

# THE QUARTERLY CONNECTION

Madison, Monroe and St. Clair Counties



## COUNTY DIRECTOR UPDATE

WRITTEN BY: LAQUITSHA BEJOILE-HAYES

My name is Laquitsha Bejoile-Hayes, and I am eager to continue serving Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair Counties as County Director. I have worked for the University of Illinois Extension for over six years in two roles; the Illinois State Board of Education Extension Program Coordinator and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Educator/ SNAP-ED Administrator.



I am a Cahokia native and take pride in all my professional and personal roles. I completed my bachelor's degree in Human Nutrition and Dietetics from the Southern Illinois University of Carbondale and my master's in Public Health from the University of Illinois-Springfield. Most of my work experience has been in Food Access and Leadership. I am a Trauma Response Trainer, Family Development Credential Facilitator, and a member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Incorporated, Alpha Upsilon Sigma East St. Louis Chapter.

First on my agenda is to learn more about our staff and volunteers and fill job vacancies. I look forward to meeting you. Thank you for your continued support.

## CONNECT WITH US!



Email us at:  
[uie-mms@illinois.edu](mailto:uie-mms@illinois.edu)



Waterloo: 618-939-3434  
Collinsville: 618-344-4230  
East St. Louis: 618-875-8939



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# 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



Madison, Monroe and St. Clair Counties

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## Madison County



### 4-H ECO BOT CHALLENGE AT THE 20TH ANNUAL WATER FESTIVAL

The 20th Annual Water Festival was hosted by The National Great Rivers Research and Education Center (NGRREC) at Lewis and Clark Community College on Friday, September 29.

This event provided a professional development opportunity for 5th-grade teachers and environmental water activities for their students. Nine elementary schools participated in the event and explored how robots can be used to preserve and protect our environment and local water sources.



## St. Clair County

### COMMUNITY GARDEN OPEN HOUSE AT CAHOKIA HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL

A Growing Together Illinois Grant has helped a local Master Gardener and Cahokia Heights teacher purchase supplies to install some raised beds in the back portion of the High School property. Unit 22 ANR, SNAP-ED, and 4-H youth development have partnered to generate food advocacy programming and help spread awareness about food access in Cahokia Heights. Approximately 150 youth and ten adults attended the Garden Open House. Youth and school faculty were invited to tour the garden, and help harvest green tomatoes, green peppers, and jalapeno peppers.







# YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Madison, Monroe and St. Clair Counties

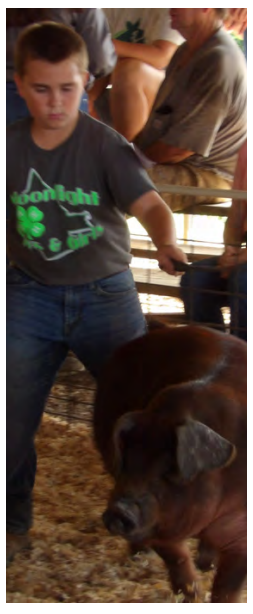
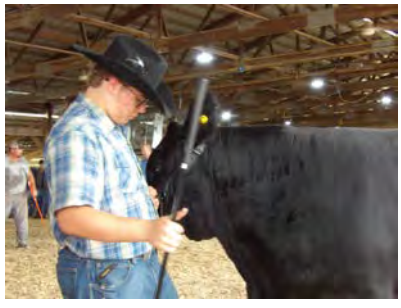
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## Monroe County

### MONROE COUNTY FAIR

Horticulture & Crops Show: 8 Exhibitors

Livestock Shows: 108 Exhibitors



### MASTER SHOWMANSHIP CONTEST

Monroe County 4-H held its first-ever Master Showmanship Contest at the county fair this year. Placing top Master Showman was Olivia Stechmesser. Olivia competed against other Master Showmen across the state at the Illinois State Fair on August 12. Lydia Henerfauth was chosen as the alternate showman.



## ON THE HORIZON

- October 3-8: National 4-H Week
- October 4 & 6: Valmeyer & Waterloo Jr. High Science Clubs begin
- October 6: Federation New Member Event
- October 14: Robotics Club begins
- October 21: Cloverbuds begin
- November 6: Achievement Program

### ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

- General Projects:
  - 29 Exhibitors
  - 8 Champions
  - 3 Reserve Champions
  - 4 Inspire Awards
- Livestock: 11 Exhibitors





# COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE

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## PUMPKIN FIELD DAY

Pumpkin Field Day was held on September 1 at Eckert's Orchard in Belleville. Pumpkin producers from Illinois and around the Midwest toured a variety trial with over 80 varieties. Participants also learned about current research on weed and cover crop management, the value of foliar nutrient applications, disease management, and insect pest and pollinator management.



## SOUTHERN ILLINOIS SUMMER TWILIGHT SERIES- LOCAL GROWER SPOTLIGHT

The series highlights and demonstrates diverse farming enterprises across southern Illinois. Feather's Farm in Waterloo hosted the July program. Keith and Betsy Jones shared their knowledge and experiences building a farm from the ground up. The program included a demonstration of how they grow lettuce through the summer heat (from seed to harvest), high tunnel and irrigation automation, the importance of irrigation water quality and how to fix poor water quality, rain harvest systems, and no-till production systems. They also discussed how they developed their marketing strategy as they built their farm.



