



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

2021 Addressing Local Needs,
Solving Global Challenges
Clark, Crawford, and Edgar Counties

A Message from the County Director

As I reflect on 2021, feelings of gratitude overwhelm me. So many amazing things happened this year.

I am grateful for our **community partners** who believe in the same mission as Extension. You have supported our efforts by providing resources, such as meeting space, staff support, tangible items, or promoting our programs to your employees, customers, and the public.

I am grateful for our **volunteers** who have stayed the course during challenging times. Volunteers are at the heart of our success, and we couldn't do what we do without them—4-H Club leaders, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, Dream Team members, Extension Council members, 4-H project superintendents, volunteer judges, Foundation members, and more.

I am grateful for our **donors** who entrust us to use donated resources to make a difference in our communities. Our donors provide

free or reduced-price services, funds to provide recognition to program participants, resources to guarantee we reach everyone in our communities, and a safe and inclusive environment to conduct programs.

I am grateful for our **staff members** who have adapted and adjusted as needed. Even during the continued pandemic, they have expanded their program reach significantly. Programs are offered in various methods to best meet the needs of the participants, honor health guidelines, and ensure high-quality programs.

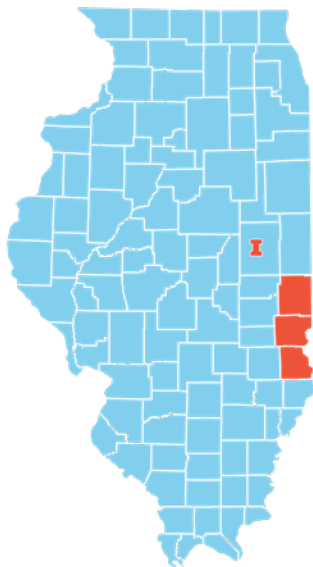
Finally, I am grateful for our **program participants** for continuing to believe in our programs and opportunities. Thank you for growing with us as we meet challenges and celebrate our successes. We appreciate your unwavering dedication.

Stacy Woodyard
County Extension Director



Stacy Woodyard
County Director

Staff Serving Clark, Crawford, & Edgar Counties



STAFF

Jennifer Bishop
Program Coordinator, 4-H

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Program Coordinator, 4-H

Hope Dennis
Community Worker, SNAP-Ed

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Program Coordinator, 4-H

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Summer Walker
Office Support Specialist

Mary Liz Wright
Educator, Nutrition & Wellness

Tammy Evans
Community Worker, SNAP-Ed
(January - September 2021)

Cartha Gustafson
Program Coordinator, 4-H
(Retired June 30, 2021)

Kim Trine
Program Coordinator,
Ag & Natural Resources
(Retired June 30, 2021)

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

565 Illinois Communities Served	335 Educational Sessions Per Week	84 Online Courses
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Partnerships Supported

6,445 Adult Volunteers	278 Community Gardens	1,000 School Partnerships
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Learners Engaged

8,000,000 Website Users	14,450 Online Course Users	500,000 Educational Program Attendees
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Resources Generated

\$14,000,000 Value of Volunteer Contributions	\$242,000 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.



Realizing a dream



When you look toward the southwest corner of the square in downtown Marshall, Illinois, there's no denying the beautifully renovated building at 507 Locust Street. Businesspeople and philanthropists Gerald and Jean Forsythe, whose family has been rooted in Clark County for over 150 years, purchased the building with the vision of providing the building to a local organization that could benefit from having a dedicated meeting space. Ultimately they chose the 4-H clubs of Clark County.

Mr. Forsythe's fond memories of 4-H camp, showing Angus steers, and attending Oliver Go-Getters 4-H Club meetings guided his decision to donate the use of the building exclusively to 4-H members and their adult mentors.

The facility, named the 4-H Clubhouse, is under the direction of the local Illinois Extension office and will be a place where 4-H youth can gather, learn, and lead.

The Forsythes have allowed our organization to customize the building to meet the needs of 4-H'ers who are going to be our future leaders.

