

Extension Quarterly Impact Report Livingston, McLean & Woodford July - September 2020



Illinois Extension
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Coming Together to Share Opportunities

Horticulture, Nutrition & Wellness, STEAM in the Classroom, and 4-H encourage idea building amongst area youth

STEAM at Home' bundles were distributed to *more than 3,000* Livingston, McLean, and Woodford County youth this summer to encourage exploration and play while at home. The Horticulture, 4-H, STEAM in the Classroom, and Nutrition & Wellness Teams partnered with area food pantries, schools, libraries, and community organizations to assist with distributions including:

- Bloomington-Normal Boys & Girls Club: 150**
- Bloomington District 87: 300**
- Unity Community Center: 85**
- Livingston County Boys & Girls Club: 225**
- Woodford County youth groups (libraries, food pantries): 826**
- Rader's Family Farm Sunflower Festival: 250**
- Children's Discovery Museum's Day of Play: 1,000**
- Heartland Head Start- McLean County: 187**



Creating a Grass Head Cup Activity Kit



Acid/Base Inflate Balloon Activity Kit

Facebook Live with the Horticulturists Makes Digital Presence

Going Live with the Horticulturists becomes regular Extension digital program and growing audience

Facebook Live with the Horticulturists was developed to provide an innovative, interactive forum for which followers can receive horticulture education, get questions answered, and learn about gardening from a research perspective. Followers watch the show live from the comfort of their own home and are able to participate in a forum; where their individual needs are being met immediately while educating other viewers. Questions are submitted in the comment box or prior to live stream. In addition, the Horticulturists do live demonstrations.

Our local Horticulture educator, Kelly Allsup, provides her expertise in integrated pest management and vegetable gardening to the show. She is joined by State Master Gardener specialist, Candice Hart and fellow educator based out of Champaign, Ryan Pankau. After 32 episodes, they have no plans of stopping as they are celebrating their successes thus far. Find past episodes on **YouTube @ [University of Illinois Extension](#)**.

- Answered over **400 questions** for the University of Illinois Extension Facebook page via the inbox and live program
- Transitioned during state shut down without a lag in programming
- Increased number of people who have liked and followed the Illinois Extension Facebook page, while lowering the average age range of followers. Before Live with the Horticulturists, the age range was between 50-65 and now is between 35-50
- Increased number of subscribers on the Illinois Extension YouTube Page
- Originated development of Illinois Extension Horticulture Facebook Group

"FB live is nice in that you don't have to sign up in advance and you can easily watch on your phone," Special guest, Peggy S. Doty, Environmental and Energy Stewardship Educator writes "The format made it easy to answer questions that came into your chat and having the group there to converse more about each topic made it feel like people were getting a broader answer to their questions. Knowing you get even more people watching the recording is a fantastic way to continue the education and impact."



Ask Extension Staff...

Sharing updates from *The Refuge Food Forest and Unity Community Center Garden*

The Extension Ag and Natural Resources Program Coordinator, Reid Young, was tasked to maintain the Food Forest and oversee production of fresh vegetables at the Unity Community Center Donation Garden. In a summer filled with changes, let's see how things ran differently this growing season...

Describe the Refuge Food forest and Unity Community Center Donation Garden.

At the **Unity production garden**, we're improving access to, and the quality of, fresh produce available to our neighbors in need. **The Refuge Food Forest** provides the community with a freely-accessible space to play, expand palates and ideas about what fresh produce is, demonstrate how to grow it at home, and explore nature.

How did volunteering change this summer?

Instead of hosting groups for work days, we provided tasks for individuals to take on at their leisure. We couldn't be as direct in tackling issues, but still had a great season.

How was the growing season?

Unity's squash and zucchini crops had several weeks of large harvests. Onions did okay, but potatoes did poorly. We're optimistic about the fall sweet potato harvest. Late frosts prevented most tree fruit and nut production. We also weren't able to complete some standard practices for disease management early in the spring; fortunately we have not seen major issue this year. Hopefully fall's efforts will provide a healthy spring emergence.

What were some of the major gardening tasks this summer?

Irrigating is important, but also supports the weeds we're trying to keep tamed—always a challenge to strike that balance.

What were your successes?

Hundreds of pounds of zucchini and summer squash!



Berries at The Refuge Food Forest

Family Financial Feuds Podcast: Celebrates One Year, Sees Over 2,000 Plays in 2020

Podcasting about family, finances, and sometimes even feuds has its listeners

Family Financial Feuds celebrated its first anniversary in 2020. This podcast comes to you from the University of Illinois Extension Consumer Economics team: Sasha Grabenstetter, Camaya Wallace Bechard, and Kathy Sweedler. The podcast is a digital, educational platform with monthly episodes that provide information on important money management topics such as credit reports and scores, power of attorney, and student loans. Other great topics, such as having multiple smart mobile devices and deciding whether to show your credit report to your partner, have made for great discussions between co-hosts over the past season. We hope you will tune in to check out past episodes and be there with us the future discussions.

- 24 tracks available
- More than 2,000 plays
- The podcast is available on both Sound Cloud and iTunes by searching "Family Financial Feuds"



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