

Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

2021 Addressing Local Needs,
Solving Global Challenges
Livingston, McLean, and Woodford Counties



Bobbie Lewis-Sibley
County Director

Staff Serving Livingston, McLean, & Woodford Counties

A Message from the County Director

Welcome to University of Illinois Extension’s Livingston, McLean, and Woodford counties 2021 annual report. It is my privilege to lead a team of outstanding staff and volunteers who provide innovative and diverse educational programming to individuals, businesses, and organizations in urban and rural settings. We serve all: youth, adults, and those with access to many or little resources.

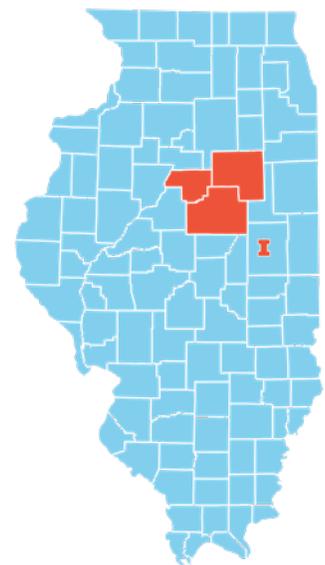
This year, the global pandemic continued to challenge us. Yes, our staff and volunteers persisted in being flexible and nimble in our programs and services and how they were provided. In collaboration with our volunteers and partners, U of I Extension staff continued to do impactful work that addressed local needs that met Extension’s mission: to improve the lives of those in our communities that we serve.

Individuals in Livingston, McLean, and Woodford counties continued to learn about managing personal finances, living healthy lives, respecting nature, running productive

farms, and enabling the best in their children. There is simply not enough room in this report to describe the many innovative and educational outreach programs presented by our staff and volunteers in 2021, nor the full influence of those initiatives. I encourage you to join us at our next Extension program and hope you will keep up with us all year long.

The accomplishments detailed in this report were possible because of the contributions of our local county boards, businesses, private organizations, personal donations, and generous volunteers. Thank you to everyone who makes Extension successful!
In good health and safety,

Bobbie Lewis-Sibley, MBA, SHRM-CP
County Extension Director
Serving Livingston, McLean & Woodford Counties



Think Global, Act Local

Illinois Extension embodies the land grant mission of University of Illinois, providing applied research and education to address societal grand challenges and local issues.

Community Support Strong and Resilient Youth, Families, and Communities

- Connectedness and Inclusion
- Involvement and Leadership
- Thriving Youth

Economy Grow a Prosperous Economy

- Economic Vitality
- Financial Wellbeing
- Workforce Preparedness/Advancement

Environment Sustain Natural Resources in Home and Public Spaces

- Enhancing and Preserving Natural Resources
- Engagement with Home and Community Landscape

Food Maintain a Safe and Accessible Food Supply

- Food Access
- Food Production
- Food Safety

Health Maximize Physical and Emotional Health for All

- Chronic Disease Prevention and Management
- Social and Emotional Health
- Healthy and Safe Environments

Look for these icons throughout this report to see how Illinois Extension is meeting these grand challenges at a local level.

Illinois Extension 2021 Statewide Highlights

Outreach Provided

565	335	84
Illinois Communities Served	Educational Sessions Per Week	Online Courses

Partnerships Supported

6,445	278	1,000
Adult Volunteers	Community Gardens	School Partnerships

Learners Engaged

8,000,000	14,450	500,000
Website Users	Online Course Users	Educational Program Attendees

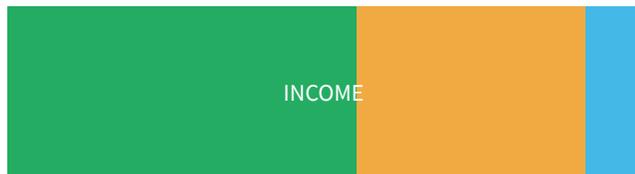
Resources Generated

\$14,000,000	\$242,000
Value of Volunteer Contributions	Value of Donated Garden Produce

Extension leaders meet with local stakeholders to define annual priorities that allow us to respond to evolving and emerging needs and make meaningful progress toward important long-term outcomes. This blend of long-range focus and local accountability is a powerful strategy that ensures we stay true to our mission as we serve communities across the state.

