



**Illinois Extension**  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

**2021** Addressing Local Needs,  
Solving Global Challenges

Coles, Cumberland, Douglas, Moultrie, and Shelby Counties





Jessie McClusky  
County Extension Director

# Serving Coles, Cumberland, Douglas, Moultrie, and Shelby Counties

## A Message from the County Director

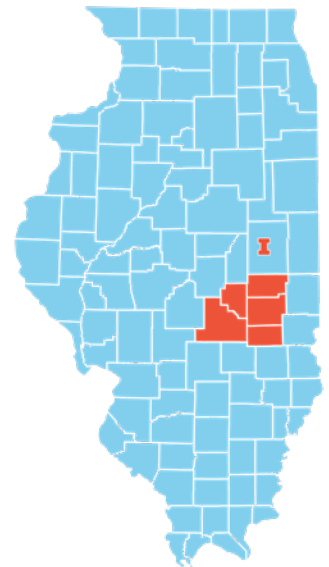
On behalf of University of Illinois Extension, the staff and volunteers serving Coles, Cumberland, Douglas, Moultrie, and Shelby counties thank you, our communities, for your continued support this past year. While 2020 was a test of strength and adaptability, 2021 was a test of resilience and patience.

We were able to remain nimble, creative, and deliberate throughout the year as we adapted (and readapted) program delivery plans to fit the most up to date COVID-19 safety recommendations. In this day and age, we recognize the flexibility virtual resources provide and will continue to offer a mix of online and in person resources.

We are grateful for the continued local support from our County Boards, 4-H Foundations, Home and Community Education Associations, County Farm Bureaus, and contributions from individuals and businesses.

No matter the challenge or crisis, Extension will continue to provide information and resources to help make lives better, healthier, safer, and more profitable for you and your community.

Jessie McClusky  
County Extension Director



# Think Global, Act Local

Illinois Extension embodies the land grant mission of University of Illinois, providing applied research and education to address societal grand challenges and local issues.

## Community Support Strong and Resilient Youth, Families, and Communities

 Connectedness and Inclusion


 Involvement and Leadership

 Thriving Youth

## Economy Grow a Prosperous Economy


 Economic Vitality

 Financial Wellbeing

 Workforce Preparedness/Advancement

## Environment Sustain Natural Resources in Home and Public Spaces

 Enhancing and Preserving Natural Resources

 Engagement with Home and Community Landscape

## Food Maintain a Safe and Accessible Food Supply

 Food Access

 Food Production

 Food Safety

## Health Maximize Physical and Emotional Health for All

 Chronic Disease Prevention and Management

 Social and Emotional Health

 Healthy and Safe Environments

Look for these icons throughout this report to see how Illinois Extension is meeting these grand challenges at a local level.

## Illinois Extension 2021 Statewide Highlights

### Outreach Provided

<b>565</b> Illinois Communities Served	<b>335</b> Educational Sessions Per Week	<b>84</b> Online Courses
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### Partnerships Supported

<b>6,445</b> Adult Volunteers	<b>278</b> Community Gardens	<b>1,000</b> School Partnerships
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### Learners Engaged

<b>8,000,000</b> Website Users	<b>14,450</b> Online Course Users	<b>500,000</b> Educational Program Attendees
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### Resources Generated

<b>\$14,000,000</b> Value of Volunteer Contributions	<b>\$242,000</b> Value of Donated Garden Produce
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Extension leaders meet with local stakeholders to define annual priorities that allow us to respond to evolving and emerging needs and make meaningful progress toward important long-term outcomes. This blend of long-range focus and local accountability is a powerful strategy that ensures we stay true to our mission as we serve communities across the state.



## Walk a mile in their shoes

In fall of 2021, 41 Windsor School District staff and City Council members participated in an Extension poverty simulation. The poverty simulation addressed the challenges of living with limited resources and an abundance of stress. Role play simulation is a powerful way to convey real-world obstacles to securing food and shelter, while maintaining the family and negotiating support systems, agencies, and the real world.

How the simulation works: Participants are assigned roles to play as community members experiencing poverty and they walk through the challenges of living with limited resources for one month, acted out in four 15-minute weeks. Each must secure food and shelter while maintaining a family and negotiating support systems, agencies, and the real world. After the simulation, the group debriefs and brainstorms ways to assist agency staff working with low-income students and families.

