

2016 Impact Report

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION SERVING GRUNDY, KANKAKEE & WILL COUNTIES







Extending Knowledge, Changing Lives

Extension provides practical education you can trust to help people, businesses and communities solve problems, develop skills and build a better future.

Grundy County

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A Note from the County Director

University of Illinois Extension is about learning. The past year proved to be a successful year in providing research-based programs in Grundy, Kankakee and Will Counties. Educators had nearly 18,000 direct teaching contacts in 2016 in the broad areas of energy and environmental stewardship; food safety and security; economic development and workforce preparedness; family health, financial security and wellness; and youth development.

The staff does an outstanding job of identifying, developing and implementing programs that address issues in our communities. We recognize that in addition to the numbers our staff is teaching, our hundreds of volunteers help expand our reach so much further in sharing what they learned with their clubs and communities.

In this report you will find a few of the programming highlights of the year. We appreciate your continued support of Extension. As always, if you have any comments or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Beth LaPlante

County Extension Director laplante@illinois.edu





Financial Report

University of Illinois Extension provides research-based educational programs and information enabling individuals to make practical decisions that improve the quality of their lives: "Extending Knowledge, Changing Lives". Extension is a three-way partnership among the State of Illinois, the United State Department of Agriculture and our counties in terms of both programming and funding.

Extension Council

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33%	Reserve Account*
25%	County Board
18%	Federal Funds**
13%	University of Illinois
11%	Local Sources

* Did not receive FY16 State of Illinois matching funds. Used emergency reserves to cover lost revenue.

** Federal Funds include Illinois Nutrition Education Program grant monies.



Environmental Programs

Youth in Lucky Green 4–H Club have participated in the River Watch program for many years and have monitored the Aux Sable Creek. This data is important in determining the water quality of the stream, animal and plant life, pollutants which might be in the water, and more. The data they collect is used by scientists throughout the country. The Grundy County 4–H program has 11 youth trained as Citizen Scientists through the Illinois State Survey program.

Grundy County had several youth attend a training on Aquatic Mussels and their significance as an indicator species of water quality. This culminated in a workshop for the Homes Cool Kids 4–H Club. Members actively searched a creek and reported the data to the River Watch program.

Participation



Latino Pilot Program

The Latino Pilot program seeks to expand 4-H opportunities for Latino youth in Grundy County. Funding for this program comes from a special grant from the State 4-H Office for rural counties. The work is to develop partnerships and programming with organizations and groups with Latinos in the community with a goal to engage families in 4-H activities and ultimately develop community clubs. JUNTOS, an experiential program that provides Latino youth and their families with the knowledge and resources to equip them to be successful students and pursue postsecondary education is also planned for the county.

3,610 youth served through the following programs:

- Community Clubs
- Conservation Day
- In-School Programs
- ▶ Ag in the Classroom
- Government Day

Kankakee County 4-H





Kankakee County 4-H

Kankakee County 4–H Federation coordinated Camp Shaw–Waw–Nas–See 4–H Fun Day on June 5, 2016. 4–H members were encouraged to bring a friend to join in the fun and to join 4–H! Over 120 enjoyed a day filled with activities: lunch, zip–lining, waterfront, team building, campfire and snacks. Illinois 4–H Foundation Northeast Illinois 4–H Club Grant and Kankakee County 4–H Federation funded the event.

After months of 4–H project work, a summer of judging events and the week of the county fair, Kankakee County 4–H Clubs take on some spirited competition provided by the



Ag Olympics at the Kankakee County Fair

Kankakee County Farm Bureau Young Farmers. Over 80 members went to the State Fair to exhibit their projects.

The culminating event of the 4–H year is the annual 4–H Recognition Night. The county celebrated the accomplishments of over 200 youth in areas ranging from clothing exhibits to livestock judging teams as well as many adults who helped make the year a success.

Participation



2,111 youth served through the following programs:

- Community Clubs
- In-School Programs
- Camp Shaw-Waw-Nass-See

Will County 4-H

Speaking for Illinois 4-H

Three Will County 4-H youth traveled to Springfield to speak with elected officials. In order to be a member of the SFI4-H, the youth must attend an intensive 1/2 day training where they learn how to explain 4-H, do presentations, speak with elected officials, and more. After completing the training, the youth are eligible to speak to elected officials, stakeholders, and sponsors throughout Illinois about the 4-H program. Because 4-H members learn by doing, the public officials hear a variety of stories about how 4-H has impacted the youth. SFI4-H youth also visited with local officials and sponsors at the annual Will County 4-H Foundation pork chop dinner. Because of these experiences, many SFI4-H participants have stated that they are more interested in our legislative system.





