ILLINOIS EXTENSION

Serving Henderson, Knox, McDonough and Warren Counties

August 2020

WORKING FROM HOME

Since we have been operating a little differently due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our staff have continued to work remotely from their homes to bring education and programming to residents in our communities, counties and beyond. While the work from home environment may be less than perfect, our team has stepped up to the challenge. Check out what we have been up to!



4-H FAIRS GONE VIRTUAL

4-H'ers in Henderson, Knox, McDonough and Warren counties prepared for Virtual 4-H Shows. While they were not able to have face-to-fact contact, 4-H members created videos for their livestock projects. General Show projects were highlighted through pictures and writing a project report explaining how they made their project.

The virtual system allowed for judges to view each project and submit feedback for the exhibitors. The 4-H staff would like to thank all volunteers and judges for sharing their time and knowledge with our 4-H youth.

The results of each show can be found by visiting the "News Release" section on our website.

FAMILY LIFE TEAM STILL AT WORK

Family Life Educator Tessa Hobbs-Curley and the rest of the family life educator team, developed and delivered numerous webinars during the past few months. The Discover Wellness series consisted of six weekly topics held in March and April. The series pertained to overall positive well-being and had a total of 1011 registrants from 28 different states and 2 different countries. Tessa cofacilitated the webinars: How High Do you Bounce?, Building Resilience, and Caregiver Self-Care which together were attended by 465 participants. The recordings of these webinars can be found at https://extension.illinois.edu/glob al/discover-wellness.

The team also hosted the Discover Brain Health webinar series, which also consisted of six weekly topics held in May and June. This series had a total of 963 registrants from 41 different states and 2 different countries. Tessa co-facilitated the webinars Hold That Thought and Two Heads are Better than One, which together were attended by 672 participants. The recordings of these webinars can be found at https://extension.illinois.edu/glob al/discover-brain-health.

Tessa and the Family Life Educators hosted a Life Story Writing virtual series that met for eight sessions during the month of May. Around 50 participants attended each session to learn about life story writing techniques, gain motivation to write, and find helpful feedback from peers. To show continued support in writing, the group started meeting monthly in July and will continue into August.

The webinars have been a great way to still reach out at least virtually, and they all have had residents attend from our four county area!



HENDERSON KNOX

Find us on Facebook @Henderson4H Find us on Facebook @Knox4H

Find us on Facebook @McDonough4H Find us on Facebook @4HWarren

4-H MOVING FORWARD

VIRTUAL LIVESTOCK JUDGING

Shelby Carlson, 4-H Youth Development Educator, partnered with John Wood Community College to host the first virtual livestock judging contest in Illinois in April. With the cancellation of the two locally hosted contests, Shelby found it important to offer an opportunity for 4-H members to showcase their skills in livestock evaluation. 85 youth participated in the contest. Since then, Shelby has assisted in the planning and implementation of the Illinois 4-H State Livestock Judging Contest's transition to a virtual format.

WELCOME TO THE REAL WORLD

4-H educators from across the state have been busy while at home editing and updating the Welcome to the Real World curriculum. Over 700 Henderson, Knox and Warren county 8th grade youth participate in the simulation every year.

The simulation begins with the assumption that students have completed basic education for their chosen career, are single, and 25 years old. They live on their own and are independent with no financial support from family and others. They proceed through the simulation in which they must deduct taxes, determine a savings amount, pay off a student loan (if applicable), and then pay their bills reflecting the career and lifestyle choices.



SNAP-ED

The Snap-Ed team has taken this rare opportunity to sharpen their knowledge and skills as well as learn new skills to better teach their audiences. Every SNAP-Ed employee across the state enrolled in and completed the National Nutrition Certification Program offered by Utah Sate University. Following a review of current curriculum's used, the SNAP-Ed team continued their education with frequently asked about topics like Reading and Understanding Food Labels, Cooking, Increasing Physical Activities, and Understanding Food Insecurity. While continuing education, the team kept in touch with and offered community partners online resources to assist clients and families during these difficult times. Looking forward to fall, the SNAP-Ed team are developing techniques to effectively deliver programs virtually.

VOLUNTEERS REMAIN BUSY

Three Rivers Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists have changed what volunteering "looks" like.