2021 Extension Council Members

Dylan Cook	Debbie Ruff
Katy Everett	Jackie Schertz (Youth)
Tera Graves	Rich Schroeder
Jenny Larkin	Julie Schumacher
Plamedie Lubika (Youth)	Mike Sommer
Lisa Maynard	Jodi Upchurch
Pam Meiner	Paul Wilkins



- 55% Local Sources
- 36% State Match
- 9% U of I General Revenue Fund



- 59% Salaries
- 18% Rent/Leases/Utilities
- 14% Program Educational Services & Supplies
- 4% Equipment & Maintenance
- 2% Travel
- 2% Office Supplies/Postage/Printing, etc.
- 1% Separation Pool



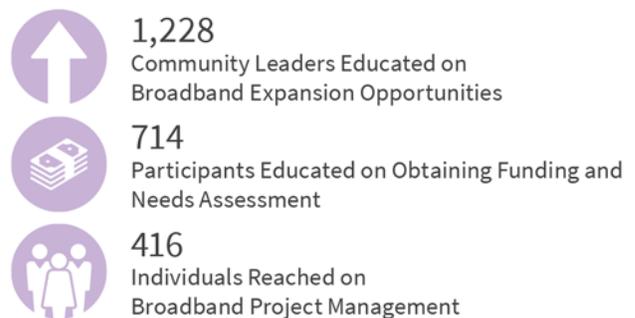
As COVID-19 continued to impact governments, businesses, and communities, Illinois Extension's Local Government Education program increased its outreach aimed at economic investment and community vitality, workforce development, leadership, policy, equity, and resiliency. By partnering with state leadership and organizations in Illinois, the Illinois Extension Community and Economic Development team has provided outreach aimed to help local governments and residents build capacity to strengthen their communities and organizations and improve public services.

Access past and future programs <https://go.illinois.edu/LGE>

Statewide Webinar Reach



Community-Driven Broadband Reach



The University of Illinois Extension's community and economic development team helps communities build capacity for creative and informed decision-making to enhance their quality of life.



370 plants were distributed at drop-off sites like this one at District 87 in Bloomington.



Growing outside the garden

Gardening has been shown to benefit overall health. This benefit comes from being more physically active, eating more fresh fruits and vegetables, and reducing stress with exposure to nature. However, individuals interested in gardening may lack access to land, resources, knowledge, or the money needed to install a garden. Others may face accessibility challenges with language.

To address these barriers to gardening, the Extension horticulture and nutrition and wellness teams piloted a collaborative program called “Garden in a Bag” that aimed to provide small, portable garden spaces in a 3-gallon bag to individuals who may lack room to garden.

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

- 23% Black/African American (27 individuals)
- 75% White (87 individuals)
- 2% Prefer Not to Answer (2 individuals)

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

- 17% Hispanic/Latino (19 individuals)
- 80% Non-Hispanic/Latino (91 individuals)
- 3% Prefer Not to Answer (4 individuals)

The horticulture team planted basil, spinach, and pepper plants in portable grow bags and developed gardening care sheets. The nutrition and wellness team developed resources on using the garden produce, including recipes, videos, and fact sheets. All resources were available in Spanish. The team used text messaging or email to send participants biweekly messages with timely tips relative to the growing stage of their plant. For additional follow-up and resources, seven emails/text messages were sent to 75 households.

Spinach, peppers, and basil were options for those learning to garden in a bag.

“Garden in a Bag” targeted audiences with low food access and limited gardening space with an interest in gardening and preparing fresh produce. This program included partners who work with the targeted audience in order to gain the trust and positive rapport with the community. The team specifically reached out to Hispanic and Black/African American audiences. Partners included various food pantries, Head Start, Heartline and Heart House, Holton Homes - John Kane seniors, Western Avenue Community Center, West Bloomington Revitalization Project, Unity Community Center, and the District 87 summer feeding program. In total, 370 plants were distributed.



