



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



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A Message from the Chancellor

The University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign is an economic engine and a driver of innovation, deeply rooted in the Illinois prairie and engaged statewide, from Cook County to Cairo. Illinois Extension brings the University to your doorstep. Extension educators live and work alongside you in every county, allowing the university to support local leaders, businesses, farmers, and residents to address grand challenges and everyday problems with practical, research-based solutions. As a youth, my own 4-H experience inspired a rewarding career in agricultural research and higher education. Today, it's an honor to lead this great public university and deepen its commitment to serve the people of Illinois.

Robert J. Jones
 Chancellor, University of Illinois



A Note from the County Director

Cook County continues to be the single largest county in Illinois. Although from 2015-2016 the county saw a 66% decline in the population, the county continues to constitute more than 40% of the state's population. In this county, 14.9% of the population (763,242 out of 5.2 million people) live below the poverty line, as determined by poverty status. This report will highlight programs specifically designed to make an impact on our communities, some of which are underrepresented and high risk populations. The Extension employees and volunteers in Cook County strive to provide equal access to programs and activities as we enable people to improve their lives and communities.

The goals for all programs delivered in this county are to increase public awareness as it relates to university research, provide equal access to underserved and high risk communities, foster grassroots involvement to identify needs, build partnerships with likeminded organizations and individuals, and deliver more comprehensive, evidence-based outreach programs that are distinctive to urban issues.

Willene Buffett
 County Extension Director



Changing behaviors...

Forest preserve workshop encourages gardeners to go native

Excerpt from featured article, originally published March 14, 2018 by Frank Vaisvilas

South Holland, IL - Spring temperatures may not have arrived yet, but summery thoughts of garden bed plans and projects for problem areas in the yard already are in full swing.

About two dozen Southland gardeners were on hand last weekend for a program offering ornamental landscaping ideas that look good, help beneficial bugs, and could even solve situations such as soggy spots in the lawn.



"It's all about incorporating native plants into our home landscape," said University of Illinois horticulture program coordinator Valerie Kehoe at Saturday's workshop.

The session was held at the Sand Ridge Nature Center in South Holland as part of the Cook County Forest Preserve District's conservation at home program, which encourages residents to adopt "forest preserve friendly" practices.

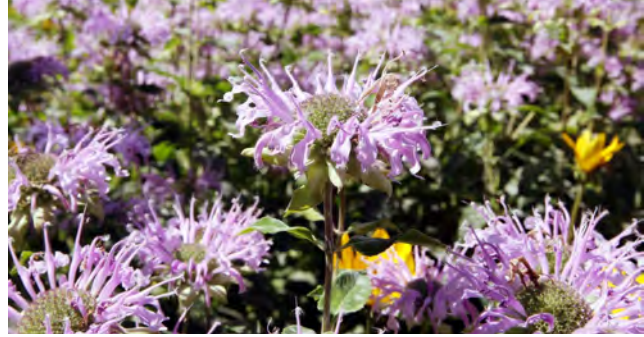
Those attending the workshop said they were willing to give native plants a try.

"I live in the city where so much space is taken up by cement and houses," said Debbie Navabi, of Beverly. "It's nice to give back and try to preserve some nature."

She said she's tired of planting new grass every year and having to weed, especially after learning that native plants require much lower maintenance.

Navabi said she'll start with a small rain garden this year. A rain garden, Kehoe explained, is located in an area outside the home where water typically collects, such as at the end of a gutter spout.

The deep root systems of the native plants will help drain the water and won't require much, if any, extra watering.



Carlisa Reeves, of Crete, said she also wants to start small with a rain garden and then branch out year after year. "I'm really excited. I'm glad I came," she said.

Emir Hardy, of Hazel Crest, said he's looking to increase his home's curb appeal with native plants. He said while native plants are becoming more common in area parks and preserves, many homeowners still aren't embracing the practice and are sticking with popular non-natives. "We're hoping to turn the tide," Hardy said.

Karen French and Pamela Abbott, who work at Flossmoor Hills Elementary School, are hoping to instill an appreciation of native plants in young students. They said organizers at the school are planning to start a native plant garden on a 63-foot-by-26-foot patch of land in the school's courtyard.

French said the garden will serve as an outdoor learning center for the students and create an awe spectacle when the plants attract butterflies. French and Abbott said the workshop gave them some good ideas.

Workshop attendees brought graph paper to map their garden plans with guidance from the university's master gardeners in attendance.