STACY WOODYARD, COUNTY DIRECTOR



Learn more at
go.illinois.edu/cce4H



Building owners Jean Forsythe (left) and Gerald Forsythe.



Growing 4-H in the community

We are always looking for opportunities to spread the great news of Illinois 4-H. Thanks to the generosity of the Illinois 4-H Foundation, we were able to “grow” our 4-H program.



Nearly 250 youth in Marshall received materials to create window greenhouses at the Marshall Area Youth Network Summer Camp lunch drive-through. The local Illinois Extension office provided instructions and a short how-to video on social media.

These window greenhouses allow youth to watch the seed germinate and record their observations on the datasheet. Families were encouraged to share photos on social media using the hashtag #gardenstemclark4H.



Siblings Harrison and Harper Downey show off the window greenhouses they made.



SPARK Into 4-H gives youth direction

Do you know what sparks your child? Chances are you have an idea. Participation in the SPARK Into 4-H program, whether online or after school, can help youth determine their interests and passions.



This program allows youth to explore the many areas of 4-H and spur them to action. SPARK Into 4-H helps kids feel connected and engaged, so needed during the pandemic.

SPARK Into 4-H was offered online once a month, with materials mailed to the participants’ homes. It was also provided after school at Wenz School in Paris, and youth learned about animal science, paper circuits, fiber arts, health, plant science, and cooking.

Thriving youth are at the core of healthy, robust communities. The 4-H club experience creates opportunities for all youth to thrive, today and into the future.

4-H expands STEM education

4-H is a safe place to learn, and it’s a great place to explore, fail, and persevere. The 4-H Robotics Club in Edgar County allows 4th to 12th graders to gain confidence in STEM subjects twice a week during the school year.



Held at Crestwood School under the leadership of Mary St. Clair, this special interest, or SPIN 4-H club, uses resources provided by Illinois Extension, including LEGO® MINDSTORMS®, a 3D printer, and *Junk Drawer Robotics* 4-H curriculum.

In addition to the 4-H Robotics Club, Illinois Extension provided STEM classroom resources to St. Clair for grades 6, 7, and 8. Sixth graders used the *Paper Circuits* curriculum to explore electric circuits and create unique projects that light up when pressed.

The seventh graders used Extension-provided solar cars to work in teams to design and engineer the best car for speed and control. This project has quickly become a favorite of students.

Used in the eighth-grade classroom, LEGO® MINDSTORMS® teach students to code robots to perform specific tasks.

By collaborating with local schools, Illinois Extension and Illinois 4-H can bring dimension to existing school programs and create new ones.

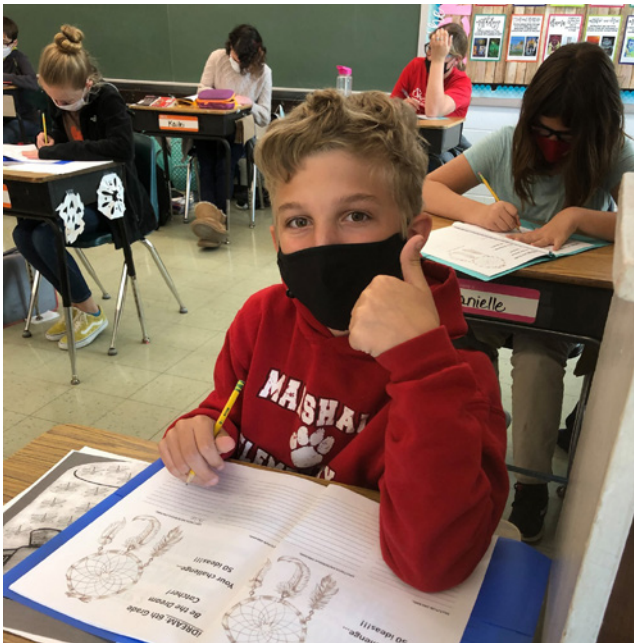
My favorite project in technology is solar cars. My group made a car that not only works, but didn’t get the worst time either!
KILEE EDWARDS



Mary St. Clair assists a student with her solar car project in the afterschool 4-H Robotics SPIN Club.



