

Extension's Impact and Local Response of COVID-19

Livingston, McLean,
and Woodford
Counties

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Extension

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER
& ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES



March - May 2020

4-H Youth Development



What's Quackin'

McLean County 4-H typically hosts an embryology program in classrooms across McLean County called Chick It Out. This year for 2020, we adapted the program to create a virtual experience for teachers and youth to learn about embryology by featuring growing duck embryos in daily videos. Youth and families engaged in daily Quack Facts and What's Quackin' Wednesday interactive activities through social media. Several area teachers also incorporated our What's Quackin' program into their E-Learning curriculum. The entire series reached over 23,149 people and the video posts were shared hundreds of times in just May and June. The curriculum is also built as a YouTube playlist and linked on the Extension website to make it always accessible as a tool for teaching all year long.



What's Quackin' Playlist:
<https://bit.ly/3eS5pUu>

4-H Rocketry Project Blasts Off!

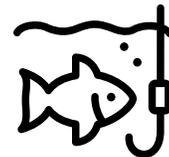
The McLean 4-H team worked with a donor to provide eleven rocketry kits for youth to use at the 4-H Show. With this the kits demonstrated the basics of putting together the rocket and using problem solution skills

Fluttering Butterfly Adventures

University of Illinois Extension Livingston 4-H staff transitioned the spring butterfly school program into a virtual experience to continue to reach area youth during the stay-at-home order. The resulting 4-H Butterfly Adventures program consisted of 18 episodes available on both Facebook and YouTube, 18,997 feeds were reached with over 1,458 video minutes watched, and engagements that include 247 post shares and 267 additional clicks, comments and likes. Educational resource activities for teachers to use with their students was included. In addition to reaching schools throughout Livingston County, the program was shared statewide. This program individually was highlighted by National 4-H during its 4-H at Home national newsletter distribution as a representative of Illinois 4-H action to our youth and communities. (Butterfly Adventures Playlist: <https://bit.ly/3cAYnCx>)



Out Fishing



McLean County 4-H, State 4-H Office, and a gracious local donor held a Virtual Fishing Fun Fest. Fishing encourages a healthy lifestyle, an appreciation of nature, builds patience, builds confidence, and increases independence. Not only did youth fish, but they tried to keep the lakes and ponds clean while doing so. Youth learned how to measure a fish once caught, and learned about different bait to use while fishing.

Making Ice Cream with STEAM

The McLean County STEAM in the Classroom program initiated a STEAM at Home program with daily STEAM Challenges for youth and families to get involved with a STEAM activity while at home. The activities were simple and required few materials. The topics included Milk Magic, Creating a Maze, and Experimenting with Nature and Wind style activities. The STEAM social media challenges, post insights from Facebook included over 172,496 reached with over 5,000 types of engagements (likes, loves, comments, etc.) and specifically 1,965 post shares. One viral post (Making Homemade Ice Cream) pushed other post engagements higher with that post still active today with over 1,700 individual post shares.

Take the STEAM at Home Challenge



Make Ice Cream

½ Cup Milk
(milk alternatives work great too)
1 Tbsp. Sugar
1 tsp. Vanilla
¼ Cup salt
2 Cups Ice
1 sandwich baggie
1 gallon baggie

- Add milk, sugar, and vanilla into the sandwich bag. *Make sure it is sealed all the way.*
- Add salt and ice into the gallon sized bag.
- Placed the sealed sandwich bag into the gallon bag and seal it closed.
- Shake! It will take about 5 minutes of shaking to turn your ingredients into ice cream.
- Once you are done, wipe off the outside of the sandwich bag to remove any water and salt, and ENJOY!

Did you know 'cold' doesn't really exist? It is simply the absence of heat!

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www.facebook.com/UofIExtensionMcLeanSTEAM

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Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time for meeting your access needs.

In May, our 4-H Youth Development Educator sent out resources to 97 leaders pertaining to youth and adult mental health, along with guides and activities for virtual club meeting etiquette. The team coordinated with 4-H teens in Livingston County to produce and share project videos across all Unit 4-H Facebook pages that reached 3,343 people with 763 total views.

