

# **ILLINOIS** Extension

University of Illinois Extension of DuPage, Kane and Kendall Counties is the link between University of Illinois and our neighbors in all three counties. Extension staff provide educational programs and research-based information to help residents improve quality of life, develop skills and solve problems.



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#### A Note from the Director

After 40-plus years with University of Illinois Extension, if there were just one thing I want people to know, it is this: Extension makes a difference.

This past year, the Dean of the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences Kim Kidwell challenged us to capture just that.

What We Do. Why It Matters. This may seem clear-cut, and in some ways, it is. However, Extension's reach and service is complex. Extension brings a variety of research-based information and growth opportunities to local communities to meet changing needs and help our neighbors, at any age, improve quality of life, develop skills and solve problems.

Here in DuPage, Kane and Kendall Counties, we specifically strive to:

- Inspire and enable youth to develop life skills for the future.
- Provide ways for youth to feel a sense of belonging, develop independence, practice generosity and experience mastery.
- Train volunteers to help anyone learn to grow.
- Guide neighbors in solving gardening problems, improving home and community food production, and reducing pesticide use.
- Build a volunteer corps to monitor, promote and protect native species and share that knowledge with others.
- Provide guidance to increase nutritious food consumption, physical fitness, and awareness of healthy lifestyle benefits.
- Teach food safety and handling techniques for proper service in community restaurants, businesses, food pantries, and shelters.
- Support organizations in the creation of healthy environments and facilitate change to make the healthy choice, the easy choice.

All of this work matters because it helps people be their best, do their best, share their best. In this annual report, you will experience just a fraction of the hundreds of Extension stories in our local communities.

Look for the 4-H teens inspiring their young neighbors to make healthy choices, the Master Gardeners evoking memories for long-term care patients and empowering teens with special needs, older adults who attend healthy living classes, the Master Naturalists who give time and sweat to protect wild places, the young 4-H'ers answering birthday wishes of those less fortunate, and the teacher whose students learn how to take better care of their bodies.

Whether you are new to Extension, a longtime supporter or somewhere in between, you are why we do what we do. You are why it matters.

Sandra I. Davis

**County Extension Director** 

#### 2017 at a Glance

**Direct Service** 



**41,554**People reached directly in 2017

#### **Online Service**



**796,100**People reached online in 2017

#### Volunteer



1,463
Local Extension volunteers

#### **Volunteer Hours**



53,967
Volunteer hours in communities

#### Volunteer Value



\$1,400,443 Volunteer value\* to communities

#### Website



671,985 Website page views in 2017

#### Media



News releases, columns & articles

#### Broadcast



117
TV/radio shows and Podcasts

#### Facebook



124,115 Overall Facebook reach in 2017

#### Videos



23,663 Extension Educator video reach

\*To determine this figure, \$25.95 was utilized as the hourly value of volunteers in Illinois, as reported by Independent Sector, www.independentsector.org

#### INCOME (%)

30 State

29 Federal

26 County

■ 15 Local Donations

#### EXPENSES (%)

60 Salaries

20 Programs

16 Rent/Utilities

4 Travel



#### **Helping Others Learn to Grow**

The Horticulture and Natural Resources program area provides instruction and resources for residents, as well as trains Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists to serve our communities.

"I enjoy sharing gardening information with people and enjoy learning from them, too," said volunteer Sue Styer of Geneva, who is a member of the Master Gardener Speaker Bureau. "Gardening is something that anyone can do. Whether it is a pot of flowers or a one-acre vegetable garden, we need to keep it going for the next generation."

Extension staff and trained volunteers lead classes and programs with various partners throughout DuPage, Kane, and Kendall Counties.

"Your advice is extremely valuable to our planning process," said Tom Sokoly of a Geneva HOA Board. "Trees are an important and valuable part of the Averill property, and your expert advice helps us make informed decisions."



Master Gardener and Master Naturalist volunteers recorded 21,170 hours of service to DuPage, Kane and Kendall Counties in 2017.

Trees are an important and valuable part of the Averill property, and your expert advice helps us make informed decisions.