In general, people retain:

- 20% of what they hear
- 30% of what they see/read
- 50% of what they hear/see/read
- 70% of what they hear/see/read/discuss
- 90% of what they hear/see/read/discuss/do – a simulation



**3,136**  
Attended  
Programs



**44**  
Educational  
Sessions



## Multi-county CSI Workshop

Six detectives were on the case and immersed in the field of crime scene investigation where they evaluated evidence, interpreted lab results, determined who the evidence belonged to, and identified the guilty suspect. Each participant flexed their critical thinking skills, deductive reasoning, and worked as a team to solve the crime. The workshop provided an opportunity for youth to participate in activities supporting the exploration of science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics (STEAM) and a small peek into career opportunities.



## 4-H sparks interests in Cumberland County

As society becomes more DIY inspired, people are letting their passions create opportunities in the form of entrepreneurship, as in the case for local small business owner Nic Taylor of Diligent Hands

Metalworking located in Ashmore. Nic opened his doors to 4-H members and held a plasma metal cutting workshop. With Nic's help, members were introduced to the fascinating world of metalworking using a plasma cutter. Members created their designs, traced them onto metal, and, with help, cut their own metal designs. Sparks flew as projects and interests in metalwork came to life.







## FarmBot: Inspiring the next generation

Watch the program as the FarmBot Project unfolds. Starting as an idea in early 2020, the project is a work in progress. FarmBot is described by the manufacturer as a “FUN hands-on tool for learning robotics, nutrition, soil science, biology, and coding.” The goal is to inspire students to explore all that the FarmBot Project has to offer and create their own path of discovery.

The FarmBot Project team includes students and educators, community volunteers, industry experts, and business professionals locally and across the area. The project is located at Elevate 217, inside the Cross County Mall in Mattoon. The raised garden bed was the first visible part of the project and will serve as the growing area. The FarmBot system was installed, followed by the grow lights which were recently added. The real excitement will be when the FarmBot system is programmed to automatically plant the seeds, water, and monitor the plants as they grow.



Extension is currently recruiting students that are interested in exploring the project through school and after-school programs. Students will learn how farming and technology are connected. We are looking forward to growing the FarmBot Project in Coles County and the surrounding communities.

The FarmBot Project would not be possible without the support of:

### Funders

- Illinois 4-H
- Elevate 217
- Rural King Inc.
- Farm Credit Services

### In-kind donations of time and resources:

- Mattoon High School – Vocational Ag Department
- Durbin Transport
- Randy Strohl – Lakeland College Business and Industry Specialist
- Terry Smith – Illinois Extension Master Gardener



An example of a finished FarmBot configuration.



## Master Naturalists Active and Productive

Despite the challenges of 2021, Master Naturalist held diverse learning opportunities and assisted with several stewardship activities. From Conservation Field days to the first Field Day of Learning, volunteers educated participants about bees, butterflies, wildflowers, and the local turtle population. In April, Master Naturalists encouraged people to get outside to hike local trails and engage in a photo scavenger hunt. During Pollinator Week, volunteers taught workshops about the many different types of pollinators and gave tours of local pollinator plots. Instructors from many organizations came together to teach Master Naturalist training, doubling the volunteers in our local Master Naturalist group. Despite the pandemic, Master Naturalists remained active and productive throughout the year.



817  
Program  
Attendance



55  
Educational  
Sessions



54  
Master Gardeners and Naturalists Trained



\$73,473  
Volunteer Value

## Pollinator Walks

During National Pollinator Week June 21-27, Master Naturalist Kathryn Bulver led a series of Pollinator Walks at three sites in Coles County. Each walk began with a presentation on pollination and pollinators, followed by a walk to look for insects on a variety of flowering plants. Participants learned about the bees, flies, beetles, wasps, and butterflies encountered along the way, as well as the flowering and host plants. Getting a chance to look at a pollen-covered native sweat bee through close-focusing binoculars was a new experience for the attendees!



This photo was taken on the last walk at a local library that has several "Butterfly Hotspot" planting areas created by the Urban Butterfly Initiative.



## Master Gardeners Busy Despite the Pandemic

Master Gardeners remained active and made a difference in their communities, offering several workshops and activities throughout the year. More than 100 individuals participated in programs, including creating an ice wreath, proper fruit tree pruning, planting potatoes in a bucket, and sowing winter seeds.



Master Gardeners also launched a monthly summer Park Walk series featuring tours of gardens throughout the community, giving participants the opportunity to learn about various plants and the history of each garden. The annual May plant sale was held at Lytle Park and featured hanging baskets, vegetables, houseplants, and native plants. Each plant was started in the greenhouse and lovingly cared for by Master Gardeners.