Some pointers Kehoe gave to ecofriendly garden designers included using rain barrels for use in non-edible garden areas, permeable pavers that allow water to seep through and buying plants from local nurseries, not big box stores.

Some native plants she recommended included prairie dropseeds, black eyed susans, and serviceberry shrubs. Kehoe said prairie dropseeds emit a pleasant aroma during the fall and the serviceberry shrubs are beautiful throughout the year with white flowers in the spring and edible berries in the fall which provide food for birds.



View entire article:

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/daily-southtown/news/ct-sta-sand-ridge-native-plants-st-0315-20180314-story.html>



Northerly Island

For 50 years, a small airport named Meigs Field leased land from the Chicago Park District. When the lease expired in September 1996, the City of Chicago, the Park District, and numerous civic organizations agreed that the airport should be reverted to parkland, as initially intended. Today, wild prairie grasses have taken root alongside beautiful strolling paths, casual play areas, and a spectacular view of the city skyline.

University of Illinois Educator Ronald Wolford, Master Gardeners and coordinators Latosha Reggans, Ariel Bland and Valerie Kehoe gardened with campers and school children from summer through fall.

The children transplanted vegetables such as cucumber, cabbage, tomatoes, lettuce, and herbs, as well as beautiful flowers like muscari, daffodils, monarda bee balm, and butterfly weed. The University of Illinois Extension partnership with Northerly Island provides participants with great information about beneficial insects, healthy eating and basic plant needs. The kids were given their own garden trowels and space in the garden beds to plant and care for, watering and tilling with their little fingers and trowels to prep the soil for planting. Harvesting was done in the fall and CPS students got a chance to learn how to put the garden to bed for the winter. Gardening with youth is an essential way to teach them where their food comes from and UIE's partnership with Northerly Island in 2018 extended children that very opportunity.



Chicago Public School campers gardening at Northerly Island.



Native Landscape Design

In 2018, six of the Forest Preserves of Cook County Nature Centers hosted eight workshops. This Master Gardener and Master Naturalist program, titled Conservation@Home Workshops, reached a total of 129 participants. There were 72 attendees in the spring and 57 in the fall.

The property owners were the designer and received a chance to learn simple design principles as well as learning the beauty and importance of native plants for our Midwest landscape. There is follow up scheduled for Spring of 2019, to address the further development of these environmental friendly landscapes.



In-class garden instruction lead by Nancy Kreith, Horticulture Educator.

School and Community Garden Training

The School and Community Garden training is a cross-disciplinary program conducted by STEM, Horticulture and Local Foods/Small Farm staff. It is focused on preparing community stakeholders and participants for establishing and maintaining successful community food system projects revolving around school and community gardens. Providing this training allows Extension staff to better focus their efforts with individual schools and community groups by targeting technical assistance at schools and in community garden projects.

During the first two years program, more than 100 participants from across Cook County have successfully completed the course. According to the 2018 program evaluations, there were three significant pieces of content that participants found helpful:

- ▶ Understanding of Next Generation Science Standards and how they apply to the classroom
- ▶ Season Extension Concepts and Structures for the Garden
- ▶ Where and how to begin a school or community garden

The 2018 evaluations also revealed the top three behavioral changes likely or most likely to occur after taking the training:

- ▶ Incorporating food safety standards into the garden
- ▶ Putting together an installation plan for the gardens
- ▶ Putting in an ornamental, native, or pollinator garden

Local Foods and Small Farms educator Zack Grant had the opportunity to work with 2017 School and Community Garden training participant Nancy Zook, a teacher at the Community Christian Academy (CCA) in North Lawndale. Ms. Zook wanted to retrofit the existing greenhouse with a season extension structure she learned about when taking the training. Educator Grant helped build and educate Ms. Zook on the proper use of a season extension structure at CCA greenhouse. This structure will be used by her classes to help grow many plants for their food garden plots in North Lawndale.



Mini-tunnel project



Dolton Growing Illinois Food Access Allocation Garden

Dolton Growing Illinois Food Access Allocation Garden

With funds from the Growing Illinois Food Access Allocation grant, our Local Foods and Small Farms team partnered with our SNAP-Ed program to alleviate food insecurity in the south suburbs. On land offered by the Village of Dolton, Master Gardeners and community volunteers built and tended an 800 square foot garden, which yielded more than 366 pounds of fresh vegetables. All of the produce was donated to St. Mary Queen of Apostles food pantry in Riverdale, a community in which 43.7% of households receiving SNAP benefits*. The St Mary Queen of Apostles pantry serves 130 families each month. In addition, 11 individuals received instruction and plans on how to build a mini tunnel structure, so they can extend the growing season in their own gardens.

