

# Livingston, McLean & Woodford Extension Quarterly Impact Report

## April - June 2019

**I** ILLINOIS  
Extension  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER  
& ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES



## Oakdale Elementary adds gardening to their school days

Extension staff partnered with Oakdale Elementary School, Normal, for an after school Garden Club offered to 3rd, 4th and 5th graders. Oakdale is a Title 1 funded school, with at least 40% of the students considered low-income. After an Eagle Scout installed 7 raised beds by the school playground in the summer of 2018, Oakdale and Extension staff brainstormed ways to use the garden. Each grade received a bed to incorporate garden lessons into their curriculum and grow vegetable to supplement their Friday Backpack program.

**15-20 youth regularly attended Garden Club during 8 sessions during the 2018-2019 school year**

Youth were introduced to a variety of horticulture topics, including trees, birds, terrariums, pollinators, plant needs, garden design & planning, and plant parts. The club used what they learned about garden design & planning, and the importance of pollinators to create a pollinator garden in a raised bed and containers for the school entrance. Areas that were mainly concrete and mulch, are now scattered with nectar-rich plants to attract pollinators to the garden. The last session included a lesson about plant parts while making “veggie kids.” This gave the kids an opportunity to try a variety of vegetables and identify what part of the plant they were eating. *One student stated, “I have never had sweet peppers before—I love them!”* Through a post-class survey of the club, *100% of the kids said they learned about gardening by attending, will garden more at home, and want to learn more about gardening all by joining Garden Club in the 2018-2019 school year.*



## Run for Cover

*Zombie Apocalypse strikes to help educate youth about disaster preparedness*

During the week of June 17-21, Livingston County 4-H hosted our second annual Zombie Camp. 25 youth from Livingston, McLean & Woodford counties attended each day. The concept of the camp was to educate youth on disaster preparedness under the guise of an oncoming zombie apocalypse. Daily topics included: developing home plans which detailed where a family would go for shelter and what supplies would be needed; building a simple first-aid pack and listening to our guest speaker, Dianne Stadel from the Livingston County Health Department, speak on first-aid and ways to use common household items in case of an emergency; mindfulness and healthy lifestyles; and outdoor cooking methods. On the last day, our teams of youth utilized this new knowledge to survive our Zombie Apocalypse simulation. Adding to the fun, 4-H Teen Teachers and other local youth joined in and played the part of zombies, make-up and all. During each 15 minute day, the teams had to purchase supplies, keep their cardboard shelter intact, and take care of their team members. Also, they had to solve the mystery of who infected the town first. When asked what the best thing about zombie camp was, many youth replied, “The Zombie Apocalypse” “The Food” “The Teamwork” and “The Activities”. Many also said they were interested in future 4-H programs and learning more about the related 4-H project areas as a result of this camp. We even had one parent say that they wished we could offer this program to adults!



## Youth spending their summer "Learning to Do"

"How-to" project workshops from cake decorating to electricity support a summer of learning!

McLean County 4-H creates their summer programming to consist of a variety of project workshops that meet the needs of all youth through learning by doing.

Youth from all backgrounds, learning styles and abilities come together with a common interest and participate in workshops that will help youth reach mastery in their project areas. 59 youth participated in 11 summer workshops led by adults who are resident experts in specific project area content. A boutique owner, fair judges, professors from Illinois State University, 4-H club leaders, our own STEAM in the Classroom Coordinator and many other professionals took time out this summer to share their experience and expertise with 4-H members. That generous volunteerism is a model for McLean County 4-H youth and encourages them to work on skill and practice to achieve mastery.

The product of each workshop varied. In workshops such as cake decorating and chocolate making, youth learned and practiced the skills necessary for this exhibit at the 4-H show. Other workshops, such as electricity and sign painting, gave youth the opportunity to work with professionals and walk out with a completed project to exhibit at the fair.

No matter the product, each 4-H summer workshop encourages youth to learn more about the projects, skills, and the resources within their community by doing the work together. Participants belong to a group based on common interest, develop independence through learning by doing, witness community generosity from adult volunteers and take one step closer to mastery in that project area.



## NEW Money Mentors class excited to serve their communities

The revitalized Money Mentors program in McLean County has newly trained volunteers who will serve as mentors. These volunteers receive 30 hours of training in money management, financial mentoring, and using community resources. During training, volunteers have opportunities to apply financial knowledge to case examples and to practice their mentoring skills. Money Mentors dedicate dozens of volunteer hours through their role with mentees and involvement in community activities. They also receive continuing education annually. Mentors are members of our community who understand the value of community engagement, and they are committed to working with participants in the program. These volunteers work with mentee participants to help them build financial resiliency through holistic, non-discriminatory approaches. They consider the complexity of participants' experiences and aim to understand individuals' relationship with money and experiences managing finances. They cover topics that include (a) paying down debt, (b) saving money for self or family, (c) developing budgets that worked well for them, (d) increase contributions to retirement saving, and (e) practice healthy credit card usage.

To learn more about how you can participate in or volunteer for the program, please contact Camaya Wallace Bechard at [cawb17@illinois.edu](mailto:cawb17@illinois.edu) or the McLean County Extension Office at (309) 663-8306. New Mentee Participant registration opens August 2 on our website at [go.illinois.edu/LMW](http://go.illinois.edu/LMW).



## Live from Extension *These are stories, quotes and experiences live from individuals impacted by Extension.*

*One participant who regularly attends Diabetes Clinic, offered through our Nutrition & Wellness program, reported that his Hemoglobin A1C went down from 9 to 7 in three months and in one year, he lost 50 lbs. He contributes his success to what he has learned at Diabetes Clinic, and stated, "This program is better than anything in the country."*

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