



**Illinois Extension**  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

**2021** Addressing Local Needs,  
Solving Global Challenges  
Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair Counties

## A Message from the County Director

University of Illinois Extension plays a vital role in building a strong community by providing services that help solve problems, develop skills, and create a better future for local residents and youth. With reliable information to help families stay healthy in body and spirit, Illinois Extension remains a trusted source to address the most pressing issues in the state of Illinois relating to food, health, environment, community, and economy.



Lynn Heins  
Interim County Director

We appreciate the collaborative partnerships with local organizations that help elevate Illinois Extension programming and events throughout the community. We are also grateful for strong local support. Additional sources of important revenue are provided through federal, state, and other grant funds. We are pleased to share this brief impact

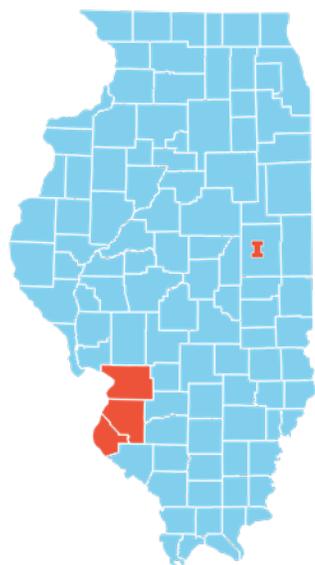
report highlighting Extension's work within the Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair County unit.

Last year was a time of challenge, adjustment, and growth as we settled into a post-pandemic reality. Now more than ever, we've learned the importance of ensuring that the public has access to unbiased, educational resources. This is the third and most critical piece of the Land Grant mission.

University of Illinois Extension programs and activities address some of the biggest issues within Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair counties that relate to food, health, community, economy, and environment. Thank you for your past and continued support to help equip our communities with educational resources.

Lynn Heins  
Interim County Extension Director

# Staff Serving Madison, Monroe, & St. Clair Counties



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# Think Global, Act Local

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

## Community Support Strong and Resilient Youth, Families, and Communities

 Connectedness and Inclusion

 Involvement and Leadership

 Thriving Youth

## Economy Grow a Prosperous Economy

 Economic Vitality

 Financial Wellbeing

 Workforce Preparedness/Advancement

## Environment Sustain Natural Resources in Home and Public Spaces

 Enhancing and Preserving Natural Resources

 Engagement with Home and Community Landscape

## Food Maintain a Safe and Accessible Food Supply

 Food Access

 Food Production

 Food Safety

## Health Maximize Physical and Emotional Health for All

 Chronic Disease Prevention and Management

 Social and Emotional Health

 Healthy and Safe Environments

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

## Illinois Extension 2021 Statewide Highlights

### Outreach Provided

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

### Partnerships Supported

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

### Learners Engaged

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

### Resources Generated

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

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



## New junior high science clubs started

After a two-year hiatus, an after-school 4-H Science Club was re-started for junior high students in Waterloo.



In addition to the Waterloo science club, there was a brand new junior high science club that started for Valmeyer students. These students meet after school in the school science lab.

Both clubs began their meetings in October 2021 and will continue to May 2022. Lessons include: the science of chromatography with leaves, engineer design by building catapults, electrical circuits with holiday cards, chemistry investigation making home-made lava lamps, and more.

Seventeen students participate in these clubs, and 4-H Teen Teachers help teach both clubs.

I'm learning things in Science Club that I haven't learned about in school yet.

4-H MEMBER



## 4-H Pen Pals bring joy to seniors

Over 40 Monroe County 4-H members were paired with local senior citizens from assisted living centers, churches, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars to begin a letter-writing program together in early 2021. The goals and benefits include:



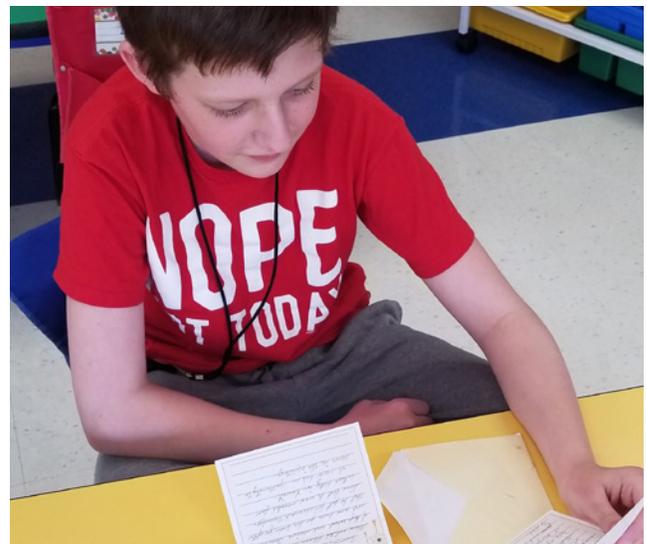
- Providing an uplifting experience to seniors since they have had limited social interactions.
- Providing a positive experience to youth by increasing an appreciation and connection with the elderly.
- Providing youth an experience to learn more about the fading skill of writing letters.

