

Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

2021 Addressing Local Needs,
Solving Global Challenges
Lake and McHenry Counties

A Message from the County Director

Families, businesses, communities, and organizations trust Illinois Extension to provide unbiased, research-based solutions to meet the challenges they face. As part of the Land Grant system, the University of Illinois Extension was established not only to provide world-class education and pioneer research and discovery, but to put learning and discovery into practice, to benefit the health and well-being of residents and communities in every part of Illinois.

Extension staff are located in every county and serves as the university's statewide network of educators, faculty experts, and staff dedicated to that mission.

The staff in Lake and McHenry counties believe in its people, its diverse neighborhoods and communities, and our shared future. We believe that education, health, and wellness are the foundation for individuals, families, and communities to reach their full potential.



James Reaves
County Director

We believe that the long-term sustainability of the environment and agricultural productivity requires stewardship and care.

We believe in and respect youth's potential to change the world, and work to support nurturing communities and opportunities to learn and grow. Extension programs may be offered as hands-on workshops, field days, online self-paced tutorials, or in other formats that are suitable for the audience and subject matter.

We believe in and are committed to our mission linking local communities to the university, to develop programs, tools, and knowledge that will support needed change. Our mission is to align research to needs and translate research into action plans that allow all Illinois families, businesses, and community leaders to solve problems, make informed decisions, and adapt to changes and opportunities.

James Reaves, County Extension Director

James Reaves

Staff Serving Lake & McHenry 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 Illinois Communities Served	335 Educational Sessions Per Week	84 Online Courses
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Partnerships Supported

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

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

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



Extension is meeting Illinois' grand challenges and priority issues



Community: Supporting strong and resilient youth, families, and communities



Connectedness and Inclusion

A strong sense of community brings people together to support each other in times of need and growth. Accepting and celebrating differences creates an environment where all voices are important and heard. When strong networks of peers and organizations support youth and families, even the most vulnerable community members feel they belong and are valued.

Involvement and Leadership

When people volunteer or advocate for a local issue, they see themselves as part of the solution and their community pride soars. Providing decision-makers with practical, timely, and research-based information gives leaders the tools they need to strengthen their communities and improve the quality of life in rural and urban areas throughout Illinois.

Thriving Youth

Thriving youth are the core of healthy, robust communities. Illinois Extension's mentorship-based youth development model focuses on social competence, academic success, career development, and community connection. The 4-H experience creates opportunities and environments for all youth to thrive now and in the future.

Economy: Growing a prosperous economy



Workforce Preparedness and Advancement

The global pandemic has reinforced that there is an ongoing need for Illinois to develop innovative ways to nurture its workforce through career exploration, training and re-training programs, and other opportunities for refining skills of the current workforce and the workforce of the future. Having a prepared, skilled, and resilient workforce in place ultimately increases tax revenue for the state.

Financial Well-Being

Financial instability can negatively affect physical, mental, and social health and can ultimately lead to bankruptcy. Illinois Extension supports financial wellbeing tools for all ages and stages which helps improve self-sufficiency, reduces the need for communities to provide support services, and creates opportunities for individuals to protect and build wealth.

Economic Vitality

Economically resilient communities are built on a solid foundation with plans for growth, plans for responding to emergencies and disasters, and innovative approaches to promote economic vitality. With 75% of the state devoted to farmland, agricultural operations, both large and small, represent a critically important contributor to the economic vitality of Illinois' local and state economy.



Environment: Enhancing and preserving natural resources

The survival of our planet depends on the quality of our water, land, and air. These shared resources must be managed through sustainable practices that support ecological balance. We must take steps now to effectively steward these resources for generations to come.

Engagement with Home and Community Landscapes

There is growing evidence that time spent around plants and in green spaces has many benefits including improved health, better interpersonal relationships, and a higher quality of life. Sustainable home landscapes also increase property values and build stronger ecosystems for plants and wildlife.



Food: Maintaining a safe and accessible food supply

Food Access

Research shows a strong link between food insecurity, poor health, and even poor academic outcomes for children. Food insecurity is not just about hunger. It's about not having access to food options that meet nutritional needs, which is particularly important for individuals and families with limited resources. Extension's network of volunteers and partners work together to address food insecurity in locally relevant ways.

Food Production

Whether large commercial agriculture operations, small farms, or community and backyard gardens, the future of our food supply relies on the use of practices that boost production and capacity. Growers at all levels benefit from effective, efficient, and sustainable approaches to cultivating produce, crops, and livestock that feed their families, communities, and the world.

Food Safety

Foodborne illnesses cost society an estimated \$36 billion annually, with an average cost of \$3,630 per illness. Food safety is challenged everywhere from the field to the kitchen. Safe growing, handling, and preservation practices can help reduce the social and economic impact of foodborne illness.



Health: Maximizing physical and emotional health for all

Chronic Disease Prevention and Management

More than half of Illinois adults have a known chronic health condition, in part due to risky health behaviors, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health. People of all ages need trusted and reliable research-based information to make health decisions that improve their quality of life. Creative solutions are needed to assure that these supports are available when and where people need them.

Social and Emotional Health

Even before the global pandemic's new social, economic, and life challenges, mental health was a growing concern. Illinois residents of all ages and walks of life need to know where to turn for resources to help cope with the daily stressors that threaten mental health and wellbeing.

