



U of I Extension Master Gardeners & Master Naturalist volunteers offer environmental education activities at Bald Eagle Days in Rock Island. **7**



Farmers watch a woodchip bioreactor installation at the VerHeecke's farm in Geneseo. It's part of a University of Illinois College of ACES research study on its effects as a nutrient loss strategy. **8**

# 2017 Impact Report

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION  
SERVING HENRY, MERCER,  
ROCK ISLAND, & STARK COUNTIES

**I** ILLINOIS

Extension

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER  
& ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES



Master Naturalist volunteers observed US Fish & Wildlife Biologist conduct fish testing on the Mississippi River in Andalusia as part of their training this fall.



4-H Teen Teachers put in many hours of training so they could help bring science and nutrition education to their communities. **4**



# ILLINOIS Extension

University of Illinois Extension  
serving Henry, Mercer, Rock  
Island & Stark Counties



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## A Note from the Director

Greetings from University of Illinois Extension Unit 7 serving Henry, Mercer, Rock Island and Stark counties.

It has been another busy year as we worked to meet the individual and community programming needs of the region in thematic areas of agriculture and natural resources, community and economic development, nutrition and wellness, and 4-H.

Research has shown that youth who participate in 4-H fare better than their peers in academics. They are involved as leaders in their schools and communities and stay involved into adulthood. With the help of 146 volunteers, we are proud to bring our unit's 4-H program to over 1,400 club members and more than 7,600 program participants.

Our community development program was at the forefront in facilitating the "Mercer County Better Together" initiative to grow community and economic activities. And with a grant from the Community Foundation of the Great River Bend, we helped area nonprofits with disaster preparedness.

We continued to work with University of Illinois tourism students to help communities along the Hennepin Canal build awareness about the value of this local treasure.

New Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists joined us through training series held at the Galva and Milan offices respectively. These dedicated volunteers are trained in the science and art of gardening and the care of our natural resources. Our agriculture in the classroom program introduces youth to the myriad of possibilities of an agriculture career and the impact agriculture makes on our lives and economy.

Innovation aptly describes the new ways our nutrition and wellness programs are reaching people, whether it be through blog posts, specialty workshops, newspaper articles, classroom visits, stations at farmers markets, or working with school lunchrooms to reduce food waste. Our unit is dedicated to improving the health and wellness of our region.

We also recognize and celebrate those who have given time, treasure, and talent to our mission.

We are thankful to our county boards who are the backbone of funding our operations—they keep us strong.

Our 4-H foundations and alumni federations, farm bureaus, local foundations, Home and Community Education associations, and Extension Advisory Council also work hard to support Extension programming through their leadership, annual campaigns, and special fundraisers. The Village of Milan and City of Galva provide us with cost-efficient facilities and building maintenance.

Thank you ALL for an excellent 2017!

Best,  
  
Jenny Garner  
County Director





## Hennepin Hoopla

On August 12, (BISAWPA) Big Island Soil & Water Association, the Village of Milan, and University of Illinois Extension hosted the first ever “Hennepin Hoopla,” a free outdoors event that included family –friendly activities and educational opportunities for people of all ages. Extension staff and volunteers from Community and Economic Development, Nutrition & Wellness, SNAP–Ed, and Horticulture participated.

Focused on the Hennepin Canal Locks 30, 31, and 32 in Milan, the event included river lore and history, activities focused on healthy living and wellness, fishing lessons for children, and educational demonstrations on native fish, plant species, insects, and water quality.

As a precursor to the event, Extension horticulture educator Martha Smith worked with BISAWPA, Rock Island Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Natural Area Guardians to select, prepare, and plant an educational pollinator garden on Big Island, adjacent to the Hennepin Canal at Lock 31 in Milan. They selected 32 varieties of native plants that will provide shelter and food for pollinators and blossom from spring to fall.



Extension Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists and other volunteers helped plant the pollinator garden (above). Visitors check out the garden during the event (below).



University of Illinois Extension SNAP–Ed community worker Taylor Wheatley (standing) shared fitness fun and nutrition news with visitors to the free Hennepin Hoopla event.

## Connecting University Research

The idea for the garden and the Hennepin Hoopla event came from a community survey project conducted by University of Illinois students in 2015. Laura Payne, extension specialist and University of Illinois professor of sports and recreation, led her class in the design and distribution of a community survey in Rock Island and Henry counties regarding resident use and perceptions for the Hennepin Canal Trail and State Park.

A number of the volunteer groups who worked tirelessly to protect and maintain the Hennepin Canal through Rock Island and Henry counties were concerned that few local residents knew about the natural areas located near their communities. Survey results confirmed that this was, indeed, the case. The University of Illinois students met with local stakeholders, designed the survey, and will use the survey results to develop messaging for local stakeholder groups focused on residents, tourists, and government agencies. The students also presented ideas for marketing and messaging the benefits of the Hennepin Canal Parkway to residents. As a result, the “Hennepin Hoopla” had its origins in a class project at the University of Illinois.



To read more about this project, garden, or the Hennepin Hoopla visit [www.bisawpa.org](http://www.bisawpa.org)





4-H teens develop leadership skills as they help lead summer camps for youth.

