A Message from the Chancellor
The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is an economic engine and a driver of innovation, deeply rooted in the Illinois prairie and engaged statewide, from Cook County to Cairo. Illinois Extension brings the university to your doorstep. Extension educators live and work alongside you in every county, allowing the university to support local leaders, businesses, farmers, and residents to address grand challenges and everyday problems with practical, research-based solutions. As a youth, my own 4-H experience inspired a rewarding career in agricultural research and higher education. Today, it’s an honor to lead this great public university and deepen its commitment to serve the people of Illinois.

Robert J. Jones
Chancellor, University of Illinois

A Message from the County Director
In late 2019, University of Illinois Extension announced the annual financial impact of its programs across the state. Valued at over $603 million, about 10 times Extension’s annual budget, our programs are meeting needs in our communities and providing substantial economic benefits.

As county Extension director in Clark, Crawford, and Edgar counties, it is my job to make sure our programs serve you, regardless of the challenges we may face — and 2020 definitely brought some challenges. Like you, the staff at Illinois Extension expected the initial stay-at-home order to be for a short time. Once we realized this was not the case, staff immediately shifted their focus from in-person programming to digital education that was then shared locally and beyond.

Extension has always stated that its greatest resource is its people and I believe that to be more accurate now than ever before. The 15 staff in our unit transformed their home offices, dining room tables, and living room sofas into their work spaces. Rather than setting up tables and chairs in meeting rooms, conducting education through Zoom became the norm. Even with the operational shift, Extension remains dedicated to providing quality educational programs and research-based information to our communities.

This report highlights the successes we experienced in 2020 and focuses on some of the programs and activities our local educators and staff conducted in person prior to the pandemic, or while working remotely.

A special thank you to our stakeholders and supporters. We invite you to partner with us as we continue to improve the lives of everyone in our communities.

Stacy Woodyard
County Extension Director
Hooking Audiences in a Sea of Virtual Content

In a year when everyone went virtual due to COVID-19, the Illinois Extension educators in Clark, Crawford, and Edgar counties reinvented themselves to stand out among the myriad of online resources available to their communities.

Illinois Extension serving Clark, Crawford, and Edgar counties is funded through a combination of federal dollars (39%), state dollars (20%), and local dollars (41%), which are returned to the community through educational programming.

### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

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Illinois Extension serving Clark, Crawford, and Edgar counties is the largest out-of-school youth organization in Illinois, 4-H challenges youth to learn by doing with fun, hands-on activities that teach skills for living.

### Impact At-a-Glance

- **Staff**: 15
- **Social Media Posts**: 1,815
- **Social Media Reach**: 312,186
- **Press Releases**: 156
- **Digital Newsletters**: 41,704

### Fiscal Year 2020

- Personnel: 77%
- Program Supplies: 11%
- Facilities/Utilities: 9%
- Travel: 3%

### Youth Enrolled in a 4-H Club
- Total: 983
- First Year 4-Hers: 35
- Adult 4-H Volunteers: 118
- Any Type of 4-H Program: 1,320

Still the largest out-of-school youth organization in Illinois, 4-H challenges youth to learn by doing with fun, hands-on activities that teach skills for living.
Educators Rise to the Challenge

In response to the stay-at-home order, the family and consumer science team (consisting of nutrition and wellness, family life, and consumer economics educators) created an abundance of digital options for consumers.

Within days of the order, the team was hard at work developing pertinent fact sheets, blog entries, and webinars. They responded to requests and made sure their material was timely and practical.

Their content received 16,895 hits in the first few months, proving their efforts were worthwhile.

As a member of the six-person statewide nutrition and wellness team, Extension Educator Mary Liz Wright was instrumental in creating several webinar series, including Managing Diabetes in a Modern World, Fill Your Pantry, Health at Home, and Health at Home: Holiday. Participants ranged from 50 to 300 per session.

While the statewide reach of online programming was exciting, Wright was pleased to see a number of local participants in the webinar audiences, as well. Like all educators, she maintained service and outreach to local individuals and groups as a priority.

Unable to meet in person with organizations such as Horizon Health Employee Wellness Program, ERBA Head Start Parent Group, Paris District 95 Birth to Three Program, and ACES Family Academies, Wright recorded several of her educational sessions and shared the videos with these groups instead.

She also recorded videos for local libraries to use in their summer reading programs.

Mary Liz Wright was at the forefront of the herculean effort to digitize programming.