TOM SOKOLY AVERILL HOA BOARD



1,921 Educator Direct Contact19,949 Social Media Video Reach

Extension Educator Richard Hentschel also shares research-based education and seasonal tips through local media and web tools, including weekly newspaper columns, regular radio features on WDCB and WSPY, the "Green Side Up" podcast, blogging, and the "This Week in the Garden" video series.

On Facebook, this video series reached 19,949 people in 2017. With timely topics and rotating locations, the short videos provide ideas and information for home gardeners. Overall, local media and social media efforts allowed us to reach hundreds of thousands with helpful information.

#### **Master Programs Serve Counties**



263

Master Gardener Volunteers



58

Master Naturalist Volunteers



21,170
Volunteer Hours



13,796
Direct Contacts



\$549,361

Volunteer Value to Communities

## Extension Volunteers Nurture Nature and Restore Prairies

The Master Naturalist program educates and trains a corps of volunteers who specialize in conservation, management and interpretation of natural resources. They strive to connect people with nature and inspire more engaged environmental stewards.

"Without the Master Naturalist program, I don't think we would have the amount of nature-minded volunteers that we have out in the community," said Jennine Kristianson of Millbrook. "They are crazy enthusiastic about spreading the word on conservation opportunities, environmental outdoor activities, special events, recreational facilities and nature-themed educational offerings."

The 58 local Master Naturalist volunteers gave more than 3,000 hours to various projects in 2017.

Through more than 30 partners – including The Conservation Foundation, Fermi Lab Natural Areas, Phillips Park Zoo, and Fox Valley Wildlife Center – they participate in native restorations, seed collection, invasive species control, species monitoring, direct education and more. They also serve on multiple councils, boards and committees.

"I volunteer for many public conservation organizations, centering my time on citizen science, land restoration, community outreach and environmental awareness," Kristianson said. "Before I became a Master Naturalist, I was a conservation volunteer, but I didn't feel as confident about sharing my knowledge as I do today."

It's in my nature
to help people help the
environment... Becoming a
Master Naturalist is one of
the best decisions I've made.

JENNINE KRISTIANSON
MASTER NATURALIST

Whether it's teaching all ages at a maple syrup festival or getting her boots dirty planting native species, she said, "It's in my nature to help people help the environment, and the flora and fauna within it. Becoming a Master Naturalist is one of the best decisions I've made."

Fellow volunteer Sue Styer of Geneva spends most of her Master Naturalist time on habitat restoration at Fermi Lab, where she even tackled a massive honeysuckle whose trunk had 26 growth rings.

"It's rewarding to remove invasive [plants] such as honeysuckle and buckthorn and see forests open up and begin to support native woodland flowers," said Styer. "I help pollinate plants of concern in isolated populations to increase their genetic diversity and ability to withstand environmental changes. It's fun to meet others who are happy to spend time in natural areas doing good work to preserve natural resources, and I get the health benefits of forest bathing while helping nature heal itself."



The next Master Naturalist training begins Aug. 2018. Learn more at go.illinois.edu/ MasterNaturalistsdkk





### **Horticulture Therapy**





2017





Indoor & Outdoor Projects





**Master Gardeners** 

DUPAGE, KANE, & KENDALL COUNTIES 2017 IMPACT REPORT 6



#### **Helping Hands and Hearts**

Master Gardeners do much more than grow flowers and vegetables. They plant seeds of hope, nurture growth and cultivate relationships. One of the best examples of this is horticulture therapy efforts.

Horticultural therapy is both beneficial and effective in many programs, including rehabilitative, vocational, and community settings, according to the American Horticultural Therapy Association.

Master Gardeners provide horticulture therapy through a range of organizations, reaching veterans, long-term care patients, pediatric patients, and adults and youth with special needs.

We Grow Dreams in West Chicago is a not-for-profit corporation that provides job training and employment for people with special needs. Gregg Bettcher, executive director of the greenhouse and garden center, said the Master Gardeners greatly support the organization's work.

"The Master Gardeners do an incredible job of teaching lessons and working side by side with our team members," he said. "They are an incredibly valuable part of what we do."

This program not only provides people with job skills, but it "accentuates the positives found in doing productive work with other great people. It also helps introduce and educate our customers about the special needs community," he said.

Master Gardener volunteer June Vandervest leads the special needs program at Downers Grove North High School.