Learn more at go.illinois.edu/cce4H



Quade Speros, a sixth grader from Marshall, approves of the lesson in his IDream workbook.



Program grows even during pandemic

For years, employers say, “If we can only get people to show up for work on time, pass a drug test, and get along with others, we can teach them the skills they need.” One theory is that some people do not show up to work because they have not connected to their passion, interests, and skillsets.

Created in 2017 by Community and Economic Development Educator Tiffany Macke, the IDREAM - ICREATE program helps foster a habit of dreaming, goal-setting, and taking action. The program helps create a workforce of happy people who have the knowledge and tools to connect to their passion, interests, and skills. To do this, community leaders, the Dream Team, work directly with K-12 students in the classroom. Employers can offer the program to their adult employees.

In 2021, the IDREAM - ICREATE program continued in the Marshall School District, despite COVID. The Marshall Dream Team volunteers were one of the first community groups approved to return to the schools.



1,863

Total educational contacts

New collaborations in 2021 included the Marshall Head Start, Marshall Public Library, and Paris Public Library.

With the help of several University of Illinois campus resources, the pilot curriculum is receiving improvements. In addition, three new school districts plan to implement the IDREAM - ICREATE program in the Spring of 2022.

With more audiences participating in the program, more people will have the skills to foster a positive attitude toward dreaming and having an entrepreneurial mindset. This new knowledge will give them the confidence to change their behavior, learn from failures, and celebrate successes.

Illinois Extension helps National Road Project become reality

When multiple parties come together because of a similar interest, it doesn't always spell success. Having clear goals, structure, and regular information sharing can magnify an organization's impact. One such example of successful collaboration is Illinois Extension's role in the National Road Trail Project in Clark County.

Tiffany Macke helped create a cohesive group that now has one voice and is able to move forward.

JOHN TARBLE



Collaborating and learning

Community and Economic Development Educator Tiffany Macke is the facilitator bringing together individuals interested in preserving a valuable piece of the county's history. Creating a multi-use trail system will foster health, wellness, tourism, and economic development for Clark County. By bringing together multiple parties, idea sharing and a deeper understanding of needs can occur.

Collaborating to coordinate current efforts

By assembling interested parties, the working committee for the Clark County Board has organized public meetings, invested \$70,000 for a feasibility study, and begun to formulate a plan. Macke's role in aligning the committee's efforts allowed the group to experience progress in 2021.

Collaborating to develop solutions

Because of Illinois Extension's involvement, the National Road Trail Committee members and community volunteers had opportunities to donate over 350 hours toward the project. The value to the county, including the county board investment, is close to \$80,000. The group is looking forward to reviewing the Strategic Plan and completing the feasibility study in 2022.

Illinois Extension involvement was key in making the National Road Trail a reality. Macke's efforts led to a concerned citizen purchasing property with significant resources.

TOM HINTZ



Learn more at
go.illinois.edu/cce



Entrepreneurship curriculum benefits everyone



Teaching entrepreneurship in schools benefits students of all ages and backgrounds. As part of their iCREATE curriculum, Illinois Extension uses a self-created game to encourage youth to think outside the box and use unconventional skills.

Focusing on creativity, entrepreneurial characteristics, soft skills, and branding, youth learn how to apply them in one's personal and professional life. This educational program is used in all grade levels and paired with the iDREAM courses.

As part of their hometown tour day, third graders stopped by the Marshall Library to learn entrepreneurship with Tiffany Macke.



Braylon Huffington (left) and Kayla Griguhn (middle) play the Entrepreneur Game with Illinois Extension educator Tiffany Macke and learn why it's important to spend money in their home town.



Even adults need to take time to dream



Who hasn't found themselves dreaming of something they hope to achieve one day? Dreams can excite us for the future. But, how do we get there?