These programs continue to innovate and meet the needs of today's youth and have made a significant impact on our communities.

Most of the connections made are continuing. Bonds have been formed and friendships have been made.

My pen pal was in the military, and I loved hearing his stories.

4-H MEMBER





## Cahokia Heights High School grows food, learns nutrition at school greenhouse

In the Fall of 2021, with collaboration between SNAP-Ed, EFNEP, ANR, and 4-H, Extension successfully completed a semester of nutrition, service learning, and growing food at the greenhouse at Cahokia Heights High School.

4-H specifically helped in the service-learning area to allow students the opportunity to give back to others in their community, especially with many kids only having the opportunity to be beneficiaries of such service.

Three classes with 20 youth each planned, implemented, and completed a canned food drive where over 1,000 items were collected and donated to the district's food pantry.

With Extension coming in to do programming, the grades of many students increased. When they were done with their work or were bored, many of them took to actually completing their homework on time.

AGRICULTURE TEACHER

## Cultures and Continents workshops inspire youth to embrace new ideas

The Cultures and Continents workshops hosted 16 youth in the first months of 2021. Each workshop included a pre-assessment, a presentation of cultural norms, a crafting project, a cooking component, and a post-assessment.

At the December virtual workshop, youth learned about the Kurdish culture of the Middle East and made a weaving project and klecha cookies. Each crafting project can be exhibited at the county fair. The program allowed youth a chance to learn about indigenous people.



In one of our Cultures and Continents Workshops, a student baked Klecha cookies while learning about the Kurdish culture.



## Madison County CAREE youth expand science knowledge at camp

In the summer of 2021, two science camps were held in partnership with Madison County CAREE. This was a new partnership in Madison County. Youth learned about soil, food science, forensic science, and renewable energy.

Several positive comments from parents were received, including a homeschool parent:

My son didn't want to come the first day, but has been begging to come back every day now. He loves everything he has learned and continues to show the entire family all of his experiments each night.

HOMESCHOOL PARENT

Along with project knowledge, kids left with new friends and a sense of belonging in the county 4-H program.

## Our 4-H clubs remained resilient with more than:



791

Program Attendance



34

Educational Sessions



24

Online or Asynchronous Learning Sessions



808

4-H Club Memberships



312

Volunteer Involved



\$678,635

Value of Volunteer Time

## Donation helps 4-H shooting sports

The National Rifle Association Foundation has awarded the unit more than \$2,000 to purchase five air pistols, five air rifles, and three bow and arrow sets.

We are very excited about expanding our shooting sports program.

4-H COORDINATOR



Visit our 4-H Youth Development website  
[go.illinois.edu/4-HYouthDev](https://go.illinois.edu/4-HYouthDev)



## Local Foods and Local Places grant expands reach

East St. Louis participated in a national program called Local Foods, Local Places (LFLP) in which they created a community-driven action plan to support the local food system with help from USDA and USEPA. Extension played a crucial role in initiating this process by applying and receiving the technical assistance, forming the steering committee with multiple local partners, and coordinating subsequent events.

In October 2021, the LFLP steering committee facilitated a public workshop with 35 East St. Louis residents and stakeholders in which they created action items to increase food production, food access, land access, and involvement in community health initiatives. There is now a LFLP subcommittee within the local Make Health Happen coalition that drives implementation of the action plan, monitors progress, and supports collaboration across the community. There are work groups on food access, community asset mapping, and health fair planning. Extension will also launch a garden workshop series in East St. Louis starting in April 2022 inspired by the food production goals resulting from the LFLP program.



## JJK youth explore, taste new foods in Harvest of the Month program

Harvest of the Month is a National Farm to School Network program that highlights a local, seasonal food item which is featured and incorporated into multiple aspects of a student's day. Grace Margherio leads agricultural education in the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Center's after school program. Youth taste a recipe featuring that food item. They help other staff incorporate the Harvest of the Month item into meals and STEM programs.