"The lessons we provide teach the students about the world around them and how to appreciate nature," said Vandervest of the group, which includes students of varying needs and diagnoses, such as autism to Down syndrome. "One of my favorite moments was when they learned to say 'butterfly' in sign language. One student kept signing all morning!"

Horticulture therapy programs can promote mental, physical and relationship skills for participants. At River Glen in St. Charles, Master Gardener Alice The Master Gardeners do an incredible job of teaching lessons and working side-by-side with our team members.

GREGG BETTCHER
WE GROW DREAMS

McCallum sees a connection between therapy activities, memory and mood.

"The residents reminisced about gardens they once had, sang songs, and had a great time working with flowers," she said of a recent session. "Of note was the happiness of the memory care residents. They may not remember what they did, but for those moments working with flowers they were happy. It was a joy for the Master Gardeners to be part of it."

At Ronald McDonald House in Winfield, the Master Gardeners provide another facet of horticulture therapy. "While we are sharing our knowledge, we are more importantly creating an 'in the moment' opportunity for the young patients and their families," said Cheryl McGarrity, Master Gardener team leader. "The children get excited about picking vegetables, or touching flowers in the new sensory garden. It gives them a joyful moment outside the cancer they so bravely face, and gives parents a lighter moment."

Indoor lessons include a craft so participants have something for their hospital rooms, and they also provide a two-hour break for parents, if they desire.

"I love being a Master Gardener because we can impact lives in such a creative way," said McGarrity.

Vandervest echoed the sentiment. "Having the opportunity to share knowledge about horticulture and conservation really is fulfilling and helps me know I am making a difference in others' lives."

Other horticulture therapy partners include: DuPage Care Center, Wheaton; Highland Oaks, Elgin; and Western DuPage Special Recreation in Carol Stream.

#### **NEW MASTER GARDENERS**

29 Newly-Trained Volunteers Join Team in 2017

The local U of I Extension Master Gardener program trained 29 new volunteers. Education is presented by Extension experts and topics include vegetable gardening, weed and insect identification, trees, small fruits, integrated pest management, lawn care, flower gardening, plant diseases, tree and shrub care, and soils and fertility. The new volunteers complete 60 hours of classroom education and at least 60 hours of volunteer time.





#### HELPING OTHERS LEARN TO GROW

Kane County Master Gardeners Extend Knowledge
In 2017, Kane County volunteers shared their own
time and talents through the Master Gardener Help
Desk, the Idea Garden, the Sherman Community
Garden, community service projects and gardens, and
various educational sessions. Master Gardeners led
classes on seed saving, seed starting, insect hotels
and more. In addition, volunteers shared nature
knowledge with youth and families through the Dirt
Days series with The Growing Place in Aurora.

#### MANY WAYS TO SERVE

DuPage County Master Gardeners Serve Communities

Volunteers completed 9,864 hours of service for 2017. The group of 132 Master Gardeners directly reached 9,319 people, and also helped grow and harvest more than 4,000 pounds of produce donated to area food pantries. Projects include: school gardens, community and giving gardens, heritage gardens, horticulture therapy, garden help line and mobile help desks, Worms in the Classroom, speakers bureau educational presentations, and docent services for Ball Horticulture and Cantigny Park.





#### PLANO COMMUNITY GARDEN

Growing it Forward in Kendall County
Two Kendall County Master Gardeners
lead the successful Plano Community
Garden. Connie Hatter and Hillard
Bryant recorded nearly 1,400 hours of
service time in 2017. Over the season,
the established garden project provided
more than 3 tons of produce to the
Kendall County Community Food
Pantry! In addition, Master Gardeners
also partnered with the Fox Valley
Family YMCA to begin a garden with
the children and staff.



#### **Learn by Doing**

4-H Youth Development programs are multifaceted and include 4-H community clubs, special interest (SPIN) clubs, in-school and after-school learning experiences, and other youth outreach opportunities. 4-H reaches youth ages 8 to 18, and the Cloverbud program is designed for ages 5 to 7.

Local 4-H activities reached 16,026 youth during the 2016-2017 program year. Programs address a range of topics, including nutrition, environmental science, robotics, visual arts, international studies, leadership and more.

