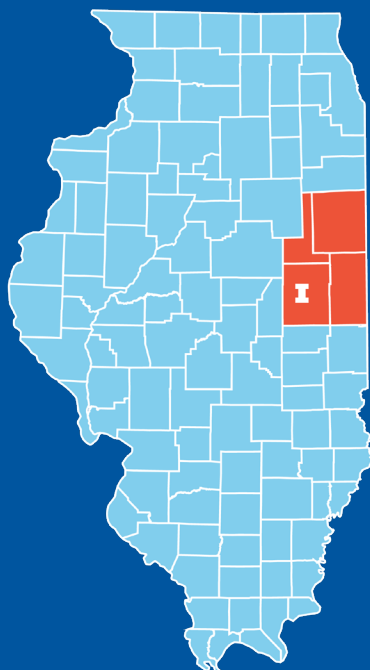




University of Illinois Extension provides practical education you can trust to help people, businesses, and communities solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future. Based in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, Extension is the statewide outreach program of the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign.



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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 2018, University of Illinois Extension had the pleasure of educating 85,000 people in Champaign, Ford, Iroquois, and Vermilion counties. Through over 1,350 in-person programs and online engagements, our staff helped make positive change in the lives of people in our community. Individuals have had the chance to learn about managing personal finance, improving the lives of their families, living more healthy lives, enjoying the beauty of nature, having more productive farms, and enabling the best in their children.

Extension's mission is to extend knowledge and change lives. Our staff do this on a daily basis by providing practical education to individuals, businesses, and organizations through our area. Whether they be offered in an urban or rural setting, provided with children or aging adults, or offered to those with access to many or little resources, our programs help make research from top professionals at the university available to the public in an accessible way.

While this report lacks the space to describe each of the lives we have influenced over the past year, we hope that you find the information within valuable in capturing a snapshot of the work we do and why it matters.

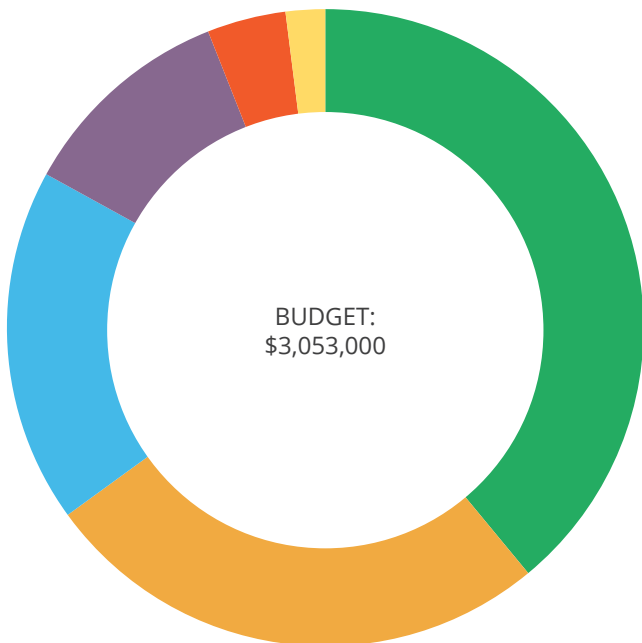
We are humbled to be able to have the opportunity to provide positive change within our community, and we thank you for the support you have provided our organization so we can continue to do so. Thanks to your backing, we can continue to make a difference for those we serve while truly extending knowledge and changing lives.

Ginger M. Boas
County Extension Director



Financial Report

Illinois Extension serving Champaign, Ford, Iroquois, and Vermilion Counties receives funding from the local level—including from county boards—as well as from state match. Our staff have also been able to acquire large amounts in grants and gifts that help us flourish from year to year.



- 39% Grants & Gifts
- 26% Local Funds
- 18% State Match
- 11% Federal Funds
- 4% General Revenue
- 2% Youth Development



Illinois Extension serving Champaign, Ford, Iroquois, and Vermilion Counties provides countless opportunities for growth throughout our communities, leading to positive change and development in those we serve.

Extending Knowledge, Changing Lives in 2018

Programs



1,350
Programs led by unit staff and volunteers.

Volunteers



50,000
Hours of work contributed by our volunteers.

People



85,000
People educated by our staff.

Web



1.8M
Page views on our unit website.

Social Media



75,000
People reached through unit social media accounts.