Several middle school youth were trained on food safety and seasonality of produce. Special activities included a garden-fresh watermelon spitting contest, homemade salsa (which the students agreed was "bustin bustin"), squash-apple-cranberry casserole, the harvest of over 50 pounds of sweet potatoes, and collard recipes.



**4,934**  
Program Attendance



**104**  
Educational Sessions



**20**  
Online or Asynchronous Learning Sessions



**13**  
Active Food Donation Gardens



**21,972**  
Pounds of Produce Donated



**2,371**  
Expert Consultations

## Testing cover crop management strategies for soybeans



Cover crops are becoming a more important component of an integrated crop management system for many crops. Commercial Agriculture Educator Nathan Johanning teamed with the SIU Belleville Research Center on various field research projects including a trial comparing different ways to manage a cereal rye cover crop before soybeans. They looked at terminating the cover crop at different heights to see how this influenced plant stand and yield.

Soybean stands were equally good across all of these termination timings and soybean yield was the same for no-till soybeans regardless of the termination timing or use of a roller-crimper. This project was shared with farmers at the annual field day at the center and around the region. This confirms the ability of farmers to maximize the benefits of cereal rye in soybeans by planting more cover crop biomass and still achieve optimal yield.

“The more cover crop biomass we can allow to grow, the greater the benefits to the soil and more carbon we can sequester,” Johanning says.

### Access to Statewide Programs



262  
State Webinar Sessions



282  
New Videos and Podcasts



1,163  
Individuals Reached in Food Webinars



1,070  
Individuals Reached in Environmental Webinars



## Local research improves sustainable production practices in tomatoes and peppers



The second year of research with the Illinois Specialty Crop Block Grant investigation using cover crops and no-till practices in tomatoes and peppers was completed. The main, local research site is the Baebler Educational Farm near Waterloo, along with an added site on the Urbana campus. This project sheds light on how these conservation practices will fit into the production system to improve and conserve soil and environment at the same time.

Research indicated these innovative conservation practices can grow a very high yielding, quality crop. Multiple in-field video demonstrations, presentations, and in-person field days were held reaching more than 5,000 participants. In addition, the Baebler Educational Farm trial raised over 10,000 pounds of tomatoes and peppers over the two years that was donated to area food pantries, churches, and nursing homes.



## Master Naturalists promote pollinators

The decline of pollinators in Illinois is a major concern. Master Naturalists are educating homeowners on how they can help increase pollinator numbers by creating more habitat. Butterfly Festival was held in September at Baebler Educational Farm near Waterloo. Families toured the pollinator habitat and learned about designing a pollinator garden at their home. Other educational booths talked about the benefits of pollinators and identified common pollinators in the area.

### Master Gardeners Increase Food Access

Many Master Gardener projects grow produce for local food pantries. They donated over 13,000 pounds of produce in 2021. The fresh produce increases food access in numerous communities, including Alton, Belleville, Cahokia Heights, Collinsville, Columbia, Fairmont City, Granite City, and O'Fallon. Master Gardeners established a new community garden at Cahokia High School and expanded the Granite City Community Garden with support from Growing Together Illinois, a collaboration with SNAP-Ed and 4-H. These gardens also hosted open house events to educate community members about food and nutrition through activities and explored the gardens to learn more about vegetable gardening.



6,043  
Program Attendance



208  
Educational Sessions



200  
Trained MG & MN Volunteers



131  
Master Gardener Volunteers



69  
Master Naturalist Volunteers



12,354  
Hours Donated



\$362,849  
Value of Volunteer Time



24  
Extension Supported Gardens



21,972  
Pounds of Produce Donated



2,568  
Expert Consultations



144  
Individuals Reached in Natural Resource Webinars

## Horticulture Helpline Support

Who can you turn to when you have concerns about your garden? University of Illinois Extension provides research-based information to help ease homeowner concerns. Master Gardener and Master Naturalist volunteers answer homeowner questions throughout the year. The volunteers provide research-based information. They identify weeds and insects that are a concern for homeowners. They also provide advice for garden issues and plant recommendations. Popular questions include identifying tree diseases, interpreting soil reports, and making lawn care recommendations. The volunteers answered over 250 gardening questions in 2021.



Visit our Horticulture Facebook Page  
[go.illinois.edu/HorticultureFacebookGroup](https://go.illinois.edu/HorticultureFacebookGroup)



## Community gardens increase food security, improve health options

The ability to eat a healthy diet is influenced by access to affordable, healthy foods. The local SNAP-Ed team worked with local community coalitions, including Make Health Happen and Healthier Together, to support increasing food security in the greater East St. Louis area by revitalizing community gardens.