"4-H is an awesome way to learn and to make new friends," said 4-H member Evelyn Martin. "4-H members plan programs, volunteer for community service, hold leadership positions, and explore a variety of projects. 4-H projects help youth learn important life skills through a variety of fun educational and social experiences."

Local 4-H Youth Development programs provide the opportunity for youth to feel a sense of belonging, develop independence, practice generosity, and experience mastery. They also open the door for youth to participate in amazing opportunities at the regional, state and national levels.



4-H youth learn about their projects, but also gain public speaking and other life skills.

4-H members plan programs, volunteer for community service, hold leadership positions, and explore a variety of projects.

> EVELYN MARTIN 4-H MEMBER

4-H by the Numbers in DuPage, Kane, and Kendall Counties



16,026
Participants



1,087
Volunteers



30,772 Volunteer Hours



\$798,533

Volunteer Value\* to Local Communities

## Illinois 4-H Encourages Awareness of College Majors and Careers

Findings from the Illinois 4-H high school senior survey suggest participation in 4-H helps youth prepare for life as adults. Awareness of career pathways is an important step toward being ready for life and work as an adult, and 4-H creates opportunities for members to gain that perspective.

93% of respondents are aware of a career related to their 4-H project areas.

96% believe their 4-H experience has helped them build skills that will be useful in a future job or career.

73% are more aware of college majors related to their project areas as a result of their 4-H experience.

#### Darien Dragons 4-H Club Earns State Award for Library Project

Many zoos and animal parks now showcase the process of new life online for people around the world to watch — from April the giraffe to Tuma, a Nile hippopotamus. One local 4-H club partnered with its local library to provide this experience and excitement to the community with the 4-H incubation and embryology project.

"It was a special opportunity for youth in the area to watch baby chicks hatch, up close, and learn about eggs, embryos and chicks," said Tricia Giron, leader of the Darien Dragons 4-H Club. "It's a captivating, hands-on opportunity to engage youth in science."

The Darien Dragons 4-H Club placed two dozen fertile eggs in an incubator at the Indian Prairie Public Library, and spent weeks monitoring the equipment, caring for the eggs, and even provided educational experiences to library patrons. The library also set up a live web cam to track the 21-day process.

In 2017, more than 200 classrooms in the tri-county area conducted the 4-H Incubation and Embryology project through University of Illinois Extension.



It provided a memorable and personal experience with science.

NATALIE WILLIAMS INDIAN PRAIRIE PUBLIC LIBRARY

During the incubation period, youth learn to prepare eggs, set up an incubator, record progress, turn eggs, test eggs for fertility, and observe the life cycle, all while practicing science, math, creative thinking, and much more. In addition to schools, some groups and organizations, like the Darien Dragons 4–H Club, take part. Giron said she initially planned the project as a home school project for her son, but decided to engage their whole 4–H club, which includes 10 youth, ages 9 to 12, and their families.

To prepare, Giron attended the U of I Extension training for adults conducting the Incubation and Embryology project with 4–H. She then shared her knowledge with the Darien Dragons 4–H members, who completed a club training on embryology.

In addition to daily monitoring, the 4-H club members helped the library with a science workshop, and showed other youth how to handle the baby chicks properly. During the month-long project, library visitors could view the eggs inperson and website visitors could watch the eggs, and eventually the chicks, via live web cam.

"It provided a memorable and personal experience with science," said Natalie Williams, Head of Youth Services for Indian Prairie Public Library District. "People are more likely to seek out information and remember what they learn when they watch it come to life, when they can hold it, and play with it."

An estimated 2,000 people participated in some facet of the Darien Dragons' 4-H club project. To extend the knowledge further, the club created a video and display board to share at the DuPage County Fair. The club went on to earn a Project Learning Award from Illinois 4-H for this endeavor.

#### **National Day of Service**

Birthdays are important milestones for youth, but not every family can afford a celebration. With this in mind, 4-H Club youth gathered birthday supplies and created more than 200 "birthday bags," which were donated to community families in need.

The local effort was part of the 4-H National Day of Service this spring, and 19 DuPage, Kane and Kendall County 4-H Clubs each partnered with a charitable organization in the area, collected the birthday kit items and delivered the completed kits. Kits included birthday gift bags filled with a cake mix, frosting, birthday candles, a 4-H stuffed bear, and even some party supplies or birthday cards.

