed planters for the residents to enjoy.

Dig It! And Dig It Jr!

Mary Fischer, Extension horticulture educator, collaborated with other state horticulture educators to create a seasonal horticulture magazine for students in kindergarten through eighth grades. The concept for the horticulture magazine has been well-received and has been adopted and supported by 4-H.

Dig It Jr! is geared for students kindergarten through fifth grades, and the Dig It! is geared for students in sixth through eighth grades. The first issue, Spring, will be released on March 1, 2022. The Fall magazine will be released on September 1, 2022, followed by Summer and Winter in 2023.



The Dig It! And Dig It Jr! magazine is a 4 page age-appropriate magazine created to teach children about gardening through fun activities.

Junior Master Naturalist Pilot Program

Mary Fisher collaborated with other staff to create a Junior Master Naturalist Pilot Program for release in August 2022. The program is divided into two groups: Junior Master Naturalists (age 9 to 12 years old) and Teen Master Naturalists (age 13 to 17 years old). Students will cover subjects in biology, zoology, geology and soils, botany, people and natural resources, hydrology, conservation, and other selected topics. They will also complete six hours of required volunteer service for Jr. Master Naturalists and 12 hours of service for Teen Master Naturalists.

The program introduces Illinois natural resources to students through educational course provided by resource professionals and experts in the field.

At the age of 18, an individual may become an Illinois Master Naturalist by successfully completing training and completing the required number of volunteer hours.



Unit 21 Welcomes New 4-H Youth Development Educator

Kasey Kemme is the new 4-H youth development educator serving Clay, Effingham, Fayette, and Jasper counties. Kasey grew up on a small grain and beef farm in Iroquois County. She attended Eastern Illinois University where she received a bachelor's degree in elementary education. She taught fourth and fifth grade in Urbana for five years. During the summers, she assisted the Ford, Iroquois, and Champaign counties 4-H programs with summer shows. In 2020, she moved to Shumway with her husband and taught for a little over a year in Altamont before taking this position. She and her husband raise show pigs and live on his grandparents' farm with their two dogs, Clark and Kip.



I have thoroughly enjoyed being out in the communities, meeting new people and going to different schools to offer different programs. I can't wait to meet many more of you.

BEES! BEES! BEES! OH MY!

Kasey buzzed on over to Montessori Kids Universe in Effingham to put the worker bees to work! Students started with a blank flower and then cut pieces of tissue paper to act as their pollen for the day. They sprinkled their tissue paper pieces onto the top of their flower. Students then received a balloon to be their bee for the project. After rubbing their "bee" in their hair to create static electricity, students picked up their pollen and visited other flowers to transfer it. They picked up pollen of the flower they were currently at, then visited another flower. After five rounds, they returned to their original flower. Students were shocked to see all the different colors on their flowers! Once all the pollen was spread, students were able to glue the tissue paper to make their flowers even more beautiful.

Kasey Visits Beecher City Fifth Grade

Beecher City fifth grade students experimented with pollination. Their lesson started with a game quiz format using Kahoot! They were so excited to see what they already knew about pollination and bees. They were discussed the importance of pollination and how it makes flowers the beautiful colors seen throughout their communities. Students then cut their flowers out and decorated them using their markers. There were many patterns and colors throughout the classroom. Fifth grade students cut their tissue paper pieces into tiny little pieces. Each person once again chose a different color of tissue paper to represent their pollen. Students then took their balloon and blew them up nice and big to create their bees for the day.

After having a short conversation about static electricity, it was time to buzz around the room to transfer their pollen from flower to flower. As the worker bees came to a stop, the class discussed the importance of pollination for the types of flowers that we enjoy every day.



4-Hers hang ribbons in communities in Effingham County during National 4-H Week.

Effingham County Celebrates National 4-H Week

Effingham County 4-H Federation organized many activities for 4-H families to showcase their 4-H spirit.

The Effingham County Board proclaimed for National 4-H Week in Effingham County from October 3-9, urging all citizens to encourage and support the work of 4-H. Federation members spoke in front of government officials regarding ribbons being hung downtown in all communities in Effingham County. Ribbons were well received and government officials were excited to be able to help showcase 4-H in their community. Over 250 ribbons were made and hung in every community in Effingham County.

Behind the scenes of every great organization you will find an army of supporters. During National 4-H Week, the University of Illinois Extension staff in Effingham County stopped by to thank some who have helped with our success along the way. We are so fortunate and thankful to have the amazing media outlets, as well as our other wonderful organizations that continue to support our mission.

Country Cousins 4-H Club receives grant!

Congratulations to Country Cousins 4-H Club of Effingham County. Country Cousins 4-H members received a \$500 Farm Credit Illinois Community Improvement Grant. Farm Credit is providing \$25,000 in donation funds to 50 4-H clubs and FFA chapters throughout the 60-county region of Illinois it serve. Club members are planning to make a bench with the funds they received.



