



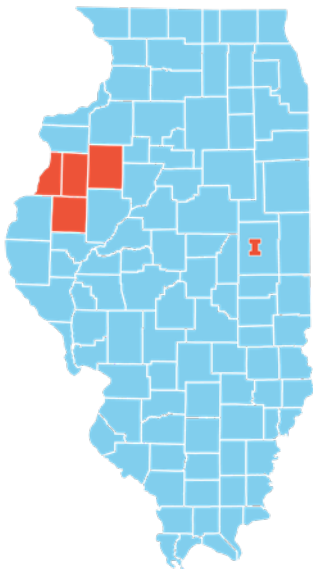
EXTENSION IN ACTION

Serving Henderson, Knox,
McDonough, and Warren Counties





Lisa Torrance
County Director



New partnerships expand Extension programming

We hope you enjoy reading just a fraction of the programming we provided during the 2022 calendar year and the impact your local U of I Extension has had on the communities we serve. We have had a few changes over the past year, and are so excited that we are fully staffed and back to seeing all of you in person as we deliver programs in the areas where you work and live.

We have many new and exciting partnerships. Some of them you will read about as you turn these pages, and some are still evolving. Housing authorities, local libraries, health departments, park districts, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Prairieland Conservancy, municipalities, and other local institutions of higher education have all been part of our programming this past year. From robotics to mental health to disaster education to seed sharing, we are continually amazed by the work we are involved with each day.

As I write this, we are also working on our new plan of work. We have been asking community members and organizations where they see Extension fitting into their future. What are the biggest emerging issues in our community and what audiences could we serve better are just two of the questions we have been exploring.

If you have any ideas or suggestions, please reach out to us and let us know. We want to serve our communities in the best way that we can.

Now sit back, maybe grab a snack and a beverage, and enjoy learning a bit about what we have been doing.

Lisa Torrance
County Extension Director



Illinois Extension Makes an Impact

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's land grant mission thrives each day through Extension's programs, resources, knowledge, and dedicated staff that are responsive to five grand challenge themes:



Community:
Support Strong and Resilient Residents



Economy:
Grow a Prosperous Economy



Environment:
Sustain Natural Resources at Home and in Public Spaces



Food:
Maintain a Safe and Accessible Food Supply



Health:
Maximize Physical, Mental, and Emotional Health

2022 Engagement

Extension leaders, staff, and stakeholders define priorities that create meaningful, mission-centered outcomes throughout the state:

643 Communities Served	720K+ Program Attendees	14.5M+ Webpage Views	22.9M+ Social Media Impressions	900K+ YouTube Views
488 Educational Sessions/Week (25K+ Annually)	95 Online Courses Accessed by 12K+ People	7,062 Local Government Education Webinar Reach	1,807 4-H Clubs	178,341 4-H Affiliations

Partnerships

Resource Generation

5,941 Program Volunteers	269 Community Gardens	1,030 School Partners	\$15,732,391 Value of Volunteer Contributions	\$223,639 Value of Donated Garden Produce
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Assessing the risk of disaster

The impacts of a disaster can affect all facets of a community and disrupt the local economy. Many communities have limited capacity to engage in planning and lack the tools needed to incorporate disaster planning strategies into their economic development planning.

To bridge this gap, Illinois Extension educator Carrie McKillip partnered on a grant focused on integrating economic development planning with disaster preparedness for rural communities in Illinois. The Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) and USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) funded the \$35,000 grant in February 2021. By November, funders recognized the applicability to surrounding Midwestern states and increased funding by \$25,000.

McKillip worked with a team of Extension educators, specialists, and a graduate student from University of Illinois Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Arpita Banerjee. Together, they created a county-specific disaster risk assessment tool that features an interactive county-level map.

As users engage with the map, pop-ups connect them to a regional disaster resilience indices and links to a detailed data dashboard with assessment reports. Reports contain rankings for community, economic, housing, and infrastructural resilience at the census tract, urban and rural area, and census place levels.

Based on the rankings, prescriptions for relevant planning processes, funding streams, and case studies are extracted from the Disaster Planning Integration Library, a customized database that functions as a search engine for all disaster planning related information relevant to rural Illinois.