Checking in on our 4-H Communities

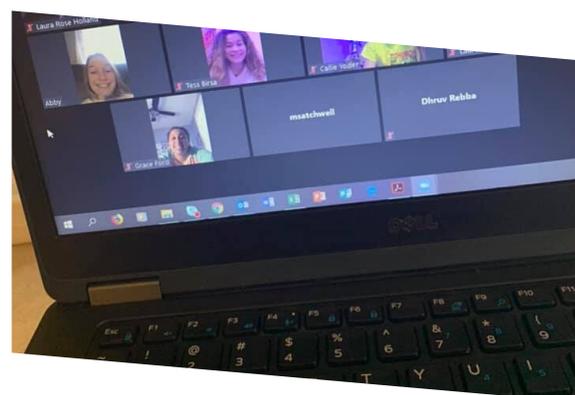
Partnering up for At-Home Activities

Unity Community Center collaborated with the Children's Discovery Museum to provide at-home STEM activity kits for Unity youth while they sheltered in place. Unity staff collaborated with other Extension staff (Horticulture/ANR, SNAP-Ed, Food & Sanitation) and community partners to put together the STEM activity kits.



Taking 4-H Office Hours Virtual

4-H Virtual Office Hours: The McLean County 4-H Team worked together to be a support system for the 4-H families. The team provided extended virtual office hours on six different days to help answer any questions that a family might have, ranging from 4-H projects to how to run a club meeting virtually.



Unity's Plan for Food Access

The Unity Community Center addressed food access, one of Extensions grand challenges, through a collaboration with United Way McLean County to provide evening meals to Unity families and local community members at the center. Volunteers from the Boys & Girls Club and the Eastview Community Outreach program joined the effort to assist by distributing the meals. Over 10,000 meals were distributed between April and June 1.

A Little Free Pantry was setup in front of the building to serve the community surrounding Unity. The pantry is restocked 2 to 3 times a week with non-perishable food. Other community members often add food to it to continue supporting each other. Garden in the Bucket kits were also distributed to Unity families. These kits provided a bucket, soil, and tomato, pepper and basil plants with instructions on how to grow the plants in the 5-gallon bucket.



Consumer Economics



The financial concerns of residents are ever-changing, from food insecurity to unemployment. Many residents are dealing with day-to-day and possible long-term financial insecurities. The University of Illinois Extension Consumer Economics program has maximized its educational efforts through digital platforms. Recently, the team offered educational programs on *health insurance, medical identity theft, student loan repayment, coping with financial stress, locating local, state, and national financial resources, and communicating with loved ones during times of economic of distress.*

The **educational resources** were provided in a variety of ways: webinars, fact sheets, blogs, podcast, and volunteers to answer questions.

Programming focuses on timely topics that are central concerns for residents. The team designed the Consumer Economics **Webinar Series: Let's Talk Money**, to cover relevant topics such as creating financial plans, managing credit, increasing savings, debt repayment plans, among others. The team has a growing registration list with over 100 participants signed-up for the eight week series.



To learn more about the program, please visit our local Consumer Economics page at go.illinois.edu/LMW_CE or statewide page at <https://extension.illinois.edu/global/consumer-economics>. If you have any questions, contact CE Educator Camaya Wallace Bechard at cawb17@illinois.edu.

Nutrition & Wellness



Impacting Illinois' Nutrition Statewide

Local Nutrition and Wellness Educator and Registered Dietitian and team collaborated with other Extension program areas to create a wide variety of COVID-19 resources. The communications team shared the resources on the State Extension Facebook page. The list below includes three examples that Livingston, McLean & Woodford County wrote and their reach for one month:

<u><i>Know Who to Trust for Reliable Health Information</i></u> (and in <i>Spanish</i>)	14,581
<u><i>What Can You Freeze?</i></u>	12,437
<u><i>Find Ways to Use Leftovers</i></u>	11,413

The Livingston, McLean & Woodford Nutrition and Wellness team worked with the Nutrition and Wellness state team to develop the **Health at Home Webinar Series**. Jenna Smith, Extension educator served as a moderator for two webinars, “**The Science Behind Popular Eating Trends**” and “**Diabetes: Practicing Self-care During Difficult Times.**” Over 340 participants attended the webinars.

Nutrition & Wellness Take on the Air Waves

The Nutrition and Wellness Educator had a radio interview with the RFD Radio Network to discuss food handling and safety during COVID-19. The radio network has a potential reach of **76,900** listeners.



The team also had a radio interview with WJBC AM 1230 to discuss food handling during COVID-19 and food preservation. The network has a potential reach of **8,000** listeners.