Amazing Race

The Amazing Race was comprised of 8 leadership and teambuilding style games, which challenged the participants to think creatively. solve problems and work together. The Plank Race challenged the youth to walk together as a team requiring good communication skills! Medals were awarded to the qualifying teams at the end of the event. The Race was a fun way to learn the importance of teamwork and to provide an opportunity to introduce a friend to 4-H. Support for this event was provided by the Illinois 4-H Foundation Northeast Illinois 4-H Club Grant.

Participation



3,211 youth served through the following programs:

- Community Clubs
- In-School Programs
- Embryology

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Will County 4-H Metro



Embryology



The wonder and science of nature are observed thousands of times each year in Will County classrooms as teachers participate in the University of Illinois Extension STEM Incubation and Embryology Project. Any person, who has ever been a student that participated in our embryology program, can vividly recall the experience long into adulthood.

Through Extension, teachers can provide a unique opportunity to bring this experiential, hands-on program to their students each year. Participating teachers receive training from the University of Illinois Extension Campus Poultry Specialist. Our Incubation and Embryology program is highly adaptable to a wide range of grade levels and can be included in several curriculum areas. Not only does this project provide education on the biology of chicken reproduction and embryonic development, but also the role chickens and eggs have in the food system, how food gets from the farm to the table and respect for animal life. Embryology Program for my second graders has provided them with the knowledge required to understand life cycles, biology and living things in a most interactive and engaging way. The students also learn life skills by working together, recording results, and discussing outcomes. Their excitement is contagious! I began this unit of study nearly 30 years ago, and find myself more excited each year as I witness enthusiastic and handson learning occurring in my classroom. Truly, this is what education is all about!

WILL COUNTY SECOND GRADE TEACHER

National Youth Science Day

Youth throughout Will and Kankakee Counties learned about concepts of flight and how drones are used to solve real world problems in the 4–H National Youth Science Day experiment, Drone Discovery. Over 175 youth participated in the experiment at locations including the Plainfield School District, Kankakee School District, Homer Township School District, Joliet Library, and Manhattan–Elwood Library.

Youth learned about the concepts of lift and drag and the importance gravity plays on flight. They were able to create their own foam "drones" to practice flight. They also had the chance to attach cameras onto a large foam "drone" to take videos and pictures of a town in need of help.

During the experiment, youth explored careers related to drones, including those that program drones, build drones, and those that interpret data drones receive. Many of the youth had knowledge of drones but this was the first time they thought about how their interest and knowledge of drones could become a career.

Summer STEM Programs

During the summer of 2016, University of Illinois Extension staff held various 4-H STEM camps and programs throughout Will County reaching 323 youth. During these camps youth were exposed to new technologies by working with their peers to solve problems.

Many of the youth learned about 3D printing and how they can use CAD software to build 3D objects to print. They were able to learn how 3D printers worked and building specifications to bring their ideas to life. Youth also learned about electric circuits and materials that could be used as conductors during creative electronics and Makey Makey projects. Many were also given the opportunity to build and program LEGO Mindstorm robots.

Youth in these programs reported more positive attitudes towards science as well as STEM careers. They also reported they felt they were able to answer science questions and complete an experiment. Finally, youth reported they felt they could answer real world problems using STEM to create a solution.

Participation

357 **Robotics Club Members** 20 Additional SPIN Club Members 888 Youth Reached in Partner Programs 31 Partner Site Programs Held 30 Robotics Club Leaders 3 Additional SPIN Leaders 29 Robotics SPIN Clubs

4-H Robotics SPIN Clubs

Interest in Robotics continues to grow with Will and Kankakee Counties enrolling youth in 29 Robotics SPIN clubs. 2016 celebrated the largest Robotics Showcase event with 299 youth, grades 4th-8th, competing in the 4-H Robotics Challenge.

4–H Robotics SPIN Clubs start at the beginning of the 4-H year. Youth begin meeting and learn how to build and program a LEGO Mindstorm robot. The curriculum focuses on teaching the youth to think like a robot, work as a team, and how to plan like an engineer.

The Challenge is announced and teams begin working together to achieve the tasks reviewing the robots design, creating a new program, and building their obstacles for the course.