## 4-H Teen Teachers

Started in 2013 with a grant from the National 4-H Council, the 4-H Teen Teachers program continues to be an excellent way to extend Extension programming in Nutrition & Wellness and Agriculture and Natural Resources. This year the program won the Interdisciplinary Team Excellence award from University of Illinois Extension for its partnership of Extension staff and 4-H teens in these program areas.

There were 67 teens that participated in 4-H Teen Teachers in Henry, Mercer, and Rock Island counties, enabling our unit to reach over 500 youth throughout the summer with sustained educational programs. The partnership between Extension staff and the Teen Teachers is critical to programming success. 4-H educator Diane Baker facilitates training for teens throughout the school year and organizes a more intensive training in early summer when she collaborates with SNAP-Ed educator Brad Cirks, Nutrition and Wellness educator Kristin Bogdonas and SNAP-Ed community workers to train teens on the Illinois Junior Chef curriculum. Together the teens and staff held nutrition camps at 18 locations in Rock Island and Henry counties over the summer where they taught 450 youth. The participants came from a variety of SNAP-Ed eligible communities and represented African-American, Asian, ethnically Hispanic, as well as immigrants and refugees from Central American, Asian, and African countries.



4-H teen teacher Lindy Couch helps lead Illinois Jr. Chefs programs to youth at Kewanee High School this summer. It was one of 18 locations that reached over 450 youth with five weeks of nutrition and wellness programs.

**Unit 7's 4-H Teen Teachers program received the 2017 State Interdisciplinary Team Award for University of Illinois Extension.**

The 4-H Teen Teachers model was also used to plan and implement our Farm-to-Table Summer Camp in Rock Island County. The week-long camp offered in the metro Quad Cities was attended by 80 Rock Island urban youth from underserved populations. 4-H staff worked with the Teen Teachers to prepare them to plan and teach the camp that included sessions on natural resource management, Midwest crop production, livestock production, precision agriculture and engineering, and connecting agriculture to the city. The 4-H Teen Teachers led hands-on activities highlighting the important role agriculture plays in our lives. The 4-H Teen Teachers said the experience helped them learn group dynamics, gain confidence in idea expression, talking and teaching children, and in some instances, choose a career path.

In addition, 4-H and ag literacy program coordinators Teresa Kirwan and Sheryl Solomonson coordinated Farm in the Park events in Aledo in June and Galva in August with over 200 youth and adults attending at each location. (Farm in the Park in Aledo received the *New Horizon Award* at the Farm Bureau Conference in November!) University of Illinois College of ACES intern Haley Haverback organized a farm-to-table educational series that was held at seven community sites in Henry County. Her efforts reached 300 youth with interactive agriculture lessons.

Our coordinated farm-to-table efforts were supported by the Moline Foundation, Tyson Fresh Meats, and Big River Resources.



4-H member Jake Bohnsack shares information on cattle with Rock Island County youth during the farm-to-table camp this summer.



Extension programs impact the community in a myriad of ways. Here are two examples:

## 4-H Feeding & Growing Communities

**I've made more of an impact tackling hunger in my area than I ever thought I could because of the overwhelming support and mentorship from my 4-H leader, staff, and foundation board. I'm so grateful to 4-H for supporting my efforts. I have learned priceless skills such as: communication, time management, grant writing, budgeting, delegating, organizational skills, responsibility, and most importantly, confidence.**

**CLARE VANSPEYBROECK,  
4-H HUNGER AMBASSADOR**



4-H Teen Hunger Ambassador Clare VanSpeybroeck organized the 2017 Food Packaging event that supplied 40,000 Illini Fighting Hunger meals to the community through the RiverBend Foodbank.

Rock Island County 4-H Teen Hunger Ambassadors are celebrating their fifth year as a 4-H club in the Illinois Quad Cities with 25 active club members. The impact of club members this year:



**300**

People fed at 10 monthly meals



**1,000**

Snack sacks distributed to the needy



**40,000**

Meals packaged at the event organized by 4-H Teen Hunger Ambassador Clare VanSpeybroeck

## Disaster Preparedness Planning

Russell Medley, Unit 7 Community and Economic Development (CED) Educator, works with communities and organizations to help them prepare for disasters, both natural disasters (weather, fire, flood, earthquake, etc.) and manmade disasters (chemical spills, food safety, power outages, etc.). The national Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) works with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help communities plan their response to disasters and mitigate the effects on individuals, organizations, and businesses. The objectives of this work include building working relationships with local and state emergency management networks, providing educational programs on disaster preparation and mitigation, defining appropriate roles during disasters, and planning collaborative responses in recovery efforts.

In 2016, Russell teamed up with Carrie McKillip, CED educator from Henderson, Knox, Warren and McDonough counties to teach disaster preparedness planning for nonprofit organizations in Rock Island County and Scott County, Iowa, with funding from the Community Foundation of the Great River Bend (CFGRB). Of the 22 nonprofit organizations which attended the workshops, 20 completed technical assistance visits with University of Illinois Extension staff, 15 completed disaster preparedness plans for their organizations, and 12 applied for and were awarded grants totaling more than \$40,000. The initiative was featured at the 2017 national Extension Disaster Education Network Conference, which was held in Moline in September.