*Source <https://www.chicagosfoodbank.org/community-data-map/>



Extension staff and volunteers helped Northlake library with technical assistance and public programs to help them set up their raised bed garden. Youth attended four sessions where they learned about composting, the environment, seed starting, transplanting, and seed biology.





Ingalls Hospital Rooftop Donation Garden

This teaching garden is in one of the unlikeliest locations -the roof deck of a hospital parking garage in an underserved, urban community. Ingalls Hospital in Harvey, Illinois, wanted their dietitians to know how to grow food as well as prepare foods. In food desert communities like this one, access to fresh produce is greatly limited. If clients can learn to grow nutritious food themselves, their diet and health will likely improve.

Renovations on this garden began in 2015 and its fruits are the results of a four-year partnership with Extension. Herbs and vegetables have been donated to three area food pantries including Restoration Ministries in South Holland, Ill.; St. Clements's in Harvey, Ill.; and the Harvey Community Center in Harvey, Ill.

Through the Ingalls Hospital programs, multiple dietitians have established vegetable garden programs at their hospitals and at one eating disorder facility.

With Extension's assistance, food pantry partner Restoration Ministries has started their own vegetable garden near their facility, further enabling their clients to learn how to grow their own fresh vegetables. To facilitate a quicker, less expensive, and less labor intensive raised bed buildout, Extension introduced Restoration Ministries to Big Bag Beds, which are an instant pop-up fabric raised bed system.

More than 44 dietetic interns and staff have received classroom training and coaching from Extension educators and the twelve Master Gardeners who volunteered their time to help with training, planting, and harvesting activities.

Nearly 200 youth have experienced the garden and now have seen with their own eyes where their food comes from. Youth also gained an appreciation of nature through learning that pollinators help provide their families with nutritious food. Youth that participated in garden activities and Extension programs such as "Herman the Worm" later demonstrated substantially less fear when they came across pollinating insects.

The Ingalls Hospital Rooftop Garden has donated more than 1,000 pounds of fresh vegetables and herbs to three local food pantries in food desert communities. Clients reported experiencing reductions to weekly grocery bills. Interns reported working in the garden relieved stress, and strengthened their sense of community.





EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM (EFNEP)

Since 1969, EFNEP has provided nutrition education that works to families, improving diet quality, food safety, and food resource management practices. EFNEP works with Illinois families in need, with particular focus on parents and caregivers, pregnant women and teens, and youth. Through hands-on classes that increase knowledge and influence behavior change, EFNEP makes a difference in the lives of those we serve.

Serving Local Families



1,083
Total Adult Participants



2,229
Total Youth Participants



60.8% (658)
Adult Participants Identified as Hispanic

RACE OF ADULT PARTICIPANTS

- 49% White (531)
- 29.7% Black (322)
- 2.8% American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (30)

Our Community Partners



53
K-12 Schools



27
Youth Centers



6
Early Childhood Centers



2
Stores or Markets



74
Community Centers



4
Food Pantries and Food Banks

Sullivan HS Cooking Class Brings Parents, Students Together

Excerpt from featured article, originally published May 18, 2018 by CPS blogger

Chicago, IL - Peeling, chopping and dicing vegetables, that was part of the food prep lesson for students in Sullivan High School's new side-by-side cooking class. It's also the school's first class that combines parents and students.

Over the next six weeks, parents from the Rogers Park Parent University will learn how to prepare a meal and assist the class's eight diverse learners. They meet once a week. The free program for parents is made possible through the University of Illinois Extension.

This week students were divided into small groups with one or two parents at a table to assist. Each group was given vegetables to peel and chop. There were onions, eggplants, bell peppers and more.

"Great job!" said one parent to a student with bell peppers.

"Ok, watch me, now you try," said another parent who demonstrates how to hold the knife.

While the vegetables were getting sautéed by one of the co-instructors, the other discussed nutrition, demonstrating portion sizes by holding up a paper plate sectioned into the five food groups: fruit, grains, proteins, vegetables and dairy.