The answer is through goal setting. Without goals, our dreams don't have much chance of becoming reality. Using her iDREAM adult curriculum, Illinois Extension educator Tiffany Macke led a virtual workshop for adults who wanted to learn skills to connect to their passions, interests, dreams, and goals.

In six sessions, participants gained knowledge using dream inventory, visualization, action, accountability, failure, and gratitude to guide them through the process of attaining their dreams.

Since the iDREAMS class, I think about my dreams weekly, if not daily. I have already captured two of my dreams.

HOPE DENNIS



As COVID-19 continued to impact governments, businesses, and communities, Illinois Extension's Local Government Education program increased its outreach aimed at economic investment and community vitality, workforce development, leadership, policy, equity, and resiliency. By partnering with state leadership and organizations in Illinois, the Illinois Extension Community and Economic Development team has provided outreach aimed to help local governments and residents build capacity to strengthen their communities and organizations and improve public services.



Access past and future programs
<https://go.illinois.edu/LGE>

Statewide Webinar Reach



60
Webinars in 2021



2,003
Individuals Learned about Leadership, Public Service, and Community Involvement



1,094
Individuals Learned about Meeting Needs of Diverse or Vulnerable Populations



3,955
Individuals Reached in Economic and Financial Stability Webinars



1,043
Reached in Economic Vitality and Community Resiliency Webinars

Community-Driven Broadband Reach



1,228
Community Leaders Educated on Broadband Expansion Opportunities



714
Participants Educated on Obtaining Funding and Needs Assessment



416
Individuals Reached on Broadband Project Management

The University of Illinois Extension's community and economic development team helps communities build capacity for creative and informed decision-making to enhance their quality of life.



POLLINATOR POCKETS

Unfortunately, pollinators are in perilous decline for a myriad of reasons, including loss of native areas. We rely on pollinators for the majority of our food. The Illinois Extension Pollinator Pocket program helps gardeners plant pollinator-friendly gardens by teaching which native plants to use, how to plant in clumps of similar flowers, how to design areas to have a variety of flowers to bloom all season, and how to provide a pesticide-free garden. The Edgar County Master Gardeners planted this pollinator pocket garden outside the office of the Edgar County Farm Bureau.



Learn more at go.illinois.edu/pocket



LOCAL MASTER GARDENER INTERVIEWED BY WTWO TV

A vital step in almost any garden is testing the soil. Edgar County Master Gardener Jan Phipps was interviewed in May 2021 by Tom McClanahan from WTWO's Valley Ag Today. Jan discussed why a gardener should test their soil, how to test the soil, and what the test reveals about the soil. To watch Jan's interview and learn more about how and why you should test your garden and flower bed soil, visit go.illinois.edu/WatchJansInterview.



Learn more at go.illinois.edu/HowToSoilTest



MASTER NATURALISTS HELP RID PARK OF INVASIVE SPECIES

Garlic Mustard is an invasive plant that threatens our natural areas due to its prolific spread and lack of natural inhibitors. On April 30, Arbor Day, Master Naturalist volunteers gathered at Blackhawk Park in Edgar County to do their part in controlling this invasive plant. The volunteers pulled the Garlic Mustard, put it in garbage bags, and carried it out of the woods since it would continue to set seeds even after being pulled. The volunteers had opportunity to pause and listen and watch the warblers in the park.



Learn more at go.illinois.edu/GarlicMustardFacts



CELEBRATE NATIVE PLANTS

Spring is a great time to clean out flower beds and refresh them for a new year of production and enjoyment. The Clark County 4-H Federation members, 4-H'ers in grades 8-12, gathered at Lincoln Trail State Park to tidy up the pollinator beds.



Learn more at go.illinois.edu/GrowNativePlants



Ensuring food safety and quality

Foodborne illnesses affect 48 million Americans each year. Illinois has an estimated 500 cottage food businesses, and we want those food products to be safe for consumers. The Cottage Food Operation Law, first enacted in 2012, was amended in 2018 and again in 2022, thanks to the efforts of Illinois Extension educators Jenna Smith and Mary Liz Wright. Wright serves residents of Clark, Crawford, and Edgar counties.