Extension Educator Helps Young Adults Learn Personal Financing

In 2017, Consumer Economics educator Kathy Sweedler launched with Dr. Nicholas Paulson (Agricultural and Consumer Economics) and Dr. Charles Chaffin (Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards) the massive open online course “Financial Planning for Young Adults.” This eight-module course utilizes videos, learner activities, discussion forums, and quizzes to teach young adults how to manage their personal finances.

2018 saw the growth and success of this course—by year’s end, nearly 17,000 learners had accessed the training. One of those young adults included Ann, a chemical engineering graduate from Nigeria. She expressed, “This course helped broaden my knowledge and educate me about the importance of building one’s finances early.” Others feel similarly to Ann—the class has nearly 100 reviews awarding 4.5 out of 5.0 stars.

Participants learn how to set financial goals, how to implement a budget, how to overcome barriers, the time value of money, the advantages and disadvantages of borrowing, common investment strategies, risk management, and financial planning as a career. The course is reaching its target audience, with 79% of the learners being between 18 and 34 years old.

Sweedler sees the success of the training as a benefit to the whole state. “By offering this education in an accessible online format,” stated Sweedler, “we can help people gain the knowledge they need to be successful, regardless of their location.”



To build an online community, participants in the “Financial Planning for Young Adults” course are encouraged to post an image of their financial goals to social media.



Four youth received scholarships for winning the Vermilion County Money Smart Week Kid Essay contest in April.

Consumer Economics

Illinois Extension’s Consumer Economics programs help youth and adults alike learn the skills they need to increase savings, manage spending, and reduce debt.

2018 Highlights



12,000

Views were recorded on 31 new posts to the *Plan Well, Retire Well* blog.



9,000

People were reached through an #askACES “Personal Finance for You” Twitter chat.



17,000

Young people accessed the “Financial Planning for Young Adults” course.



90

People received financial assistance from Money Mentors volunteers.



A Decade of Helping U of I Students

2018 marked the 10-year anniversary of Financial Wellness for College Students, a free program that helps University of Illinois students learn how to manage money and make wise financial decisions. One student who used the program in 2018 expressed, “Your financial wellness program prepared me for my dream job!”

Since 2008, 174 student interns have been trained by Consumer Economics educator Kathy Sweedler to do effective outreach and financial education for their peers. Thanks to all who have supported this program throughout its first 10 years!



Family Life

Adults, caregivers, professional staff, and others who participate in Family Life programs develop skills in healthy lifestyle decisions, effective family communication, and management of life transitions.

2018 Highlights



8,000

Views were recorded on 40 new posts to the award-winning *Family Files* blog.



2,000

People viewed videos published to the team's Facebook page. The highest-viewed video was about aging better by being grateful.



2,540

People attended Family Life programs, including ones on brain health and aging.



15,600

People were reached through an #askACES "Tackling Stress and Increasing Recovery" Twitter chat and a Snapchat takeover.



Using Technology to Reach and Educate New Audiences

As the world becomes more technologically driven, Extension educators have stepped up to reach audiences in new and engaging ways. This year, Family Life educator Chelsey Byers Gerstenecker explored the world of social media through Twitter chats, Facebook videos, and a campus Snapchat takeover.

Through the #askACES Twitter chat, led by the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, Byers Gerstenecker reached 14,300 people. She also created numerous Facebook videos about educational Family Life topics, which were viewed by over 2,000 people. Additionally, she arranged a takeover of the campus Snapchat account, reaching 1,300 people about Brain Health Awareness Week in the process.

Summer Movie Series Addresses Tough Family Topics

In fall 2017, Family Life educator Chelsey Byers Gerstenecker was approached about educational opportunities to increase awareness of the opioid crisis in Illinois. Byers Gerstenecker saw the importance of expanding discussions to make it easier for people to address the issue as they saw it happening around them; however, she needed a new format to discuss the topic, since it was not in her background.

Byers Gerstenecker approached coworker Kathy Sweedler, and together they developed a summer movie series. They would show films in trending topics, including *The Heroin Project*, which highlighted the opioid epidemic in Illinois. Additionally, local experts would be on hand for a panel discussion following each film.

They launched "Timeless Family Topics" over the summer, and through this three-part movie series provided a background to those needing to address tough topics in their families. The films shown included *Thinking Money: The Psychology Behind Our Best and Worst Financial Decisions*, *Monster in the Mind: The Convenient Un-truth about Alzheimer's*, and *The Heroin Project*.

The series was a success, and the duo looks forward to expanding it in the future. This format brought in people who were new to Extension, as well as a much younger audience. Byers Gerstenecker felt Extension needed to play its part in the process, stating, "Extension's role as the planner and convener of experts, resources, and space was a great way to begin the conversation locally."