Find more Extension programs
go.illinois.edu/LMW



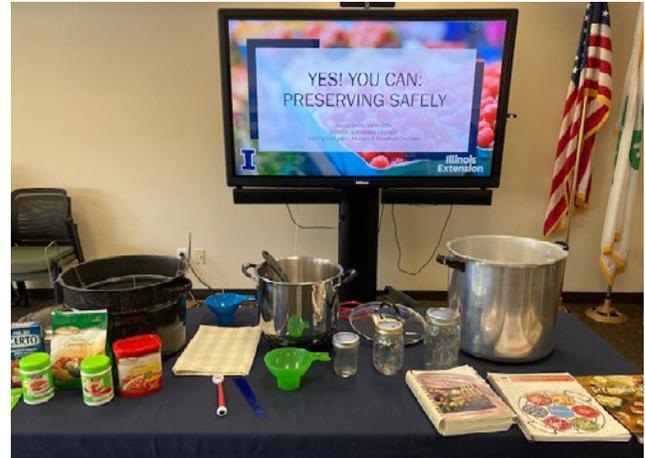
Preserving safely

Home gardening has grown in popularity, and, as a result, so has interest in food preservation. This increase in popularity, along with a supply shortage in canning equipment, raises concerns some may be using unsafe canning foods practices, increasing the risk of food borne illness. Food safety continues to be a top priority area for the nutrition and wellness team. This year's focus was to increase safe canning and food preservation practices.

The team took several steps to reduce potentially unsafe canning practices. Nutrition and Wellness Educator Jenna Smith wrote a blog post featuring tips on what to do if you do not have specific canning equipment, supplies, or ingredients. Additionally, the team tested 38 pressure canner gauges (testing is recommended for dial gauges once per year to ensure gauge accuracy) and answered over 50 food safety consumer questions. In July 2021, Smith held the “Yes! You CAN: Preserving Safely” canning class, providing instruction on using a boiling water bath canner, steam canner, and pressure canner to 15 participants, with the additional opportunity for participants to bring in their dial gauge pressure canner lids for testing.



Nutrition & Wellness intern Joo Yee Lim tests pressure canner lids at the Extension office.



First time and experienced canners explored proper food preservation techniques at the Yes! You Can Workshop.

Beyond preservation

Smith also provided expert guidance on the amendment to the Illinois Cottage Food Law to ensure the changes included safe, up-to-date food preservation practices. The Illinois Cottage Food Law allows local farmers and food entrepreneurs to prepare food in their home kitchen to be sold at an Illinois farmers market. Smith and a fellow Extension educator worked with the Illinois Stewardship Alliance and the Illinois Department of Public Health to negotiate toward safe processing methods that are reflected in the new amendment that took effect January 1, 2022.

To help cottage food operators better understand the new law and to ensure they have a handle on food safety, Smith presented a webinar, “Serve it Safely at the Farmers Market,” to 117 attendees. She marketed to both cottage food producers as well as health department staff who wanted to gain more knowledge about the law. In addition, Smith and her colleagues are working to develop an online course to help explain the law and important food safety measures which will serve as another valuable resource for cottage food operators.



Find programs and recipes from the Nutrition & Wellness Team
go.illinois.edu/LMWnutrition



Growing access

The Unity Community Center Food Giveaway and Demonstration Garden has been used for research, demonstrations, and workshops, but is most-widely used as a production garden and source of fresh food to donate to local families and area food banks.

This location is surrounded by low-income family housing and one of the larger minority populations in the Normal area. With that in mind, the garden has the potential to make an impact by increasing food access in an area that has low access to fresh food.

Bringing his extensive knowledge of vegetable gardening, Local Food Systems and Small Farms Educator Nick Frillman set his first-year objective: to grow at least 1,000 pounds of fresh food. He wanted most, or all, of the food to be given away to the community members who live in close vicinity of the garden.

The Extension team grew 1,143 pounds of food. Half of the food was given away at a weekly pop-up distribution site during times when nearby residents were walking home from work. The remaining was donated to area food banks. In addition to food access, it allowed connections and conversations to be made with local community members and Extension staff.

The garden allowed Extension to grow fresh food for a population who was experiencing chronic stress from the pandemic and create a relationship with the Unity-area community for the future.



1,143

Pounds of food grown and distributed from Unity Garden



Tomato varieties were grown and distributed to local families.



SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EDUCATION

SNAP-Education works with Illinois families in need to make the healthier choice an easier choice. Through classes, workshops and collaboration with community partners, SNAP-Education positively affect families and communities by using research-based solutions to encourage healthier nutrition and physical activity choices.

Reach and Impact of SNAP-Education



5,183

Total Estimated Reach



161

Number of Nutrition Education Classes Provided

TYPE OF CLASSES

69% Face-to-face

31% Virtual or online

After a youth nutrition education series at a local community center, a parent of one the students approached SNAP-Ed. They shared after taste testing in the series, their child started asking for more fruits and vegetables. The parent also said their child has started trying new fruits and veggies to see which ones he likes.

SNAP-Education Community Partnerships



13

K-12 Schools



2

Early Childhood



6

Other Agencies or Community Centers



12

Food Banks and Food Pantries



Giving Gardens increase food access in Livingston County

Grow and give back. Fifty-three community members, families, churches, and youth organizations in Livingston County did this through the Giving Garden program. Staff members with Extension’s horticulture and local food systems and small farms developed and distributed gardening kits to help beginners and experts grow vegetables and flowers, free of charge, with a pledge to donate at least 50% of the produce and cut flowers to someone or somewhere in need.



Giving Gardens were found all over Livingston County. This one was featured at the Extension office in Pontiac.

Vegetable kits

Livingston County residents have faced increased food insecurity due to loss of jobs, health issues, and other daily challenges over the past two years. Together, we increased food production and access by growing and harvesting vegetables in Livingston County backyards and providing fresh food to those in need. Starter kits included two tomato plants, four pepper plants, cucumber, and zucchini seeds.



Cut flower kits

Research shows that flowers positively affect our emotional health and well-being. They increase our level of happiness, make intimate connections, and can have a long-term impact on our emotions and feelings of satisfaction and fulfillment. Gifting someone a simple bouquet grown in a home garden can be a simple and fulfilling experience. Starter kits included seeds for five flowers (sunflowers, zinnias, cosmos, gomphrena, celosia), as well as plant care sheets for all the plants and tips on how to harvest and arrange the flowers.

Participants received monthly newsletters with gardening resources and videos to help them grow their vegetables and flowers, seed to harvest.

Fresh vegetables and cut floral arrangements were donated weekly from June through September to local food pantries, nursing homes and hospitals, social service agencies, schools, senior centers, and individuals or families in need.

Together, University of Illinois Extension and gardening community members increased the health and well-being of our Livingston County neighbors and friends through gardening and giving.



Sunflowers, zinnias, and vegetables including tomatoes and peppers were included in the giving back program for the community.



Find out more about programs like Giving Gardens
go.illinois.edu/LMW



Mastering the school garden

Livingston County Master Gardeners received an Illinois Master Gardener Teamwork Award for their volunteer work at the Flanagan Elementary School Garden and Junior Master Gardener project. The project was recognized for making a positive difference in the community. Visited by youth of all ages, the school garden teaches about pollinators and how plants grow, including vegetables and native plants. Towering prairie plants, bright flowering annuals, and wonderfully fragrant herbs create an outdoor classroom for teachers, students, and the community to experience hands-on learning right outside the school doors. Cherished for its work in designing and caring for the garden, the school would not be the same without its natural space.



Historically teaching

McLean County Master Gardeners assisted more than 1,000 community members of all ages at Sarah's Garden at David Davis Mansion in Bloomington this year. Master Gardeners inspired youth audiences at 4-H educational workdays, Girl Scout badge programs, and school groups at the restored 1872 garden. Volunteers use the 150-year-old garden to teach the community about planting and saving seeds, protecting butterflies, and recognizing historical plants while sharing the rich history of Sarah Davis's original garden. Master Gardeners have spent the last 20 years researching, preserving, and tending this local historical landmark.



Homegrown access

Woodford County Master Gardeners, in partnership with Great Oaks Community Church in Germantown Hills, grew and donated 4,550 pounds of vegetables this summer. Produce was donated to local food pantries. Master Gardeners have designed the 100' x 100' garden annually since 2016. Volunteers continue to increase pounds of food grown, food donated, and impact in their community's food access opportunities. They also continue to guide fellow gardeners on best growing practices and pest management through their teaching garden.