Healthy and Safe Community Environments

Personal health decisions are not made in a vacuum. We must create environments where healthy choices are not only possible but are also encouraged. Classrooms, school cafeterias, food pantries, workplaces, and other built environments play an important role in promoting health and safety.





The 2021 SNAP-Ed Literacy Walk featured several educational activities.



SNAP-ED Literacy Walk 2021

Dale Kehr, SNAP-Ed Extension Educator, Lake County



As in many communities, COVID has left the Zion community feeling the need to engage families and the community. Last winter, Extension assisted on a grant to increase literacy and physical activity in Zion, a low-income community whose schools qualify for free and reduced lunches.

The book, *Healthy Eating Habits*, by Beth Bence Reinke was selected for the 4 - 7-year-olds. This colorful storybook walked early readers through healthful foods, healthy eating habits, and balancing food intake.

The storybook boards were created with the help of the Zion Benton Township High School staff using recipe cards from Extension 2021 calendars and physical activity cards. Families attending the event in the park enjoyed stopping by, reading, and learning about healthy eating habits.

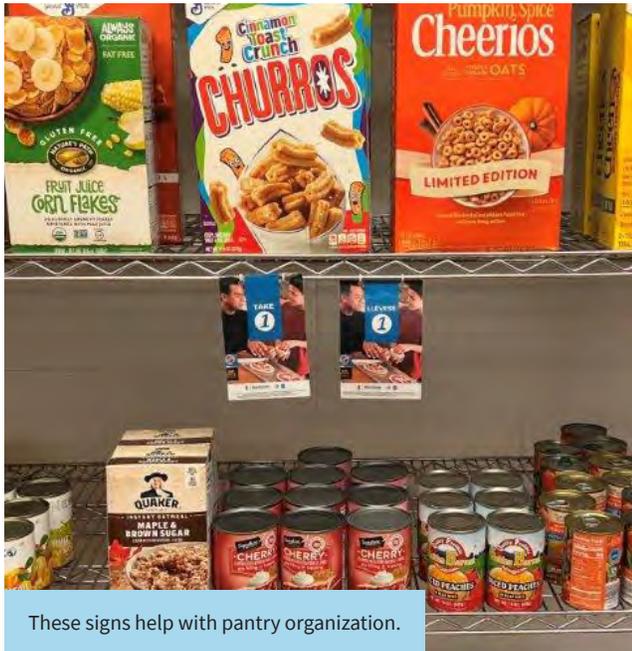


Dale Kehr welcomes attendees to the Literacy Walk.

Who would have thought implementing this first literacy walk in Zion would lead to additional projects, such as the Zion Together Healthy Project? Further requests for support for school gardens and other Extension programs have been requested.



Learn more about SNAP-Education
extension.illinois.edu/lm



These signs help with pantry organization.

Family Care Closet

Lee Kouski, Program Coordinator, Lake County

“Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much.” This quote from Helen Keller demonstrates the philosophy of the PSE work being done in the unit. Extension has had the opportunity to grow a partnership with the North Chicago Community Partners to assist the residents of North Chicago with making the healthy choice.

Extension has worked with the Family Care Closet located in North Chicago Community High School that provides food, diapers, and other essential items to families in need. Extension has provided recipes and signage that help spread healthy messages. It also assisted educating how much food is recommended from each group depending on family size. Materials were provided to help with the organization of the pantry and ease of selecting products.

Extension is looking forward to growing this partnership and providing more to the families of North Chicago, allowing them to make the healthy choice the easy one.



Nutritional messaging at the Family Care Closet.

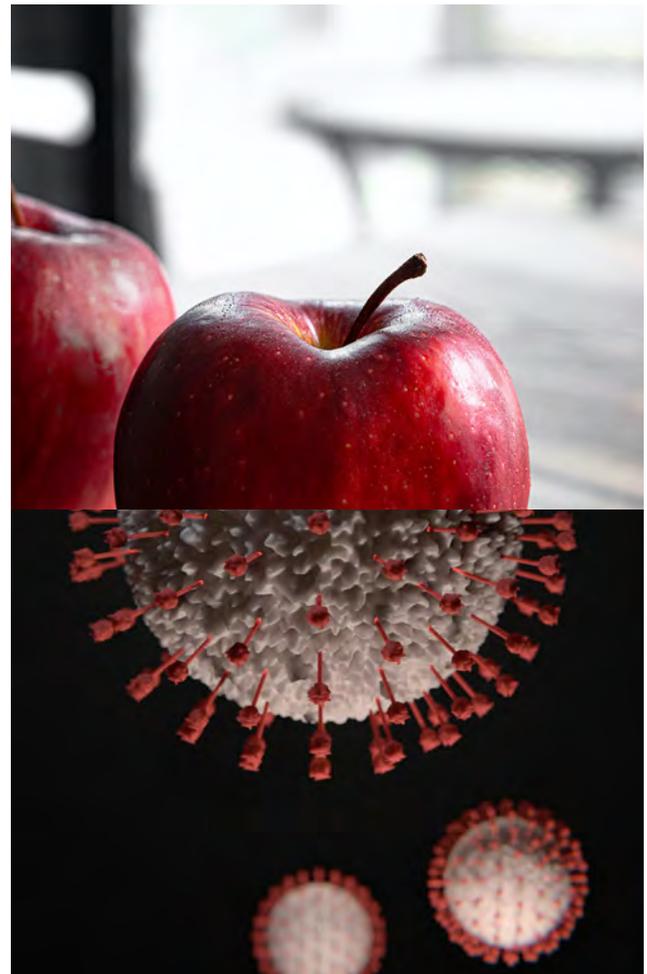
Wonder Lake Food Pantry

Mary Flores, SNAP-Ed Program Coordinator, McHenry County

The global pandemic has brought a plethora of changes to life. One of those changes, which isn't spoken of as often as it should be, has happened to food pantries across McHenry County.