Volunteers also grew and donated over 1,800 pounds of produce to food pantries and gave information and expert advice as they answered more than 100 questions that came into the Horticulture Hotline.

Master Gardeners took day trips to local hidden gems, learning about unique plants and interesting growing techniques. Although the year was not as expected, Master Gardeners rolled up their sleeves, got creative, and celebrated their many accomplishments.







## Shelbyville Community Garden

In collaboration with the Shelbyville Community Garden committee and HSHS Good Shepherd, a new garden space was created and planted at the hospital. Currently, there are 10 raised beds and plans are in the works to add another 11 beds with the goal of doubling the produce production in 2022. The project was supported by a grant from HSHS Good Shepherd. The new garden beds harvested 708 pounds of fresh produce that was donated to a local food pantry.







## Helping feed those in need

By sharing a little, we can help a lot

Extension SNAP-Ed's Partners in Produce had a record year, tipping the scales with over 62,000 pounds of fresh produce provided to 41 local food pantries.

University of Illinois Extension Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education staff and Extension volunteers attend the Arthur Produce Auction during the growing season. Growers and auction attendees donate a portion of their produce to help people in their local community, choosing to donate rather than sell at a loss. The produce is then distributed to local food pantries, summer child nutrition programs, and local agencies.

**Since the program began in 2019, it has grown from 25,000 pounds to 62,000 pounds!**

An Illinois Innovation Network grant provided Eastern Illinois University nutrition and dietetics students hands-on experience, assisting the effort by loading produce, delivering to pantries, and tracking the donations and products delivered.



41  
Food Pantries



62,619  
Pounds of Produce



Learn more about this program  
<https://extension.illinois.edu/ccdms/partners-produce>







## Mobile food pantries expand reach

This past year, in partnership with Catholic Charities of Decatur and Central Illinois Food Bank, Shelby County 4-H and Shelbyville United Methodist Church sponsored bi-monthly food mobiles in Windsor and Shelbyville. On average, about 100 families were helped at each event. This project will continue if the need exists.



## Windsor Food Mobiles bring food to people

When the Windsor Food Mobiles became too big for just three people to manage, the Shelby County 4-H Federation stepped in and teamed up with SNAP-Ed and the Windsor Grade School cafeteria staff. Federation members thought the Windsor Food Mobiles are a great way to help the community and put their hands to larger service. Federation members helped unload the food truck and distribute the food packages seven times, serving 665 families during the seven food mobiles.

Federation members believe helping at the food mobile is important because everyone deserves to be able to feed their families and it feels good to help people in the community put food on their table. This was a great team project between Shelby County 4-H and the SNAP-Ed team!







## Supporting families, the vital components of our communities

### Building Resiliency in our Lives

Everyone has been challenged by a tough situation sometime in their lives. Highly resilient people can adapt, recover, and grow stronger from difficult situations. Extension Educator Cheri Burcham presented “Building Resiliency in Yourself and Your Organization” several times in 2021. The program helped participants discover the types of characteristics resilient people and organizations possess that help create opportunities from challenges. The goal is to inspire participants to nurture and strengthen their own resilience.

- 98% reported they “Agree/Strongly Agree” the program met their expectations
- 99% reported they “Agree/Strongly Agree” they learned something they plan to use in their work and/or personal life.

The program was delivered virtually statewide twice to 158 Illinois Association of Home and Community Education members and the public.

As a result of the program, some people indicated they hope to: “Have a more positive outlook for myself and others I associate with; construct my self-care plan; continue reframing my negative experiences as opportunities for growth; write three things I’m grateful for every day; set new goals and look at things with a more opportunistic approach; take an inventory of the people in my life and live more intentionally to create a varied network to benefit myself and others; and, boost my self-confidence!”