Master Gardeners



138
Volunteers



6,422
Volunteer Hours



Learn more about Master Gardeners
go.illinois.edu/LMW_MG



Sprouting Little Roots across the state

Through gardening, youth can learn patience, hard work, and responsibility, as they gain a skill set that lasts a lifetime.



In its fourth year, the Little Roots gardening program expanded statewide. The youth gardening program allows all Illinois 4-H staff to offer a new and engaging curriculum to 4-H Cloverbud leaders and youth in their counties.

Over 500 4-H Cloverbuds and youth from 30 counties in Illinois participated in 2021. Since the program started in 2018, over 800 youth have participated in the program.

The program encourages and inspires youth to grow their own food and flowers and donate any extras to those in need. In addition to increasing interest in 4-H gardening project areas, it provides an opportunity for family engagement while it increases environmental awareness.

The program includes a bright, kid-friendly gardening calendar that serves as a guide for the Cloverbuds and their guardian for growing six different plants from seed through harvest. The calendar engages youth in weekly activities from mid-April through September that encourages observing the world around them, researching basic horticulture terms, and caring for their plants.



Little Roots participants can showcase their homegrown vegetables and flowers at their local 4-H shows during Cloverbud Showcases

Showing your roots

To encourage engagement throughout the summer, adults are encouraged to join the private group on Facebook to receive weekly tips, videos, and gardening activities for the household. Cloverbuds that participate in the program are also offered opportunities to showcase their vegetables and flowers at their local county 4-H show, community events, and private Facebook group. Youth attending showcases share their journey: what they learned, and what they plan to grow next year.

Little Roots is now an Illinois 4-H Signature Program.

As a leader and as a teacher, I learned A LOT more about gardening. I want to try to help them grow more flowers next year. The zinnias grew so big and tall!

PARTICIPATING 4-H LEADER

She walked away with more knowledge and felt connected to something bigger than herself.

PARTICIPATING 4-H CLOVERBUD PARENT



McLean County 4-H Cloverbud Cora shows off her Little Roots Sunflowers and Zinnias



For more information on the Little Roots program
go.illinois.edu/LittleRoots



Culture, cuisine, and conversation

With vacations canceled or postponed due to the ongoing global pandemic, the 4-H team provided youth an opportunity to virtually travel the world with 4-H. The unique experience, Culture, Cuisine, and Conversation, took the youth to Japan, Finland, Brazil, Australia, Thailand, and South Korea, having fun as they traveled through the curriculum. Fifty young people expanded their cultural understanding with this bi-weekly program during fall and winter.



Participants prepared a dish from a different country each week. They watched videos created by 4-H partners in the country who gave tours of their kitchens and homes. The youth enjoyed live conversations with fellow participants each week. The program aligned with 4-H learning standards by providing and strengthening skills in 4-H youth leadership, citizenship, and life.



1,276
Total Club Members



227
Total Adult Volunteers



112
Total 4-H Clubs



4,638
Total 4-H Projects Exhibited

Keeping up with Unity



Unity Community Center in Normal provides academic support, enrichment, and positive youth development programming for families with limited resources, immigrant families, and youth who receive ESL services through the local school district. In response to COVID-19 guidelines, the team introduced a hybrid program, allowing youth whose families are not able to attend in-person to participate virtually. Multiple programs in Extension participated in creating and presenting curriculum for Unity youth including:

- Teen program learning topics, including email etiquette and public speaking with 4-H Teen Teachers, financial literacy, social media, and body image, with local Extension consumer economics educator, and Innovation Institutes with Children's Discovery Museum.
- CATCH Kids Club (K-5 youth) with SNAP-Ed staff.
- STEM education with Children's Discovery Museum.
- 4-H project exploration.
- eSports project exploration, including pathways to pro, collegiate esports leagues, degree programs, scholarships, and careers in the esports field, everything from game design to law and business administration.
- Animal science education, including embryology program and butterfly program. Youth learned about embryo development and life cycle of both species. They concluded their exploration with a virtual field trip to Miller Park Zoo.