Together these tools can generate resiliency plans for a county or community to incorporate into existing community planning frameworks. Full scale implementation in Illinois is expected by summer 2023.



Learn more about Extension Disaster Preparedness
extension.illinois.edu/disasters



Tree planting at the Knox County Nursing Home. Pictured, left to right are Chris Enroth, Extension educator; Kathy Breeden, Master Gardener; Mary Carlson, Master Gardener and Master Naturalist; Sue Indelicato, Master Gardener; Marilyn Morris, Master Gardener; Melinda Webber, Master Gardener; and Wendy Ferguson, Extension program coordinator.



Collaboration brings oak trees to the community

Many hands made for light work when Illinois Extension participated in a statewide 4-H Green Communities Tree Program. Knox and McDonough were two of 31 counties across Illinois that joined the movement to address the decline of native oak savannas.

4-H members, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, and the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation District planted 25 oak trees in public spaces at the Knox County Nursing Home in Knoxville and Patton Park in Macomb.

Oak trees are a keystone species which means an entire ecosystem depends on them for survival and habitat. Oak trees support more life forms than any other North American tree genus. This project directly supports healthier and more resilient ecosystems in our communities.



Learn more: extension.illinois.edu/hkmw/master-gardeners



Master Naturalists transition take-home kits into programming

Libraries across the country chose nature as the theme for summer reading programs, and Master Naturalists recognized an opportunity. Volunteers transitioned popular take-home kits used by educators and parents to deliver educational activities to children during the pandemic into library programming.

The Warren County Public Library hosted Wendy Ferguson, program coordinator, and volunteers who presented a hands-on workshop about mammals to 40 children. The kids learned what a mammal is and used that information to create their own mammals. Using their imagination, they created habitats, then shared how their mammals lived and what they ate.



Youth displays the make-believe mammal she created.



Nearly 2 tons of fresh produce was grown and donated to local food pantries from Extension and volunteer gardens.



Master Gardeners give back

Master Gardeners doubled the amount of produce grown to almost 2 tons of fresh vegetables for their local food pantries. Volunteers spent nearly two hours each day of the 175-day growing year in two different gardens, planting, weeding, watering, and harvesting. Many collaborators helped with the joys of gardening, including the Knox County Housing Authority, numerous area libraries, 4-H members, and community members. More than 800 hours of education and outreach efforts were clocked.



3,885
Pounds of Produce Donated



\$6,449
Value of Donated Produce

Work from our Extension Master Gardeners



55
Master Gardener Volunteers



1,840
Master Gardener Volunteer Hours



\$112,406
Value of MG and MN Volunteer Time Provided



Learn how to grow your own food
extension.illinois.edu/gardening



Good Growing: Blogs, podcasts, and videos help gardeners grow

The popularity and interest in home gardening has kept the Good Growing team of educators busy developing blogs, videos, podcasts, and emails to provide digital education to the members of our communities.



The most popular 2022 posts included:

- Seed stratification: What seeds require cold treatment
- Baldfaced hornet: Dangerous bug or beneficial insect?
- How to grow sunflowers at home
- Sparks in the night: Fireflies and tips on conserving them

I find Good Growing to be so delightful because even though I feel like I have quite a bit of knowledge and experience behind me, there's always something to be learned and the staff always presents that information in a fun and non-judgmental way. I feel like it's accessible to everyone!



53
Blog Posts



49
Podcasts



36
Videocasts



1,248
Weekly email to subscribers



Annual Monarch Migration Festival offers fun and learning for all

Extension Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists collaborated with the city of Galesburg Parks and Recreation Department, Knox County Farm Bureau, and Lakeside Nature Center to present the Eighth Annual Monarch Migration Festival.

In August, the community celebrated the North American Monarch butterfly's migration south to Mexico where butterflies hibernate until spring, then return to lay their eggs. Participants learned about the life cycle of the Monarch, its pattern of migration, and the habitats that support butterflies.