Through the "Timeless Family Topics" movie series, viewers learned about difficult but trending topics that may impact their lives now or in the future.



Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed)

SNAP-Education staff works with Illinois families in need to make the healthier choice an easier choice where they eat, shop, live, play, and learn. Through classes and workshops, and by collaborating with community partners to adopt research-based solutions to encourage healthier nutrition and activity choices, SNAP-Education positively impacts the families and communities we serve.

Serving Local Families



16,595

Total SNAP-Education Participants



53.9%
Adults



46.1%
Youth



12.5% Identified as Hispanic
80.2% Identified as Non-Hispanic
7.4% Unknown

RACE OF PARTICIPANTS

- 43.8% White (7,275)
- 42.2% Black (7,011)
- 4.7% American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (774)

Our Community Partners



53

K-12 Schools



8

Youth Centers



18

Early Childhood Centers



2

Stores and Markets



16

Community Centers



23

Food Pantries and Food Banks

SNAP-Ed Staff Implement Healthy Food Initiatives in Danville

Eating habits established in childhood, the elementary years, and into high school have an impact on individuals for the rest of their lives. To help youth establish healthy eating patterns, Caitlin Kownacki and Sue Barnes (Danville School District food service director) worked together to provide healthy options for students in 2018.

With \$7,500 acquired through the Breakfast After the Bell grant, Danville High School created two grab-and-go breakfast carts, which allow students free access to healthy breakfast items. Students can choose from fresh smoothies, fruit, cereal, yogurt, granola bars, string cheese, juice, and milk.

"The carts allow students to start their day with a healthy meal. This helps their brains wake up and increases their productivity in the classroom," stated Kownacki. Since the carts were opened at the beginning of the school year, breakfast participation has increased by 13%.

In addition to helping students at the high school, Kownacki and Barnes secured \$75,000 to help youth at five elementary schools throughout Danville. Through the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program, children try new fresh fruits and vegetables, including different varieties, in a fun learning environment. The program focuses on tasting fresh, unprocessed produce so kids can see how fruits and vegetables taste in their natural state.

Through these two grants, Kownacki and Barnes hope youth in Danville have access to healthy food options to help them build healthy habits from a young age and perform at their best in the classroom.



The grab-and-go carts at Danville High School have increased breakfast participation at the school by 13%.



EFNEP Celebrates 50 Years

For half a century, EFNEP staff have made a difference in the lives of families and children by providing solutions to poverty and hunger. With EFNEP, people increase their knowledge and change their behaviors through programs that challenge preexisting attitudes and teach valuable skills in nutrition and wellness.

This year, EFNEP celebrated its 50th birthday. In the past 50 years, EFNEP staff throughout the nation have reached over 33 million vulnerable families. And EFNEP works! Of the adults it serves, 90% reported improved behavior after participating in EFNEP programs. 94% of participants started eating more fruits and vegetables, and 65% said they improved their food safety practices.

While the numbers speak for themselves, EFNEP's true success is shown in the stories individuals tell about the impact EFNEP programming has had on their lives. For example, during one class, participants were given a \$25 budget and local sales ads to make a shopping list. When the group shared their lists, one lady stayed under budget. She mentioned that thinking about everything she learned in class helped her make good choices. She shared, "Before our class, I never made a shopping list or compared prices. These classes helped me save money and time at the store."

EFNEP serves six counties throughout Illinois: Champaign, Cook, Madison, Peoria, St. Clair, and Vermilion. We are very proud of our EFNEP program in Champaign and Vermilion Counties, and we look forward to many more years of serving our community.



Through the 50 years that EFNEP has existed in the United States, staff have reached over 33 million vulnerable families to teach skills in nutrition and wellness.



Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

EFNEP works with families in need to improve food selection, food safety, and food buying practices. Through work with community partners, EFNEP focuses on parents and caregivers, pregnant women, teens, and youth. Hands-on classes increase knowledge and influence behavior change, making a difference in the lives of those who are served.

Serving Local Families



941
Total Adult
Participants



976
Total Youth
Participants



6.8% (64)
Adult Participants Identified as Hispanic

RACE OF ADULT PARTICIPANTS

- 49.8% White (469)
- 32% Black (301)
- 12.6% American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (119)

Our Community Partners



10
K-12 Schools



7
Youth Centers



2
Early Childhood Centers



40
Community Centers



1
Food Pantries and Food Banks



Master Gardeners Honor Missing Chinese Scholar

In the fall of 2018, Champaign County Master Gardeners and the U of I Chinese Students and Scholars Association collaborated to create a garden dedicated to missing Chinese scholar Yingying Zhang. This garden, funded with generous contributions from the College of ACES, the City of Urbana, Illinois Public Media, and many more, is adjacent to Campbell Hall, where Yingying was last seen.