"Every child would like a cake on their birthday," said 4-H leader Sandy Murray. "We are providing that for children who otherwise might not get one."

In all, 4-H'ers delivered 215 birthday kits to 17 service organizations in the Fox Valley area, including: Addison Switchboard, Batavia Interfaith Food Pantry, Elburn Food Pantry, Elgin Crisis Center, Helmar Food Pantry, Hesed House, Elmhurst Walk-In Ministries, Loaves & Fishes, Old Second Bank of Elburn, People's Resource Center,



Nineteen DuPage, Kane and Kendall County 4-H Clubs collected birthday kit items for the 4-H National Day of Service. In all, they delivered 215 completed kits to various charitable organizations in the area.

They are reminded of how a simple act of kindness and working together can create a positive difference in many lives, and often the lives of children just like themselves.

> TINA HEIDRICH 4-H VOLUNTEER

Ronald McDonald House, Salvation Army Food Pantry of Aurora, Salvation Army of St. Charles, Sharing Connection, St. Mary's of West Chicago, The Store at Harvest Chapel in Sandwich, West Chicago Food Pantry, and York Township Pantry.

"4-H members learned how easily birthday celebrations may be eliminated when families do not have the means to have extra treats or celebrations," said 4-H leader Tina Heidrich. "They are reminded of how a simple act of kindness and working together can create a positive difference in many lives."

Giving back is an important part of the 4-H experience. One of the four Hs stands for "hands to larger service." 4-H members are encouraged to develop and practice skills to be helpful to others. Throughout each year, 4-H members participate in club and county service projects that benefit their local communities, country and world.

"By participating in community service activities, 4-H members gain a sense of pride, accomplishment, empathy, tolerance, understanding and compassion," said Heidrich. "This project was a winning opportunity for everyone – for the 4-H clubs to work together as a team for a positive outcome, for the food pantries that now have an exciting surprise to make available to their guests, and for the recipients who will be celebrating, enjoying and having fun on a truly special day."

#### THREE EARN PLACE IN HALL OF FAME

State Recognizes Local 4-H Volunteers

Illinois 4-H Foundation annually recognizes 4-H volunteers for exemplary service. In 2017, three local volunteers were inducted into the Illinois 4-H Hall of Fame: 4-H SPIN Club leader Todd Gordon of DuPage County; Kane County's Patricia Bunge, a longtime supporter & volunteer; and Diane Morris, past leader and Kendall County 4-H Foundation executive director.





#### LOCAL TEENS LEAD AG INNOVATOR PROJECT

Youth Learn Problem-Solving, Value of Agriculture 4-H Teen Science Ambassadors Xen Briggs of Downers Grove, Julian Heidrich of Oswego, and Olivia Antoine of Barrington traveled to Washington, D.C., as Illinois representatives to learn the Ag Innovator Healthy Soils CSI project. The teens taught other 4-H Teen Ambassadors, who in turn, led more than 1,300 youth in the project. The 4-H Ag Innovators Experience is presented by National 4-H Council and Monsanto to help develop critical workforce skills in young people and show that agriculture can be relevant and fun.

#### 4-H DEVELOPS LEADERS FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

Local Programs Support Results of Illinois 4-H Teen Survey

4-H recognizes youth are an important community resource and places youth in meaningful leadership roles today while surrounding them with caring, supportive adults. Locally, teens learn and lead through 4-H Teen Science & Health Ambassadors, Kane County 4-H Teen Ambassadors, and Kendall County 4-H Teen Federation. An Illinois 4-H survey found:

**93**% of respondents said they feel motivated to impact and influence others because of their experience in Illinois 4-H.

**91%** feel confident in their ability to impact and influence others.

\*Based on 644 responses to the 2016 Illinois 4-H Teen Survey





#### SPOTLIGHT: SPANGLISH 4-H CLUB

Bilingual Group Focuses on Shared Experiences
At each Spanglish 4–H Club meeting, the group explores a project area to introduce members to new ideas and skills. Youth take turns leading projects, with help from leaders/parents, who are all new to 4–H! Spanglish was formed by families in the Y115 School District Dual Language program to provide opportunities outside class to use Spanish together and make lasting friendships. The club voted their mission to be: "To learn and work together as we grow from Cloverbuds to 4–H'ers with the support of each other and our family."