The national Extension Disaster Education Network Conference in Moline in September featured Russell Medley and Carrie McKillip, University of Illinois Extension educators; Kelly Thompson, vice president of grantmaking at CFGRB; and Colleen Sibthorp, director of finance and membership at WVIK Public Radio Station. Colleen shared her experience as a participant in the disaster preparedness planning.





## Community Planning

University of Illinois Extension Community and Economic Development Educator Russell Medley works with communities and organizations to develop and implement surveys, conduct focus groups, facilitate community planning, and support small business development. Russell's projects in 2017 include:

### VILLAGE OF ALPHA COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

In 2016, the Village of Alpha surveyed residents to solicit ideas for projects, areas for improvement, and community priorities. With those results, Russell worked with community volunteers to define a course of action. From March to June 2017, Russell facilitated a community planning process, working with a team of 36 volunteers to create the "Village of Alpha Community Strategic Action Plan." The plan focused on business development, new events and activities for residents, and increasing community involvement in village activities.

The plan was approved by the village board in July. Since its approval, community action teams have tackled the strategies laid out in the plan. Three new businesses have opened or announced plans to open in the community, two existing businesses have been purchased by new owners, the community has expanded its festivals and events to attract new visitors, and the village has developed a new, user-friendly website. University of Illinois Extension is proud to be part of Alpha's development.



Tena Anseeuw and her mother, Edna Mahalovich, worked with University of Illinois Extension on the Alpha Community Action Plan.



University of Illinois Extension Community and Economic Development educator Russell Medley takes notes during one of the community forums for Mercer County Better Together.

### MERCER COUNTY: BETTER TOGETHER

Over the past two years, Russell has worked with the Community Foundation of the Great River Bend, Looser Flake Charitable Foundation, Mercer Foundation for Health, and Mercer County YMCA to implement a countywide planning process in Mercer County. In 2016, the groups formed "Mercer County Better Together" and hired project coordinator Kyle McEwen. Francesca Sallinger, graduate student in urban and regional planning at the University of Illinois, provided technical support to the project under Russell's direction.

In 2017, Russell worked with Kyle to host 11 community forums across the county, ultimately connecting with nearly 800 Mercer County residents. Community volunteers were involved in facilitating meetings, fundraising, marketing, data analysis, and collecting stories from residents about their history in Mercer County. They also connected with residents through online surveys, a Facebook page, and a new website. As a result of these efforts, Mercer County will develop a countywide strategic plan that will include input and actionable strategies that are the result of Mercer County residents working collaboratively. Mercer County is better together!



## Helping Others Learn to Grow: Master Gardener & Master Naturalist Volunteers

University of Illinois Extension manages the Master Gardener and Master Naturalists programs which build a base of knowledgeable and committed volunteers who assist their communities on educational projects related to horticulture and natural resources. In 2017, our unit trained an additional eight new Master Gardeners who are already offering their assistance on a variety of horticulture projects.

In 2017 we also offered a Master Naturalist training where 10 students spent their fall studying botany, environmental ethics, archeology, climate, forestry, geology, prairies, mammals, birds, reptiles, insects, and aquatics in both classroom and field work lessons, graduating in October – ready to share their time and talents in support of natural resources programs.

## MERCER COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS WIN STATE TEAM AWARD

Master Gardeners in Mercer County earned the 2017 Illinois State Master Gardener Teamwork Award for their work to transform a perennial garden they maintained at the fairgrounds in Aledo into an outdoor pollinator classroom. Utilizing a grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Foundation, they installed genus-specific perennial pollinator plants so visitors could learn about various varieties and cultivars within a genus. The garden also is a teaching tool for learning about pollinators and what is needed for both butterfly caterpillars and adults. Master Gardener volunteers labeled the plants and installed a garden mailbox that holds garden maps and plant lists for self-guided tours. The garden has been used for horticulture outreach and Ag in the Classroom programs.



Apollo Elementary students visit to garden as part of Mercer County Extension's Ag in the Classroom pollinator lessons.

They truly love the time that we spend with them teaching and working in their garden.

**JULIA MARTIN, MASTER GARDENER,  
MonARC PROJECT CHAIR**



Extension MonARC garden volunteers include: Chair Julia Martin, Marion Lardner, Judy Hartley, Deb O'Brien, Linda Clewell, Deb Durnal-Corso

## MASTER GARDENERS AND MASTER NATURALISTS DEVELOP A MonARC GARDEN & EDUCATION PROGRAM

Master Gardener and Master Naturalist volunteers worked with Arc of the Quad Cities on a vegetable gardening project to help empower people with disabilities and provide them with fresh produce. They created an ongoing weekly program during the 2017 growing season, teaching lessons on environmental topics including bees, insects, and composting. They also worked with Arc clients to install raised bed gardens that were planted with edible and ornamental plants. The vulnerable-audience clients enjoyed learning about environmental topics and growing healthy food that supplemented their daily diet. Many of the clients reside in group homes, and this addition of fresh food was a luxury for them and the other residents who used the food they grew for their meals.

## Master Gardener & Naturalist by the numbers:



**134**

Active Volunteers



**6,885**

Volunteer Hours



**1,083**

Continuing Education Credit Hours





A woodchip bioreactor on a Henry County farm will part of a University of Illinois study on this nutrient loss strategy.

