



2020

Addressing Local Needs, Solving Global Challenges



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

DuPage, Kane,
& Kendall Counties



Deanna K. Roby-Vorgias
County Director

A Message from the County Director

Unprecedented. Historic. Uncertain. 2020 tested all of us and our communities. During this trying time, our dedicated staff and valued volunteers went virtual with real intent. Our team delivered Extension’s research-based information and strong educational programs in different ways — to both existing and new audiences. Locally, we developed more than 60 educational videos and online programs, providing guidance on creating budget-friendly, healthy meals; growing better gardens; encouraging STEM experiences for youth; and building a variety of skills for all ages.

Pairing local expertise with the vast selection of statewide resources and webinars, we helped shine a light on important information. DuPage, Kane, and Kendall county neighbors have offered notes of gratitude, requests for more information, and even encouraging words.

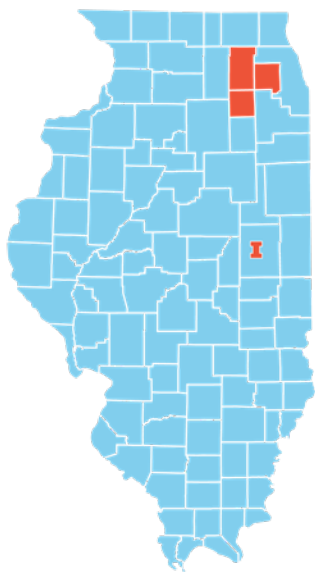
We want to sincerely thank all of our clients, supporters, and volunteers for being part of Extension, especially in a year of challenges. We look forward to continuing to serve you in the future!

Deanna K. Roby-Vorgias,
County Extension Director

Despite and amidst a pandemic, the outreach of Extension continues to remain strong and relevant, but also creative, flexible, proactive, and resilient. On a personal level, I have found Extension to be a comforting constant I could rely upon in a world of uncertainty. From 4-H opportunities to webinars to activities to responding to need, Extension has not missed a beat.

TINA HEIDRICH,
4-H ALUM, PARENT, AND VOLUNTEER

Staff Serving Dupage, Kane, & Kendall Counties



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Applying a Local Lens to Statewide issues

University of Illinois was established as part of the land grant system to provide world-class education, pioneer research, and put learning and discovery into practice to benefit the health and wellbeing of the state's residents and communities.

Extension is built on a local community framework, but our educators and specialists are part of a statewide network of Extension professionals. They work every day to improve the lives of Illinois residents and bring stability and innovation to businesses and communities.

This statewide network of educators, faculty experts, and staff are dedicated to the mission of aligning research to needs and translating that research into action plans. Their work allows Illinois youth, families, businesses, producers, and community leaders to solve problems, make informed decisions, and adapt to changes and opportunities. Educators in local units contribute to statewide efforts in their expert content area. In turn, local units benefit from these collaborative efforts and high-quality resources.

Through input from internal and external stakeholders, Extension focuses on statewide priorities in five core areas: community, economy, environment, food, and health. This blend of long-range focus, shared expertise, and local accountability is a powerful strategy that ensures we stay true to our mission while we tailor our programming to meet local community needs.

Illinois Extension's Grand Challenge Framework

Community Support Strong and Resilient Youth, Families, and Communities

- Thriving Youth
- Connectedness and Inclusion
- Involvement and Leadership

Economy Grow a Prosperous Economy

- Economic Vitality
- Financial Well-being
- 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

Hallmarks of strong, resilient communities include residents who feel connected, have a strong sense of belonging, and appreciate the diversity represented in their neighborhoods. These communities often experience lower rates of violence and offer a higher quality of life. Research has shown that civically engaged youth are more likely to contribute to their communities as adults. Illinois Extension activities play a pivotal role in designing strategies to sustain a leadership pipeline, discovering opportunities for volunteers to actively engage in meeting local needs, and supporting development of robust community networks.