Due to the limited space, shortage of volunteers, and state-mandated social distancing, families were required to stay in their vehicles. This forced food pantries to get creative with what they had available. Creativity, however, does not equal healthy. In a time plagued by sickness and uncertainty, a healthy diet is more important than ever. One of the toughest questions faced was “How do we effectively provide a delicious and healthy meal while following all these new protocols?”

By partnering with the staff at the Wonder Lake Food Pantry, three months of healthy and nutritious meals were planned. Using the bundling intervention, the prepackaged boxes included recipes along with all the ingredients necessary to prepare at least one full meal. The first week, 65 families received bundled meal bags in addition to the normally distributed food boxes. By the end of the three-month plan, 250 boxes were distributed.





SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EDUCATION

SNAP-Education works with Illinois families in need to make the healthier choice an easier choice. Through classes, workshops and collaboration with community partners, SNAP-Education positively affect families and communities by using research-based solutions to encourage healthier nutrition and physical activity choices.

Reach and Impact of SNAP-Education



38,898
Total Estimated Reach



852
Number of Nutrition Education Classes Provided



- 16% Face-to-face
- 75% Virtual or online
- 8% Mixture of face-to-face or online

SNAP-Ed worked with community partners on a nutrition literacy walk at Shilo Park in Zion for families to read before or after playing together. The goal was to combine literacy and physical activity to the community by placing signs along the path of a park for pedestrians to read as they walk. Local preschools have also visited the walk and enjoyed reading the book, focused on healthy eating, together.

SNAP-Education Community Partnerships



23
K-12 Schools



9
Early Childhood



17
Other Agencies or Community Centers



11
Food Banks and Food Pantries



Teaching healthy living

Miguel Palacios, SNAP-Ed Community Worker, Lake County



Waukegan Community Unit School District # 60 OrganWise Guys Program

Extension presented the OrganWise Guys nutrition program at four different schools in Waukegan Community Unit School District 60 during the 2020-2021 school year: Andrew Cooke Magnet Elementary School, Hyde Park Elementary School, Little Fort Elementary School, and Whittier Elementary School. In 2021, Extension provided 247 nutrition virtual and face-to-face sessions reaching 592 students. During several weekly sessions, kindergarden to second grade students engaged in fun and interactive lessons, learning about the importance of our organs and their functions, making healthy food choices, drinking water, and enjoying physical activity habits from a young age.

First Baptist Church of Waukegan Illinois Junior Chef Program

Extension provided 12 face-to-face sessions of the *Illinois Junior Chef* curriculum at the First Baptist Church of Waukegan. *Illinois Junior Chef* teaches children basic food preparation skills, kitchen safety and how to incorporate healthy eating into their lives. The *Illinois Junior Chef* Program is offered to kids from 8 to 13 years old. This effective and unique program provides kids with the opportunity to practice hands-on cooking skills that are very important to develop healthy eating habits and prepare healthy foods for themselves and their families.

Beacon Place and Waukegan Housing Authority Catch Kids Club

Extension provided 15 face-to-face sessions of the CATCH Kids Club curriculum at Beacon Place and Waukegan Housing Authority. Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) is a K-8 after-school program that includes nutrition and physical activity lessons and snack preparation activities. In this program, kids learn about the importance of eating healthy, reducing screen time, and physical activity.



EAT.MOVE.SAVE. booths open dialogue at community events

Monica Marr, SNAP-Ed Community Worker, Lake County

Building recognition and trust with those we serve is key to making a difference in a community. It is important that residents of Zion are aware of University of Illinois Extension and know and recognize staff. One tool that SNAP-Ed community workers use to achieve that recognition is the Eat.Move.Save. booths.

The colorful display is taken to community events, schools, and food pantries and draws people in to talk with us. Monica Marr, SNAP-Ed community worker in Lake County, chooses a focus for each event and shares information that can help individuals and their families lead healthy lives. Information includes SNAP-Ed handouts and healthy recipes to make at home, along with a taste testing to encourage them to make the recipe. Eat. Move.Save booths reach audiences in their community and help them feel comfortable with staff.

Throughout the seasons, Zion residents will see the Eat.Move. Save booths at partner sites, such as Abiding Love Food Pantry or at Zion Benton High School. At the food pantry, staff get to know the clients and their needs. At the high school, staff talk to students and encourage them to sign up for the Teen Cuisine program. The Eat.Move.Save booth is at Humanity First's monthly food truck location, where staff walk from car to car sharing healthy tips and recipes for the foods they will be receiving. It's all about meeting people where they live and building those relationships.

Teen Cuisine teaches many cooking skills and healthful eating

Deleah Elizabeth Flores, SNAP-Ed Community Worker, Lake County

Middle school youth at Foss Park in North Chicago are participation in Teen Cuisine, led by Deleah Elizabeth Flores, SNAP-Ed community worker. The teens have learned many skills, such as knife and cutting skills, how to read a recipe, proper and accurate measuring techniques, and healthy eating practices using MyPlate. The students are eager to learn cooking skills with a hands-on approach, and they are always excited to taste their creations.