## Extension Educators Team Up to Coach Teens to Inspire Youth

Media messages and advertising can sometimes adversely influence youth choices, especially with food. To combat this, Extension Educators Donna Nuger, 4–H Youth Development, and Jessica Gadomski, SNAP–Education, teamed up for a Media Smart Youth Initiative at East Aurora School District.

The program empowered teens from East Aurora School District as 4–H Teen Healthy Living Ambassadors, and the Extension educators led them in lessons and discussion about MyPlate dietary recommendations, ways to be active, how to reduce sugar, and how advertising impacts food choices.

The teen ambassadors then planned lessons for elementary students and taught them after school at Gates School.

"I like that we learn things we didn't know before, and we get to teach little kids," said 4-H Teen Ambassador Elizabeth Vilchis, who said she likes sharing her ideas and making up games to teach younger students about healthy food choices. "They teach us to train others. They also tell us about college and careers. It's a fun experience."

Christian Delayo, another 4-H Healthy Living Ambassador, said they also serve as mentors, teach skills like tying shoes, and share experiences, like playing soccer or talking about dinners at home. We get to interact with kids about food, nutrition and exercise. We learn to get ready and practice a plan.

CHRISTIAN DELAYO
4-H HEALTHY LIVING AMBASSADOR

"We get to interact with kids about food, nutrition and exercise," said Delayo. "We learn to get ready and practice a plan."

He likes to provide lessons with physical activity. "Kids should have 60 minutes per day," he added.

The program promoted healthy choices among teens and younger students alike. Teens participated in a pre-assessment related to media, nutrition and physical activity, and following the three-month program, the average score increased 21 percent. By the end of the program, all the teens also strongly agreed that "choosing foods that are good for my body is important."

The cross-program initiative also built communication, teamwork, and presentation skills for the teens. In fact, Extension educators saw an increase in self-esteem and confidence among the teens, and improvement in communicating with peers and to younger audiences.







#### SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EDUCATION (SNAP-Education)

SNAP-Education works with limited-resource audiences to make healthier choices where they eat, shop, live, play and learn in their communities. Through classes and workshops, and by working towards policy, systems, and environmental changes, SNAP-Education positively impacts the nutrition and activity choices of people and communities we serve.

#### Serving Local Residents



Total SNAP-Ed Participants



2.501 (36%) Adults



4.411 (64%)



4,718 (68%)

Participants Who Identified as Hispanic

#### RACE OF PARTICIPANTS

■83% White (5,706)

11% Black (751)

American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (455)

#### Our Partners



60 K-12 Schools



Community Centers



Youth Centers



Early Childhood Centers



Food Pantries and Food Banks

#### **SNAP-Education Guide Greater** Nutrition, Healthier Future

By educating children about health and nutrition, SNAP-Education programs can positively influence future adults and community leaders, as well as also reach families today.

SNAP-Education youth programs are ageappropriate, interactive and fun, including Color Me Healthy and OrganWise Guys. The engaged staff and evidence-based curriculum encourage youth to eat healthy, try new foods and exercise regularly. In addition, educational materials go home to families and SNAP-Education staff also may host parent groups or meetings.

"[They] teach about fruits and vegetables and also about staying healthy," said Michelle Grabowski of Dietrich School in Aurora. "This is extremely important with today's students considering the obesity epidemic and increased consumption of fast foods. My students love learning about healthy food choices, good exercise and even parts of the body."

SNAP-Education reaches youth and families through K-12 schools, youth centers, community centers and early childhood centers. For example, SNAP-Education partners with Head Start DuPage County, providing programming in eight of the nine sites.

"Children enjoy the in-class instruction and repeat some of the concepts when discussing foods at meal time," said Maureen Lamperis, Health and Nutrition Coordinator with Metropolitan Family Services, which runs Head Start in DuPage County. "[It] helps us fulfill our requirements in a fun, unique way."

My students love learning about healthy food choices, good exercise and even parts of the body.

> **MICHELLE GRABOWSKI EAST AURORA SCHOOL DISTRICT**

## Extension Equips Teens to be Agents of Change in Community

Holidays – such as Halloween and Valentine's Day – often center around candy, but there are ways to cut back on the treats and still celebrate the season.