To measure the success of the program, each year the youth complete a Youth Engagement Survey created by National 4-H Council. Scores show that youth in these clubs: have positive attitudes towards science; believe they can complete an experiment successfully; have positive attitudes towards working as a team; feel they belong in the 4-H SPIN Club; and feel their leader cares about them and their success.

The success of these clubs is due in large part to partnerships with local school districts and local youth organizations. The current partners that work with the 4-H Robotics SPIN Club program are Joliet Public Schools, Laraway School District, Plainfield School District, Kankakee School District, Momence School District, Elwood School District, Troy School District, Homer Township School District, Zion Lutheran School District, St. Joseph School District, Manhattan-Elwood Library, and Joliet Library.

Additional

SPIN Leaders

Nutrition



Kankakee County

SNAP-Education helps those in need make healthier choices by reaching people where they are in their communities with interactive classes and skill building activities.

Program Reach



Programming Provided through Community Partnerships:

4 K-12 School Districts

Early Childhood



∠ Youth Centers

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-ED)

Illinois Nutrition Education Program staff worked with community partners to assist low-income families to adopt healthier eating habits and become more physically active. MyPlate for My Family Curriculum based on recommendations from the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans, targets parents and caregivers to assist in planning, purchasing and preparing healthy food for their families. Many fun, interactive programs for preschool through 8th grades are taught in schools and day cares in Kankakee County.

In addition to direct education, technical assistance is provided in policy, systems and environmental change. Work with food pantries in Will and Kankakee Counties introduces strategies to encourage individuals to make healthy food choices with product placement and simple signage. SNAP-Ed partnered with Head Start in Will County to assist in utilizing a screening tool to assess families at risk for food insecurity. Families found to be at risk received assistance, referrals additional and community resources. Training and technical support are being provided for K-12 schools to help them meet USDA professional standards requirements. Smarter Lunchroom Assessments to help create healthier school lunch environments have been completed in approximately 23 schools in Kankakee and Will Counties. Over half of these schools have begun making changes based on the results of the assessment to promote healthier food choices for students.

Nutrition

Smarter School Lunchroom Assessment

It can be a struggle to get kids to eat a wellbalanced, nutritious meal at school when they are allowed to self-select foods. University of Illinois Extension has received \$4.5 million from the Illinois Board of Education over three years to help provide training and education to school food-service professionals statewide.

The Board contracted with University of Illinois Extension to develop and conduct inperson and web-based training that supports child nutrition standards, promotes a more appealing cafeteria environment, improves the quality and appeal of the lunch program and reduces food waste.

Smarter School Lunchroom Assessment includes observation of each lunch line in each school and completion of an Assessment Scorecard. Twenty-three school lunchrooms in the three counties were assessed in 2016.

Educators met with the School Food Service Director and Manager to review strengths and evaluate opportunities for schools to improve the school nutrition environment and to encourage healthful eating. Once these simple action items are identified, it is recommended that schools implement no more than three total action items in a school year.

Recent action items: offer fresh fruit displays in attractive bowls; add food related art in the cafeteria to improve eating environment; re-arrange milk display to offer white milk first and display in two locations.



Yes, we have employed some of the recommendations from the Smarter School Lunchroom Assessment completed by Extension and we have seen some improvement in fresh fruit selection and increase in students choosing white milk over chocolate.

SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE MANAGER

I on Diabetes

Diabetes ranks as the 7th leading cause of death in Illinois. According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, more than 969,000 residents (9.2%) in Illinois have been diagnosed with diabetes. University of Illinois Extension's "I on Diabetes" is a series of face-to-face sessions designed for anyone interested in preventing or managing diabetes. Participants received information on diabetes treatment goals and self-monitoring; managing carbohydrates, sodium, cholesterol and fat portions; planning meals; and reading food labels. Food demonstrations, taste testing, and recipes assisted participants using artificial in sweeteners, low-fat products, and herbs and spices.

Following the sessions: 60% indicated they "more strongly agreed" that healthy foods tasted good, reported selecting or helping others select healthier food choices when dining out, and indicated improved choices in managing portion sizes. 70% indicated they were preparing foods that fit into their meal plan and selecting foods that will reduce the risk for heart disease.



Home Food Preservation

Home food preservation is enjoying a new gain in popularity. Participants need to know the dangers of improperly prepared home canned foods and the proper procedure for safety. All participants indicated increased knowledge gained in safety and method of home food preservation.