COMMUNITY

1,532
Program
Attendance

59
Educational
Sessions
and Videos

974
4-H Club
Memberships

547
Total
Volunteers
Engaged*

\$1.15M
Volunteer Value
**

* Total Master Gardener, Master Naturalist, and 4-H volunteers.

** Based on the Independent Sector 2019 rate of \$27.98 per hour.

Illinois Extension focuses on the following priorities as the foundation of strong and resilient youth, families, and communities.



Connectedness and Inclusion

A sense of community brings people together to support each other and overcome threats to survival and growth. Accepting and celebrating our differences is essential for creating environments where all voices are important and heard. Thriving families and communities are supported by a diverse and deep pool of community members and organizations.



Involvement and Leadership

Community pride soars when residents who volunteer, advocate, contribute, or lead see themselves as part of the solutions to local issues. Decision-makers can best enhance community vitality and improve the quality of life in both rural and urban areas when equipped with the skills and research-based information.



Thriving Youth

Thriving youth are the core of healthy, robust communities. Our mentorship-based youth development model applies a holistic development framework. It focuses on social competence, academic success, career development, and community connection. The 4-H club experience creates opportunities and environments for all youth to thrive, today and tomorrow.



4-H Members and Volunteers Create PPE for Seniors, Frontline and Essential Workers

4-H Robotics Team Donates 7,000+ 3-D Printed Face Shields

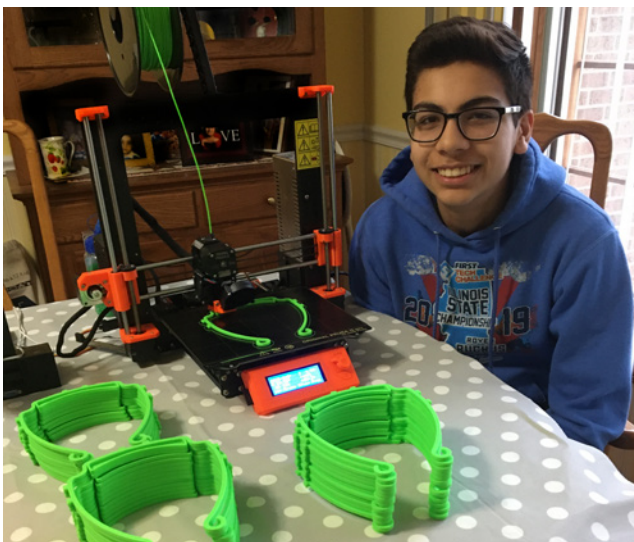
For Kane County's Got Robot? 4-H club and First Tech Challenge team, 3-D printing is a familiar technology. Members regularly use 3-D printers to make robot parts, but in March of 2020, they established a new goal to help address the shortage of personal protective equipment in their community. Working together from a distance, they created face shields for healthcare and other essential workers using the team's 3-D printer, in addition to 10 personal or borrowed devices. Members raised funds for supplies and collaborated with three other local robotics teams, sharing open source files and production tips.

By August, the 4-Hers, ages 12 to 17, had printed and donated more than 6,500 shields locally and across the country. Their 3-D printed face shields have gone to hospitals, first responders, and nursing homes in the team's hometown of Elgin, throughout Chicago, and as far away as Texas. Members felt that it was a perfect way to couple their technical expertise with the 4-H ideal of serving others and bettering the world.