In cooperation with the Illinois Stewardship Alliance and the Illinois Department of Public Health, Smith and Wright provided food safety expertise to assist writing the proposed amendment, making certain food safety practices were a part of the proposal. Their focus was on the processing of acidified and fermented foods.

Partnership is key.

To help cottage food operators better understand the law, Illinois Extension presented several webinars to hundreds of participants, both with the Illinois Stewardship Alliance and the Illinois Farmers Market Association (ILFMA). Wright is currently serving as the cottage food expert on the ILFMA board. In this capacity, she has delivered the Cottage Food Update presentation to several in-person and online workshops, including the Illinois Specialty Growers Conference.

As someone just getting into cottage food, I feel I have more resources at my disposal.

A WEBINAR PARTICIPANT

To further ensure the public will follow the new law, Smith, Wright, and Adena Wilson, Extension online instruction specialist, are developing an online course for cottage food operators. This comprehensive course will cover all aspects of delivering a safe and wholesome product to consumers. This course will roll out in Spring 2022 for a nominal fee.

Real change takes place.

The Governor signed the amendment to the Cottage Food Law that took effect in January 2022. Due to Smith's and Wright's commitment to ensuring this law necessitates safe food handling and processing practices, Illinois Extension has potentially reduced the instances of harmful foodborne illnesses caused by unsafe food preparation. In addition, we have proven our value to the Illinois Stewardship Alliance and strengthened our partnership.



Learn more at
go.illinois.edu/cottage



Online course receives updates

While we worry that adults and children don't spend enough time in nature and know little about the source of their food, we can be hopeful things are changing. The pandemic revealed an increase in interest in where food comes from, and with that, gardening.

Mary Liz Wright and the Illinois Extension School Garden Team expanded the school garden curriculum to an online format in response to this interest. Wright was instrumental in creating the food safety and nutritional lessons.

Created for teachers, administrators, and adult volunteers, this online course allows school educators to learn at their own pace, in real-time, with the team of instructors reviewing assignments and answering questions via email. In addition to the online communication, school garden organizers are encouraged to join team members for live, virtual question and answer sessions periodically.

Subjects covered in the course range from creating community support to the nutritional content of typical Midwest garden produce to selecting a site for the garden.



Teamwork is rewarded

Learning to preserve food at home properly requires food safety knowledge and skill to ensure food's long-term safety and quality. The Illinois Extension Nutrition and Wellness team earned first place by the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences for its marketing package of the Fill Your Pantry Home Food Preservation webinar series.

Illinois Extension educators reached 1.8 million people with their 2020 marketing of the webinar series and 31 Days of Home Food Preservation social media campaign. Mary Liz Wright, nutrition and wellness educator in Clark, Crawford, and Edgar counties, was a team member, receiving recognition in 2021.

It is estimated that foodborne illness represents an annual burden to society of approximately \$36 billion, with an average cost burden of \$3,630 per illness.



Learn more at go.illinois.edu/FillYourPantryWebinars



First steps in dealing with diabetes

According to the CDC, 10.5% of the United States population has diabetes. A diagnosis of diabetes doesn't have to leave one feeling alone. Those with diabetes have more resources than ever before.

Illinois Extension regularly offers in-person and virtual classes and provides online resources for those with the disease and for their family members. A nutrition and wellness educator, Mary Liz Wright, taught one such course at the Marshall Public Library.

Participants learned to set realistic goals, what their body is going through, what to eat, and how to stay active. A second session introduced different resources and available services.



Participants of the diabetes program at the Marshall Public Library use images of food to build a healthy meal.

Healthy habits can be learned

Rural communities are at higher risk of food insecurity and nutritional deficiency. Because summer is a great time for families to set new goals to eat healthier and exercise more, Illinois Extension Educator Susan Sloop offered the Healthy Habits 12-Day Challenge in June.

Developed by the National 4-H Council and the Walmart Foundation, this challenge allowed families to commit to two weeks of eating healthier, being more active and mindful, and feeling a greater sense of connection with each other.

