



Illinois Extension

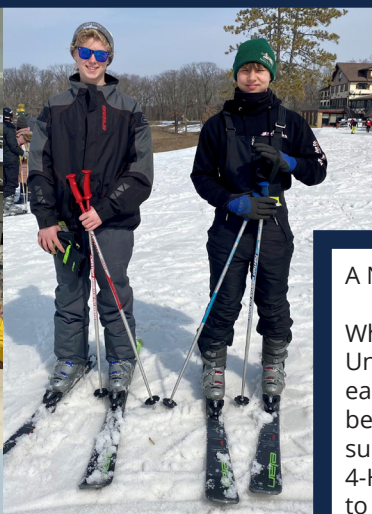
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

First Quarter 2021 Impact Report Jo Daviess, Stephenson, and Winnebago Counties



Extending Knowledge; Changing Lives

Illinois Extension offers practical education to help people, businesses and communities solve problems, develop skills and build a better future.



A Note from our Director:

While 2020 brought several unknowns, I'm proud to say University of Illinois Extension was able to overcome each of these new and unique challenges. We continued being productive with educational programming and support including having 4-H members participate in 4-H Shows, our nutrition staff finding ways to connect to the under-served and our Extension educators continuing to create and deliver new content.

We jumped into 2021 with the winter conference season reaching most of our usual audience and many new faces via many successful virtual events. As you'll see throughout the report—we did that and much more! Our volunteers were very patient as we navigated how to move forward and return to in-person programming. Thank you to all of our volunteers and supporters for your dedication and perseverance.

Looking to the future, planning for summer is well underway—4-H Shows will be in-person, programming has already started to resume face-to-face and the phone lines are ringing off the hook for the Master Gardener help desks. We are ready for a summer of living, learning, and having fun.

Stay tuned,

Margaret

Pictured: (top left and top center) Stephenson 4-H members Emma Gustafson, Michelle Marck and Magen Busker make tie-dye shirts during a leadership meeting; (top right) U of I Local Foods and Small Farms Educator Grant McCarty prunes the fruit tree in front of the Winnebago County Extension Office; (right) Winnebago 4-H members in the Youth Leadership Team, Meredith Dady, Robert Dady, Amelia McCray-Grotto and Claire Hopkins have their first face-to-face meeting since COVID; (center) Jo Daviess 4-H members Joseph Brudi and Karl Hubb pause for a photo during the annual 4-H Ski Trip; (center left) Piper and Parker AuWerter show off their newly acquired baking skills thanks to the "I Made That" program.



Local Food Systems and Small Farms



Since March 2020, Local Food Systems & Small Farms Educator Grant McCarty has created 40+ videos for the Unit's YouTube channel offering local gardening advice.



Visit
go.illinois.edu/JSWYouTube

Intro to Fruit Tree Pruning - McCarty converted his popular winter class into a virtual webinar on the basics of pruning, tools to use and strategies for fruit trees.



3 virtual sessions



90 individuals attended

After the Intro to Fruit Tree Pruning class, 22 participants sent in 88 photos of fruit trees for advice from McCarty on which limbs to keep or prune. McCarty consulted on each tree by drawing to show the tree's structure and which branches to prune.

Stateline Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference - Another project was the 25th annual conference. The usual day-long experience was split into **5 virtual sessions** in February. The conference attracts commercial vegetable and fruit growers from Illinois and Wisconsin who sell to direct and/or wholesale markets.



4 sessions: Apples & Pears, Stone Fruits, Grapes, and Strawberries



Averaged 29 people per session

Illinois Nutrition Education



ABC's of School Nutrition - The start to 2021 was a busy one for Educator Carol

Erickson. Erickson, along with Nutrition and Wellness Educator Diane Reinhold, designed and created the ABC's of School Nutrition, a peer-reviewed school nutrition training program that is funded by the Illinois State Board of Education. Together, Erickson and Reinhold turned the in-person training into virtual events for 2021.

We had to address the need since we couldn't meet in person. School nutrition professionals still needed their continuing education courses in order to be compliant with the USDA's professional standards requirements for school nutrition staff.

-Carol Erickson
Extension Educator, SNAP-Ed



Visit go.illinois.edu/abc

Erickson led several of the newly created online courses between January and March, including: Meals in the Classroom, Meal Service for Remote Learners, Garden to Cafeteria, and ABC's Lunchroom Heroes. Reinhold led two sessions of a timely course on Food Handler Training with COVID-19 Guidance.



5 virtual sessions led by Erickson
2 virtual sessions led by Reinhold



143 individuals attended Erickson's courses
157 individuals attended Reinhold's course



94 School Districts represented in Erickson's courses
36 School Districts represented in Reinhold's courses

Environmental and Energy Stewardship

Supporting local environmental organizations and helping them navigate the virtual world during a global pandemic has been the main priority for Stanley (Jay) Solomon, Environments and Energy Stewardship Educator. Solomon has been working with the Jo Daviess Soil and Water Health Coalition, Northwest Illinois Forage and Grassland Council, Northwest Illinois Forestry Association and the Northern Illinois Land Stewardship Coalition.

The key for each of these groups is looking at how to provide educational events virtually or limited in-person capacity within the next year.

-Stanley (Jay) Solomon
Environmental & Energy Stewardship Educator

The virtual transition for many of these groups has been difficult, but Solomon has guided them through this difficult time by providing an online platform, offering technical assistance, participating in efforts, providing insight and helping plan virtual meetings. "A lot of these groups have struggled to go virtual," explains Solomon. "I've been able to advise them based on the University guidelines as examples to work from going forward."

Solomon's challenge moving forward will be to help each of the groups revert back to face-to-face events safely.



