

Serving Henderson, Knox, McDonough and Warren Counties

December 2020



NEW PROGRAM STARTS STRONG

With parents, teachers, caregivers, and students under constant challenges during this pandemic, Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists seized an opportunity to make a difference. This fall dedicated volunteers along with horticulture staff rolled out their new take home kits program.

In their inaugural offering, they made and delivered over 300 kits for local children. The kits are free to the public and provide fun educational activities for preschool to middle school students. Each kit contains the materials needed for the activity as well as a comprehensive guide for adults to successfully lead their students through the activity to completion. Additional "surprise" bonus materials and activities were supplied by our partners at Illinois Farm Bureau and other University of Illinois Extension programs.

Each quarter new take home kits will be released. The newest kits were announced on December 18 and will be available for pick up beginning January 4, 2021. To find out more about the take home kits visit <u>go.illinois.edu/TakeHomeKits</u>.





LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION

Each year, elected and appointed government officials and administrators from across the state improve their knowledge and skills through professional development opportunities offered by University of Illinois Extension. Participants benefit from the advanced instruction and broad expertise that instructors bring to the programming. In this past year, over 3000 local government officials and community leaders participated through webinars and program recordings.

Registration for upcoming webinars, as well as recordings of past webinars, can be found at <u>go.illinois.edu/lge</u>.

Upcoming Webinars

• January 12, 2021 State of Illinois: Legislative Update

• January 21, 2021 Rural Partners: Telehealth (Part 1)

• January 27,2021 National Association of Counties' Federal Legislative Update

• January TBA Rural Partners: Telehealth (Part 2)

• February - March 2021 TBA DEI in Education Policy (Series)

Be notified of what is coming up by signing up to receive updates at <u>go.illinois.edu/hkmwNews</u> to sak as much

BRAIN HEALTH INITIATIVE

Alzheimer's disease affects roughly 5.8 million people in the US and is the fifth leading cause of death among Americans age 65 years and older. By 2030, more than 24% of Illinois' residents will be 60 years and older. Currently, the biggest risk factor for dementia is age. Research shows that if individuals can push back and possibly stave off the effects of Alzheimer's disease, they can potentially increase the length of the quality of their lives. Positive lifestyle and wellness choices and effective management of other health conditions are contributing factors to brain and body health.

The overall goal of the Illinois Extension Brain Health Initiative is that participants adopt long-term health-promoting behaviors to enhance physical and mental wellness. The team's brain health programs center around research that supports lifestyle factors that contribute to brain health, some of which include, rest, diet, socialization, stress management, intellectual engagement, and physical activity.

The team facilitated 135 brain health programs directly reaching 3107 participants. These included presentations to several state and national meetings/conferences. They also delivered brain health education by indirect means through news articles, social media posts, the Extending Wellness texting program, radio interviews, podcasts, and articles included in the Bathroom Buzz newsletter for a total reach of 317,501. Their Family Files Blog had 10,248 views, with many of the articles featuring a brain health related topic.

A Discover Brain Health webinar series was designed to help participants understand the brain as we mature, and tips and strategies were provided to maintain and improve brain health and function, including activities to challenge the brain. A total of 2863 participants engaged in the webinars, tuning in from 41 states and three countries. The recording of these webinars can be found at: <u>extension.illinois.edu/global/discover-brain-health</u>.

THE AWARDS SHOW MUST GO ON...

The Knox and McDonough County 4-H programs held a drive through awards show to recognize youth accomplishments from the 2019-2020 4-H year, and handed out the 2020 4-H Fair trophies. Families drove through and received their goodie bag full of snacks as well as their awards.



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MASTER GARDENER TRAININGS

Wondering what to do this winter? Want to further your passion for gardening? Our Master Gardener program is proud to offer two different ways to participate in our high quality, scientifically based training.

If you work full time or it is hard to attend a class at a specific time each week, this first option is a perfect fit for participants juggling a schedule. Our online training contains all of the rigorous materials found in our face to face training, but participants work through it at their own pace. Viewing videos, reading materials, and taking quizzes to test your knowledge, this course offers the flexibility working adults need. Registration is open now and classes begin on January 21, 2021.

The second training option will be a hybrid of our face to face training and our online course. Meeting every Tuesday starting February 16, 2021, participants will meet virtually with educators each morning to discuss that week's topic as part of a state wide group. The trainees will then meet as a local group to work through a hands on activity and case study with their local educator and coordinator (in person if health guidelines permit, via Zoom if not). This is a great way to build relationships with fellow trainees as well as receive immediate feedback from our expert educators.

The cost for either training is \$200 and includes a comprehensive manual and all of the materials needed. Access to a high speed internet connection is highly recommended. Contact Wendy Ferguson, program coordinator at <u>wendyf@illinois.edu</u> for more details.

RESOURCE PAGE LAUNCHED

A new webpage can assist in learning from home. The resource webpage was developed to provide educators, parents, and caregivers an easy way to find online materials that can help engage their children in a variety of learning experiences.

The top of the webpage lists what Extension has to offer for parents and educators. Scroll down and navigate through sections to find fun activities and lessons. Sections include: Hands-on Activities, Robotics and Coding, STEM, Staying Healthy, Subject Learning, and Virtual Tours. The webpage can be found at go.illinois.edu/YouthResources.











CHECK US OUT

Stay up to date with all the latest Extension news and programs by following us on social media @ILExtensionHKMW.

Check out our website to find a list of all the events being offered virtually and in person, the latest news releases and blogs, and so much more!



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