

Impacting **I** YOU

"Impacting You" is a monthly report used to communicate University of Illinois Extension - Unit 26 programming impacts to stakeholders.

Dear Valued Stakeholder:

Extension plays a vital role in building a strong community by providing services that help solve problems, develop skills, and create a better future for local residents and youth. From reliable information to help businesses weather the economic effect of COVID-19 to activities to help families stay healthy in body and spirit, Illinois Extension remains a trusted source to address the most pressing issues in the state of Illinois relating to food, health, environment, community, and economy.

It is my pleasure to present this brief impact report of the programs and events offered to the residents of Franklin, Jackson, Perry, Randolph and Williamson Counties during this past month.

*Lynn Heins, County Extension Director
Serving Franklin, Jackson, Perry, Randolph & Williamson Counties*



Total
Contacts



Total Number
of Programs &
Events

Grants help Extension establish local community gardens

Addressing food insecurity is a core mission of University of Illinois Extension. Through the help of grant funding, community gardens will be established in Carbondale and Marion within the coming months as the result of two Growing Together grants. Growing Together is a multi-disciplinary special project focused on increasing access to fruits and vegetables in identified Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) networks to help food insecure families.

The project works in partnership with the Illinois Master Gardener and 4-H Youth programs. Through this collaboration, SNAP-Ed funds are provided to build or expand food donation gardens as local Master Gardener projects.



Growing Together Community Garden Grants



Illinois 4-H staff evaluate options for summer 2021 exhibitions

In 2020, more than 400 Illinois 4-H competitive events, exhibitions, and shows went virtual, providing a positive youth development experience while protecting our members, volunteers, and staff. While the 2021 4-H exhibition season will be shaped by the ongoing impact of the coronavirus pandemic, we are working hard to find solutions that balance the safety of our communities with the benefits our youth gain from participating in face-to-face judging experiences. For summer 2021, we are preparing for the possibility of returning to in-person events, based on local conditions at that time and in conjunction with current IDPH guidelines.



As the youth development program of University of Illinois Extension, our events must abide by the guidelines of both campus and the Illinois Department of Public Health. As we evaluate options and apply innovative thinking to our event management processes, it is important to note that Illinois 4-H will continue to follow all relevant public health guidelines. New safety protocols will play a significant role in our return to in-person programming. Illinois 4-H staff are diligently researching and designing a variety of program formats and structures. Our goal is to provide options so that each county can make their own program decisions based on current local conditions and the latest IDPH guidelines. By working in partnership with the local public health department and other organizations in our communities, we are committed to our youth participating in one of the hallmark experiences of being a 4-H member – 4-H exhibitions and shows, whatever format that may take. We remain committed to pacing our decision-making process in coordination with available data and safety protocols, but we are vetting scenarios that include a return of in-person judging for 4-H exhibitions in summer 2021.

In February, our unit welcomed three new Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) community workers. Jenny Povolish will be housed in Williamson County, and Nick Brown and Misty Bernhard will be located at our Jackson County office. In their role, community workers provide services, information and skills to empower families to make positive changes for their health.

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College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

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If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in programming, contact your registration office. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time for meeting your access needs.