- MG/MN learned new digital technologies in order to move programming from in person to virtual.
- "Touch a Truck" became "Sense a Truck" with MG/MN giving a virtual tour of Ms. Mariposa, the Monarch butterfly educational bus.
- Social media posts have engaged viewers with local community garden spaces. The IL Monarch Waystation Capitol Facebook page promoted the benefits of pollinators throughout the month of May.
- MG have added extra rows to their home gardens to raise food for their local pantries. Food donation amounts to be determined as they harvest.
- Citizen science projects, such as I Pollinate, Bee Spotter, and Nest Watch, are being completed in the backyards of a number of MN homes.
- The Naturalist Notebook blog is being used as a training tool for other MN programs from across the state.
- MG and MN have continued their education by viewing online webinars, reading scientific journal articles, and researching information on their own projects.



MCDONOUGH WARREN



NOT SLOWING DOWN

The global pandemic has not slowed down efforts of the University of Illinois Extension Horticulture team. In fact, with the burst of interest in gardening, local horticulture efforts have far-exceeded years past. Working from home has presented challenges, but the local Extension horticulture team continues to provide the community with valuable resources to help it's citizens and communities.

In March as the country shutdown, Illinois Extension educators saw a surge in demand for knowledge in vegetable gardening. They scaled up their efforts to deliver timely news articles, blog posts, videos, podcasts, social media posts, and more efforts to deliver research-based information to Illinois citizens. With restrictions on in-person education, the educators and coordinators have made every effort to deliver the needed information to the public safely.

Since the stay at home order was given, your local Extension horticulture staff has delivered: Blog Posts - 20 *Good Growing has had over 37,000 views since Jan 1* Webinars Delivered & Moderated - 6 TV Appearances - 2 Podcast Episodes - 14 Print News Articles - 18 Videos Posted Online - 12 Radio Interviews - 2 Client Questions Answered - 202

Additionally, horticulture staff have provided information to commercial fruit and vegetable growers since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak. Illinois Extension partnered with the Illinois Farmers' Market Association to give the tools they need to make plans for the safe opening of local farmers' markets. Christopher Enroth, Horticulture Educator, has communicated these state-wide efforts with area farmers, health departments, and market organizers on the procedures for opening up local farmers' markets and managing the risk of disease transmission.

Further efforts have been made by local Extension horticulture staff to retain the function of food donation gardens. In the past, much of this work was conducted by Extension Master Gardeners, however, Extension suspended volunteer activity during the stay-at-home order. For 2020, Extension staff have maintained the gardens keeping beds weeded and ready for volunteers to return. Some garden crops were also planted and harvest has commenced with produce being donated to local food pantries.



COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

While working from home Carrie McKillip, Community and Economic Development Educator, has spent countless hours on a variety of projects.

- The Henderson County Mitigation plan received FEMA approval pending adoption. They are in the process of receiving resolutions from the participating jurisdictions to submit for final approval. This is crucial for jurisdictions to be able to receive pre and post disaster mitigation funding from FEMA.
- Research was done to update the Age Matters program to include iGen or Gen Z. The updated version was then presented via Zoom to the Illinois County Officials Leadership Academy. Carrie also recorded two class presentations on Age Matters for College Sandburg College students.
- Local Government Official webinars have continued to take place. The webinars are held via Zoom and are recorded. Past webinars can be found at go.illinois.edu/lge
- The Rural Quality of Life Project taking place in Bushnell has continued despite restrictions. Interviews have taken place over the phone. The team is currently developing a plan to host small group meetings with community members.
- Carrie served on the panel discussion for the National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals response to COVID-19 both for EDEN and Illinois Extension.
- The Six County Fast Pitch Competition has been postponed until 2021 to allow entrepreneurs to be able to safely participate.

BACK IN OFFICE

Thank you for your patience as we have tried to keep our staff and members of our community safe by continuing to work remotely. Our staff will start transitioning back into offices in mid-August. The current plan is for our offices to open to the public on September 14. Until then, curbside pick-up is available for any material you might need before then and can be arranged by calling the office.

Due to some policies in how we are required to staff offices, there may be some changes to the days and times the offices are open. Any changes will be posted on the door at each office, as well as to our website and social media as soon as the changes are finalized in the upcoming weeks.











CHECK US OUT

Be sure to keep up to date with all the latest news and what we are doing by following us on social media.

Check out our website to stay up to date on all the events being offered virtually and in person, check out our news releases and blogs, and so much more!



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