The students look forward to the classes every week, even as they battle the harsh winter weather conditions they may face getting to and from the park district.

"I feel as though I am broadening their palates by introducing recipes they have not experienced before, which encourages them to try new and unfamiliar foods" Flores says.

I believe I am leaving a positive impression on the children that will remain with them as they get older.

DELEAH ELIZABETH FLORES





Extension programs reach kids and their families

Mary Jo Napolitano, SNAP-Ed Community Worker, Mchenry County

When Mary Jo Napolitano, Extension SNAP-Ed community worker, taught *Illinois Junior Chef* at Brown Bear Daycare Center in Harvard in 2021, she noticed a boy, Oscar, who was very diligent, especially with learning the knife skills. When asked, he said he wanted to work in a restaurant like his big brother, so he practiced all he learned at home. Oscar, like many of the children, appreciated the techniques taught during the week-long class and was over-the-moon with the graduation certificate, cookbook, and incentives.

Later, at the monthly EAT PLAY GROW program at Brown Bear for adult caregivers of preschoolers, Mary Jo heard her name called as she was greeting families. It was Oscar with his family. He had a big smile on his face and introduced his parents and his two siblings, Mary Jo says.

Oscar said that he told his parents they should come to the EAT PLAY GROW program because of the great time he had at *Illinois Junior Chef*, assuring them they would learn a lot and have fun. His parents said Oscar still uses his cookbook and cooking skills and talks about eating the five food groups. During the program Oscar's mom and dad participated fully, asking questions and modeling behavior for their little ones. Oscar would pop in now and then to see what we were doing -- especially during snack time. After the class, Oscar's parents thanked me and they have attended several classes since.

"I think this story demonstrates how important interaction between SNAP-Ed and the whole family is to provide the complete message of EAT.MOVE.SAVE.," Mary Jo says.

Responding to crisis during unstable times

Maxine Racanelli, SNAP-Ed Community Worker, Mchenry County

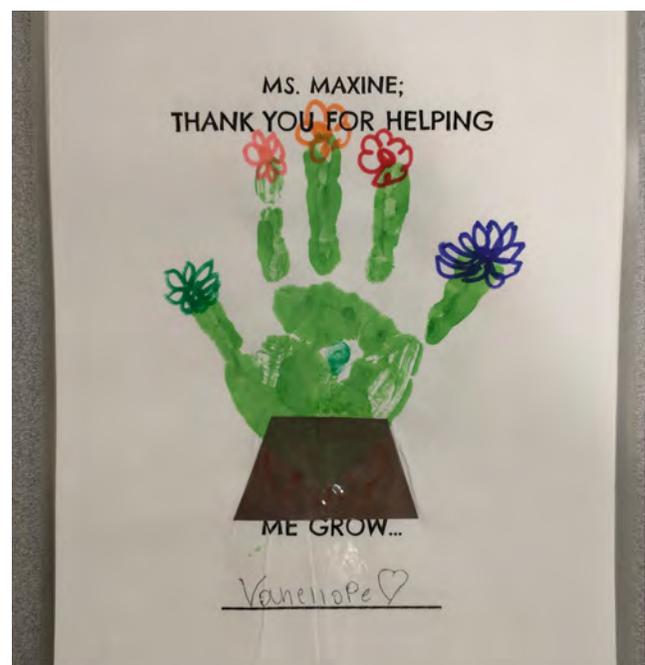


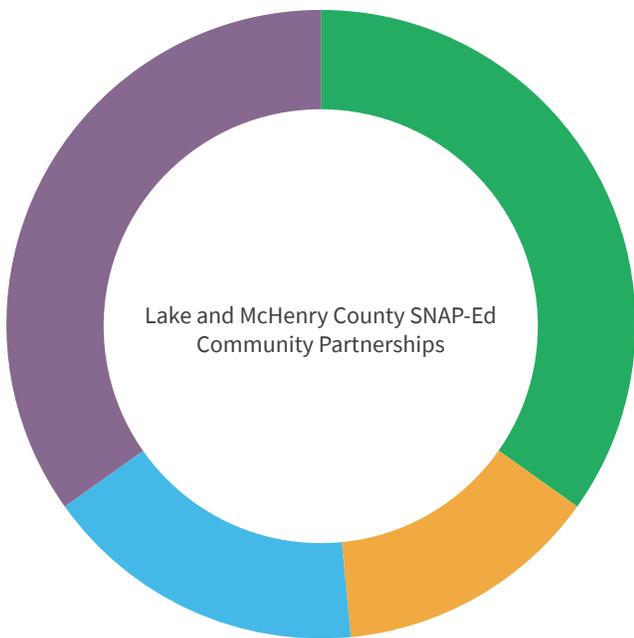
The COVID-19 pandemic aggravated the situation of food insecurity, resulting in adverse public health consequences. Parents working multiple jobs, remote work, and home schooling coupled with disruptions in the availability, access, utilization, and stability of food have resulted in a multifaceted phenomenon.

The SNAP-Ed program addressed some of these needs in its virtual programs, with partners offering virtual access to curriculum.