A series of three hands-on practice sessions was conducted:

Water Bath Canning – Jams and Jellies

- Learned to properly preserve jam using the water bath method
- ▶ Food safety of home canned foods
- Limited shelf life of home preserved jams and sweet spreads
- ▶ Water Bath Canning Pickles
- Learned the safety of using standard vinegar for pickle making
- Learned that pickles need to be processed in boiling water bath
- ► Fermentation: Sauerkraut
- Learned the correct method and health benefits for making fermented food



all my Monthly changes for the better

change for the better

Change for the Better is a financial management curriculum designed for limited -resource audiences. Participants learn from hands-on, experiential learning with discussion, games, case examples and demonstrations. During 2016, the Extension Consumer Economics Educator piloted a class at Jerome Combs Detention Center with eight participants. After the class. participants shared:

"Learning more about my thoughts and why I spend.... in the process of re-evaluating my priorities."

"Credit history and score is a big part of my life and could affect me getting different loans I'll need in life. Before today's class I didn't care about my credit history and score."

"The case study and monthly spending plan activity gave me a better idea about how to not over spend and save money."

Money Smart Week – April 2016

Extension partnered with Frankfort, Manhattan–Elwood, Homer Township, Limestone, Manteno, Mokena, and Plainfield Libraries to provide 14 free financial education programs. Over 217 participants attended and topics ranged from credit and debt management, estate planning, learning about light bulbs, and identity theft.

Go Green Garden Club

The Go Green Garden Club is a partnership between the Will County Master Gardeners and local community agencies that provide services to developmentally disabled adults— Cornerstone Services, Joliet Park District's Special Recreation of Joliet and Channahon (SRJC) and Trinity Services. The participants meet weekly from March through September with Will County Master Gardeners to learn how to grow and use fresh produce.



This program is entering its fifth successful year and has engaged over 80 special needs individuals. Some of the participants have been with the program since the inception, while new members continue to join every year. In this 26 week/year program, the members, with the guidance of the Will County Master Gardeners, make their own selections of the vegetables they want to try to grow, start the seeds in a greenhouse, plant at the community garden, maintain and harvest their crops throughout the growing season.

But this program has provided so much more than learning about gardening. Client supervisors report the success of the program is observable outside the program content.

Today I spoke with our friend Lois – she told me about something new she is trying to do as a volunteer in the public and that volunteering is something new for her and a bit scary but she summed it all up by saying, "When I get nervous about doing it, I just tell myself, if I can grow a tomato, I can do anything!" ...well, I had to just sit and enjoy that for a few moments and share it with you before I proceed with my work day...

BEV, SOCIAL WORKER

Because this is a long term program, there is opportunity for development of teambuilding and leadership within the group. Some of the members have become the teachers for the new participants, showing them the various gardening tasks they have learned from the Master Gardeners.

Each season the program culminates in a Fall Harvest Party where members plan the menu for the meal using the produce they have grown in their garden.





Monarchy Comes to Will and Grundy Counties

No, this isn't an episode of Downton Abbey but rather a new project of the Will and Grundy Master Gardeners and Naturalists that is helping to bring back populations of the monarch butterfly. The purpose of the MONARCHY project is to educate residents about the life cycle of the monarch butterfly and put that newly acquired knowledge into action by establishing monarch waystations and participate in citizen scientist projects that help to monitor monarch populations.



Monarchs are only one of many species that are dropping in populations because of habitat loss, pesticide use and changes in green industry practices. Scientists indicated a profound dip in the population. The recorded number of monarchs was at its lowest in 2010. Will and Grundy Master Gardeners hosted two trainings—one on the biology of the monarch and one on rearing monarch caterpillars in the classroom, community center or home. These trainings inspired installation of several monarch waystation plantings at community centers, schools and home gardens throughout Will and Grundy Counties.

Participation



BY WAY OF PLAINFIELD ON THE ROAD TO MEXICO

An exciting outcome of this program was truly one in a million! During the late summer as the final generation of monarchs hatched and started their migration to Mexico, Will and Grundy County residents who participated in the MONARCHY program began tagging the butterflies as they participated in the Monarch Watch citizen scientist program. Amazingly, three of the monarchs that were tagged by a Plainfield resident in her home garden, were recovered in Mexico over the winter.

Future trainings are planned for 2017 as interest in the MONARCHY has increased throughout Will and Grundy Counties.