The garden will serve as a respite to all who knew Yingying, as well as a place of healing for the community. A palette of green and white flowers, chosen for their symbolism in Chinese culture as well as their muted tones, surrounds a fading path that ends at a bench and an engraved stone about Yingying. The garden creation and implementation were overseen through completion by Master Gardener Phyllis Williams.

The individuals, staff, and businesses that contributed to the project commemorated the garden through a dedication ceremony on October 11. Ryan Pankau expressed the honor felt by the Master Gardeners in being approached to create the garden. "This garden will serve as a place to reflect about Yingying and her life, how this tragedy has impacted our community and how we now move forward," Pankau said.

In the future, Master Gardeners will maintain a supervisory role with the garden, providing annual training for student volunteers to upkeep its beauty.



Friends and community members joined Master Gardeners and the U of I Chinese Students and Scholars Association to honor Yingying Zhang in a garden dedication ceremony.

Horticulture

Illinois Extension's horticulture programming creates more beautiful communities while saving natural resources and preserving natural areas.

2018 Highlights



33,440

Volunteer hours were completed by our Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists.



\$807,300

Is the value to the community of the hours completed by our horticulture volunteers.



3,800

People attended over 60 horticulture programs, including nearly 1,500 people who came to our Garden Walks.



675

Horticulture Hotline questions were answered by our Master Gardeners.

HORTICULTURE VOLUNTEERS

217 Champaign County Master Gardeners

138 East Central Illinois Master Gardeners

74 Vermilion County Master Gardeners

19 Ford-Iroquois Master Gardener



Providing Education to Volunteers

This summer, Horticulture educator Ryan Pankau arranged a series on managing natural areas, with a goal of providing education to Master Naturalist volunteers. Through this three-part series, Master Naturalists learned about management decisions made to accomplish restoration goals at sites throughout east-central Illinois.

65 volunteers attended this series, which included "A Bird's Eye View of Land Management," at Warbler Ridge, "Native Plant Management," at Anita Purves Nature Center, and "Prairie Restoration," at the Middle Fork River.



The Behrends family of Iroquois County received the 4-H Family Spirit Award during the 2018 Illinois State Fair. This award recognizes an Illinois family who “advocates for the Illinois 4-H program over multiple generations.”

4-H Youth Development

4-H programs teach youth life skills, including leadership and decision-making. 4-H members are more likely to succeed in school and contribute to communities and are less likely to participate in risky behavior.

2018 Highlights



3,200

Youth benefited from 4-H Youth Development programming.



106

Community, SPIN (Special Interest), and Cloverbud 4-H clubs served youth in our area.



1,290

Youth in Champaign, Ford, and Iroquois counties participated in Ag in the Classroom.



450

People volunteered their time and energy to our youth programming.



140

Youth participated in the Food Challenge, learning healthy habits in the process.

YOUTH INVOLVED IN 4-H

522 Champaign County

143 Ford County

490 Iroquois County

165 Vermilion County



4-H Youth Feed the Hungry

Although Illinois is a leading producer of agriculture, one in five Illinois children experiences hunger. Vermilion County 4-H and Illini Fighting Hunger answered the call to help struggling families in their local communities in March through the 4-H Feeding and Growing program.

54 4-H members and community volunteers met at Danville Area Community College to package 10,000 meals. Volunteers formed assembly lines to combine and seal ingredients for a soy-based casserole meal for distribution to local food pantries and agencies in need. Some of the 14 organizations that took in the packaged meals include the Vermilion County Housing Authority, Danville Area United Way, Vermilion County Head Start, and multiple food pantries.

Hallie Beck, member of the Stoney Creek Ramblers 4-H Club, observed the importance of taking time to volunteer for this event, stating, “I think it’s important to give back to our communities, and I enjoy helping others less fortunate than I am.” Helping others is a driving factor in 4-H, as members learn to be better community members through volunteer opportunities and educational projects.

Vermilion County 4-H’s meal packaging event was one subset of a larger drive to package meals throughout the state. On April 4, Illinois 4-H volunteers and members surpassed 1 million meals packaged, paid for, and delivered to families in need by Illinois 4-H.