From the comfort of their homes, parents and children benefited from EAT PLAY GROW and Organwise Guys programs. After some restrictions were lifted and face-to-face classes resumed, Maxine Racanelli, SNAP-Ed community worker, taught the CATCH program to students at Jefferson and Crosby Elementary schools in Harvard. The students learned the difference between "go, slow, and whoa foods," learning you should eat whoa foods only once in a while.

Of course, children do not make the buying decisions when it comes to food, so Parent University was held at Harvard High School where Extension helped parents understand the difference between food needs and food wants. The Healthy Cents program teaches families about lifestyle behaviors and the availability of healthy food options, and provides recipes allowing them to continue their journey toward health. This same program was presented at Head Start in Harvard and Crystal Lake during the monthly parent meetings.





- 23% K-12 Schools
- 9% Early Childhood Centers
- 11% Emergency Food Sites
- 23% Other Types of Organizations



Grand Challenges

Food Data



1800
Program Attendance



17
Educational Sessions



13
Online or asynchronous learning sessions



10
Active food donation gardens



45,591
Pounds of produce donated



\$65,650
Value of produce donated



91
Expert consultations: staff responses to food-related inquiries

Health Data



17,562
Program Attendance



863
Educational Sessions



662
Online or asynchronous learning sessions



4-H is Growing True Leaders

4-H youth programs are empowering and preparing Illinois youth for success both now and in the future.



Opportunity4All

Advancing the mission for all youth in Illinois to be empowered and prepared for success.



Standing Together Taking Action inspires greater social justice

Dr. Michele Cox, Extension Educator, 4-H



In 2021, Michelle Cox, 4-H youth development educator, led a team of colleagues across Illinois in developing and piloting Standing Together Taking Action (STTA), Illinois's first social justice club. The club allows 4-H youth an opportunity to understand social justice issues and provides them with the tools and resources to interrupt systemic power structures and advocate for change. STTA's objectives were to:

- Bring Illinois youth together to deliberate, reflect, and act on social justice issues.
- Provide a safe space to educate and engage youth in healthy conversations surrounding social justice.
- Allow youth a platform to speak on issues that affect their communities.
- Provide resources and direction for youth to promote effective change related to social justice issues in their community through service-learning initiatives.

To date, the program has hosted 22 youth across 19 counties in Illinois. The pilot surveys assessments indicated:

- 90% of youth participants strengthened their ability to dialogue on social justice issue
- 100% of youth participants learned how social change happen
- 100% of youth participants had a chance to connect with people from different background
- 80% of youth participants learned how to create an action plan
- 100% of youth participants learned information that they use in their daily lives
- 100% of youth participants learned how to have a difficult conversation with family and friends
- 100% of the youth participants stated they would encourage other youth to participate in STTA



Learn more about 4-H
extension.illinois.edu/lm



4-H Juntos - Together for a Better Education

Working to close the degree-attainment gap:

Sandra Prez, 4-H Educator, Metro, Lake County

In 2020, Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce reported only 36% of job openings will not require education beyond high school. Fewer than one quarter of Latino adults in Illinois have attained the necessary education for the better-paying jobs that require an associate's degree or higher. The benefits of post-secondary education, such as higher income across a lifetime, better health outcomes, and increased job stability, do not accrue solely to the individual. Communities benefit as well.

Currently, most of Latino school-aged children, who make up one quarter of our K-12 classrooms in Illinois, are the offspring of immigrant parents. While parents are the strongest support system for youth, most Latino immigrant parents lack the knowledge needed to help their children attain post-secondary education. 4-H Juntos: Together for a Better Education is a program based on the belief that the educational success of Latino youth requires the collaboration of families, schools, and communities. For this reason, 4-H Juntos is presented to parents and their children, learning together. The lessons are presented in Spanish.

In 2021, Sandra Prez provided 4-H Juntos to the students and families at the Harvard Consolidated Unit School District 50 in

McHenry County where the Latino youth in the schools make up much more than the state percentages. At Harvard Jr. High School, Latino youth make up 73% of the school population; at Harvard High School, Latino youth make up 67% of the school population. Harvard Jr. High School was an early adapter of 4-H Juntos, providing the five-week training twice a year for their eighth grade Latino students and families for the past five years.

In 2021, six Harvard High School staff members were trained to present 4-H Juntos. The first program was presented in person in the fall of 2021, with an option for participants to attend virtually. In five two-hour interactive workshops, families learned about making education a family goal, family and school communication, requirements for graduation, post-secondary educational options, and how to finance higher education.



65%

of jobs require Associate's degree or higher



Only 21%

of Latino adults have Associate's degree or higher



Compared to 48%

of White adults who have Associate's degree or higher



Source: 2022 Excelencia in Education
www.edexcelencia.org



Cloverbuds met at the McHenry County Extension office for hands-on learning and fun. Below: Cloverbuds conducted STEM experiments and created art projects.



McHenry County 4-H Cloverbuds enjoyed three full weeks of summer fun

Michele Aavang, 4-H Coordinator, McHenry County



After a long and challenging school year, McHenry County 4-H offered a three-week in-person hands-on Cloverbud experience for youth ages 5 to 7. Led by 4-H Teen Ambassadors with the assistance of volunteers and staff, Cloverbud members participated in three days of fun activities, including STEM stations, visual arts, tie-dye, simple foods, and food decorating.