## ON THE HORIZON

*FALL: Collect data from this year's research*

*FALL: Planting for 2023 Cover Crop Research and Variety Trial*

*JANUARY 11-13: The Illinois Food, Farmers Market & Specialty Crop Conference*

*JANUARY 26: Horseradish Conference*

*JANUARY: Agronomy Round-up*





# HORTICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES



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### BUTTERFLY FESTIVAL

University of Illinois Extension hosted Butterfly Festival at Baebler Educational Farm on August 28. Two hundred attendees learned about butterflies, other pollinators, and native plants. Participants toured the pollinator habitat and participated in educational booths. The event explained the role pollinators play in the environment and taught homeowners how to create more habitats to increase the butterfly and pollinator populations.



### MASTER NATURALIST TRAINING

Eight trainees are taking the Master Naturalist fall training. Topics include prairies, forests, geology, botany, ornithology, and entomology. Following training, the volunteers will assist with projects, including invasive plant species removal, bird counts, and water quality projects. The class will graduate in November.



### ON THE HORIZON

#### *Online Master Gardener Training*

- Fall 2022, Winter 2023

#### *State Master Naturalist Conference*

- October 17, 2022

#### *Weekend Gardener*

- February 25, 2023

#### *Weekend Gardener-Virtual*

- March 4, 2023

#### *Gateway Green Conference*

- March 8, 2023

#### *Color of Spring*

- March 18, 2023

### COLOR OF AUTUMN WORKSHOP

Master Gardeners hosted a fall gardening program at the Annex Building in Waterloo. Home gardeners learned more about seed starting, common backyard birds, and tool sharpening. Participants shared that they will use their increased knowledge this winter as they do some garden preparation work indoors.



# LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS & SMALL FARMS

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## SEED TO SMOOTHIE

At the Jackie Joyner-Kersey (JJK) Summer Camp, the upper elementary students participated in a program called Seed to Smoothie. The youth harvested vegetables from the JJK garden, adapted a smoothie recipe using the harvested produce, and created samples to share and promote with the rest of the JJK Summer Camp. The youth were excited to share their creation, promote it, and see the student's and staff's reactions to it.



## FOOD ACTION ACADEMY

The Illinois 4-H developed a curriculum Food Action Academy piloted at the JJK Center with middle school youth. This curriculum teaches the students the basics about food systems, food insecurity, and food access. It gives them the tools to map their communities and develop ideas to make healthy and culturally relevant food more accessible. Many students went on to start the JJK Farmer's Market stand and continue to come up with ways to use the funds generated to help with nutrition in the East St. Louis area.



## ON THE HORIZON

*The JJK Farmer's Market stand continues in front of JJK (101 Jackie Joyner-Kersey Circle, East St. Louis) on Wednesdays 4-5:30 PM until at least the end of October.*

# NUTRITION AND WELLNESS

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### COOK WITH KRIS

Clients from Monroe County Human Support Services (HSS) learned basic cooking skills through a 6-week workshop program. HSS helps individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities pursue their potential and live their best lives. Clients learned how to practice food safety, follow recipes, and use kitchen utensils and equipment. Their favorite recipe was white chicken chili!



### PROGRAMING

Our educator has reached nearly 80 adults through various nutrition and wellness programs.

- Healthy Eating and Hydration sponsored by the Aging Mastery Program (AMP) in Millstadt
- Air Fryer 101 workshop for the HCE program
- Fueling for Work and Play session offered to members of the Monroe County Women's Quilt Guild
- Farmer's Market smoothie booth

### NETWORKING

- Relationships and partnerships are being built within the community. They include Morrison-Talbott Library, Human Support Services, St. Louis District Dairy Council, The Oasis Institute, health departments, schools, 4-H leaders, churches, and food pantries.

## ON THE HORIZON

### Wellness Wednesdays

- Oct 19 "The Link Between Arthritis and Diet"
- Nov 9 "Air Fryer 101"
- Dec 14 "Healthy Holiday Eating"

### Kids Cooking Club

- Meets monthly for students in grades 3-5

### Clean Hands, Healthy Bodies

- 2nd and 3rd-grade classrooms
- Partnership with Monroe, Madison, and St. Clair counties

### Cooking for One or Two

- Oct 12





# SNAP-ED: SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EDUCATION

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## FRUIT AND VEGETABLE VOUCHER PROGRAM

The Fruit and Vegetable Voucher program has had great success in the past few years, combating food insecurity and increasing food access by focusing on providing healthy foods to families. Last year, the program served 500 families by providing \$10 vouchers that they were able to redeem for fresh produce. This year, we are continuing these efforts by partnering with several Belleville schools and East Side Health District. So Far, East Side Health District has distributed over 200 vouchers and has already had 50% of these vouchers redeemed at the Fresh Farmer's Market in East St. Louis. We thank the Healthier Together Coalition group for their efforts and for funding this fantastic initiative.