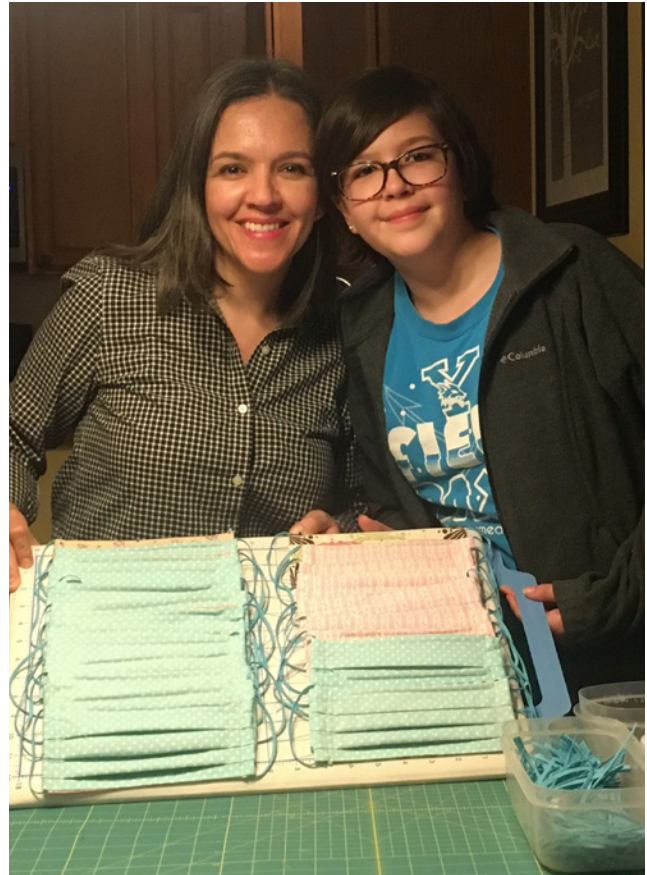
We saw this [face shield project] as an opportunity for us to help the community. It's crucial for people to have these. We're making a big impact in our community and other communities around the country.

JOSH KLAPPERICH

4-H ROBOTICS TEAM MEMBER



4-H member Josh Klapperich shows off some of the more than 7,000 3-D printed face shields that his Elgin-based club donated to healthcare professionals, essential workers, and older adults.



Spanglish 4-H Club's Magda and Anna Emmert show some of the face masks they created and donated to the effort started by a local 4-H volunteer.

4-H Volunteer Inspires Hundreds to Sew Masks

In March, 4-H volunteer Charlotte Wyncoop started a Facebook group for those interested in making fabric face masks for healthcare workers, first responders, nursing home residents, and other critical groups. She invited 4-H club members, 4-H volunteers, adult community members, and both sewers and non-sewers to join the group, now 425 members strong.

To date, members have donated more than 10,000 masks! Along the way, they evaluated and adjusted designs using feedback from healthcare workers, created mask holding button bands, and worked with community organizations that serve seniors and those most at risk or in need.

Wyncoop even led a two-part online mask sewing workshop for youth. She taught participants how to make two different mask styles with personal sizing information, and even explained how each style helps to keep people safer.



Want to help the effort?
Visit go.illinois.edu/4Hgotfaceshields



Virtual Opportunities Provide Real Benefits

4-H Youth Find Ways to Learn and Grow in New Conditions

Nearly 1,000 entries were submitted for local 4-H shows in 2020, as families adapted from in-person to online summer showcases. While the experience was certainly different, 4-H virtual shows still offered youth significant benefits.

Each year, 4-H members work hard to learn new things and develop skills, which they demonstrate through exhibits. Instead of bringing physical exhibits to the fair, youth uploaded photos, videos, and reports to an online system. Just like with in-person shows, each received constructive, valuable feedback from knowledgeable volunteer judges.



4-H member Abi Munar created a lending library for her civic engagement project. “I did this to honor my grandma, as well as help out my community. To me, 4-H is about helping others out,” said Munar.

4-H has provided us with hobbies and education, and has helped me get through the pandemic.... I think 4-H has given us a lot of happiness this year.

KEATON SELBERT

1st YEAR 4-H MEMBER

“It was important to encourage members to participate because it taught them how to complete projects in a different format and still learn and be successful,” said 4-H parent and volunteer Rhonda Oker. Her daughter Lydia entered several projects, including interior design and animal science. While her swine videos were challenging, they were still her favorite part. “I loved doing them!” Lydia said.