Impacting Wellness Here at Home

The Nutrition and Wellness team continued to provide **Diabetes Clinic**, the only diabetes support group in Woodford County. In-person programs transitioned to recorded webinars viewed online. The recorded webinars covered topics like “**Managing Stress and Diabetes**” and “**Taking Comfort in Food.**”

Osteoporosis Awareness and Virtual Learning

The Nutrition and Wellness team developed a series of four videos to highlight National Osteoporosis Month for the month of May. The videos were posted weekly on the Livingston, McLean & Woodford Extension Facebook page and already have reached over 700 impressions.

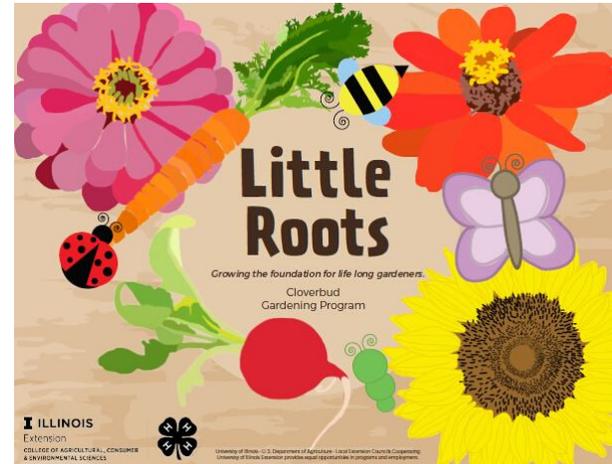


Agriculture & Natural Resources



Encouraging "Little Roots" for Tomorrow's Gardeners

The Horticulture & 4-H Teams are offering a youth gardening program to inspire and teach them to grow their own food and appreciate the world around them. The Little Roots program includes a gardening calendar to guide youth and their guardian in growing six different plants from seed through harvest. The calendar engages youth in weekly activities that encourage observing the world around them, researching basic horticulture terms, and caring for their plants. Youth that participate in the program will also be offered three opportunities to “showcase” their vegetables and flowers. A Facebook group has been created to share weekly tips, videos, and gardening activities.



Giving Gardens

The Horticulture team established production of storable crops, including potatoes, sweet potatoes, onions, and squash, for the Unity Community Center food distribution site. Gardening activity bundles and tomato plants were distributed to Unity families in May. Forty garden buckets with peppers and basil plants will be distributed to community members visiting the Unity food distribution site in June.



Backyard Garden Challenge: From Social Media to your Backyard

The Horticulture team created a daily backyard garden challenge on Facebook to engage volunteers and gardeners while they are at home. Since the first post on Earth Day in late April - thousands of Facebook feeds reached with 1,413 actively engaged with the post adding comments, sharing, and reading the attached article. The engagement rate on these posts is 5 times higher than average Facebook post engagement rate. During the last month of the backyard garden challenge, 51 new people started following the Livingston, McLean & Woodford County Master Gardener page.

Backyard Garden Challenge

Create with Dandelions & Violets

- Use these spring bloomers to make art!
 - design shapes
 - paint on paper or a sidewalk
 - be creative!
- Share pictures with us!



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Find more Backyard Garden Challenges at www.facebook.com/MidIllinoisMasterGardener

In April, the Horticulture team created and distributed 150 garden-themed activity bundles to youth through Bloomington-Normal Boys & Girls Club.

Gardening Activity Bags

Master Gardener Help Desks Go Virtual

Livingston, McLean & Woodford County Master Gardeners have continued to offer their knowledge to the community by offering virtual Help Desks to answer homeowner questions about gardening, identifying plants, and gardening issues. People can reach us by phone at (309)663-8306, Ext: 1218, Facebook messages, or email uiemg-mclean@illinois.edu with submissions, images, and questions. These options help encourage community member submissions of their questions while office hours are adjusted.



University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists are contributing to citizen science projects, growing food for their community, conducting garden experiments, and engaging in online horticulture education and webinars.

Always Learning, Growing, and Sharing

Extension Program Collaborations

Collaboration Adds Summer Fun to Learning

University of Illinois Extension Livingston, McLean & Woodford staff have collaborated to be a "Community Educator of the Week" for Bloomington District 87 schools. Nutrition & Wellness, 4-H, STEAM in the Classroom, and Horticulture teams combined resources and educational lessons and activities to be included in bundles distributed to 300 PreK through 12th-grade students at summer food distribution sites.



Extension's Educational Kits ready to be distributed to 300 youth of District 87 Schools in Bloomington.

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