2020-21 Unity Enrollment

90% Black or African American
10% Caucasian



21 Students

100% Non-Hispanic

52% Male

48% Female



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access Dialogues

Media headlines, a global pandemic, and constantly changing societal and political decision making influenced Illinois 4-H and Livingston, McLean, and Woodford County 4-H teams to co-host a local Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access (DEIA) Dialogue discussion for teens in the community. Led by the Illinois 4-H Youth Leadership Team members, the first topic, “What is Bias?” focused on systematic and structural injustices using multiple perspectives that lead to critical awareness, deep reflection, and personal growth. The teens were able to be in a safe place with their leaders and peers to discuss these trending topics and increase their awareness and deeper understandings which may lead to brighter futures. Empowering our youth is the first step to a stronger tomorrow.

Youth thoughts matter

Health is an important part of 4-H. After all, an entire H is devoted to it. Just like exercise and nutrition are a part of good health, mental health plays an important role in our daily living. Using research-based programming around positive youth development, 4-H youth get the hands-on real-world experience they need to become leaders, but are they taking the time to help themselves?

The National 4-H Council commissioned a survey to explore teens’ perceptions and experiences around mental health. The survey, which polled over 1,500 diverse youth ages 13-19 nationwide revealed that youth are three times more likely to feel peer pressure to hide their feelings than to drink or do drugs. Therefore, the Livingston, McLean, and Woodford 4-H programs put mindfulness in youth and teens at the forefront of our programming in 2021. The statewide program, Your Thoughts Matter, is an online series for youth ages 13-19.

Statewide, more than 60 teens learned to define mental health, talk about mental health with family and friends, and help themselves and others. The program empowers youth to talk openly about issues around mental health, reduce stigma and take action to be part of the solution. Now, we’re creating a 4-H special interest (SPIN) club where youth can meet online monthly to continue their learning, observations, and togetherness to put intentional mindfulness in their journeys. This program is also being piloted as a classroom curriculum for 7th grade and higher for the 4-H program.

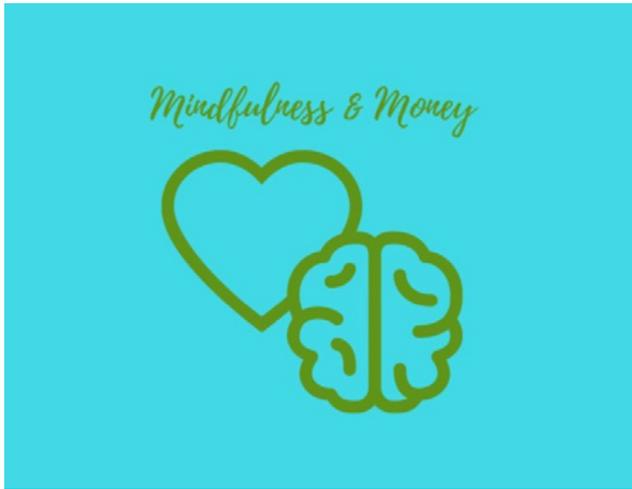
Supporting our youth to adulthood

Growing up and becoming an adult is a challenge. Extension helps youth prepare for adulthood. From life after graduation to tips for everyday adulting, Extension provided resources to ease the transition to young adulthood.

- **College and Career Readiness Conference:** This five-part series features videos of people in a variety of career fields discussing college, trade schools, the military, applying for jobs, and interview tips. Youth also watched people interviewing for jobs. The videos were viewed by more than 300 people.
- **Freshman Summit Care Packages:** When the annual Freshman Summit at Eureka College wasn’t able to happen in person, Woodford 4-H and the Freshman Summit Committee designed and delivered 381 care package bags for local freshman. The bag contained a key chain, 4-H DIY stress ball, suicide prevention information, safe driving information, candy, flyers for Eureka College, lessons on financial credit and borrowing, microwave recipes, and microwave safety information.