For families new to 4-H, 2020 was a unique first-year experience. “4-H has provided us with hobbies and education, and has helped me get through the pandemic,” said Keaton Selbert. “We thought that it would be a way to meet new friends in person, and attend the county fair. The experience was different than we imagined, but I really enjoyed the garden and the feathery friends we tended. We had Zoom meetings to share our projects. It has taken a lot of dedication, but I think 4-H has given us a lot of happiness this year.”

His mom Shannon added that through 4-H they had access to “hands-on educational activities that give us such rewarding results. We want to thank you for the immense richness 4-H has added to our lives this year.”

4-H Staff Shifts to Providing Online Resources and Experiences

In addition to virtual programming for club members, 4-H staff also provided online learning opportunities for non-members, giving them a glimpse into what 4-H is like. Multi-session, interactive virtual workshops covered a wide range of interests, including photography, sewing face masks, and horticulture. 4-H staff also created more than 30 educational videos on topics ranging from dog training to origami to stop motion videos.

Local and state economies depend on recruitment and retention of a skilled workforce and sound economic planning and development. Agricultural operations, large and small, make a foundational contribution to local and state economic vitality. Population projections suggest that metro and rural Illinois communities will experience demographic shifts thanks to the exit of younger workers and a growing retiree population. These shifts are expected to produce serious economic issues. To compound the situation, many communities are already grappling with short- and long-term economic implications of COVID-19.



ECONOMY

6,075
Program
Attendance

62
Educational
Sessions

20
Online Learning
Sessions

Illinois Extension focuses on the following priorities as effective supports for economic stability and prosperity.



Workforce Preparedness and Advancement

The global pandemic has reinforced the need to develop innovative ways to nurture the Illinois workforce. These include career exploration, formal training and re-training programs for economically vulnerable populations, management training, and opportunities for professionals to meet regulatory and licensure requirements for continuing education. Ultimately, a prepared, skilled workforce increases tax revenues.



Financial Wellbeing

Financial wellbeing can affect physical, mental and social health which can result in poorer job performance, reduced ability to concentrate, and bankruptcy. Preventing bankruptcy and financial insecurity reduces the community need for support services. Extension supports financial wellbeing across ages and stages of life.



Economic Vitality

Rural and urban communities must be built on solid foundations. They must plan for growth, prepare for emergencies, and share responsibility for continually seeking ways to promote economic vitality. Agricultural operations, both large and small, are critically important contributors to the economic vitality of Illinois' local and state economy.

The natural wonder of Illinois is more than just its beautiful scenery. The land provides recreation for residents and visitors, habitat for pollinators and wildlife, pastures for grazing livestock, fields for growing food, and the safe water that is essential for all living things. Threats to our land, air, and water can be managed with the identification, promotion, and adoption of environmentally sustainable policies and practices. Carefully developed green spaces and natural assets help youth and adults improve learning and enhance physical and mental wellness. Sound environmental and agricultural policies contribute to a sustainable and diverse environment, increase comfort, reduce government costs, and enhance property values.



ENVIRONMENT

2,532
Program
Attendance

216
Educational
Sessions and
Episodes

326
Trained
Volunteers
*

\$378K
Volunteer
Value
**

1,304
Expert
Consultations

* Total Master Gardener and Master Naturalist volunteers.

** Based on the Independent Sector 2019 rate of \$27.98 per hour.

*** Supporting home and natural environment inquiries.

Illinois Extension sustains natural resources in home and public spaces by focusing on these educational priorities.



Enhancing and Preserving Natural Resources

Water, land, and air quality have significant implications for our survival. These shared resources must be managed through ecological balance and sustainable practices. Our future depends on our ability to effectively steward these resources for generations to come.



Engagement with Home and Community Landscapes

There is growing evidence that exposure to plants and green spaces provides many benefits, like improved health, quality of life, concentration, and relationships. Sustainable home landscapes can net economic benefits to communities through increased property value. They also can create environmental benefits for all by supporting pollinators and other important contributors to ecosystems.



Extension Volunteers Continue Horticulture Help and Environmental Stewardship

Master Gardeners Answer Hundreds of Calls for Help

Rather than shut down the Master Gardener Help Desk in the spring of 2020, dedicated Extension staff and volunteers took it online. Master Gardener volunteers worked from their homes, answering more than 500 questions via email.