Each hour, a release of Monarchs symbolized the start of their long journey south. To combat the butterfly's dipping population, Illinois supports 3,240 registered Monarch waystations. Master Naturalists maintain nearly a dozen pollinator sites in the Knox County area.



5,334

Environmental Program Participants



135

Environmental Educational Sessions

Work from our Extension Master Naturalists



28

Master Naturalist Volunteers



998

Master Naturalist Volunteer Hours



Learn more:
extension.illinois.edu/hkmw/master-naturalists



Master Naturalist Cindy Owsley displays just some of the native seeds collected this year by our volunteers.

Seed collection project grows into annual event

Each year, Master Naturalists participate in a citizen science project collecting seeds from native Illinois plants. This year brought something new: Volunteers made over 50 species, including one endangered species, available to the public through a seed-sharing event.

Participants designated their top three species choices, and the remaining seed was divided and shared with all attendees. To support efforts in the community, seeds were shared with Prairieland Conservancy for ongoing stewardship projects and with the Galesburg parks and recreation department for use in new garden installations at two park locations. Look for the next seed share in October 2023.

Master Naturalists provided nearly 1,000 hours of service:

- Stewardship: 337 hours
- Citizen (Community Science): 118 hours
- Educational programming: 381 hours
- Outreach and other activities: 162 hours



Participants at the Native Seed Share explore the numerous seeds available. Everyone received their top three species choices, as well as other quality seed. Photo by Cindy Owsley.



Mastery on display at fairs



Every day, 4-H members make staff, volunteers, and their communities proud as they take “learning by doing” to the highest level. 4-H members demonstrate their mastery with projects at the fair, from aerospace and animal science to entrepreneurship and entomology.



McDonough County 4-H member Carter Hoge of Good Hope was named the champion Master Showman at the 4-H State Fair Master Showmanship, placing first in two of the three species.



885
4-H Club Members



1,480
Fair Exhibits



4,561
4-H Affiliated Experiences



Extension prepares youth for real world

Illinois Extension provides financial wellbeing tools for all ages. Shelby Carlson, Extension youth development educator, taught Welcome to the Real World, a financial literacy and career exploration simulation, to nearly 650 youth at Abingdon, Avon, Canton, Carthage, Macomb, Monmouth, and Roseville schools.

In the simulation, participants “live” for a month, paying bills and facing many choices for how they spend available money. They learned how career choices and monthly spending habits impact their ability to spend and save. Welcome to the Real World develops youth self-sufficiency which contributes to the overall health of the community.



MYLO participants learn about health care professions and removing personal protective equipment with the Western Illinois University School of Nursing.



Mentorship provided to Macomb Youth Leadership Organization

University of Illinois Extension partnered with the Macomb Area Chamber of Commerce and Macomb High School on the Macomb Youth Leadership Organization (MYLO). MYLO opens community opportunities to young people. The 3-year program begins with sophomores. In their first year, students get to know their community. As juniors, they shadow local professionals. In their senior year, youth lead a community service project.

Extension mentors first year participants during field trips that introduce them to the variety of job opportunities available in Macomb. Recent highlights include tours of a local factory; visits with city, county, and state government officials; and presentations from young entrepreneurs while touring their businesses. Annually, 42 teen leaders from Macomb High School take part in MYLO.



A Knox County youth puts his knowledge of coding and circuits to work using a Makey Makey board.

Youth learn coding and more

Youth learned about coding, robotics, and electric circuits. They used EV3 and Spike Prime robots, as well as Makey Makey, an invention kit that turns everyday objects into touchpads that connect to the internet. These tools help young people explore new ways of creating art, engineering, and music.

Julian Inniss, 4-H program coordinator, created coding and building workshops and robotics camps, as well as made visits to schools, libraries, and housing authorities. Young people enjoyed hands on learning, peer-to-peer instruction, and experimentation through trial and error to learn foundational STEM lessons they can build on.



Using simulation tools, MYLO participants learned what sounds a health care professional will listen for in patients.