With funding support from IPHI and its Building Resilient Inclusivity grants, the SNAP-Ed team and the community coalitions revitalized three community gardens to improve access to healthy food, reducing the need for residents to seek out additional transportation. Efforts included community garden workdays, open houses, garden gleaning, and sustainability plans to ensure the effort continues next growing season.



### SNAP-Ed Community Partnerships

SNAP-Ed works with Illinois families in need to make the healthier choice an easier choice. Through networking and programming, the team has built strong partnerships within our communities. The team has continued to collaborate with community partners through classes and workshops to adapt

research-based solutions that encourage healthier nutrition options and activity choices which have been shown to positively impact families and communities. SNAP-Ed continues to show resilience with a significant rise in community partnerships every year.



33  
K-12 Schools



18  
Emergency Food



8  
Early Childhood



34  
Other Types of Organizations



Jeremiah's Food Pantry received a cold storage unit through the Building Resilient Inclusive Communities grant through IPHI, Healthier Together, and Make Health Happen.

## Jeremiah's Food Pantry

The SNAP-Ed PSE team has continued to support the Building Resilient Inclusive Communities grant made possible by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Illinois Public Institute. Three cold storage units were procured and delivered to three food pantry sites to help improve equitable access to healthy foods. In addition, the SNAP-Ed PSE team provided technical assistance in helping each pantry develop nutrition policies to promote healthier environments.

Jeremiah's Food Pantry was one of the pantries to receive a cold storage unit from Make Health Happen, MTCCO, and Healthier Together through the BRIC grant.

We are serving a large audience, but normally when we receive a USDA delivery of meat, we have to give it out right away, sometimes giving people extra because we did not have the capacity to store it. This month, we were able to store it using the cold storage unit. Thank you so much!

OWNER OF PANTRY



Check out Jeremiah's Food Pantry Facebook Page [go.illinois.edu/JeremiahsFoodPantry](https://go.illinois.edu/JeremiahsFoodPantry)



Madison School District Wellness Committee at Bernard Elementary School.

## Madison School District highlights wellness benefits

 Madison School District and University of Illinois Extension have a very strong partnership together. Lucia, the food service director, and Katrina and Rima with the SNAP-Ed team have made great strides with their partnership and impact in this community. Extension assisted Madison School District in the Triennial Assessment and provided expertise guidance on writing its Wellness Policy. They held many meetings to ensure their policy met appropriate requirements.

Extension supported the development of the School Wellness Committee, fostering discussion of the benefits this committee would bring to the district's teachers, staff, principal, and superintendent. The Madison School District Wellness Committee meets once a month and has four sub-committees, including school garden, food service and nutrition, education, and miscellaneous. The group has made great progress in just a few months by reinforcing the wellness policy for the school, preparing for the school garden, and implementing a food backpack program with Soup N Share, the food pantry located directly across the street from the schools. This provides students who need food over the weekend to take items home. This group engages with stakeholders and businesses in the Madison community to expand the impact.

 Visit the SNAP-Ed Website  
[eat-move-save.extension.illinois.edu](http://eat-move-save.extension.illinois.edu)

## Fresh produce voucher program increases healthy options for families

 The Chronic Disease Work Group is chaired by an Extension SNAP-Ed educator. The group implemented a fresh produce voucher program in Belleville.

Through the Healthier Together Coalition funding, the group increased food access and fresh fruits and vegetable intake which helps decrease chronic disease in the Belleville area. The work group identified target audiences in Belleville to serve those most in need. More than 500 fresh produce vouchers valued at \$10 each were distributed. Recipients can redeem vouchers for fresh produce at either Farmers Market Stores in Belleville or at the Old Town Farmers Market on Saturdays. This program was a great success with a 67% redemption rate.

### **Increasing Healthy Food Access Through the Growing Together Illinois Grant**

The Granite City Community Garden donated 526 pounds of produce to the local food pantry, Community Care Center, with the efforts of our Extension staff, Master Gardeners, and Community Support. This was an increase of 216 pounds over 2019 (310 pounds total in 2019). This was a very successful program year, and we look forward to increasing our reach next year.

### **School Wellness**

Extension provided professional guidance with Madison School District, Granite City School District, Roxanna School District, and East St. Louis School District on their Triennial Assessment, School Wellness Policy, and Wellness Committee. Extension has also been a driving force at school gardens, providing them with the expertise and resources they need to have a successful garden. The SNAP-Education team provides nutrition education at the garden sites to youth for a farm-to-table approach. We formed a great relationship with the schools and look forward to big plans for the 2022 year!