Each growing season, trained Extension volunteers field community questions for free, usually through in-person visits or phone calls during office hours. These tri-county Master Gardeners adapted to continue serving their communities in 2020, when many residents started or expanded their gardening efforts while spending more time at home.

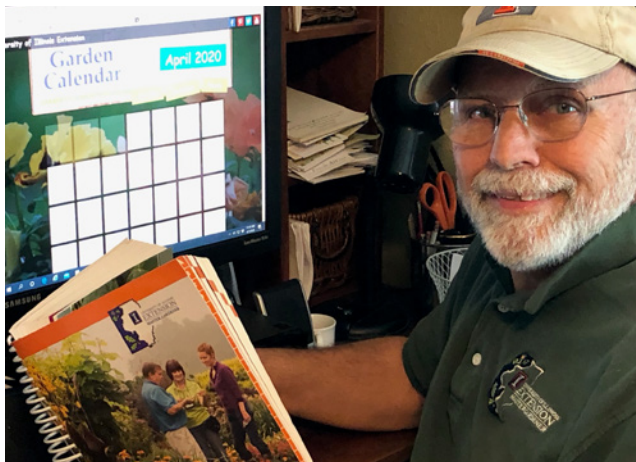
The e-version of the Help Desk did not seem to impact customer satisfaction. Several individuals wrote thank you messages, saying the advice nursed family heirloom plants, saved them money, or just gave them peace of mind.

One resident wrote, “Thank you for taking the time to provide so many great ideas. This is one of the most comprehensive emails I think I have ever received — truly.”

In addition to the Help Desk, Master Gardeners shared practical, factual information through dozens of online presentations, videos, radio shows, and social media posts.

New Master Program Volunteers Complete Virtual Trainings

Despite the challenges of 2020, 49 new volunteers in our counties completed Master Gardener or Master Naturalist training online.



Master Gardener Steve Wolf staffed the Kendall County Help Desk from his home office in 2020. Tri-county volunteers answered 571 questions from March through October.



Master Naturalist Maureen Slaven teaches a nature lesson to youth at a local forest preserve in fall 2020.

The pandemic brought my job to a standstill. I was furloughed in March 2020. As soon as it was safe to do so, however, I was able to resume my Master Naturalist volunteer work at the forest preserve. I’m so happy to have had these opportunities to continue to share my love of nature with others.

MAUREEN SLAVEN, MASTER NATURALIST

In the fall, 24 Master Naturalists attended virtual classes for 10 weeks, learning about botany, herpetology, ornithology, prairies, watersheds, mammals, entomology and more. The training prepares volunteers to more effectively participate in local environmental education and stewardship. They go on to help local agencies with prairie restoration, invasive species control, injured animal care, and species monitoring.

“The Master Naturalist program was a perfect fit for my personal and professional goals,” said volunteer Maureen Slaven. “This cost-effective program not only provided a tremendous amount of information, it also helped me forge connections and contacts.”

This winter, 25 new Master Gardener volunteers completed 11 weeks of virtual training. The extensive training sessions were conducted by University of Illinois Extension educators in horticulture, insects, diseases, grasses, woody and herbaceous ornamentals, and fruits and vegetables.



4-H Teens Create Video Series to Teach Water Conservation

Local 4-Hers Lead Water Connects Us All Program

Thanks to 4-H Teen Teachers in DuPage, Kane, and Kendall counties, local youth – and youth around the state – learned about water quality and what they can do to help conserve and protect this essential resource.

“Many of us take water for granted,” said 4-H Teen Teacher Krish Nangia of DuPage County. “It is a precious resource. I want everyone to understand how water contamination is a problem in today’s society, and that it cannot be solved without working together.”

When the pandemic shut everything down in the spring, a group of 4-H Teen Science Ambassadors knew they had to adapt the 2020 4-H Ag Innovators Experience, Water Connects Us All, for online use.