Participants from the 4-H Cooperative Sorority at University of Illinois.
Photo by Tessa Hobbs-Curley

Mental health trainings empower the community

Through a partnership with the Rural Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network, certified Illinois Extension educators Shelby Carlson and Tessa Hobbs-Curley provided two types of Mental Health First Aid trainings, one for adults and one for adults who regularly interact with rural youth.

Adolescence is challenging for many young people and mental health issues can develop during this formative time of life. Participants in the Mental Health First Aid trainings learned to identify signs and symptoms of mental illness and substance use and gained the skills to feel confident supporting a person in crisis.

Participants included 4-H leaders, community members, teachers, parents, and Extension staff. Newly certified Mental Health First Aiders left with the resources to connect someone in crisis with appropriate care. Eligible educators gained Illinois State Board of Education professional development credits.

“One hundred percent participants found the course helpful and informative and are better prepared for the work they do professionally,” says Hobbs-Curley.



23,853
Health Program Participants



425
Health Educational Sessions



Learn more:
go.illinois.edu/MentalHealthMatters

Residents learn to thrive

Six in ten adults in America have at least one chronic illness, and four in ten have two or more, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

To combat these alarming statistics, Extension educators Cheri Burcham and Tessa Hobbs-Curley presented “Take Charge of Your Health,” a six-session program designed to empower participants to manage ongoing health conditions by implementing healthy habits into their daily life. Though chronic conditions vary widely, the skills for managing most chronic conditions are the same.

Residents gained tools to deal with difficult emotions; improve and maintain their strength, flexibility, endurance, and nutrition; better understand treatment choices; and communicate effectively with family, friends, and health care professionals.

Results from the post program survey reported 100% of respondents felt “much better or better” about their ability to manage their chronic condition. After the workshop, they reported an excellent sense of well-being.

“I thoroughly enjoyed the program and plan to take others in the future,” one participant said.

I instituted new routines which are making me feel healthier than before I began the program.
Participant



Learn more:
go.illinois.edu/health



Continued community partnership delivers personnel development series

Along with the nation, Henderson County was impacted by a reduced workforce and high turnover rate as challenges with retaining and training qualified employees emerged. These issues were exacerbated by a declining population and an aging workforce.

Illinois Extension has partnered with the Henderson County Health Department (HCHD) for two years to provide creative pandemic relief.

Carrie McKillip and Tessa Hobbs-Curley, Extension educators, provided team-building, employee retention, and customer service training using Extension's expert programs: Real Colors®, Age Matters, Customer Service, and Diversity for Customer Service.

As a capstone, the educators and HCHD administrators identified a real situation to practice the concepts learned. This resulted in better comprehension for participants and immediate problem solving for the community.

Extension plans to continue work on this innovative personnel development training series and tailor it to specific industries.



\$3,344
Economic Development Program Participants



51
Economic Development Educational Sessions



173
Expert Consultations in Economic Development



Learn more about Extension Economic Development
go.illinois.edu/EconomicDevelopment

SNAP-Ed creates access to healthy choices



Amy Finley, SNAP-Ed community worker, works to meet people where they are, delivering Healthy Cents, Create Better Health, and Illinois Junior Chef programs at neighborhood community centers and public housing facilities.

Children learned to keep their bodies healthy by eating healthy during school visits and at programs such as Organ Wise Guys and Serving Up My Plate. Interactive Eat.Move. Save informational booths are presented at food pantries and grocery stores where healthy recipes and meal ideas are sampled. Recipe cards are given to aid in healthy decision-making.

Resources about how to use the Find Food IL map are shared, ensuring residents get connected with school and summer meal sites, food pantries, farmers markets, senior food resources, and SNAP and WIC offices.



Amy Finley provides nutritional information for high school students in Henderson County.



303
Nutrition Education Classes



1,540
Total Reach through SNAP-Ed Programs



Get tips for eating healthy on a budget
eat-move-save.extension.illinois.edu

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Cover photo: Planting an oak tree for the 4-H Green Communities Tree Program. Photo by Shelby Carlson



Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

College of Agricultural, Consumer & Environmental Sciences

University of Illinois, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Local Extension Councils Cooperating.
University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate, please contact the event coordinator. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your needs.

The Illinois Nutrition Education Programs are funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

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