With instruction and guidance from SNAP-Education Educator Jessica Gadomski, the Teen Council of Villagebrook Apartments in Carol Stream was empowered to develop and lead healthy lifestyle initiatives such as a Healthy Halloween party for their neighborhood's elementary-aged youth.

"I was glad to be able to link our emphasis on service to the community with this program where the teens could think about the good of their younger neighbors," said Marissa Sabio of Outreach Community Center.

The teens exercised leadership, decision-making, planning, and execution, and the party-goers learned about nutrition and exercise from older neighbors they look up to. For weeks, the teen group participated in lessons and discussions on how to make healthy changes with Gadomski. Then the teens moved into the planning phase.

"She skillfully directed the teens to think about making healthful choices regarding snacks and meals, encouraged them to try new foods, and pushed us to think of better alternatives and substitutions," said Sabio.



Teens inspire young neighbors with healthy fun.

# We prepared them and the teens rose to the challenge! MARISSA SABIO OUTREACH COMMUNITY CENTER

"As we discussed the plans for our Healthy Halloween party, the teens started asking 'How can we make this healthy?' and 'What else tastes good, since we can't pick junk food?' and 'What can we give as prizes if we don't want to give candy?'"

At the party, the teens led spirited games and a freeze dance contest, and taught the youth to make healthy snacks, including a witch's broom with pretzels and a "yummy mummy" pizza with whole wheat crust, low-fat cheese and turkey pepperoni. The effort aimed to provide leadership skills for teens and to influence healthier habits of all youth.

"I enjoyed the kids' happiness and their willingness to try new things," said one teen. "We got to choose what we did [at the party], and it was a great time."

Another added, "I liked that we were able to be leaders to the other kids and help them out."

It was such a success Sabio said the teens want to host another event. "We prepared them as much as possible and the teens rose to the challenge!" said Sabio. "We are now planning a Valentine's party using some of the same thought processes and planning procedures."

By collaborating with organizations like this one, Extension brings research-based education to communities through established programs with strong relationships with residents.

"It provided validation to what we already try to promote. Sometimes, just hearing the same message again from another source makes the point stick better," said Sabio, expressing appreciation for Extension and all the group's partners. "We all need partners to do good, hard work in our communities."

#### WORLD RELIEF EFFORT

Extending knowledge for success

Extension continues its partnership with World Relief to provide on-site education for individuals new to the United States. SNAP-Education staff work closely with participants who learn new skills, such as proper measuring and chopping, how to use different kinds of kitchen equipment and how to prepare healthy snacks and meals. This group explored new ways to add vegetables to most meals and snacks to help their family get the nutrition they need.





#### ILLINOIS JUNIOR CHEF PROGRAM

Teaching important skills to youth
The hands-on Illinois Junior Chef program promotes healthy food choices and positive cooking skills. In DuPage and Kane counties, our SNAP-Education team worked with 990 youth through summer, afterschool and community center programs to reach youth ages 8 to 14 in Aurora, Batavia, Carol Stream, Warrenville, and West Chicago. During the series, youth learned how to properly prepare fun, nutritious meals.

#### SCHOOLS SCORE WITH ABCs OF SCHOOL NUTRITION

West Chicago school wins Meal of the Month Contest

Since 2015, U of I Extension has partnered with the State Board of Education to inform and support school nutrition professionals with free USDA Professional Standards training and resources, including Smarter Lunchroom assessments. In 2017, as a follow-up to these assessments, 47 local schools implemented at least 1,165 new practices to better promote healthy choices at school. Methods included cafeteria branding, student artwork, attractive and easy-access fruit and vegetable displays, food identification cards, unflavored milk campaigns, and fresh fruit bowls at multiple points in the lunch line. In August, Leman Middle School won the Meal of the Month contest with chicken enchiladas.





#### THIS SEASON IN NUTRITION

Sharing health information via social media
Hosted by Extension Educator Laura Barr, "This Season in Nutrition" videos highlight food, nutrition and exercise topics throughout the year, including summer food safety and healthy eating patterns. 2017 social media series focused on helpful tips with subjects like heart health and healthy holidays. In 2017, these efforts reached 5,245 people with research-based messages.