In addition to activities hosted at the McHenry County Extension office in Woodstock, 4-H Cloverbuds and their families went on three field trips, each with a special theme.

- Let's Learn about Pollinators: Youth learned about the importance of pollinator gardens and saw the beehives cared for by "Just Wing It" Pollinator 4-H Club members.
- Let's go for a Hike! at Pleasant Valley Nature Preserve: Cloverbuds completed a nature journal by creating leaf rubbings, learning what to put into a daypack, going on a scavenger hunt, and taking a hike in nature.
- Let's go to the Farm at the Vanderstappen Dairy Farm: Cloverbuds learned about field crops, where milk comes from, how dairy cows are fed and milked, and how to make feed and care for farm animals.



Learn more about McHenry County 4-H
maavang@illinois.edu



McHenry County 4-H

By the Numbers

Total 4-H Clubs: 51

19 Community Clubs	18 SPIN Clubs	11 Cloverbud	3 In School Clubs
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Total 4-H Youth Members: 526

343 Youth in Community/ Multi-Project Clubs	150 Youth in Spin Clubs	33 Youth in Cloverbud Clubs
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301 Youth Reached Through Other 4-H Programs	253 Youth Participated In Competition In 2021 Fair
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Exhibitors

1308 McHenry County Fair Project Exhibits	884 Exhibitors/ Livestock Exhibits	424 Exhibitors/Non- Livestock Exhibits
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41 McHenry County 4-H IL State Fair exhibitors	585 Embryology program participants
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Volunteers

93 Adult 4-H Volunteer Club Leaders	174 Screened 4-H Volunteers
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Violet Jones won the 4-H McHenry County Best in Show in rabbits.



Lake County 4-H members learn parliamentary procedures from youth leaders



Ofelia Delgado, 4-H Coordinator, Lake County

4-H clubs use parliamentary procedures and Roberts Rules of Order when conducting youth meetings. Parliamentary procedure encourages members to have an equal voice. Youth want to learn the skills to become better members of the executive board for their local 4-H club.

The local 4-H Youth Leaders Ambassador group hosted officers training for Lake County youth where they learned how to make motions, debate, and amend them to reach the desired outcome. They also put their skills to the test with the Out of Order parliamentary game. The game tests the knowledge of agenda and motion order.

The youth conducted a mock meeting. Local 4-H adult leaders and staff provided guidance and support as needed. The youth were vocal, engaged, and able to comfortably function and formulate the agenda, including making motions in an orderly manner following parliamentary procedures. As a result, they'll function in their club roles more effectively.

The 4-H program, and specifically officers training, teaches youth they, too, have a voice and when it is proper to use it in a business setting.



Learn more about Lake County 4-H
odelgado@illinois.edu





Lake County's 4-H program was well represented at the 2021 Lake County Fair.



Lake County 4-H By the Numbers

Total 4-H Clubs: 23

9 Community Clubs	11 SPIN Clubs	2 Cloverbud Clubs
8 After School	1 Military	



Exhibitors

680 Lake County Fair exhibitors/projects	497 Exhibitors/Livestock Exhibits	183 After School Clubs Exhibitors/Non-Livestock Exhibits
19 Lake County 4-H IL State Fair exhibitors	240 Embryology program participants	



Total 4-H Youth Members: 217

147 Community/Multi-project clubs	44 Organized 4-H In-School Clubs
68 Total youth who participate in competition in 2021 Fair	
17 After School Clubs	9 Military 4-H Clubs
75 SPIN Clubs	4 Cloverbud Clubs



Volunteers

16 Adult 4-H Volunteer Club Leaders	45 4-H Volunteers	174 Screened 4-H Volunteers
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Master Gardener volunteers were able to deliver ample amounts of fresh produce to the Local Food Bank.

Lake County Master Gardeners work to improve the quality of life in their community

Jesse Davis, Master Gardener Coordinator, Lake County

In 2021, despite a global pandemic, Master Gardeners in Lake County worked to improve the well-being of residents in their communities. Master Gardeners worked with partners to connect residents to educational and active outdoor opportunities in gardens and natural spaces. They also worked to reduce food insecurities within the county.

Despite much of our programming going virtual, Master Gardeners, through the Speakers Bureau, newly developed Adaptive Gardening program, and public adult and kids' programs, continue to keep residents passionate and excited about gardening, growing and being active outdoors. Partnerships with the Solid Waste Agency of Lake County, grants, and collaborations allowed us to expand our reach, grow a garden network, and help communities that are most in need.

To address the evolving diversity within the Master Gardener program and the newly developed hybrid training and classes, a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Committee is in development. The committee's goals include ensuring all residents of the ever-changing communities in Lake County can gain access to the Master Gardener Program, training, and resources.



The Master Gardeners of Lake County harvested thousands of pounds of produce at the Libertyville Chapel CARE garden in 2021.



The Lake County Extension SEED Education garden, which is located in front of the University of Illinois Extension Lake County office in Grayslake, was beautiful in summer 2021.