## Nutrient Loss Pilot Program

The excitement was palpable at Todd VerHeecke's farm in Geneseo on September 27 as farmers, agriculture industry representatives, TV and radio news, and even a French media station gathered to see a woodchip bioreactor being installed. The installation was part of a joint effort across Illinois agriculture to reduce nutrient loss in farm fields, and for good reason.

High levels of nitrogen and phosphorous runoff from Illinois farm fields makes its way into the Mississippi River basin and has been a significant contributor to the Gulf of Mexico dead zone, an area low in dissolved oxygen. VerHeecke is among those farmers who wants to protect our natural resources and water quality. "I wanted to leave my farm better than I found it for future generations," says VerHeecke. His fields feed into the Mississippi basin via the Green and Rock Rivers.

The woodchip bioreactor at the VerHeecke farm will be part of a study conducted by Laura Christianson, assistant professor of water quality at the University of Illinois Department of Crop Sciences. Research assistants Hannah Dougherty and Jack Mrozek will visit the site about once each month to conduct tests on the water quality, monitoring the water's flow rate and nitrate concentration. These water samples will be analyzed for nitrate concentration in a laboratory on campus.

Ivan Dozier, assistant state conservationist with the Illinois Natural Resources Conservation Service said, "With partnerships like these and the farmers who are willing to make the changes, we can have an impact on reducing nutrient losses, improving our environment and water quality for everyone."



U of I College of ACES researchers Hannah Dougherty, left, and Jack Mrozek will monitor the water quality of the woodchip bioreactor.



Extension's new Juntos 4-H grant-funded program will engage Latino youth and families in Moline's Floreciente neighborhood to focus on college and career readiness.

## Pilot Program: College & Career Readiness for Latino Youth

University of Illinois Extension will focus a new program on college and career readiness preparation for Latino students in the Floreciente neighborhood in Moline. Using a model developed by North Carolina State University, it brings together cohorts of eighth-grade students to support each other through high school. This program addresses the fact that Latino youth are at greatest risk for dropping out of school between ninth and tenth grades.

North Carolina State University developed Juntos 4-H ("together" in Spanish) in 2007 as a way to empower Latino students and their parents with knowledge, skills, and resources to encourage families to work together as they pursue the path to high school graduation and higher education. Success from their program inspired our Extension unit to apply for funding to do a similar pilot program. We received a grant in 2017 from Global Communities whose mission is to create long-lasting, positive and community-led change that improves the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable people across the globe. Juntos 4-H will help Latino youth and families:

- › Find a path to academic success in middle school and high school, viewing high school graduation and higher education as attainable goals
- › Heighten family awareness of the value of school success, high school graduation and setting goals for higher education
- › Improve positive communication between youth, parents, and school staff
- › Guide youth and parents to understand graduation requirements in the U.S. school system
- › Heighten family awareness of financing college expenses in the U.S.
- › Increase youth awareness of the higher education opportunities and application process

University of Illinois Extension is partnering with the Boys and Girls Club of the Mississippi Valley on this pilot project, and has hired Monse Magallon to coordinate the program. "We are thankful to Global Communities for their support," said Jenny Garner. "Together we can help address this larger community issue of college and career readiness in the growing Hispanic population, which also has significantly higher drop-out rates than other minority students."







## Health & Wellness

University of Illinois Extension's nutrition and wellness programs cover a broad range of topics to help our community take charge of their health. They include nutrition and food preparation, physical activity and healthy lifestyles, food security, food safety, chronic disease prevention and management, and health literacy. Here are the 2017 programs by nutrition and wellness educator Kristin Bogdonas:

### Start the Week off Right Health Column in QC Times

- › *Mindful Eating, A Conscious Approach to Health*
- › *Healthy Habits Start with Your Inner Dialogue*
- › *Dancing Does a Body Good*
- › *How to Spot a Fad Diet in 30 Seconds or Less*
- › *Tips for Better Sleep Month*
- › *Energy Drinks, Too Much of a Good Thing?*
- › *Herbs: From Garden to Kitchen*
- › *Fruits & Veggies- More Matters Month*
- › *Celebrate Pumpkin Month*
- › *Winter Self-Care*



Participants learned about food preservation during a hands-on workshop canning raspberry Jam in Aledo with Kristin Bogdonas. (4th from the right)

### Food Preservation Programs in 2017

- › *The Art of Fermentation* for Nursery School
- › *The Art of Fermentation* for the Spring DIY day at the Milan Extension Office
- › Canning, Freezing, Drying lesson at the Mercer County Health Department
- › Canning, Freezing, Drying lesson at the Orion Library and Moline's Riverside Park
- › Sauerkraut workshop at the German American Heritage Center
- › Food Preservation series for Arrowhead Ranch
- › Farm in the Park- Galva- Food Preservation Display, information, recipes and samples
- › Canning and Raspberry Jam workshop in Aledo

### Chronic Disease Prevention/Management Programs

- › Meals for a Healthy Heart
- › I on Diabetes

## Nutrition & Wellness Programs By the Numbers:



**1,900**

People reached in direct programs including 1,700 adults and 400 youth



**60,000**

People reached every 5 weeks with health column in Quad City Times



**115,000**

People reached with Educator health blog, "Turnip the Beat!"