Jasper County holds Conservation Field Day

Sixth grade students at St. Thomas and Newton Elementary explored the outdoors during the Jasper County Conservation Field Day, sponsored by the Jasper County Soil and Water Conservation District and University of Illinois Extension in Jasper County. Both the graduating 2021 class in the spring, and the 2021 sixth grade class this fall participated in the program.

Sam Parr State Park served as their classroom as they studied these topics: Our Planet Earth, Pollinators, Watershed, Forestry, Aquatics, and the Prairie Chicken Sanctuary. The Jasper County SWCD also tested the sixth graders' knowledge about conservation with conservation Jeopardy. Illinois Raptor Center showed off the large birds that are usually only seen high in the sky. A bald eagle was a highlight of the presentation.

To complete the conservation education, each student completed a project focusing on one conservation area. The Jasper County Extension and the Jasper County SWCD have been able to bring this program to the sixth grade students in Jasper County for over 30 years with the cooperation of the Jasper Community Unit 1.



Sixth Graders attend Jasper County Conservation Field Day at Sam Parr Park

Camp Cloverbud

4-H Cloverbud members enjoyed a fun-filled day at the Jasper County Fairgrounds, participating in many luau and beach-themed activities. The Jasper County 4-H Ambassador team organized and facilitated all of the activities during the event. Cloverbud members started with icebreakers that introduced both their fellow Cloverbuds and the 4-H Ambassadors. Throughout the day, Cloverbud members made ocean themed Jell-O cups and jellyfish crafts. Since this age group is very active, Ambassadors ended the hot day with some fun water games. Both the 4-H Cloverbuds and the 4-H Ambassadors learned from each other and had a great day.



Cloverbuds enjoyed a day of fun-filled activities during Camp Cloverbud

Toys for Kids

Jasper County Toys for Kids program, sponsored by the Jasper County Home and Community Education, gets assistance from 4-H members who shop for toys and help organize donated toys for over 200 Jasper County youth. The program's long history spans 30 years. Donations are collected from local contributors and businesses to provide a new gift for each child registered.

In December of 2021, the Jasper County 4-H Federation shopped for several children and by provided funds for four children in the program.

Since 4-H clubs and other local youth organizations budget and shop to make the most of the money allotted for each child, the program also teaches money management and community service. The Toys for Kids program provides a positive experience for everyone involved, whether they are a volunteer assisting with the shopping and organizing, or a youth receiving gifts for a brighter holiday.



Toys for Kids Program makes Christmas a little brighter for over 200 Jasper County youth



Welcome to the Real World

Welcome to the Real World, an experiential learning curriculum on career exploration, decision-making, and money management, helps young people improve their financial literacy. The interactive, hands-on, real-life simulation explores career opportunities and show the impact of lifestyle and budget choices young people will face when they are living on their own.

Students from the Mid-State Special Education program in Fayette and Bond counties explored potential occupations they may want to pursue in the future. After they have completed the career exploration portion of the program, students went through the *Welcome to the Real World* simulation. With the assistance of community members and businesses, participants spent their “salary” on necessities and expenditures, such as groceries, utilities, and entertainment. Classes were both virtual and in-person at Kaskaskia College in Vandalia.



4-H Officer Training

Clay, Effingham, Fayette, and Jasper counties hosted a virtual 4-H officer training in March 2021 with the help of leaders and 4-H members from all four counties. The 40 participants learned about officer roles, meeting components, community service, and more through discussion and hands on activities. Their knowledge was put to the test using Miro Board, a virtual collaboration website, to practice writing checks and filling out a transaction register. Participants also practiced Parliamentary Procedure by making motions to build a trail mix snack. This idea and many other resources allowed members to into action many of the things they learned at their next club meeting.



extension.illinois.edu/ceffj/4-h-youth-development

Fayette County 4-H Kickoff

Fayette County 4-H hosted a recruitment event to kick off the 4-H year and celebrate National 4-H Week on October 4. This event was hosted at the Fayette County YMCA and sponsored by Southwestern Electric Coop. 4-H members showcased their projects for others to explore and learn about. Jennifer Jones, Extension watershed outreach associate, taught about soil types, nutrients, and erosion while the participants created their own soil painting. Staff also had interactive booths on the visual arts and drone 4-H projects. Attendees enjoyed food, games, and crafts, as well.

Clay County Dog Obedience

Hallie Clagg of Clagg's Classy Canines gave 4-H members lessons on dog discipline and training. They learned about canine care, responsibility, and the sport of dog showing in dog obedience classes. Eleven youth participated in the four weekly classes held at the REA Building in Charley Brown Park, before showing off their talents at the 4-H Dog Show during the Clay County Fair. The 4-H members had so much fun and learned from each other. A couple participants even dressed up their dog as hotdog and fitness instructor for a costume contest.