Using the influence of young people, teen teachers provided a portion of the daily online lessons. Each lesson included a mindful activity to facilitate being present in the moment, a physical activity to promote a healthy habit, and a kitchen activity to teach a skill or nutritional tip.

Before the challenge, registered families received a free kitchen essentials kit in the mail.





Nutrition and Wellness Educator Mary Liz Wright conducts a live online cooking demonstration as part of the Healthy Eats for a Healthy Beat educational series.

Health education is accessible for all using live and recorded sessions

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, more than half of Illinois adults have a known chronic health condition. People of all ages need reliable research-based information and strategies to make healthy decisions that improve their quality of life. Creative solutions are required to assure these supports are available when and where people need them.

One creative solution has been to offer live, online educational sessions for the public to join or watch recorded versions later at their convenience. Health at Home: Healthy Eats for a Healthy Beat was offered during February, American Heart Month. These four free 30-minute sessions explored essential nutrients for improving heart health, followed by a live food demonstration showing how to prepare a heart-healthy meal.

Topics addressed were sodium, fats, fiber, and sugar consumption. Local nutrition and wellness educator, Mary Liz Wright, presented the live cooking demonstration during the fiber session. She showed the public how to make black bean burgers and black bean blueberry smoothies.

Visit go.illinois.edu/FiberRecipes to print out these fiber-rich recipes.

Visit go.illinois.edu/FocusOnFiber to view the entire Focus On Fiber webinar and see the cooking demonstration.

A multi-faceted approach to healthy living on a budget

Learning to eat healthy on a budget is a hallmark of the SNAP-Ed program. Other areas of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education include:

- **Find Food IL** website to help participants find places in their community offering free food or meals.
- **Eat.Move.Save** website which promotes fun activities to get the whole family moving, along with recipes that taste great and is easy to prepare.
- **School programming** to teach elementary students how to keep their bodies healthy.

The students absolutely love your videos. They seriously listened and paid attention and participated. It's wonderful to have you back, even if it's through video.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER, ROBINSON

SNAP-Ed community workers Hope Dennis and Tammy Evans spend their days visiting food pantries where they teach about specific food topics and provide healthy recipes for participants. They also provide the *OrganWise Guys* program to elementary students. Using the fun body-part characters from the *OrganWise Guys* curriculum, Dennis and Evans engage youth through games, books, and videos to teach healthy living topics. Students who participate in this program are shown to have improvements in weight, BMI percentile, blood pressure, and test scores.



SNAP-Ed Community Worker, Hope Dennis, provides programming via video to a second grade class at Kansas Elementary School.



Learn more at go.illinois.edu/eatmovesave





Local teen learns healthy living skills

While some of our day-to-day activities returned to a pre-pandemic status in 2021, other areas did not. Many youth still found themselves uncertain about how COVID-19 may continue to impact their lives. Their physical, emotional, and mental health continued to suffer. Fortunately, 4-H youth now have the tools to become healthy living changemakers right in their communities through the leadership of prominent lifestyle and health experts at the 2021 National 4-H Summit for Healthy Living.

Illinois 4-H youth represented our state as facilitators, speakers, and ambassadors. One ambassador was Crawford County's Dannika Fulling, a 10th grader at Palestine High School. Dannika is a 7-year 4-H member with a personal interest in healthy living. She says her parents introduced her to healthy living through camping, hiking, and other outdoor activities. She says it was an honor to be chosen as an ambassador for Illinois, and especially to represent Crawford County. She says she will use the skills she learned in the summit, such as paying it forward, learning how to cope with stress, and working as a team, in her own life and her community.

Designed for grades 9 through 12, the summit brought together teen health leaders from across the country to focus on helping teens develop the knowledge and skills to address today's issues facing nutrition education, physical fitness, wellness, and emotional well-being. Fifteen teens were chosen to represent Illinois at the conference as 4-H Healthy Living Teen Ambassadors. Over 500 ambassadors gathered for this virtual conference.