## HEALTHY AGING SUMMIT, MAY 12 IN MOLINE

Family and consumer science educators have been coordinating Healthy Aging Summits all over the state, covering topics related to family life, nutrition & wellness and consumer economics. Our unit held one on May 12 in Moline where participants learned about Eating Well as We Age, Filling Your Bucket List, Maintaining Memory and Cognitive Health, and New Research in Osteoporosis.



## MINDFUL EATING PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS

Mindful eating is all about bringing "attention and intention" to our food choices and eating behaviors. Participants get practice reconnecting with their senses and learn valuable skills to become more aware of the choices they make and how it impacts their long-term health and well-being. Kristin took programs out to many local groups including: Health Jam at Geneseo and Kewanee schools, Ready to Learn Conference for childcare providers, and the Illinois Family and Consumers Sciences Teacher's Association Conference. Surveys taken after each class show participants are more likely to be mindful as they:

- › Slow down and enjoy food more
- › Monitor portion size
- › Incorporate their senses while eating
- › Put more healthy food out for snacking
- › Eat at a table instead of in front of a TV
- › Watch sugar intake
- › Pay more attention to hunger cues and stop eating when satisfied instead of stuffed



## Smarter Lunchrooms—Making Illinois Schools Healthier, One Success at a Time

### SHERRARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS TRAY STUDY

Illinois Extension nutrition and wellness educator Kristin Bogdonas conducted a tray waste study at Sherrard Elementary School. It sparked interest to divert that waste from the landfill within the District. A training was held on August 9th where reduction strategies were proposed. Share Tables are now being implemented at all schools in the district. At K-4 buildings, food service staff collect packaged items that have not been opened by the students and left on the tray. Those items are added to the "Nourish to Flourish" bags that go home with students on weekends. At the Jr/Sr high, items are given to the counselor and those go home with students in the "Nourish to Flourish" bags as well. Time-sensitive produce go home with students in a separate bag during the week. Sherrard Jr/Sr High School is looking to expand the program and will hopefully have students promoting the "sharing" table. Matherville Intermediate is in the planning process and will be starting their share table/food rescue program in the near future. At this time all schools are successfully getting the excess food to families in need with no leftovers!



Sherrard students are filling the Nourish to Flourish bags — a plan devised from the Smarter Lunchrooms as a way to reduce waste and help students who face food insecurity in the district.



### 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



**12,075**

Total SNAP-Ed Participants



**4,671 (39%)**  
Adults



**7,404 (61%)**  
Youth



**1,666 (14%)**

Participants Who Identified as Hispanic

#### RACE OF PARTICIPANTS

- 67% White (8,141)
- 27% Black (3,279)
- 5% American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (655)

#### Our Partners



**32**  
K-12 Schools



**6**  
Stores or Markets



**14**  
Youth Centers



**42**  
Community Centers



**31**  
Early Childhood Centers



**18**  
Food Pantries and Food Banks





4-H Teen Teachers help with Ag in the Classroom career explorations (left). Mercer County kids enjoy their Ag in the Classroom lessons (right).

## Ag in the Classroom

University of Illinois Extension partners with the Mercer and Rock Island County farm bureaus and the Mercer County Soil & Water Conservation District to bring agriculture outreach to schools, teachers and the community. In 2017, Ag in the Classroom coordinators Teresa Kirwan (Mercer) and Sheryl Solomonson (Rock Island) brought programs to more than 13,700 students in grades K-12 on topics such as plants and seeds, soils, water, careers, corn, soybeans, wheat, animal nutrition, and agricultural production.

The program also reached 1,393 educators in the county's public schools. In addition, an estimated 1,716 adults learned about agriculture through community events. Here are 2017 Ag in the Classroom highlights:

- › Summer Ag Institute teacher trainings— curriculum, trainings, and field trips for teachers
- › Community events: John Deere Learn & Play Day; Quad City River Bandits Celebrate Ag Night; summer library programs; Mercer County YMCA Healthy Kids Day
- › Farm in the Park in Aledo, which won the New Horizon Award at the Farm Bureau Conference
- › Embryology lessons, incubators and eggs delivered to area grade schools
- › Science club afterschool programs in Mercer County and lessons at YMCA summer camps
- › AgXPerience: Nearly 1,000 2nd and 3rd grade students take field trips to Rock Island County fairgrounds and John Deere Commons for ag lessons
- › Seasonal horticulture outreach to schools in partnership with Master Gardeners on soybeans, corn, Earth Day, May Day and others
- › Career explorations at area schools and presentations with FFA classes
- › Farm-to-Table camps with 4-H Teen Teachers
- › Flat Aggie contests at Mercer County grade schools
- › Safety day camps at Mercer County YMCA summer camp and intermediate and elementary schools
- › Mercer County traveling farm day exhibit delivered to schools, Farm in the Park, YMCA summer camp, preschools and ACE camp



Kaley Rouse with her mom, Tami Rouse.