Visit go.illinois.edu/nutritionandwellness
Virtual Veggie Cakes: Healthy and Fun

“Dig Deeper: Read, Investigate, Discover!” was the theme for this year’s Illinois Summer Reading Program.

Extension Educator Mary Liz Wright has been a summer reading programming staple at several local libraries in past years and she wasn’t about to let 2020 change that.

Wright, with the help of fellow Extension Educator Susan Sloop, created “Dig Into the Garden: Let's Make Veggie Cakes!” The video invited viewers to cook along with Wright. Participating families picked up packets containing recipes and other pertinent information from the library several days prior to viewing the video.

Wright gave viewers a tour of her home garden, harvested a few vegetables, then proceeded to her kitchen to prepare veggie cakes.

Participants learned where vegetables come from and what they look like growing in the garden. Wright shared food safety tips, both in the garden and in the kitchen. Viewers learned how to measure ingredients and grate vegetables, the different techniques used to measure wet and dry ingredients, how to make brown sugar, and how to cook pancakes properly. Wright also shared how to make homemade applesauce as a healthy topping for the veggie cakes.

The video had 130 viewers and many of them cooked along, having fun while learning practical skills in the garden and kitchen.

Social Media Reach Swells, Exceeds Expectations

In 2020, the public needed access to timely and reliable information, not just about the pandemic, but topics impacting everyday life, as well. Tips and updates in areas such as cooking, nutrition, and health were important and of interest throughout the year.

Family and consumer science social media posts achieved unprecedented reach in 2020. Posts linking to fact sheets and blogs, created by Extension educators like Wright and covering topics such as cooking for one or two, what to eat when you’re not feeling well, meatless choices, food budgeting, taking your kitchen appliances out for a spin, creating family meals, and holiday-themed tips all proved extremely popular with Facebook audiences.

One tip sheet on understanding food package dates received over 18,000 views!

Visit go.illinois.edu/nutritionandwellness
4-H Club Addresses Anxiety, Stress, and Depression

Teens have experienced increased anxiety, stress, and depression throughout the pandemic, according to a Harris Poll conducted by the national 4-H organization. University of Illinois Extension offered support for youth struggling with these issues and provided a safe place to talk about mental health with family and friends through Your Thoughts Matter, a six-part online series.

“We need to be advocates for teen mental health and be willing to listen to what they are feeling,” said Susan Sloop, 4-H youth development educator and moderator for the sessions.

The program was very deliberately structured as a 4-H Special Interest Club, which Sloop said allowed youth who are interested in a certain topic to engage in a very concentrated way. Using the experiential learning model, youth were able to share, process, generalize, and ultimately apply what they learned in a culminating activity.

The online platform allowed more youth to participate across the state, though Sloop admits there were also disadvantages to an online-only format. “You can lose the nonverbal communication and energy you gain from being in a room with others,” Sloop said. “That’s hard to replicate, but youth are already familiar with communicating in a virtual world.”
“Your Thoughts Matter: Navigating Mental Health,” was written by Jami Dellifield and Amanda Raines, Ohio State Extension, to equip teens with a basic understanding of their own mental health. The COVID-19 pandemic increased that need, exacerbating existing mental health issues and introducing a whole host of new challenges and obstacles for teens to navigate.

“While we understand that teens experienced mental health issues prior to the pandemic, it is important to note that the Harris Poll survey was conducted during the COVID pandemic,” said Sloop. “Teens were isolated from friends, navigating virtual learning, and dealing with the loss of milestone events, such as prom and graduation.” Understandably, this would have increased participants’ anxiety levels.

The survey revealed separation from family and friends during COVID to be the greatest stressor for teens, with 61% of respondents indicating they had increased feelings of loneliness and 64% saying COVID will have a lasting impact on their generation’s mental health.

“Providing youth a safe place to share their emotions and being a source of support can go a long way,” said Sloop. “Positive adult-youth relationships build resilience and can be a game changer for many teens who are experiencing adversity and trauma.”

Virtual Programs Reach Far Beyond Illinois

Extension Educator Susan Sloop admits that reaching people during the pandemic was a challenge, but one that proved beneficial in some ways. She discovered her programs reached well beyond Illinois when she had a young participant from Delhi, India join her every week during the Mindful Me series.

According to Mindful Me authors Anne Iaccopucci, Katherine Soule, and Kendra Lewis, the overall program aims to promote mindful practices that lead to improvements in managing one’s own goals, developing a sense of self, time management, stress management, emotional regulation, and mindful eating practices.