112
Lake County Master Gardeners



8
Lake County Community gardens



1,581
People helped through MG Information Services



14,179
Pounds of food donated (93,466 servings)



For more info about Lake Co. Master Gardeners
jessebd@illinois.edu



Combating food waste in landfills

Sarah Farley, Extension Educator, Local Food Systems and Small Farms

Each day, approximately 1 pound of food per person is wasted in the United States. This equates to 103 million tons of food waste generated in America in 2017, or between 30% to 40% of the food supply (USDA, 2020). According to a Frontier Group 2018 report, food waste and yard trimmings make up more than a quarter (28.2%) of U.S. garbage, even though they are organic and easily compostable. Lake County holds two of the region's six landfills, one of which is expected to reach capacity in 2022, according to the Illinois Landfill Capacity Report (2015).

University of Illinois Extension partnered with the Solid Waste Agency of Lake County to work to combat the issue through waste diversion, gardening education, and compost education efforts. In February 2021, partners and Extension Master Gardeners launched a six-session Garden Learning Series to educate residents on vegetable gardening and composting. Additionally, a survey was distributed to key community gardens to understand compost creation and use. The team also researched community gardens in the county to develop a county-wide community garden network.

As a result, 521 residents registered for the Garden Learning Series. Of those, 105 attended the presentation on composting. In a follow-up survey to the session, participants reported an increase in knowledge of methods of composting and materials for the compost pile. They also indicated the greatest likelihood to apply compost to their garden followed by composting at home and separating food scraps.

Sixty community gardens were identified for the creation of a Lake County community garden network. Nineteen indicated organic waste diversion and/or compost use or practices. This unprecedented information, the new community network, and partnerships pave the way for future waste diversion, building a more circular economy, and increasing fruit and vegetable production to the building of soil organic matter through compost use.



For more info about Local Foods/Small Farms
sfarley@illinois.edu



Seasoned Master Gardeners held an Expo to provide new Master Gardener Interns with information about the multitude of volunteer projects.



Teaching, growing, donating

Brenda Dahlfors, Master Gardener Coordinator, McHenry County



McHenry County Master Gardeners continue to assist their neighbors suffering from food insecurity by donating more than 30,000 pounds of fresh produce to food pantries throughout the county this past summer and fall. The bulk of the produce came from the Harvard Garden, located next to Diggins Library in Harvard. They are followed by the Hoffman Park Community Garden in Cary and the Nunda Township Garden in Crystal Lake.

GardenFest was presented virtually in 2021, with more than 100 residents learning beginner-to-advanced-level gardening skills, techniques, and topics from home. GardenWalk was welcomed by more than 500 attendees as they viewed nine gardens, ranging from small city lots to grand estates. Attendees were able to interact with homeowners and ask questions of Extension-trained Master Gardeners. This was followed by another record-breaking attendance at Farm Stroll, a partnership between Extension and McHenry County Farm Bureau. More than 1,000 individuals visited 12 farms in southern Wisconsin and McHenry County. Attendees learned how their meat, fruit, and vegetables are produced, in an up-close and hands-on way.

The VFW Peace Garden in McHenry continues to make progress toward creating a haven for our veterans and first-responders

suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. The group received a grant from the state Master Gardener office.

A preschool gardening program in Woodstock, similar to the one at Brown Bears in Harvard, is being created in partnership with Hearthstone Communities.

The transition to an online volunteer training is attracting a younger and more diverse pool of candidates with great energy and ideas. Thank you to a great group of individuals!



Master Gardeners plant fruiting shrubs at the VFW Peace Garden in McHenry.



For more info about McHenry Co. Master Gardeners
dahlfors@illinois.edu



Master Gardeners at the Harvard Garden grew thousands of pounds of fresh produce, which was donated to local food pantries.



McHenry County Master Gardeners coordinate the volunteer efforts at the VFW Peace Garden in McHenry.



Farm Stroll, held on the last Sunday in September, attracted more than 1,000 attendees.

The transition to an online volunteer training is attracting a younger and more diverse pool of candidates with great energy and ideas.
BRENDA DAHLFORS



113
Active McHenry County Master Gardeners



23
McHenry County Master Gardener Interns



8,354
Volunteer hours



1,829.5
Master Gardener continuing education hours



1,012
McHenry County clients served



30,640
Pounds of food grown and distributed

24,322 lbs Harvard	2,277 lbs Nunda	2,632 lbs Hoffman Park
140 lbs Gannon	70 lbs St. Ann	285 lbs FISH McHenry

89 lbs Demo Garden	825 lbs Give Back Gardens (Home Gardens)
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Home and Community Education

University of Illinois Extension has partnered with Lake and McHenry County Association for Home and Community Education for more than 100 years, providing its membership with research-based, educational lessons. The mission of HCE is to enhance the lives of individuals and families through quality educational programs and experiences, and to encourage responsible leadership and service to the community. HCE supports Extension in each county through annual financial donations that assist in the overall local budget. Members also serve as 4-H volunteers and on Extension boards.

McHenry County

Carol Giammattei, MCAHCE president

The McHenry County Home Community Education members were not able to meet often in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They did meet for a few board meetings, a field trip, a luncheon, and a holiday party. The group looks forward to starting up our board meetings and programs in 2022. The following projects benefited the local communities:

- Seventeen pairs of handmade fleece mittens were given to the Home of the Sparrow, which strives to reduce homelessness among women and children through creative strategies and community partnerships, resulting in lasting self-sufficiency.
- Five handmade fleece quilts were given to the Linus organization to be distributed to children in local hospitals.
- More than 400 large handmade Christmas stockings, black knee-high socks, and miscellaneous toiletries were donated for overseas troops.
- One hundred forty Christmas stockings, each with a candy cane included, were distributed to the residents of the local nursing home, Valley Hi. Magazines were also provided.
- Five members attended the District 2 meeting in Sycamore.
- More than 2,400 volunteer hours were recorded for 2021.