## FOOD PANTRY AND GARDEN OPEN HOUSE DAY

To bring awareness to resources available to community members residing in Cahokia, the University of Illinois Extension team has partnered with the Horticulture Program Coordinator and helped host an Open House Event for the Local Food Pantry and Community Garden.

Approximately 40 families toured the food pantry and participated in Extension activity booths. Families received various items from the pantry, and the St. Louis Area food bank mobile truck was invited to the event. Many visitors commented that they did not know about the Cahokia School Food Pantry and the different services available, including providing clothing items.







# EFNEP: EXPANDED FOOD & NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM



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### NEW PROGRAM YEAR

We are wrapping up the program year 2022 and marching into the program year 2023. In 2022 we provided nutrition education to 624 participants and over 321 sessions. Youth enrollment for Summer Youth cooking schools was 494.

Our goals for this coming year include the following:

- Increase Food Resource Management
- Physical Activity
- Increasing the Adult Graduation rate for enrolled participants
- Increase our Teen Program Reach
- If you are interested in learning more about EFNEP or want to enroll in our program, please contact us at 618.875.8939.

### ON THE HORIZON

The Illinois Nutrition Education Program (INEP) now has a demonstration kitchen to host cooking demonstrations and nutrition education lessons for Madison and St. Clair Counties residents. This location will be at the old Nelson Mandela School, located at 1800 N 25th Street, East St. Louis, Illinois. The coined name for this kitchen is the INEP Community Teaching Kitchen.

We look forward to continuing to offer optimal programming to all our audiences and hope to see you soon!



### SUCCESS STORIES

#### MyPlate

Most middle school youth were unfamiliar with My Plate, but knew about the food pyramid. After showing them images of My Plate and the purpose of switching the picture, the students understood and saw the importance of the five categories. Within a day, the students could apply what they had learned to create different meal scenarios with the correct serving amount for each category.



#### Summer Youth Cooking Schools

Katie Harper Wright Elementary School staff were just as excited as the youth. The teachers were impressed with how well the students were engaged and participated in the prepping and preparing of the recipes. The staff appreciated that the children were open to trying new foods. They were also impressed with how well the recipes tasted—so impressed that they would like to start having classes for the adults as well. They are looking forward to us returning in the fall for future programming.

# STAFF DIRECTORY



**Illinois Extension**  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Madison, Monroe and St. Clair Counties



## County Director



**Laquitsha Bejoile-Hayes**  
County Director  
Unit 22



## Office Support & Marketing



**Nicole Hellen**  
Fiscal Office Support Associate  
Collinsville



**Mary Kay Rahn**  
Office Support Specialist  
Waterloo



**Karla Isaak**  
Office Support Specialist  
INEP



**Amanie Abusaid**  
Marketing  
Marketing Coordinator

## 4-H Youth Development



**Emily Reece**  
4-H Youth Development  
Educator



**Kelly Brandt**  
4-H Youth Development  
Program Coordinator

**Vacancy**  
4-H Youth Development  
Program Coordinator

**Vacancy**  
4-H Youth Development  
Metro Educator

## Agriculture, Horticulture, & Natural Resources



**Elizabeth Wahle**  
Commercial Agriculture-Horticulture  
Educator



**Nathan Johanning**  
Commercial Agriculture  
Educator



**Grace Margherio**  
Local Food Systems & Small Farms  
Educator



**Sarah Ruth**  
Horticulture & Natural Resources  
Program Coordinator

## SNAP-Ed

**Vacancy**  
SNAP- Education  
Educator



**Rima Abusaid**  
SNAP-Education  
Educator



**Rebecca Holman**  
SNAP-Education  
Community Worker



**Maritza Lemke**  
SNAP-Education  
Community Worker



**Julie Fulton**  
SNAP-Education  
Community Worker



**Elizabeth Levey**  
SNAP-Education  
Community Worker

**Vacancy**  
SNAP-Education  
Community Worker

**Vacancy**  
SNAP-Education  
Community Worker

## EFNEP

**Vacancy**  
EFNEP  
Educator



**Shaneise Tally**  
EFNEP  
Community Worker



**Aretha Burns**  
EFNEP  
Community Worker



**Gestavia Peebles**  
EFNEP  
Community Worker



**Chastidy Wilson**  
EFNEP  
Community Worker



**Shawn Milton**  
EFNEP  
Community Worker

**Vacancy**  
EFNEP  
Community Worker

**Vacancy**  
EFNEP  
Community Worker

## Nutrition & Wellness



**Kris Juelfs**  
Nutrition & Wellness  
Educator

Monroe County - Main Office  
901 Illinois Ave, PO Box 117  
Waterloo, IL 62298  
(618) 939-3434

Madison & St. Clair County Office  
1606 Eastport Plaza Dr, Suite 100  
Collinsville, IL 62234  
(618) 344-4230

Jackie Joyner-Kersey Food, Agriculture,  
and Nutrition Innovation Center  
2051 Lynch Ave, East St. Louis IL 62204  
(618) 875-8939

Thank you for your continued support of Extension and our communities!