5,665  
Program Attendance



227  
Educational Sessions

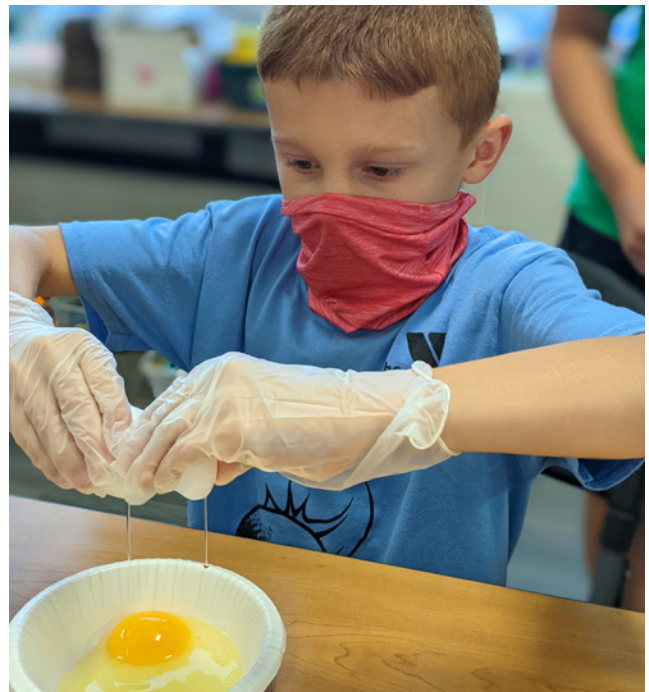


128  
Online Sessions



## Illinois Junior Chef Program enhances youth cooking skills

Students in the Mattoon YMCA summer program had a blast in the Illinois Junior Chef program learning basic cooking skills, such as cutting, peeling, mixing, and juicing. They also created fun and delicious recipes. At the end of the week, they received their own set of cooking supplies: cutting boards, measuring cups and spoons, spatula, water bottle, and a custom cookbook with the week’s recipes.







## SNAP-Ed partners with Charleston Parks and Recreation

The SNAP-Ed team partnered with the Charleston Parks and Recreation Department to provide cooking schools and nutritional programming during their summer camp. Participants made their own snacks, learned about healthy eating habits and routines with MyPlate, and played fun games to reinforce incorporating activity into their day.

## Take Charge of Your Health

Ignoring a chronic condition will not make it go away, and suffering is simply a poor management technique. So, if you live with a long-term health condition, why not learn how to more effectively manage it and live an active and fulfilling life. Although the specifics of managing each condition vary, the skills for managing most chronic conditions are quite similar.

I realize I am not alone with my health problems; the sharing of experiences with others who are struggling with chronic health issues; and, learning about conditions and how to manage connecting with others who have similar conditions.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

Take Charge of Your Health helps participants become better health managers. Classes are highly engaging and include dealing with difficult emotions; improving and maintaining strength, flexibility, and endurance; appropriate use of medications; effective communications with family, friends and health care professionals; and nutrition. The series is held for 2.5 hours weekly for six weeks. 80% of participants reported they felt better about their ability to manage their chronic condition after taking the workshop series. 100% agreed the program had been helpful in these areas: manage their chronic condition, continue to work or perform other daily activities, manage stress and fatigue, eat healthier, increase physical activity, socialize with others.

The program was a good refresher for many things that I knew already but had not been practicing; I appreciate the opportunity to take the class and the encouragement to be informed and pro-active. The program leaders were very knowledgeable and helpful, open and approachable during class discussions, and they made it very interactive.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANT



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## STAFF

### Coles County Office

Kim Morrison, 4-H Educator

Jenny Lee, Master Gardener/  
Master Naturalist Coordinator

Elizabeth Hartke, SNAP-Ed  
Community Worker

Jessica Hays, 4-H Coordinator

Meredith Probst,  
SNAP-Education Visiting  
Extension Educator

Open,  
Office Support Assistant

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Office Support Associate

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County Director

Cheri Burcham,  
Family Life Educator

Angie Welker, 4-H Coordinator

Susan Stollard,  
SNAP-Ed Community Worker

Teri Boehm,  
Office Support Specialist

### Shelbyville Office

Mary Beth Massey, SNAP-Ed  
Program Coordinator

Penny Hood, SNAP-Ed  
Community Worker

Yolanda Nation,  
4-H Coordinator

Diana Litteral,  
Office Support Assistant

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## OFFICE INFORMATION

### Coles County Office

809 Broadway Ave.  
Mattoon, IL 61938  
(217) 345-7034

#### Office Hours

All locations Monday- Friday  
8 AM - 4:30 PM  
Closed 12:00 - 1:00 PM

### Cumberland County Office

102 S. Meridian, PO Box 218  
Toledo, IL 62468  
(217) 849-3931

### Moultrie-Douglas Office

304 E Progress Street  
Arthur, IL 61911  
(217) 543-3755

### Shelby County Office

1125 W. North 2nd Street  
Shelbyville, IL 62565  
(217) 774-9546

**Illinois  
Extension**

#### 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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