2016 Will County Master Gardener Outstanding Award Winners



Jo Chenell and Suzanne Bisonette



Kim Wysocki and Suzanne Bisonette



Pollinator Conservation

Pollinators are a marvel of nature; they pollinate about one-third of our food crops. Unfortunately, pollinator foraging habitats are dwindling. Pesticide toxicity and other stresses like weather and pests are killing them. One strategy to preserve pollinators has been to encourage beekeepers to properly raise honevbee colonies for maximum survival. Local associations have formed for education and mentorship. Kankakee River Valley Beekeepers Association meets every 6 weeks and the newly formed Grundy Beekeepers Association meets monthly. Extension supports these groups with presentations on nutrition and water supply, disease and insect pest management, pollinator-attracting habitats, hive inspections and its management and honey value-added products.

During the 2015 winter, most beekeepers lost more than half of their honeybee colonies to the extremely cold weather, although loss by inexperienced beekeepers was thought to be due to poor management. Presumably, with the information offered in 2016, there will be reduced colony losses.

Significant accomplishments reported for 2016:

- 10 new beekeepers started raising bees, while 12 added more hives to their apiary
- ▶ 16 reported they inspected their hives more times in 2016 than before
- 15 beekeepers indicated that information to prepare hives for spring was helpful
- 6 beekeepers started to provide bees with water instead of letting them search
- 9 beekeepers "split" their hives to increase number of colonies
- 12 beekeepers applied non-chemical ways to control Varroa mites
- 6 bee enthusiasts grew pollinatorattracting plants, while 9 left some native plant area undisturbed
- ▶ 6 beekeepers requested the services of an apiary inspector after learning of availability

Agriculture and Natural Resources





Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs)

Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) are ways that produce growers can prevent on-farm contamination of fruits and vegetables. All possible measures are taken to prevent microbial contamination as fresh produce moves through production, storage and distribution systems. GAPs not only prevent the public from illness, but they also protect the farm business from the economic consequences of foodborne illnesses caused by outbreak of food-borne illness.

62 growers were trained. 40 of those trained online and included participants from Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, and Michigan.

Impact: 11 trainees wrote food safety plans; 4 were audited and passed food safety inspections.

Following GAPs training: the few who previously used raw manure have stopped; the few who use pesticides apply them judiciously and handle them safely; and majority post signs such as "all workers must wash hands after using bathroom."

MASTER GARDENERS

 Kankakee Farmers Market April-October answering homeowner's gardening questions

- Letourneau Home Museum period garden
- Grow a Row for the Hungry
- ► School Gardens
- Beautification gardens: Freedom Garden,
- Bird Park and Aroma Park Planters
- Maintaining Butterfly Garden at Camp Shaw-Waw-Nas-See
- Kids Day at the Farm for all 4th graders of the county
- School Programs instructing over 500 youth: taking care of the Earth while making Earth Day bracelets; life cycle of a pumpkin; Have You Eaten a Flower Today; Tomatoes; Vermiculture and more.

MASTER NATURALISTS

- ▶ Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
- ► Kankakee Sands Nature Conservancy
- ► Raptor Rescue
- Plants of Concern
- Classroom presentations including Fur bearers of Illinois; Bird Calls; Out My Backdoor and The Bugs: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly.

Kankakee County Participation



Master Gardeners **41** Master Naturalists

6,207 Volunteer Hours

Extension Staff

County Extension Director

Beth LaPlante

Office Support

Shona Dionne Debbie Gaffield Marsha Kerschke Judy Lemenager Mariana Maldonado

Educators

Drusilla Banks, Nutrition and Wellness

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James Theuri, Local Food Systems and Small Farms Deloris Walker, SNAP Ed

Megan Walsh, 4-H Youth Development, Metro

Program Coordinators

Brooke Baker, 4-H Youth Development, Grundy County

Holly Froning, Master Gardeners, Kankakee County

Debra Koch, 4-H Youth Development, Kankakee County

> Nancy Kuhajda, Master Gardeners, Will County

SNAP-Ed Instructor

Janet Moody, SNAP-Ed, Kankakee County

Extra Help

Gabrielle Born, 4-H Program Staff, Will County

Elena Cabral, 4-H Latino Program Coordinator, Grundy County

> Anthony Warmack, 4-H Program Staff, Grundy County

> > Janet Wills, Clerical, Grundy County

> > Megan Ward, Clerical, Grundy County



University of Illinois ~ U.S. Department of Agriculture ~ Local Extension Councils Cooperating University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate 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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