Sloop also taught virtual archaeology lessons from the library as part of their summer reading programs. Prior to each lesson, participants were given a list of materials needed for the activities. They made their own hieroglyphs, a model of Stonehenge with crackers, and a time capsule.

Visit go.illinois.edu/cce4H

Illinois Extension stepped up to the challenge and did not let COVID-19 stop them from providing quality education via live streaming during the library’s summer reading program.

ALYSON THOMPSON, LIBRARY DIRECTOR
In 1830, a young Abraham Lincoln traveled from Indiana with his family to settle in Illinois. Almost two centuries later, new young leaders are following in his footsteps by preserving the state’s natural legacy at his namesake park.

Clark County 4-H members Colin Perron and Rachel Morris put their hands to higher service by installing boot-brushing stations at Lincoln Trail State Park to help keep out invasive species. “Colin and Rachel share a love for nature and interacting with nature in responsible and respectful ways,” said Tresa Morris, Clark County 4-H club leader and shooting sports coordinator. “This community service project was perfect for the two of them!”

In September, the Morton Arboretum, in partnership with Play, Clean, Go, put out a statewide call for volunteer groups to install stations at pre-selected, at-risk sites. Morris noticed the nearby 1,023-acre Lincoln Trail State Park was on the list and got to work.

Hikers can use boot-brushing stations to remove plant materials from their footwear before and after moving through natural areas, reducing the risk of moving invasive species seeds.

Colin and Rachel met with Tom Hintz, the park’s site superintendent, on October 31 to install boot-brushing stations at two trailheads, leaving room for a sign with instructions and information about invasive species.

One of the goals of the Illinois 4-H Shooting Sports program is to instill a love of outdoor sportsmanship and conservation, while teaching safe and responsible handling and use of firearms.

“Installing boot brush stations is a win-win service project,” said Curt Sinclair, Extension specialist in 4-H shooting sports and environmental education. “They are really effective at helping control the spread of non-native species and it raises awareness for our youth members and for everyone who uses that trail.” Looking ahead, Hintz and Morris plan to grow the partnership by coordinating programs that get youth outside and learning about natural resources.
**SPIN Clubs Key to Community Involvement**

4-H is for all kids, no matter their background, interests, or schedule. Hosting programs in the schools that provide a positive environment and hands-on activities using the 4-H curriculum is one of the ways the 4-H community meets youth where they are. When those programs are paired with community members from local businesses, everybody wins.

When Jessica Sisil, Palestine Grade School principal, was approached by 4-H Program Coordinator April Knoblett about an afterschool program focusing on science, technology, engineering, and math, she was 100% on board. Around the same time, Marathon, the local oil refinery company, wanted to establish a STEM group that would allow their engineers to connect and share their trade with youth in the community. By combining these two efforts, an amazing afterschool STEM SPIN club was formed.

Before the pandemic hit, 12 students had taken advantage of this opportunity. Knoblett’s goal is to convert this club to a virtual platform and create additional SPIN clubs to meet the interests of even more students throughout the year.

**Challenges of Teaching Virtually Are Worth It**

Having shown goats since 2003, Bailey Bergherm is no stranger to being in front of a live audience. As the owner of BAB Boer Goats, she manages the day-to-day work of raising her herd, while also doing custom livestock fitting, photography, and evaluating as an ABGA certified judge.

Her goat clinic, originally scheduled as an in-person event at the Edgar County Fairgrounds with nearly 60 registered participants, was transitioned to a series of videos streamed via Facebook Live, which increased the reach to over 6,000 views!

One of the main challenges she faced in the virtual format was simply not having enough hands — hands to hold the camera, hands to hold a goat, and hands to type on the computer or cell phone, monitoring and responding to participant questions.

Bergherm felt that overcoming those obstacles to continue providing education, especially to a youth audience, was completely worthwhile.

“The youth are our future, and it is important to share my knowledge with the next generation,” said Bergherm.

Visit go.illinois.edu/cce4H
Exploring Entrepreneurship in the New Normal

When a program is still going strong after five years, it has clearly reached the participants in meaningful ways. University of Illinois Extension Educator Tiffany Macke has been collaborating with the Crawford County Entrepreneurial Opportunities program since its inception.

One of the staples of Macke's programming is the Real Colors training that helps students better understand their character traits. In 2017, she added the iDREAM inventory experience, giving participants a starting point for dream realization. Recently, an iCREATE entrepreneurial mindset activity was included to increase critical thinking skills.