4-H Teen Teachers learned the Ag Innovators Challenge in Iowa, and later worked together to create video demonstrations when they could not teach in person.

Many of us take water for granted. It is a precious resource. I want everyone to understand how water contamination is a problem in today’s society, and that it cannot be solved without working together.

KRISH NANGIA, 4-H MEMBER

They worked together via Zoom to develop a video series, allowing teachers, parents, and youth to access the challenge in a different way.

The videos explore water, nitrogen, and carbon cycles, as well as wetlands, watersheds, ecosystems, and the challenge’s four demonstrations of water-saving practices.

These hands-on activities use everyday items to show how rain gardens, bioswales, saturated buffers, and bioreactors protect watersheds and wetlands, and improve water quality in our communities. The models of these engineered conservation practices help youth learn how they work in both rural and urban settings. Kits with supplies were made available for contactless, curbside pickup by families, teachers, and others.

In February, prior to the height of the pandemic, Nangia and fellow 4-H member Sofie Heidrich traveled to Iowa for training. Since then, they have passed that knowledge on to nearly three dozen 4-H Teen Teachers across Illinois, who use the challenge and the video series in their own communities.

“I believe that the youth we teach and reach with these materials have the ability to become mentors themselves and share their knowledge with others,” said Heidrich.



Check out the Water Connects Us All resource center at go.illinois.edu/4HAIEWaterConnectsUsAll

Advances in agricultural practice driven by research and technology have the dual benefit of improving production efficiency and reducing the environmental impact caused by the food production system. While our production is high, one in every nine Illinois households experience food insecurity, and its rise over the past 10 years significantly impacts the health and wellbeing of Illinois residents. Over 2 million Illinois residents rely on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for food assistance according to May 2020 totals from Illinois Department of Human Services, with a 14% spike in the latter half of the year associated with the effects of COVID-19.



FOOD



* Supported by Extension staff and volunteers.
 ** Volume of produce donated to local communities.
 *** Based on average value of \$1.44 per pound.

Illinois Extension supports a safe and accessible food supply by developing knowledge and educational programs in these areas.



Food Access
 Issues with access and affordability of healthy food options can perpetuate chronic illness. Healthy people and communities require safe, nutritious, and abundant food and the education to make every food choice and every food dollar count.



Food Production
 COVID-19 presented challenges never before realized: supply shortages from the closure of food and meat processing plants, shifted demand from the closure of restaurants and schools, and consumer fear over uncertain transmission of the virus.



Food Safety
 COVID-19 created new areas of concern for consumers on food safety from eating and storing carryout foods and potential transmission on food packages to safely preserving foods grown in home gardens.



Master Gardeners and SNAP-Ed Team Help Local Pantries Fight Food Insecurity

More than 14,000 Pounds of Produce Donated in 2020

In 2020, community and donation garden projects looked different, but Master Gardener volunteers still gave their time (and vegetables) to help their communities. Many planted extra garden rows at home, or managed garden plots to harvest donations for local food pantries.

“Donations of fresh fruits and veggies are incredibly helpful to keep our seniors healthy and strong,” said Cheryl Anderley of Dundee Township Food Pantry. “It energizes them to cook, and it also allows them to control the amount of salt.”



Master Gardener Tsue Ostermann donated fresh greens and tomatoes from her own garden.

I loved how excited the pantry volunteers were every time I arrived with my big baskets of produce. We all can use our time and talents to have a positive impact on the people around us.

ANITA NORTH HAMILL, MASTER GARDENER

DuPage Master Gardener Tsue Ostermann said the effort was even more important in 2020. “So many people lost their jobs and needed help. Fresh vegetables are always welcome because often donors give canned goods.”

Community garden plots managed by Master Gardeners, like those in Plano and Naperville, also safely continued their work. In total, Master Gardener volunteers donated 14,234 pounds of fresh produce in 2020, including carrots, tomatoes, onions, green peppers, hot peppers, radishes, cucumbers, beans, zucchini, summer squash, lettuce, eggplant, beets, kale, rhubarb, cabbage, cauliflower, winter squash, Swiss chard, and brussel sprouts.