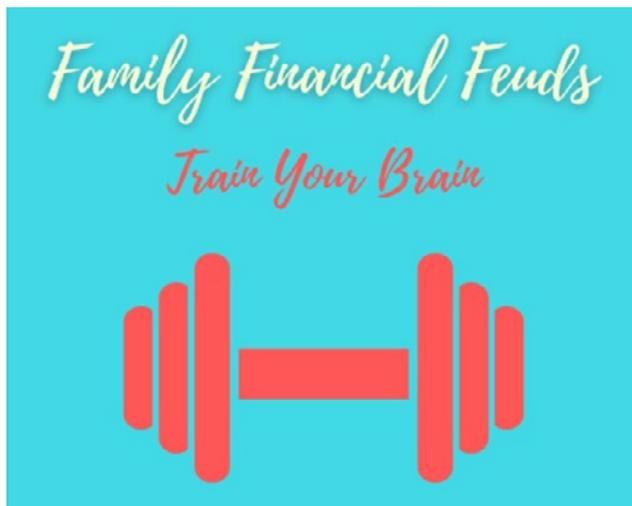
Learn more about the 4-H program
go.illinois.edu/LMW4H



Mindfulness and money

The events and landscape of the past few years and changing lifestyles for many of us creates new financial challenges. The Extension consumer economics team focused on strategies that intentionally incorporate mindfulness techniques in adult financial education. The theme of mindfulness was creatively integrated into all webinars, workshops, and resources in various means.

- Family Financial Feuds episode: Mindfulness and Money had over 200 listeners
- Family Financial Feuds episode: Train Your Brain with a family life professional as a special guest had 257 listeners
- The team attended the Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education (AFCPE) National Conference and presented on Mindfulness in Money Management. Eighty-three people attend the live session, and the video was posted on the symposium website for members through 2022
- Additional planning, lessons, and workshops for local, state, and national audiences



Keep up with Consumer Economics on their blog go.illinois.edu/FearlessFinancialFuture

Let's Talk Money



Let's Talk Money is a free, eight-part webinar series that helps individuals and families, no matter where they are with money, gain a better understanding of basic financial topics and improve their financial situation. Confidence in financial activity results in a better overall understanding of self and mindfulness efforts in our lives. The series had **584** people registered for the entire series. Each session averaged **84** people, with one session having **149** participants. **17%** of our attendees lived out of state.



Archived versions of these webinars are available go.illinois.edu/LTMplaylist

- Who are you with money?
- Borrowing: how much is too much?
- Access to credit: how do you fair?
- What's your best debt repayment strategy?
- Credit scores revealed
- The best-kept secret for financial success
- Framing biases – overcoming hurdles
- Make your savings grow

Let's Talk Money webinar series attendees

79% of the attendees self-identified as women

63% 12%
White Black or African American

11% 8%
Asian Hispanic

The webinar series succeeded in providing relevant, up-to-date, and timely financial information to consumers in a year of uncertainty and questions. The series and work of Consumer Economics Educator Camaya Wallace Bechard and her team resulted in receiving the Central Regional Dean Don Felker Family Resource Management Award from the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) for the Let's Talk Money webinar series.





Trees must be planted as if it is a part of an ecosystem by understanding soil, plant diversity, and proper care techniques.



Networking for growth of urban trees

Trees are adored for their spring flowers, fall color, and wonderful shade on a sunny day. They are also essential tools in building our ecosystem, from storing carbon to preserving Illinois wilds. Trees are a vital part of the urban environment, but research finds urban trees are only living 20% of their actual lifespans.

As national tree planting efforts continue to grow in popularity and gain legislative attention, simply planting a tree is not enough. Improper planning, planting techniques, care, and pest control efforts all pose risks to urban trees. When planting a tree, consider the whole ecosystem by understanding soil, plant diversity, and proper care techniques.

“Urban trees are more important than ever,” University of Illinois Extension Horticulture Educator Kelly Allsup says. Allsup and the Extension horticulture team created the 6-day, 18-session Urban Tree Conference to connect industry professionals, academics, and Extension’s Master Volunteers with experts on tree health. Topics included forestry science, tree care, pruning, and selection. During the sessions, forest ecologists delved further into urban forests and their benefits to the landscape.

Initially, the McLean County program connected the tree care industry to Extension by teaching participants about tree planting, diagnosis, and hands-on pruning workshops. Then, local participants wanted more complex urban tree information and experience. The online conference, held during the pandemic, peaked their interests even higher.