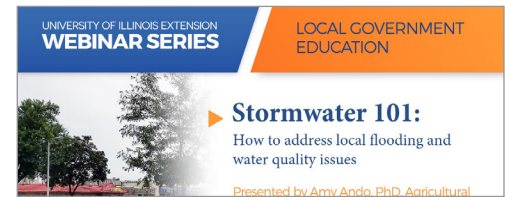


4-H members Allie Huchel and Sloan Morton and community member Pam Nave (center) were three of 54 participants in the meal packaging event at Danville Area Community College. The group packaged 10,000 meals for food-insecure homes in Danville.



WEBINARS REACH LOCAL OFFICIALS STATE-WIDE

Each year, local government officials and administrators from across the state improve their knowledge and skills through professional development webinars provided by Illinois Extension. Over the past year, local government webinars have reached 1,500 people through live and recorded sessions. The most popular topics included The Opioid Crisis, State and Federal Legislative Updates, Strategies for Attracting and Retaining Youth in Rural Communities, and Disaster Preparedness.



Miss these webinars live?
<http://go.illinois.edu/LGE>



YOUTH LEARN LIFE SKILLS THROUGH UNIQUE CLUB

This year marked the fourth anniversary of one of the cutest 4-H clubs in town—the 4-H Hopstars Rabbit Agility Club. In this club, youth meet through the summer to teach rabbits how to jump over barriers and traverse ramps, all while learning about rabbit care. The youth exchange ideas with each other to help their rabbits navigate the course, and Nicole Moore, leader of the club, expressed that “some of the older members even show newcomers some tips and tricks they’ve learned over the years for training rabbits.”

EXTENSION COLLABORATES WITH FARMERS MARKET TO PROVIDE NUTRITION EDUCATION

The Land Connection strives to make it easier for SNAP recipients to receive fresh produce through its summer farmers market. Because of its commitment to SNAP recipients, Champaign County’s SNAP-Ed program collaborated with the organization to teach attendees at the market what to do with their produce once they purchase it. Extension staff provided samples of recipes that use fresh, local foods found at the market. They then asked the people who taste-tested the recipes if they enjoyed them and whether or not they would like to see a given recipe served for lunch at local schools. The team will be sharing the data they collected to make changes in partnering schools through the area.



DANVILLE YOUTH GAIN EXPERIENCES THROUGH GARDENING

Last summer, Illinois Extension collaborated with Project Success of Vermilion County and Danville Area Community College (DACC) through Vermilion County 4-H to provide a unique experience for Danville youth. Students in the Project Success program at North Ridge Middle School enrolled in 4-H for the first time and got hands-on experience with gardening at the DACC Land Lab. Youth designed a garden, planted produce, maintained the crop during the growth stage, and picked the vegetables in the fall. Many of the youth involved in the gardening club did not have frequent experiences with nature before joining the club. Volunteers noticed the impact the club had on the youth involved. Mary Catherine from Project Success expressed that through the events the youth experience at the Land Lab, “the most rewarding thing has been seeing students’ excitement at seeing things grow.”



Unit Staff



Ginger Boas
County Director



Chelsey Byers Gerstenecker
Family Life



Caitlin Kownacki
SNAP-Ed



Myla Munro
4-H Youth Development



Ryan Pankau
Horticulture



Melissa Schumacher
EFNEP



Kathy Sweedler
Consumer Economics



Mynda Tracy
4-H Youth Development

County Director

Ginger Boas

Educators

Chelsey Byers Gerstenecker,
Family Life

Caitlin Kownacki, *SNAP-Ed*

Myla Munro, *4-H Youth Development*

Ryan Pankau, *Horticulture*

Melissa Schumacher, *EFNEP*

Kathy Sweedler, *Consumer Economics*

Mynda Tracy, *4-H Youth Development*

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Tabitha Elder, *Horticulture*

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Jim McGuire

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Cover photos: (top left) 4-H youth show swine at the Iroquois County Fair. (top right) Youth fill out mock checks during a Welcome to the Real World event at Broadlands High School. (bottom left) A participant cuts a piece of celery during a Market to MyPlate program in Champaign. (bottom right) Richard Fiese, Champaign County Master Gardener, completes a task at Yingying's Garden on the U of I campus.

University of Illinois ~ U.S. Department of Agriculture ~ Local Extension Councils Cooperating
University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in any program, please contact the county Extension office. The Illinois Nutrition Education Program is funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the US Department of Agriculture by the Director, Cooperative Extension Service, and University of Illinois.