“Fresh produce is in high demand at the pantry,” said Master Gardener Connie Hatter of the Plano Community Garden. “I have seen what they get from stores, most of which is thrown away because it’s rotten or badly bruised. We wanted to give even more, so we put our heads together and decided we could increase our produce by adding cool weather crops.”

To assist pantries in making these donated vegetables attractive to pantry clients, local SNAP-Ed staff provided nutritious, low-budget recipes and information cards.

“People often don’t know how to cook vegetables that they aren’t familiar with, or how to prepare familiar ones in healthy ways,” said Master Gardener and pantry volunteer Elaine Weil. “We have been very happy to receive recipes and information to address these issues and distribute to clients.”



Extension Supports Local Food Access Sites to Serve and Educate Residents

SNAP-Ed Provides Recipes, Educational Materials, and Signage

At the height of the pandemic, food pantries needed new ways to distribute food to those in need. Most switched from a shopping-style model to distributing pre-packed boxes via delivery or contactless curbside pick up.

While these models provided additional safety, clients were likely to receive foods that were less familiar, less desirable, or less healthy than they would have chosen on their own. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education team responded by creating resources for packing more nutritious, practical boxes.

Staff created a guide with balanced nutrition tips for pantries and budget-friendly recipes to match box ingredients for patrons. SNAP-Ed staff also helped pantries with indoor and outdoor displays. The materials were provided in both English and Spanish.

“Extension has helped us with providing information, nutrition guidance, posters, recipes, and even signs for our parking lot,” said Cheryl Anderley of Dundee Township Cares Food Pantry. “We try to promote and encourage a healthy eating mindset, and appreciate easy, nutritious recipes that don’t require too many ingredients.”



SNAP-Ed staff worked with local food pantries to provide helpful, bilingual signage at pick-up locations.



Community workers transitioned from in-person lessons to virtual delivery methods, including a recipe introduction series.

Extension reached out to us during the beginning stages of COVID to see how they could help, and continue to do so. We appreciate [them] helping us to help others with healthy resources, recipes, promotional materials, and signs. We feel it is important our guests know that we not only distribute food, but that we keep them informed and encouraged to eat healthy.

DIANE RENNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MARIE WILKINSON FOOD PANTRY

SNAP-Ed Increases Local Online Tools and Presence

In 2020, Extension’s education efforts went virtual, from live online presentations to instructional webinars and recipe videos. Staff learned new technologies and turned their homes into production studios with limited resources.

During a live Zoom presentation in fall 2020, staff taught the Eat Play Grow curriculum to refugee families, who spoke six different languages! Interpreters joined to help translate and all of the participants remained engaged.

“Sometimes we think of people from different countries as so different than us, but these moms just want to help their kids grow up happy and healthy, too,” said Community Worker Cindy Glavin. “Many people who live here struggle raising kids. Being with this group, I realized the extra hurdles a refugee family has to get over to provide their family with healthy foods — frequently very different types of food than they are accustomed to.”

This SNAP-Ed collaboration with Cooperative Association for Special Education will continue in 2021 with additional classes and topics.



Get nutritious, budget-friendly recipes at go.illinois.edu/EatMoveSave

Nationally, about 86% of annual health care spending is related to chronic disease with research suggesting that up to 80% of premature heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes diagnoses could be prevented. There is clear evidence from health, nutrition, and behavioral research demonstrating the positive impact of research-based communication and outreach to promote physical, emotional, and mental health. With health disparities felt unevenly across Illinois communities, education and outreach efforts need to pay special attention toward surfacing and understanding trends impacting limited-resource populations.



HEALTH

12,527
Program Attendance

647
Educational Sessions

34
K-12
Schools

SNAP-Education Community Partnerships
9
Early Childhood
Centers

18
Agencies or
Community Centers

25
Emergency
Food Sites

Illinois Extension works to maximize physical and emotional health for all Illinois residents by focusing on these priorities.