## Extension Provides Education to Foster Healthy Habits at Any Age

U of I Extension provides research-based education on chronic disease management, proper nutritional choices, overall physical wellness, food safety, and food preservation.

By working with communities, organizations, businesses, health groups, and schools, Nutrition and Wellness Educator Laura Barr directly reached 1,979 seniors, adults and children in 2017.

"We partner in order to teach nutrition basics, balanced eating, healthy choices while eating out, budget friendly nutrition, diabetic and heart healthy diets, and more," said Sandy Pastore, executive director of the Oswego Senior Center.

"Your workshop was engaging and interactive," said Lydia Van Slyke of Seven Generations Ahead. "The kids were so happy to learn about healthy food! It was absolutely incredible to watch."



The kids were so happy to learn about healthy food.

LYDIA VAN SLYKE
SEVEN GENERATIONS AHEAD

#### **Focus on Diabetes Management**

U of I Extension wants area residents to focus on how they can prevent, or properly manage, diabetes. The Illinois Department of Health reported more than 1.34 million people in Illinois have diabetes, and an estimated 341,000 have the disease, but do not know it yet. Health education is needed to understand the food relationship to blood sugar or serum glucose.

Extension offers two diabetes program options to the community — I on Diabetes and Vivir Bien con Diabetes. Both are designed for patients, caregivers or those interested in preventing or managing diabetes. The goal is to increase awareness, emphasize the need for a health care team and improve diabetic care and overall well-being.



Stay tuned to news, videos and more on Facebook at facebook.com/extensiondkk





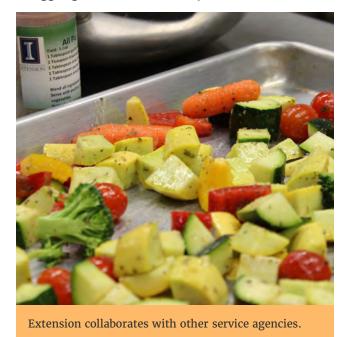
## Extension Partners to Combat Malnutrition in Local Seniors

The aging American population faces a difficult-to-identify and often overlooked challenge – malnutrition. However, University of Illinois Extension and local communities work together to diminish the growing national threat here at home.

Around half of older adults either are at risk of becoming malnourished or are malnourished, according to the Defeat Malnutrition Today Coalition. Those at greatest risk are likely age 70 and older, or those who already have been diagnosed with chronic disease. To combat this, Extension partners with local senior–focused organizations to provide hands–on educational sessions on a wide array of nutrition and exercise topics.

Chewing or swallowing problems, lack of transportation or support systems, medication interactions and being on a fixed income all can cause or exasperate poor nutritional status in older adults. This also can worsen chronic disease, delay healing and increase chances of infection or falls. Complicating things further, some older adults may experience weight loss with malnutrition, while others do not.

"Malnourished seniors are not necessarily those struggling with food insecurity," said Ginnie Moore,



We collaborate with U of I Extension to develop and provide education and application opportunities. It is important for people to have accurate and tangible information.

SANDY PASTORE OSWEGO SENIOR CENTER

community planner and health educator with Northeastern Illinois Area Agency on Aging. "They may be facing another challenge."

For example, a senior who lives alone and has arthritis may struggle with meal preparation, and may opt for packaged or easy-to-prepare foods. Eating alone is one of the biggest risk factors, as 42.3 percent of Illinois seniors live by themselves, When eating alone, individuals may not be motivated to cook a balanced meal.

"Many times it is not that they are underweight, but that they are consuming low-nutrient foods or highly-processed, convenient foods that result in limited nutrition," said Sandy Pastore, Executive Director of the Oswego Senior Center, adding that this loss of nutrients affects overall health, as well as energy, motivation, and cognitive function.

Older adults can connect with community support through senior centers, park districts, congregate or home-delivered meal programs, and other services. This can lessen risk of malnutrition and increase socialization and access to free or low-cost nutrition education and social activities. Session topics may include nutrition basics, healthy choices while eating out, budget friendly meal options, diabetic and heart healthy diets, and more.

"We want to help seniors get excited about food and cooking," Pastore said. "We collaborate with U of I Extension to develop and provide education and application opportunities. It is important for people to have accurate and tangible information."



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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).

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