The Lake County Association of Home and Community Education held its “Welcome Back for S’More HCE” Picnic in the Park in summer 2021.

Lake County

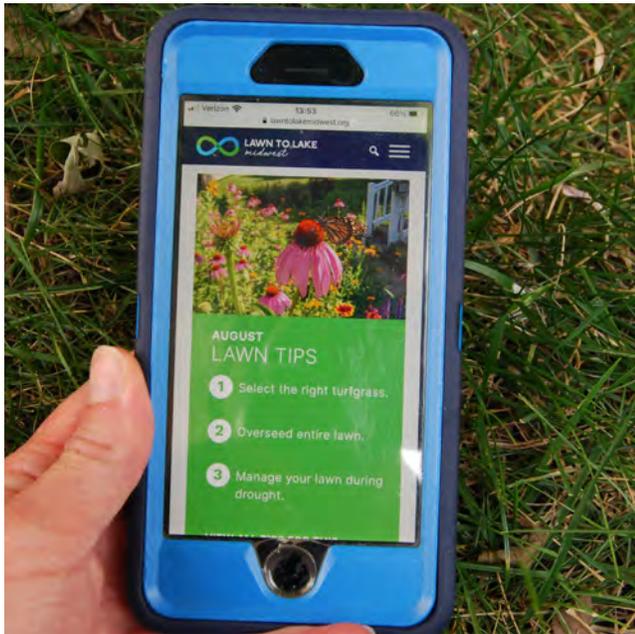
Angela Hicks, LCAHCE president

The Lake County Association for Home and Community Education maintained 106 members for 2021. University of Illinois Extension provided online lessons, including the popular HCE “Lessons for Living” and the LCAHCE Newsletter. When restrictions eased during the warm weather, members held meetings and lessons outside in backyards and at the park.

LCAHCE held its annual meeting, the “Welcome Back for S’More HCE” picnic in the park, International Day, and the Cultural Enrichment Day. The events were well attended by members despite limitations.

With the Illinois Association of Home Community Education Annual Conference canceled in 2021, a mail-in ballot election was held for officers, and Angela Hicks was elected state president. She began her role in March 2021.

It is the LCAHCE Board’s hope that 2022 will be a much more productive and healthy year for everyone concerned.



Lawn to Lake program aims to prevent aquatic pollution

Sarah Zack, IISG's Pollution Prevention Extension Specialist, McHenry County

Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, one of 34 Sea Grant programs nationwide, uses research, education, and outreach to bring the latest science to communities. A bi-state program, IISG is funded through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Purdue University, and University of Illinois Extension.

The group develops and conducts extension and outreach activities related to the prevention of aquatic pollution. One such focus area is Lawn to Lake, targeting lawn care-related pollution in watersheds. A statewide survey of Illinois lawn caretakers in 2019 identified the top environmental concerns among homeowners as keeping pesticides out of the environment, maintaining biodiversity, and improving water quality.

To address these concerns, the new Lawn to Lake program website was developed: lawntolakemidwest.org. Working with horticultural experts at University of Illinois, the site provides the latest science-based lawn care recommendations to help homeowners grow a healthy landscape and protect water resources. Focus group discussions informed three new brochures, distributed to Extension offices statewide in 2020, that encourage lawn caretakers to consider the environmental impacts of lawn care decisions. A partnership with Illinois Extension Watershed Outreach Associates resulted in customized fact sheets for two priority watersheds.



Contact Sarah Zack for more information about Lawn to Lake Midwest or Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant's other outreach initiatives
szack@illinois.edu



As COVID-19 continued to impact governments, businesses, and communities, Illinois Extension's Local Government Education program increased its outreach aimed at economic investment and community vitality, workforce development, leadership, policy, equity, and resiliency. By partnering with state leadership and organizations in Illinois, the Illinois Extension Community and Economic Development team has provided outreach aimed to help local governments and residents build capacity to strengthen their communities and organizations and improve public services.



Access past and future programs
<https://go.illinois.edu/LGE>

Statewide Webinar Reach



60
Webinars in 2021



2,003
Individuals Learned about Leadership, Public Service, and Community Involvement



1,094
Individuals Learned about Meeting Needs of Diverse or Vulnerable Populations



3,955
Individuals Reached in Economic and Financial Stability Webinars



1,043
Reached in Economic Vitality and Community Resiliency Webinars

Community-Driven Broadband Reach



1,228
Community Leaders Educated on Broadband Expansion Opportunities



714
Participants Educated on Obtaining Funding and Needs Assessment



416
Individuals Reached on Broadband Project Management

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.

LAKE AND MCHENRY COUNTY EXTENSION COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS 2021/2022

Clinton Bunch
Megan Eppel
Mary Garcia
Cecil Lampkin
Brian Malone
Linda Sharken

David McDermott
Kelly Sadowski
Simeon Viltz
Patricia Warren
Tyler Wilke
Sarah Zack

Ericka Johnson
Dawn Scichowski
Gina Scichowski
Addison Gjelsten
Regina Rakoncay
Oscar Bonillia

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ONLINE



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extension.illinois.edu/lm

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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