## 4-H Member Recognition

The past year in 4-H has been a story of achievement at the state level. Here are some highlights:

**Kaley Rouse, an 11-year 4-H member in the Stark County Century Clovers won three 4-H state awards October 7.** The Illinois 4-H Key Award, which emphasizes community service and mentorship, the Leadership, Citizenship, Professionalism (LCP) Award, and the Legacy of Leadership \$1,000 Scholarship Award.

**4-H members take state awards in dog obedience.** Livia Dodd of the Red Ranger's 4-H Club received first place in the junior division of dog obedience. Hannah Close of the Rural Go Getters took second place in junior showmanship division at the State 4-H Dog Obedience Competitions in August.

## STATE 4-H CLUBS SERVICE AWARDS

### Mercer County Hamlet Handy Helpers

Led by Brenda Close, they helped with a Thanksgiving dinner and community meals, made tie blankets for the Crisis Center, made Christmas and Easter Baskets for the needy, held food drives, and put out flags on Veterans' graves for Memorial Day.

### Mercer County Joy-Eliza Ag

Led by Bill and Stacey Boruff, club members organized the lunch stand for the Eliza Community Center benefit, put together care packages for veterans, hosted a bake sale for the animal shelter, and several other community service projects.

### Mercer County Saddle Teens 4-H

Led by Joyce Smith, club members focused on understanding the needs of food pantries and providing them with resources. The teens made 80 freezer meals for distribution to the needy, assisted the food pantry with packaging and distribution, served a soup supper for the community, as well as other food insecurity assistance.

### Rock Island County Hayburners

Led by Pam Berenger, club members helped organize two horse shows to collect food for the RiverBend Foodbank. "Ride for Hunger" and "Hooves for Paws" raised over \$4,000 for the Rock Island animal control, plus several other service projects.





4-H Members build their citizenship, leadership and life-skills and have FUN and make friends while doing it!

## 4-H Positive Youth Development

4-H is the largest out of school program in the United States. Research has shown that youth who participate in 4-H fare better than their peers in academics. 4-H youth are also more likely to donate money or time to a charitable cause and to take time out of their day to help the sick, poor, or others in need. 4-H participants are looked up to as role models by other youth. They are involved as leaders in their schools and communities and stay involved into their adulthood. University of Illinois Extension is proud to organize this program for Henry, Mercer, Rock Island and Stark counties.

4-H members in our unit are engaged not only in their community clubs but several also serve on state 4-H advisory committees to help plan events for 4-H members across the state. They are involved in Speaking for Illinois 4-H, where they go to Springfield to meet with state legislators and share their 4-H experiences and the impact the program has on their lives. Our 4-H members share their time and talent to give back to their communities—serving free meals, helping with environmental projects and working with senior citizens. 4-H citizen scientists cleared debris and gathered macroinvertebrates from the Edwards River. 4-H Teen Teachers reached hundreds of urban and rural children through cooking schools and a farm-to-table initiative that helped the kids understand that produce comes from the land, not the grocery store. Still more youth took part in an embryology class series, learned about fishing and improved their equestrian skills in 4-H special interest clubs. And through it all, leadership and public speaking skills were being honed.



4-H citizen scientists participate in community service, developing new skills along the way.

This past year across the four counties 4-H youth participated in archery, pistol, and shotgun competitions. Rock Island County 4-H member Brent Alman took first place in shotgun trapshoot at 4-H Shooting Sports Nationals! 4-H club members worked hard on the general projects and livestock for their county fairs, with hundreds of projects advancing to state 4-H competitions—including Livia Dodd of Henry County 4-H who placed first in the junior showmanship division.

We know that behind the success of our 4-H youth stands a strong adult leader. They give countless volunteer hours to oversee club meetings, work with our staff to ensure policies and procedures are followed properly, pick-up supplies for an activity, purchase and donate supplies for their clubs, organize 4-H projects at the county fairs, use their expertise for SPIN (special interest clubs), and many more necessary tasks. Our program coordinators Jennifer Peterson and Tracy Fowler-Pestle and 4-H Educator Diane Baker have done an outstanding job organizing the program with the help of our tireless 4-H volunteers to ensure this valuable program continues to make a big impact on so many youth in our communities.



Through their 4-H projects, club members get to explore topics that interest them and learn by doing.

**842** Community Club Members  
**190** Military 4-H Members  
**414** Special Interest Club Members  
**146** Volunteers  
**7,694** Youth participated in 4-H educational programs, camps, etc.







## 2017 Program Highlights



University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners provide horticulture resources at community events, like the Rhubarb Festival on June 2 and 3, 2017 in Aledo.



Members from Mercer County 4-H place flags on veterans' graves at the Aledo Cemetery for Memorial Day.



Stark County 4-H Member Lucas Wisnefski took third place overall at the Master Showmanship Contest at the Illinois State Fair, pictured here with Illinois Farm Bureau President Richard Guebert, Jr.



4-H Members Kylie Foster and Jackson Ruud teamed up for the "Pairs Pleasure" class at the Ride for Hunger charity show Oct. 7. Their Hayburners 4-H Club raised over \$600 and 75 pounds of non-perishable food items for the River Bend Food Bank. The project helped earn them a State of Illinois 4-H Community Service Award.



On April 1, Rock Island County 4-H families organized a community event, "Passport to Adventure," to celebrate the food and culture of native countries of several 4-H members including Burma, Congo, Libya, Turkey, Mexico, and American soulfood.