“These experiences are vital for our students in getting them to think like an entrepreneur,” said Tyler Woods, Clark County CEO instructor.

Macke plans to continue the six-part iDREAM series in the spring of 2021, with the goal of completing it before the end of the year.

Our local government education programs increased outreach in response to the COVID-19 crisis and developed a critical partnership with the Illinois Office of Broadband’s initiative to extend high-speed internet access across the state.

go.illinois.edu/communitybroadband

The 2020 Leadership Academy pivoted to a virtual platform, offering county officials online workshops on a variety of topics, including crisis communications, managing economic development initiatives, finding and using data, leadership styles, managing change, ethical considerations, fiscal and economic impacts of COVID-19, and reversing population decline.

go.illinois.edu/leadershipacademy

Statewide Webinar Reach

37
Webinars in 2020

1,706
Reached in Community Involvement and Leadership Webinars

926
Reached in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Webinars

5,182
Reached in Economic and Financial Stability Webinars

1,115
Reached in Community Resiliency Webinars

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.

https://go.illinois.edu/LGE
COVID Won’t Keep Us From Dreaming

While COVID-19 disrupted many aspects of our lives in 2020, it did not keep us from dreaming. Normally conducted in person, the six-part Dare to Dream program for adults was transitioned into a virtual series. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign’s Wellness Center had over a dozen employees eager to take part in this virtual pilot and, due to its success, has requested the series again in 2021.

The iDREAM program at Marshall Schools was another successful transition. Rather than conducting in-person sessions, the community members of the Marshall Dream Team redesigned the activity to include Zoom interviews with all high school senior participants. The new virtual components will become a permanent part of the program even after in-person school resumes.

Extension Educator Tiffany Macke and Marshall seventh grade teacher Carrie Miller were pleased to learn how much their students had retained from their fifth grade sessions of the iCREATE program. The students even requested sessions they missed during their sixth grade year due to COVID-19. When middle schoolers request additional lessons, you know you’re doing something right!

Building a Trail One Step at a Time

The National Road Trail System has a vision to create a multi-use trail system to foster health and wellness, tourism, and economic development in Clark County. University of Illinois Extension Educator Tiffany Macke is aiding the project by setting up a fund for donations, updating their plan, expanding resources, and researching grants.

With Macke’s guidance and expertise, the National Road Trail System has been recognized as a working committee under the Clark County Board. This is a major step that will help to open new doors for the project on state and federal levels.

Find more information about the National Road Trail System on their Facebook page.

Visit go.illinois.edu/C-E-D

Macke’s excitement and vision of the trail keeps our team engaged and focused on our goals for our community.

JIM BOLIN, NATIONAL ROAD TRAIL SYSTEM

Avery Cornwell and Ricky Gibson, Marshall seventh graders, show off their iCREATE binders.
Keeping Gardening at Home in 2020

The average age of Master Gardener and Master Naturalist volunteers meant these groups were in a demographic especially vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic. This made safety precautions, like social distancing, an absolute must for agriculture and natural resource programming in Clark, Crawford, and Edgar counties this year.

Many volunteers spent time tending to their own gardens in 2020, and they weren’t alone. Interest in gardening was up 43% according to a survey conducted by Axiom Marketing, a Minnesota-based firm. To meet this growing need, while keeping volunteers and participants safe, Extension provided opportunities for small groups, virtual education, and remote information-sharing for farmers, gardeners, and naturalists.

In a socially-distanced, outdoor meeting of Master Gardeners, local members were treated to a floral demonstration using flowers and other materials from the home of Steven and Kim Trine.

Jan Phipps continued to write a monthly news column with suggestions for improving one’s own garden. This informative Master Gardener series is published in multiple newspapers in Clark, Crawford, and Edgar counties, as well as Vigo County, Indiana. It is also distributed via social media and published on the Illinois Extension website.

Extension Master Gardeners donate approximately 3,500 hours each year, while Master Naturalists donate another 302,000 hours annually.

Ag and Horticulture Highlights

At the beginning of 2020, Illinois Extension responded to the signing of the Illinois Hemp Bill by providing a workshop on the basics of growing industrial hemp in Clark County. Recognizing that this versatile crop has the potential to empower small farmers and to revitalize farming communities, many signed up to participate.