View entire article:
<https://blog.cps.edu/2018/05/18/side-by-side-cooking-class-brings-parents-students-together/>




SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EDUCATION (SNAP-EDUCATION)

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




Serving Local Families

 **12,241**
Total SNAP-Education Participants

 **49.4%** Adults  **50.6%** Youth

 **46.5%** Identified as Hispanic
31.6% Identified as Non-Hispanic
21.8% Unknown



-  **26.5%** White (3,245)
-  **29.1%** Black (3,558)
-  **7.9%** American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (972)

Our Community Partners

-  **32** K-12 Schools  **17** Youth Centers
-  **46** Early Childhood Centers  **7** Stores and Markets
-  **41** Community Centers
-  **14** Food Pantries and Food Banks



Family Learning Night at Walt Whitman Elementary School in Wheeling, Illinois

Making Accommodations

SNAP-ED community worker works with sign interpreter to deliver My Plate lesson on family meals to a hearing impaired mom. Mom was a participant at her local school, Walt Whitman Elementary School, in Wheeling, Illinois for the school's Family Learning Night.

She shared, through the interpreter, that she had made one of the recipes she had learned in a previous SNAP-Ed class for her family. She also had begun using store ads to save money when grocery shopping as a result of the classes.

High School Relationships for Diverse Learners

Regardless of a young person's abilities, education and skill, practice are key to promoting healthy and mutually respectful behavior. People with disabilities are far more vulnerable to sexual abuse than are their peers, especially those with developmental disabilities. Through role-play, modeling and discussion the High School Relationships for Diverse Learners series delivers knowledge and skills to describe and promote healthy relationships, as well as reduce the risk of sexual abuse. This series includes lessons on communication and conflict resolution, decision making, dating abuse and breaking up, the role of technology in healthy relationships, consent, and power in relationships. Through partnerships with Eric Solorio Academy High School and Southside Occupational Academy High School, 64 youth participated in the High School Relationships for Diverse Learners series during the 2017-2018 program year.





I believe that the High School Relationships group provides a safe space for our diverse learners to tackle issues that they would be uncomfortable discussing anywhere else. This is our second year participating and some students that did not get referred this time around came and advocated for their need to be part again this year. They actually look forward to being able to meet together and not feel ashamed about the differing levels of knowledge and experience that they all bring to the group. My students learn from each other and leave feeling empowered.

AYANNA PEDEN, CASE MANAGER
ERIC SOLORIO ACADEMY



FOOD



COMMUNITY



HEALTH



Thank you so much for the cucumber and mint water. I go home and make that all the time now. You helped me save so much money. I hate plain water so I was always buying those little flavor squirt bottles to add flavor to my water and those aren't cheap. I was spending \$7 for each of those. Now, I can just buy a cucumber for 70 cents and throw in some mint. That's all I drink now.

SNAP-ED PROGRAM PARTICIPANT



Serving Youth in Cook County

Wherever you live, 4-H is there. Whoever you are, 4-H is the place where you belong and are part of the club, where you serve in the world where you live, where you act on matters important to you, and where you learn to accomplish the dreams you strive to achieve. Illinois 4-H empowers and prepares youth for success — for today, tomorrow, and a lifetime.

Program Reach



13,232
4-H Participants



188
Adult Volunteers



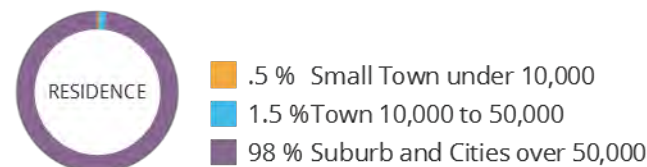
829
4-H Club Members



682
First Year Members



- 38 % Caucasian
- 34 % African American
- 28 % Asian, American Indian, Pacific Islander, 2 or more races, or unknown



Extension Program Coordinator assist youth with “Cloud in a Bottle” experiment

We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT



Youth explore the properties of slime.



Career Exploration

Cook County 4-H youth visited local businesses to explore career opportunities. They met employees, discussed characteristics of different work environments, and discovered high school and college courses needed for success on several career paths. Participants visited Chicago Executive Airport in Wheeling; Jarosch Bakery in Elk Grove Village; and, Daily Herald Paddock Printing Center in Schaumburg. At Chicago Executive airport kids were treated to a presentation about the airport, a tour of the airport runways, mechanical facility, and flight operations area. The youth were also invited back for a ride in an airplane with the Young Eagles Program! Youth at Jarosch Bakery were given a tour by the owner providing the youth with a fascinating look at the bakery operations and a delicious treat at the end of the tour. The youth at the Daily Herald Paddock Printing Center toured the immense printing facility with robots and awesome machinery! They also were able to ask the owner and staff about their jobs, and learn from start to finish what goes into printing the newspaper every day.