In the fall of 2021, Dannika Fulling and Crawford County 4-H program coordinator April Knoblett held the Food, Fun, and 4-H program for local elementary students. The five afterschool workshops held at the local library focused on healthy habits regarding food and exercise and positive mental health activities. Fulling says it was a good feeling to use her newly learned skills to pass on knowledge to youth in her community.



Dannika Fulling, a student at Palestine High School, represented Crawford County and Illinois at the 2021 National 4-H Summit for Healthy Living.



One of the 4-H club scarecrow displays placed next to a Healthy Trails Campaign sign along the Airstrip Trail at Lincoln Trail State Park in Marshall.

Healthy Trails campaign comes to Lincoln Trail State Park



Deciding to move more can have a positive impact on our physical and mental wellbeing. During fall, Illinois Extension educators encouraged residents to become more physically active and practice mindfulness, dreaming, and goal setting.

By partnering with Lincoln Trail State Park in Marshall, Tiffany Macke, Mary Liz Wright, and Susan Sloop created the Healthy Trails Campaign. They placed seven signs along the Airstrip Trail inside the park, starting in October 2021. This date coincided with a scarecrow display contest for local 4-H clubs which increased visibility. Each sign had an activity for participants to complete while on the trail with a link to learn more information on the Illinois Extension website.

Walking is one of the simplest ways to be active, and local parks and trails are free to use.

MARY LIZ WRIGHT

Macke, who teaches others how to set personal goals, says taking a mindful walk in nature can enhance the physical benefits. Sloop says the signs encourage visitors to take photos along the trail and post them to Facebook using the hashtag #HealthyTrailsCCE.

The educators have plans to expand the Healthy Trails program in the spring and summer of 2022 in Crawford and Edgar county parks.



Learn more at go.illinois.edu/healthytrailsce



4-H is Growing True Leaders

4-H youth programs are empowering and preparing Illinois youth for success both now and in the future.



Opportunity4All

Advancing the mission for all youth in Illinois to be empowered and prepared for success.



These Clark County 4-H'ers enjoyed gathering for their annual awards night. Recognition encourages young people and increases their interest in the opportunities available to them.

Two essential components of positive youth development

A fundamental aspect of 4-H is community service. By allowing youth to meet needs in their community and experience something meaningful, we instill a sense of pride and ownership, build discipline, foster respect for others, and promote civic responsibility.

As restrictions loosened some during the latter part of 2021, more opportunities became available for youth to begin participating in real-world experiences.

Many of the 4-H clubs resumed good works in their neighborhoods, such as clearing debris at cemeteries, collecting food for animal shelters, cleaning out flower beds at local parks, and making decorated lunch sacks to hand out at grain elevators during harvest.

Another central part of 4-H is building life skills through hands-on learning. Fortunately, in 2021, we were able to inspire kids by providing socially-distanced workshops. These activities allow youth to ask adult mentors questions, learn from their mistakes, and share ideas.

4-H'ers learned about making healthy snacks, the importance of being active, learning how to best lead their clubs in their new officer roles, designing, cutting, and affixing custom t-shirt creations, and using an evergreen binding machine to create wreaths from fresh branches.

By providing hands-on activities, we can ensure youth experience the 4-H difference. Because local staff provided safe, socially-distanced activities, Illinois Extension could empower youth to gain skills to lead for a lifetime.





Team building boosts morale

The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically disrupted Illinois Extension staff's regular way of working. Low morale among staff was a natural byproduct of working remotely for much of 2020 and early 2021.



County Director Stacy Woodyard brought the team together to improve company morale, boost motivation, and provide positive reinforcement. The main Extension office is just a few miles from beautiful Lincoln Trail State Park in Marshall.

Staff met on a warm, sunny June day at the outdoor pavilion for a short meeting. Even though employees returned to their offices in March of 2021, co-workers from all three offices had not been together for more than a year.

The pavilion allowed staff to maintain social distance, and co-workers filled it with missed chatter. Soon, the business meeting was underway; the team shared their joys, concerns, and a plan for moving forward.