Urban greening strengthens communities, improves mental health, and provides environmental services such as cleaning pollution from the air, reducing flooding, and providing homes and food for wildlife.
**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION
HORTICULTURE EDUCATOR KELLY ALLSUP**

Presenters from University of Florida, University of Wisconsin, Purdue University, Morton Arboretum, University of Illinois, Illinois Extension, and Michigan State University taught 148 participants from four states. Many participants earned continuing education credit to their professional organizations, such as the Illinois Arborists Association. Increasing educational efforts through county-level workshops, educational resources and fact sheets, and establishing the multi-state conference increases efficiency and effective local tree-planting efforts, sustainability, and urban tree growth through generations.



Views from Sunset Trail at Sugar Grove Nature Center



Naturally together

The Illinois Grand Prairie Master Naturalists continued to be stewards of the land. A few main events highlighted their volunteer efforts to maintain our natural areas and build environmental growth for years to come. These included:

Remembrance Abraham Lincoln in Funks Grove: Volunteers from our three counties came together to commemorate the day President Lincoln’s funeral train came through Funks Grove. They gathered in that very place and read stories from that time. For many, this was the first time they gathered since the global pandemic hit.

Nature Trails Day: A committee of Master Naturalist volunteers came together to put on Nature Trails Day at the Sugar Grove Nature Center. Over 200 attendees from surrounding areas learned about animals. The Miller Park Zoo and the Illinois Bat Conservancy were highlighted. Activities included trails and hiking opportunities, picnics, and youth activity stations. It was a day exploring and taking in nature to its fullest.

Master Naturalists



78
Volunteers



3,690
Volunteer Hours

4-H Educator receives national recognition



Four University of Illinois Extension 4-H youth development staff received national recognition at the National Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals National Conference held in November 2021 in Memphis, Tenn.



Alcha Corban, 4-H Educator receives national award

4-H Youth Development Educator for Livingston and Woodford counties and Unity Community Center Alcha Corban received the Achievement in Service Award. Corban says her mission is to empower youth to discover their passions, achieve their goals, and give back to their communities through 4-H programs that promote personal growth, team building, leadership, and service-learning opportunities.

Program area team honors for statewide Nutrition & Wellness team

Across the state, local University of Illinois Extension staff help families, businesses, and communities identify local issues and potential solutions to those issues. Extension professionals use research-based knowledge and translate that knowledge into actions and strategies that are understandable, actionable, and locally relevant.



Jenna Smith, Nutrition & Wellness Educator receives state Extension program team award

Extension’s entire statewide nutrition and wellness team, including Livingston, McLean, and Woodford county Educator Jenna Smith was honored with the Program Area Team Excellence Award.

The team’s Fill Your Pantry food preservation series reached more than 1.8 million contacts, with 1,000 participants sharing how the workshops taught new skills and improved their food safety processes. The team was also recognized by their national association.

EXTENSION STAFF

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Educator, Horticulture

Katie Buckley
Educator, 4-H Youth
Development - McLean

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Educator, 4-H Youth
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OFFICE INFORMATION

McLean County

1615 Commerce Parkway
Bloomington, IL 61704
Phone: 309-663-8306
FAX: 309-663-8270
Hours: Monday - Friday
8am to 4:30pm
(Closed 11:30-12:30pm)

Livingston County

1412 S Locust
Pontiac, IL 61764
Phone: 815-842-1776
FAX: 815-842-6547
Hours: Monday - Friday
8am to 4:30 pm
(Closed 12-1pm)

Woodford County

109 East Eureka Avenue
Eureka, IL 61530
Phone: 309-467-3789
FAX: 309-467-6034
Hours: Monday - Wednesday
8am to 4:30pm
(Closed 12- 1pm)
Thursday - Friday (by appt only)

McLean County

UNITY Community Center

632 Orlando Avenue
Normal, IL 61761
Phone: 309-862-4041
FAX: 309-663-8270
Hours: Monday - Friday
11am to 7pm

ONLINE



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College of Agricultural, Consumer & Environmental Sciences

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If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate, please contact the event coordinator. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your needs.

The Illinois Nutrition Education Programs are funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

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