University of Illinois Department of Crop Sciences keeps Illinois farmers apprised of the latest research. Here they share research on incorporating berry and nut-bearing shrubs and trees in alley cropping system with hay or other row crops as an option to add more profits to land use.



Extension educator Martha Smith, here with U.S. senators Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth, was among the Extension professionals who visited with legislators in Washington D.C. at the Public Issues Leadership Development Conference April 2-5, 2017. Russell Medley also represented our unit at PILD.



Extension SNAP-Ed staff share nutrition information at agencies across our unit. Here, SNAP-Ed community workers Gale Vyncke and Brent McRae share information at a mobile food pantry in East Moline.



University of Illinois College of ACES Dean Kimberly Kidwell visited our unit on December 5 as part of her goal to visit all 27 Extension units across the state. She is pictured here talking to stakeholders during a 4-H Teen Teachers program at Deere-Wiman in Moline.

4-H offers club members many opportunities to grow in their knowledge of livestock production like hosting the Youth Livestock Conference in Champaign in March 2017. Pictured at the event are two of our unit's 4-H members, Courtney Wiedenmann and Hunter Johnson.



## UNIT 7 4-H MEMBERS SERVE ON STATE TEAMS

Several of our unit's 4-H members have stepped up to leadership by serving on these state committees:

- Unit 7 Illinois Teen Conference members: Lindy Couch (Henry County), Tori Speer (Mercer County), Paw Kaw Ku and Ashlie Ledbetter (Rock Island County), and Kaley Rouse (Stark County).
- 2017 Illini Summer Academies at University of Illinois Jazmine Hall and Mykeisha Wells (Rock Island County).
- Illinois 4-H Youth Leadership team: Shelby Ledbetter, Josh Cole-Brodnax, and Paw Kaw Ku (Rock Island County).



Rock Island County teens, Man Lun, Sarah Anderson, and Asrielle Allen represented Illinois 4-H at the National 4-H Healthy Living Summit in Washington D.C.



Martha Smith, horticulture educator, presents at the 2017 Mid-Winter Horticulture workshop in Geneseo.

## EXTENDING HORTICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES EDUCATION

University of Illinois Extension horticulture educator Martha Smith provided a wide range of programs for Illinois gardeners, which included presentations at events like our annual Nursery School: Lessons in Gardening Symposium, Mid-Winter Horticulture Workshop, the Spring Series, and Master Gardener and Master Naturalist trainings both here and at other Extension units. She also spearheaded the Four Seasons of Gardening Webinars that are offered across the state and provided training and resources on the management of emerald ash borer (EAB) including her award-winning project of creating EAB education exhibit installations at Illinois rest stops.



Teens at High Roads Alternative School in Aledo planned a healthy afternoon at the Aledo Senior Center and set up and played a beach ball volleyball game with them.

## TEEN AMBASSADORS ENGAGE IN HEALTHY LIVING

University of Illinois Extension SNAP-Ed educator Brad Cirks engaged youth in Henry, Mercer and Rock Island counties as Teen Ambassadors. The goal was to increase student, teacher, and community awareness of health policy systems, or environmental changes that can take place in a school or community setting.

During several weekly sessions, Brad guided the teens through steps to help them collaborate on a community project. Teens at High Roads Alternative School in Aledo planned a healthy afternoon at the Aledo Senior Center. The teens researched ingredients for healthy smoothies they made for residents. They also set up and played a beach ball volleyball game with them. The teens couldn't believe how much the seniors enjoyed the game, especially those who used to play volleyball. Teens at Excel Alternative School in Atkinson planned a fun day for kids in the second and third grade program at Excel. They researched and prepared a taste testing of sunburst tomatoes, pears, jicama, and grapefruit. They also planned fun activities in the gym where they had kids play a game of "pick up your room," a group tic-tac-toe game, and beanbag activities. Teens at Ridgewood School in Rock Island researched and put together a weekly nutritional information board located outside of the school lunch cafeteria. Each week they updated the board to promote a target food or fruit and vegetable.

These teens are putting their knowledge to work impacting the health of the audiences they served.





## Financial Information

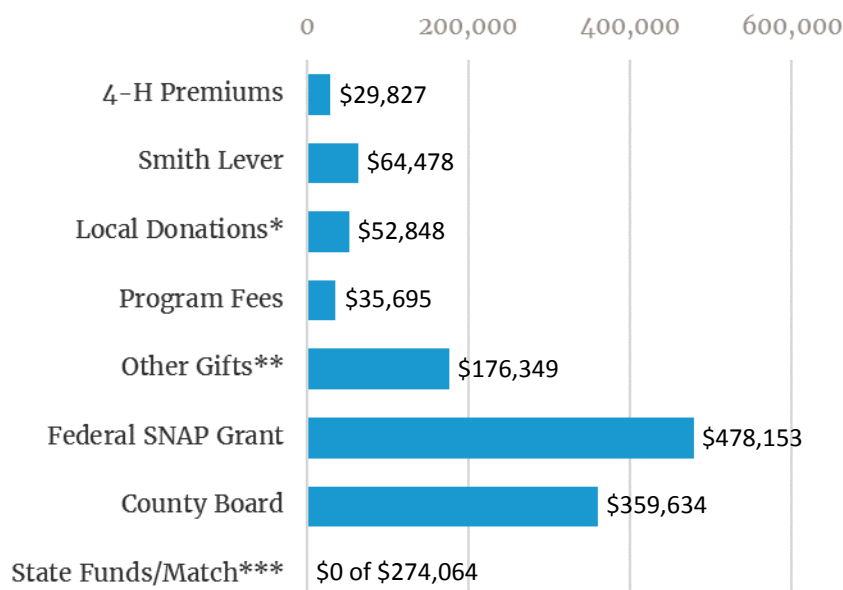
University of Illinois Extension is a three-way funding partnership among the State of Illinois, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the county boards in Henry, Mercer, Rock Island, and Stark. Our SNAP-Ed programs are funded by a federal grant from the USDA.