Commercial Agriculture

Northwest Illinois Agronomy Summit - The virtual conference, 'Updates in Nutrient and Pest Management,' was held in February and March. University of Illinois and University of Wisconsin-Madison specialists addressed production strategies including pest management, cover crop management, grain safety and more.



7 virtual sessions replaced the day-long, in-person event



41 registered participants

Midwestern Hemp Database - Commercial Agriculture Educator Phillip Alberti has been at the forefront of creating the Midwestern Hemp Database, a research project started in 2020. The project is a collaboration of Midwest Universities, testing laboratories and growers creating a network to provide research-backed, regional insight into agronomic performance and cannabinoid development of industrial hemp varieties.



Visit go.illinois.edu/hempdatabase

Nutrition and Wellness

I Made That! - In January 2021, the "I MADE That!" program was introduced to youth and 4-H families across the Unit. This new bi-monthly program was co-created by Nutrition and Wellness Educator Diane Reinhold. The goal of the program is to introduce youth to 4-H while promoting healthy lifestyles. These educational kits offer families an opportunity to work together to give youth various cooking experiences while learning about food safety and healthy nutrition choices.



Each kit includes a baking guide along with items to get you started on the included recipes. In January, families learned how to bake yeast bread as shown above.

It's important to develop a healthy lifestyle early in life. Learning about healthy eating, food safety, and healthy modifications when making your favorite recipe are essential skills that can help us live a long and healthy life.

-Diane Reinhold

Nutrition and Wellness Educator



57 kits were ordered for the January "I Made That" program featuring National Baking Month



23 kits were ordered for the March "I Made That" program featuring National Nutrition Month

4-H and Youth Development

Jo Daviess, Stephenson and Winnebago 4-H programs have kept pretty busy, even during the off-season. Becky Gocken made the transition from Stephenson County 4-H Program Coordinator to Winnebago County 4-H Program Coordinator. Brenda Heimann was hired to take over the role in Stephenson County.



Over the course of the first three months of 2021, events are slowly returning to in-person. All three counties have held:

- Virtual Youth Officer Training
- A 4-H Ski Trip
- Camp Counselor Trainings
- Monthly Leadership Meetings
- Public Speaking Workshops held in conjunction with local County Farm Bureaus
- 4-H county-wide, monthly meetings
- 4-H Beef Weigh-Ins



Your Thoughts Matter - Local youth participated in a series of mental health discussions in February and March. This virtual program gave youth the opportunity to learn about how to navigate the often-taboo subject of mental health. Together, youth learned how to define mental health, how to talk about it with family and friends and how to help themselves and others. Topics included discussing different mental health behaviors and disorders such as anxiety, depression and self-harm as well as examining the tainted ideology of mental health and how to properly seek help.

It's important to change the culture surrounding the topic of teen mental health and make it okay for youth to talk about. Mental health is not just an adult topic. Tackling this issue and removing the stigma that surrounds mental health is probably the best investment we can give our children and future generations.

-Angela Miller

Jo Daviess 4-H and Youth Program Coordinator

Horticulture

'Think Spring' Gardening Series - A virtual program was created to replace the annual in-person programming for early 2021. Program Coordinators Nikki Keltner and Alex Burbach designed the series to offer a range of gardening topics for all skill levels.



6 webinars in the series with top educators from across the state



210 registered participants throughout the series



Highest attended webinar had 122 registered participants

In one session, participants learned about the care for succulents—the hardy desert plant turned popular houseplant as well as how to create a living wreath with them.



Staff at Washington Elementary in the Rockford School District assemble yogurt parfaits during one of SNAP-Ed Community Worker Terre McGee's weekly visits.

SNAP-Education

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Community Workers Barb Curry, Rita Gillette, Terre McGee and Linda Ricker have continued educational classes in Stephenson and Winnebago Counties to help limited income households focus on healthful diets and physical activity. Programs focused on helping families with tips to eat healthy while saving money and making the most out of their grocery dollars. Together, the team also created a new virtual class that had a lot of success, "Container Gardening."



40 face-to-face youth classes
50 virtual youth classes



528 youth impacted
225 adults impacted



15 face-to-face adult classes
30 virtual adult classes



7 new partners joined with SNAP-Ed in the first quarter.



During the first quarter of 2021, SNAP has worked with:

- 8 K-12 Schools
- 6 Emergency Food Sites
- 10 Agencies/Community Centers
- 1 Store/Market

SNAP-Education Program Coordinator Gina Adams has redirected her duties to finding new ways to reach out to community partners without the usual face-to-face contact. Adams delivers promotional items including calendars and recipe cards for the various SNAP-Ed virtual programming as well as keeping the eat-move-save website current. Adams has been able to find ways to continue her relationship with various program partners in the Rockford area including Rosecrance Health Network, Remedies, Northern Illinois Food Bank, Salvation Army, and the Northwest Community Center.



Visit go.illinois.edu/EatMoveSave for more information about SNAP-Ed.

University of Illinois Extension office locations

Jo Daviess County

204 Vine St.
PO Box 600
Elizabeth, IL 61028
815-858-2273

Stephenson County

Highland Community College
Building R,
2998 W. Pearl City Rd.
Freeport, IL 61032
815-235-4125

Winnebago County

1040 North Second St.
Rockford, IL 61107
815-986-4357

SNAP-Ed Rockford Office

850 N. Church St.
Rockford, IL 61103
779-423-0982



website:
go.illinois.edu/jsw



Facebook:
University of Illinois Extension -
Jo Daviess/Stephenson/Winnebago County



email:
uie-jsw@illinois.edu



YouTube:
go.illinois.edu/JSWYouTube

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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 in any program, please contact the county Extension Office.
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