I really enjoyed being outdoors, spending time with coworkers, and fulfilling one of my dreams of water biking on a lake. The day was a huge morale booster.

TIFFANY CERVANTES,
OFFICE SUPPORT ASSISTANT

After the meeting, everyone was allowed to enjoy the beauty of nature surrounding them at the park, eat at the outdoor restaurant, and enjoy each other's company by playing oversized outdoor games.



Coworkers Susan Sloop and Mary Liz Wright challenge each other to a game of Connect Four while enjoying nature.



After 23 years in the role of Clark County 4-H Program Coordinator, Cartha Gustafson retired in 2021.

Two long-time employees retire

Known for her outgoing personality and open-door policy, Cartha Gustafson coordinated numerous programs for the 4-H'ers of Clark County the past 23 years. She and her husband created the 4-H Jazz Band SPIN Club. Cartha came from a four-generation 4-H family. She is looking forward to riding her mule and traveling with her family in retirement.

A teacher at heart, Kim Trine says she does her best work in a classroom or before an audience. For five and a half years, she served in a classroom role, teaching youth about nutrition. She spent another four years coordinating the Master Gardener and Master Naturalist groups for Illinois Extension.



Kim Trine retired from Illinois Extension after nine and a half years. She worked as a community worker in the SNAP-Ed program and as program coordinator in ag and natural resources.

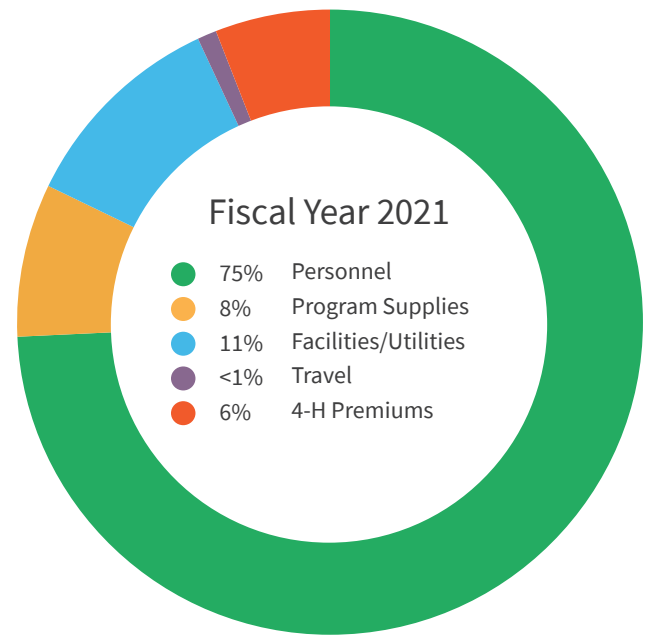
Learn more at go.illinois.edu/cce

Illinois Extension and WMMC, a winning combination

We live in the information age, but what good is knowledge if it isn't shared? One of the best ways to communicate with a community is through local radio programming. Illinois Extension in Clark, Crawford, and Edgar counties has partnered with WMMC Radio in Marshall to bring monthly educational topics to the morning show listeners.

We look forward to many more years of partnering with Illinois Extension to promote their outstanding programs.

JOEY O'ROURKE



Clark, Crawford, and Edgar County Extension is funded through a combination of federal dollars (18%), state dollars (35%), and local dollars (47%), which are returned to the community through educational programming.



167
Total volunteers engaged across all program areas



278
Total educational sessions across all program areas



675
Total 4-H club memberships across three counties

OFFICE INFORMATION

Clark County Extension

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8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Monday - Friday

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Robinson, IL 62454
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8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Monday - Friday

Edgar County Extension

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Paris, IL 61944
(217) 465-8585

8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Monday - Friday

ONLINE



/uiextensioncce



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/What's Cooking with Mary Liz Wright

Cover photo: Susan Sloop works with youth during the after school program SPARK Into 4-H.

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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.

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