Even though they were unable to host an in-person gardening workshop, Master Gardeners turned the annual April in Paris event into a free webinar hosted by one of the original speakers, Diane Plewa. Illinois and Indiana Master Gardeners were able to receive continuing education credit for attending this virtual program.

Visit go.illinois.AgNaturalResources

The Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists set an example of observing social distancing by tending to their own gardens in 2020.
SNAP-Ed Inspires Healthy Choices

Early in 2020, Tammy Evans and Hope Dennis, SNAP-Ed community workers, were able to make their regular direct education visits to area schools, early education centers, and health departments. During these visits, they were able to teach youth and their families how to make healthy nutritional and activity choices using the OrganWise Guys, Color Me Healthy, and MyPlate for My Family programs.

One of the year’s highlights for Evans happened early on, during one of her in-person visits to the Creative Center for Children in Paris. As part of the Color Me Healthy program, Evans conducted a veggie taste test with the class. When she returned to the center for the afternoon session, teachers reported that the morning class asked for more broccoli and cauliflower at snack time.

“We want broccoli and cauliflower!”

PRESCHOOLERS AFTER IN-PERSON TASTE TEST

SNAP-Ed Community Partnerships

- 3 K-12 Schools
- 2 Store or Markets
- 8 Agencies or Community Centers
- 12 Emergency Food Sites
- 9 Early Childhood
CREATIVE AWARDS CEREMONIES
4-Hers in Clark, Crawford, and Edgar counties always look forward to the end of the year when they are acknowledged for their hard work. Just like most events in 2020, the awards ceremonies needed to convert to a socially-distanced format, but Extension kept it meaningful and memorable. Each county held drive-through events allowing families to pull up and receive their hard-earned accolades.

LOCAL PROGRAMS REACH ACROSS THE STATE
Educators in all program areas quickly adapted to providing virtual content, both live and recorded. It turns out, they’re pretty good at it! Our educators discovered their audiences were often from all across the state, in addition to locals who would have dropped in for a class at the library or senior center.

4-H YOUTH REWARDED FOR EFFORTS WITH COMMEMORATIVE T-SHIRT
“This year has been a challenge in many ways,” said Susan Sloop, 4-H youth development educator. Knowing 4-H members were going to be disappointed about not being able to show in person at 4-H fairs due to COVID-19, 4-H program coordinators in each of the three counties held a t-shirt design contest to commemorate this unique year.

“This was just one of the ways we tried to help our 4-Hers feel connected during a time when we all felt very disconnected,” said Sloop. 4-Hers were asked to submit t-shirt design entries via Facebook, making sure the design highlighted the virtual fair event, which was conducted completely online.

CONTINUING EDUCATION FROM AFAR
Nearly 700 Extension employees live and work in all 102 Illinois counties. The 2020 Extension Annual Conference, held virtually on November 18-19, provided our staff with continuing education opportunities in the areas of communications, IT, human resources, program planning and evaluation, design thinking, health and wellness, inclusion, and updates on the Extension and Public Engagement Connection Center. All staff were able to participate this year, due to the virtual nature of the program.
### Staff Directory

- **Tiffany Macke**  
  Educator, Community & Economic Development

- **Susan Sloop**  
  Educator  
  4-H Youth Development

- **Cartha Gustafson**  
  Coordinator, Clark Co.  
  4-H Youth Development

- **April Knoblett**  
  Coordinator, Crawford Co.  
  4-H Youth Development

- **Mary Liz Wright**  
  Educator  
  Nutrition & Wellness

- **Stacy Woodyard**  
  County Director

- **Kim Trine**  
  Coordinator  
  Ag & Natural Resources

- **Hope Dennis**  
  Community Worker  
  SNAP-Ed

- **Tammy Evans**  
  Community Worker  
  SNAP-Ed

- **Darra Walker**  
  Associate,  
  Promotions & Publicity

- **Summer Walker**  
  Specialist  
  Office Support

- **Rebecca Schiver**  
  Associate  
  Office Support

- **Tiffany Cervantes**  
  Assistant  
  Office Support

- **Maisie McClure**  
  Assistant  
  Office Support

### Extension Council

- Rob Angus
- Stephen Boyer
- Mallory Cook
- Abbey Furlong
- Bev Goekler
- Troy Hickey
- Bailey Maulding
- Randy Allen Peterson
- Dallas Richardson
- Hailey Sanders
- Cindy Spencer
- Reuben Stence
- Alison Williams

**2020 ILLINOIS EXTENSION IMPACT REPORT**