Chronic Disease Prevention and Management

Chronic diseases prevention has collective benefits to all residents of Illinois, such as lower health care costs, increase employee productivity and morale, and decrease absenteeism.



Social and Emotional Health

COVID elevated a growing mental health crisis in the country. Extension has added resources and staff to address the growing need to provide hope and care for struggling individuals and families in the state.



Health and Safety Environments

From school lunchrooms and home-based settings, to 4-H club meetings and day care facilities, Extension is building safe, healthy, and inclusive learning environments.

Serving Illinois During a Global Pandemic



When early signs of COVID-19 arrived in Illinois, families and businesses across the state were forced to confront a reality unlike anything they could have imagined. With schools transitioning to virtual learning, parents were hungry for information about managing the physical and emotional health of their at-home learners. Families suddenly found themselves together at home more, where they explored new hobbies, such as gardening and food preservation. Farmers needed to navigate the numerous challenges facing both local and global food supply chains. Almost overnight, restaurants and retail stores had to rethink their business models or risk becoming irrelevant in a suddenly virtual world.

As the challenges mounted, the Illinois Extension network emerged as an effective method for creating and sharing timely, research-backed solutions to many of the most pressing issues we were grappling with. Extension's educators led the way forward during a time of uncertainty for many. We are proud to share some of our highlights from the past year.

Illinois Extension provided applied research and education to address statewide challenges and local issues.

We nurtured local talent. Extension supported 7,207 Master Gardener, Master Naturalist, Money Mentor, and 4-H volunteers. They devoted nearly 570,000 hours of community services and support, valued at \$16 million.

We met learners where they lived. During the past 12 months, Extension websites garnered more than 12.8 million visits. Our social media strategy generated more than 200 million impressions, highlighting Illinois news, events, and research.

We partnered to create synergy. Our impact is magnified through more than 2,000 local, state, and national partnerships. Extension helped partner organizations secure more than \$7 million in grant funds, enabling Illinois communities to address local challenges in areas such as food access, rural economic infrastructure, and workforce development.

An independent research firm valued Extension's annual impact on the State of Illinois at \$603 million, about ten times its 2019 budget of \$60.9 million.

Illinois Extension created positive economic benefit for the state of Illinois. The positive economic outcomes of Extension's programs were estimated as at least \$477 million in 2019.

Extension programs stimulated local and state economies through employment and program expenditures. Economic output in Illinois related to Extension expenditures was \$126 million for 2019. Illinois Extension directly employs 655 FTE personnel, and generates an additional 403 FTE jobs through indirect and induced impact effects.

Extension helped residents, businesses, and local governments adapt and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Educators and faculty specialists dove deeply into unique needs related to the pandemic. Farmdoc's Coronavirus and Ag seminar series attracted more than 7,400 live participants over 20 seminars, covering topics such as retail food prices, livestock markets, trade, and ethanol.

Program partnerships helped Illinois families connect with local food resources. Extension's Illinois Nutrition Education program published Find Food IL, showing the location of free and subsidized meals and food access points in a searchable, mobile-friendly mapping application.

Our staff learned to create rich, meaningful online learning experiences. With in-person meetings restricted, we hosted nearly 25,000 online and in-person educational sessions, benefiting more than 600,000 attendees. Illinois 4-H embraced an online format for summer exhibitions in every county, showcasing the work of 2,200 members at the virtual Illinois State Fair.

Our technology supported connectivity for online learners and remote work employees. Five county Extension offices piloted "drive-up" WiFi sites to make internet accessible to those with needs for schoolwork, online businesses, and social connection.

2020-21 EXTENSION COUNCIL

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Rhonda Oker, Kendall County

David Pileski, DuPage County
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*denotes youth members

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Mon. - Fri., 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

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Cover photo: Local Master Gardener volunteers donated 14,234 pounds of fresh produce to food pantries in DuPage, Kane, and Kendall counties in 2020. Read more about this great effort on page 12.

**Illinois
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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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