Sewing Confident

West suburban Cook County 4-Hers were introduced to “Sew Confident”, a 4-H sewing club. Business owner Darese King led a six-session instructional sewing club at the Westchester office. This was a unique opportunity for students to work under the tutelage of a professional seamstress and work directly on individually assigned sewing machines. Ms. King was able to emphasize that sewing is a life skill as well as a profession. Sewing club members learned basic sewing skills, which included threading hand and sewing machine needles, understanding how to operate a sewing machine, various stitching techniques, and how to correct sewing errors.



Life skills such as cooking, cleaning, organizing, gardening, and even sewing should be added creatively to the educational systems. It will teach children to be responsible along with seeking academic excellence. Being grown-up is measured not only by how smart a person is, but also by how cooperative and responsible they are.
NOORA AHMED ALSUWAIDI



Is it Science? Or Magic!

Is It Science? Or Magic! is a new interactive 4-H series designed to help elementary students explore science. Each workshop uses video, immersive activities, and real-world connections to explain science concepts in a non-intimidating and easy-to-understand way. The goal is to create an active exploration of a topic, where youth are encouraged to ask questions, investigate, and try out their ideas to find solutions to problems they can relate to.

Desired outcomes of the series are for youth to:

- ▶ Develop an interest in science at an early age
- ▶ Reject the notion that science is “too hard,” or a subject that they would be less likely to succeed in
- ▶ Cultivate the science and engineering skills of observation, problem-solving, cooperation, and persistence
- ▶ Exposure to STEM careers

In 2018, we worked with 50 elementary age kids. 90% of our youth state that they have not had science instruction at school.

The afterschool program we work with has requested the series for an additional year; they also want to expand the program to some of their other locations.



Youth work with dry ice to explore the three states of matter

If we bring more women and minority students into science and technology careers, the rate of innovation in America would quadruple.

A JOINT STUDY BY HARVARD UNIVERSITY, MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, AND THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS



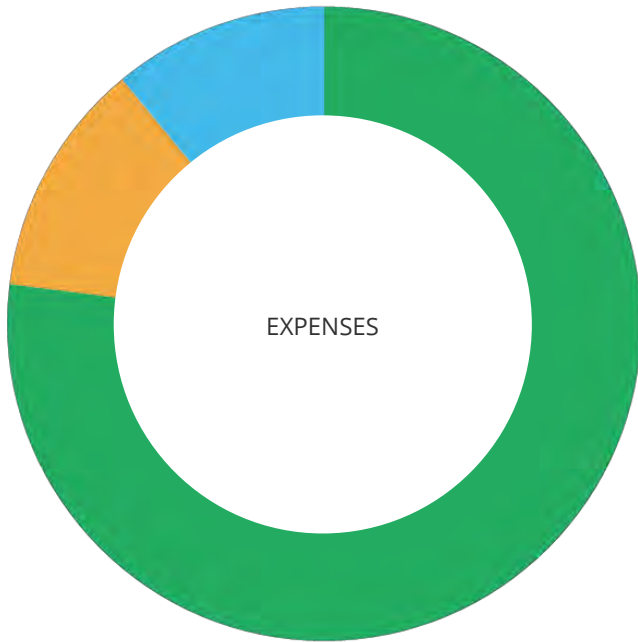
Youth use the “sink or float” experiment to explore the difference between size and density



Youth make a “cloud in a bottle” to recreate cloud and fog formation, and learn about the water cycle



Financial Report



- 77% Wages
- 12% Operating Expenses
- 11% Leases

Planning is bringing the future into the present, so that you can do something about it now.

ALAN LAKEIN



Direct Teaching Statistics from Educators



135,021

Direct participant contacts



4,561

Program sessions



493

Unique program site locations (unduplicated)

Master Gardener / Master Naturalist Statistics



17,597

Volunteer Hours



\$457,877

in Donated Community Services



75

Community Gardens



43

School Gardens





County Extension Director

Willene Buffett

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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). Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the US Department of Agriculture by the Director, Cooperative Extension Service, and University of Illinois.