SNAP-Ed remains a valuable resource with more than:	 <b>965</b> Participants	 <b>284</b> Sessions	 <b>147</b> Hours
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## Summer youth cooking schools highlight global cuisine



EFNEP served 170 youth at 12 sites across Madison and St. Clair counties during the summer of 2021. The theme was “Eating Around the Globe.” Children cooked and sampled cuisine from Latin America, Africa, and the Mediterranean. Mozzarella, Basil and Zucchini Frittata, Tzatziki, Mediterranean Quick Bread, and Jambalaya were all on the menu. Through this experience, kids learned new cooking skills and terms, ways to increase their fruit and vegetable intake, and the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Both hosting sites and children felt the youth cooking schools were superb. The program generated several referrals for programming this Fall.

### Success Story

Jessica is a new participant in the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. She is the mother of four and home schools her children. Jessica shared that the Eating Smart Moving More curriculum has helped her save so much money with her nutrition coach. Jessica said she is now reading labels and learning what the correct portions sizes should be. She has also experienced a decrease in food waste.

### Mommy and Me Cooking Classes

EFNEP hosted Mommy and Me cooking classes during the year. Sites included Good Samaritan House, Cahokia Heights Early Childhood Center, and Belleville Branch Library. Both Mommy and kids were excited to learn new cooking skills. Several kids said they would try the recipes at home.



## East St. Louis Christian Activity Center benefits from Teen Cuisine course

The Christian Activity Center (CAC) is an out-of-school time center that serves the Gumper Housing in East St. Louis. The Christian Activity Center has been a long-standing partner with the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. Over the past few weeks, Extension has worked extremely close with the Pathway Program at CAC. Students completed the Teen Cuisine curriculum.

Pathways Coordinator Johanna Gillan says, “We are very fortunate to have had Ms. Wilson give a six-week course on nutrition and food value for our middle and high school-aged students. Our program is designed to help teens take ownership of their future by making informed decisions about life, school, and social experiences. The Teen Cuisine course taught students valuable life skills with information on how to use food in a way that benefits their growth, without neglecting their palate.”

EFNEP takes great pride in meeting our participants and organizations where they are.

## Shopping tours offer tips



Eastside Health District and EFNEP are currently offering shopping tours to WIC participants in Cahokia, East St. Louis, and Fairmont City. Shopping tours are conducted at the WIC participants store of choice and completed within 45 minutes. Through this tour, WIC participants learn how to use their WIC EBT card, read labels, and shop for value. They are offered an opportunity for a more profound nutrition experience through EFNEP. So far, six WIC participants have completed a shopping tour.

## EFNEP remained resilient with more than:



241  
Families Enrolled



205  
Youth Enrolled



145  
Lessons Taught



73  
Sessions



136  
Hours

## Empowerment skills help families



EFNEP community workers and nutrition coaches are completing the National Family Development Credential Program. The FDC is a proven, professional training and credentialing program in which family workers learn to engage families in self-empowerment. This training focuses on identifying strength families as they work to achieve their goals.



The accreditation process includes

- Completion of the Empowerment Skills for Family Workers course, taught by an FDC instructor certified by the National Family Development Credential Program at the University of Connecticut
- Completion of an FDC portfolio that documents their ability to practice the skills learned in the course
- Successful passing of the National FDC credentialing exam

This credential is often held by social workers, teachers, or other individuals who work closely with families in goal setting.



Visit our Illinois Nutrition Education Program Website  
[inep.extension.illinois.edu](http://inep.extension.illinois.edu)

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## OFFICE INFORMATION

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Fax: (618) 344-5602  
Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 4:30 PM

### EFNEP Training Center

2051 Lynch Avenue  
East St. Louis, IL 62204  
(618) 397-4973  
Fax: (618) 397-8823  
Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 4:30 PM

### Jackie Joyner-Kersey Community Center

101 Jackie Joyner-Kersey Circle  
East St. Louis, IL 62204  
(618) 274-5437

### Scott Air Force Base Youth Center

4691 Patriots Drive  
Scott Air Force Base, IL 62225  
Phone: 618-256-4991  
Hours: This office is only for Military 4-H  
Youth Programming

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## ONLINE



search: University of Illinois Extension  
Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair Unit

ILFoodWeb

Madison County 4-H

Monroe County 4-H

St. Clair County 4-H

Illinois 4-H



@ILFoodWeb



search: Illinois Extension  
Madison, Monroe,  
and St. Clair YouTube

# Illinois Extension

## College of Agricultural, Consumer & Environmental Sciences

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, 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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