4-Hers show off their “best friends” at Clay County Dog Obedience Show



Deer donation program to expand food access in 12 central Illinois counties

One in 10 people in Illinois struggles with hunger every day, including one in eight children, according to Feeding America. When families are hungry, making healthier choices can be even more difficult. A new project in the unit focuses on expanding food access through University of Illinois Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education.

The Health Equity Achieved Together Project (HEAT) is a multi-disciplinary project with Illinois SNAP-Ed and other programs within University of Illinois Extension. Programs will develop and implement innovative strategies to improve health outcomes and reduce community barriers to healthier lifestyles. The HEAT Project leverages the expertise of Extension and networks across Illinois, thereby maximizing the positive impact on the health of Illinois families.

The Illinois Deer Donation Program Pilot will connect meat processors, hunters, and food pantries in 12 central Illinois Counties: Clay, Coles, Cumberland, DeWitt, Douglas, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper, Macon, Moultrie, Piatt, and Shelby. The encourages hunters to donate their deer to meat processors who will ground the venison and provide the lean protein to food pantry clients. Clients will also receive recipes and resources from Illinois Extension to help them prepare venison at home, since some might not know the best way to prepare venison.

This will be an opportunity for hunters to help tackle food insecurity in their communities while doing something they enjoy and supporting small businesses in our area.

MICHELLE FOMBELLE,
EXTENSION SNAP-ED EDUCATOR

In addition, HEAT project awardees will engage with local stakeholders and community members as they design and implement their initiatives. Projects will also plan sustainability and inclusion strategies to ensure that the projects have long-lasting community impact. The goal of the project is to provide a foundation for a future statewide program in collaboration with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

SNAP-Ed community workers continue to provide essential programs

Veterans Fair

SNAP-Ed face-to-face programming returned for summer and fall programming. Erin Maxwell and Jo Stine teamed up to provide a booth each month for the Enduring Freedom Ministries Veteran's Fair at the food pantry in Shumway. Recipes, including new ideas for using their garden fruits and vegetables, along with physical activity and cooking tips, were given to each person who stopped by the booth. Staff encouraged participants to sign up for the Illinois Nutrition Education Program Text Messaging program and INEP monthly health newsletter.

Schools

After a year and a half of being creative with virtual programming due to COVID, Erin and Jo were welcomed back in the classrooms. Using OrganWise Guys and Serving up MyPlate curriculums, kids learned why we should eat healthy and how to get plenty of physical activity, then how to apply it to their daily lives.

Food Pantries

Erin's local food pantry continued to be a drive thru only. She was able to share some handouts by placing them in their boxes. Jo was able to return to the food pantry in April. The new routine of pick up and go seems to be working, and the clients' needs are being met.

SNAP-Ed

The year proved to be challenging at times, but with continued efforts, Extension has offered programs stressing the importance of healthy eating and physical activity to better our clients' lives for years to come. Thanks to technology, the team been able to stay in touch with all the partners, as well as continue with only trainings and conferences.



<https://go.illinois.edu/ceffinep>



SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EDUCATION

SNAP-Education works with Illinois families in need to make the healthier choice an easier choice. Through classes, workshops and collaboration with community partners, SNAP-Education positively affect families and communities by using research-based solutions to encourage healthier nutrition and physical activity choices.

Reach and Impact of SNAP-Education



5,183
Total Estimated Reach



112
Number of Nutrition Education Classes Provided



- 15% Face-to-face
- 85% Virtual or online

Illinois SNAP-Ed worked with the Regional Office of Education #12 to provide professional development opportunities for their school food service staff. Though 2020 opportunities were canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual programming was offered in 2021.

SNAP-Education Community Partnerships



5
K-12 Schools



3
Early Childhood



3
Other Agencies or Community Centers



5
Food Banks and Food Pantries



4-H is Growing True Leaders

4-H youth programs are empowering and preparing Illinois youth for success both now and in the future.



131,628
Youth Affiliations



6,192
Adult Volunteers



1,597
Clubs



47,556
Fair Exhibits



2,159
Programs



2,257
Youth in Leadership Projects & Programs

Opportunity4All

Advancing the mission for all youth in Illinois to be empowered and prepared for success.



24%
Minority Members



12%
Hispanic Members



788
Virtual Programs



142
New Program Sites



OFFICE INFORMATION

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Jasper: @JasperCountyIllinois4H



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<https://extension.illinois.edu/cefj>

Cover photos: (top left) A Clay County 4-Her takes a break between classes at the Clay County dog obedience show. (top right) A young 4-Her watches intently as the instructor shows him pointers on rabbit care during the Effingham County rabbit workshop. (bottom left) Jasper County presented a fishing program at Sam Parr State Park. A young 4-Her displays his trophy fish. (bottom right) During the Fayette County 4-H Kickoff held at the YMCA in Vandalia, children enjoyed soil painting at the Watershed booth.

Illinois Extension

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).

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