These partnerships bring hundreds of thousands of programming dollars into our four counties, matching local contributions with state, national, and federal support.

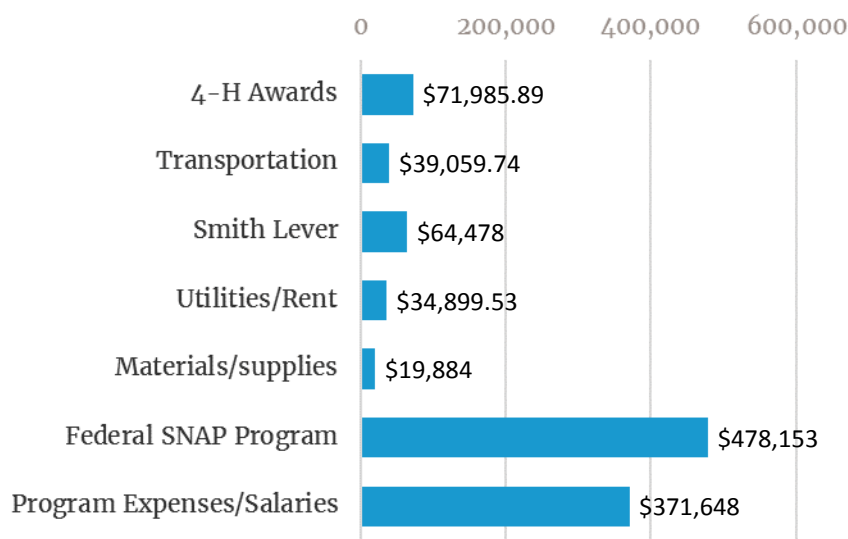
Extension leverages funding through county boards, matching it with dollars from the State of Illinois. However, once again, we did not receive the state match of \$274,064 due to the budget impasse.

Extension received \$44,578 in national, state, and local grants between June 2016 and July 2017 to support programs in Henry, Mercer, Rock Island and Stark counties.

### 2017 Income



### 2017 Expenses



#### Grants Included:

- \$7,503, U.S. Dept. of Defense, 4-H Military Partnership
- \$7,500, IL State Board of Education, 4-H programs
- \$5,500, Wal-Mart, 4-H Youth Voices
- \$5,000, Mel McKay Charitable Trust for horticulture projects
- \$5,000, Amy Helpenstell Foundation for core operating support
- \$4,195, IL 4-H Foundation, 4-H programs support
- \$2,500, National 4-H Council, Youth Healthy Living
- \$2,000, Brandt Foundation, farm-to-table
- \$1,980, Community Foundation of the Great River Bend for classroom equipment
- \$1,500, Brandt Foundation, 4-H Fighting Hunger
- \$800, Rock Island Arsenal Welcome Club for 4-H military programs
- \$500, Moline Foundation for 4-H farm-to-table programs
- \$400, from YSA Youth Changing the World for 4-H food packaging
- \$200, National Rifle Association for 4-H archery equipment

\*Local donations include 4-H Federations and Foundations, HCE, Farm Bureau and Misc. General Donations

\*\*Other gifts include GRF funds and Youth Development (IDOA), other Farm Bureau and corporate gifts.

\*\*\*We did not receive the designated state matching funds due to budget impasse.

## STAFF

### COUNTY DIRECTOR

Jenny Garner

### EDUCATORS

Diane Baker, 4-H Metro & Military

Kristin Bogdonas, Nutrition & Wellness

Brad Cirks, SNAP-Ed

Russell Medley, Community & Economic Development

Martha Smith, Horticulture

### PROGRAM COORDINATORS

Becky Buckrop, Marketing & Development

Tracy Fowler-Pestle, 4-H

Teresa Kirwan, Ag Literacy & 4-H

Tracy Jo Mulliken, Horticulture & Agriculture

Jennifer Peterson, 4-H

Sheryl Solomonson, Ag Literacy & 4-H

### COMMUNITY WORKERS

Donna Buehler (Minear), SNAP-Ed

Darcy Eggiman, SNAP-Ed

Brent McRae, SNAP-Ed

Gale Vyncke, SNAP-Ed

Tayler Wheatley, SNAP-Ed

### EXTRA HELP

Monse Magallon, Juntos 4-H

### OFFICE SUPPORT

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~ Local Extension Councils Cooperating

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

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