



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

2021 Addressing Local Needs,
Solving Global Challenges

Edwards, Lawrence, Richland, Wabash, and Wayne Counties

A Message from the County Director

On behalf of University of Illinois Extension, the staff, and volunteers serving Edwards, Richland, Lawrence, Wabash, and Wayne counties, I want to thank you, the public, for your continued support of Extension this past year. As I sit and think about 2021, I'm pleased to say it was a year we started to get back to some sense of normalcy.



Tara Buerster
County Extension Director

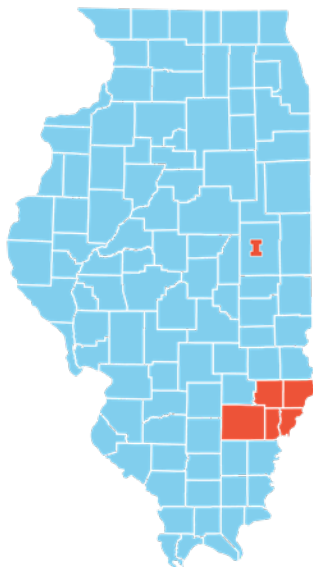
This past year, we saw our programming start to return to more face-to-face events, with all of our 4-H shows and fairs as in-person events. I am thankful for our hard-working staff and volunteers who make those events happen. Volunteers are the heart of our success – 4-H club Leaders, superintendents, judges, Extension Council, Foundation members, Master Gardeners, and others – who have stayed with us during these difficult times. Extension would not be what it is without those willing to give of their time and help.

We continue to be thankful for support from our county boards, foundations, local farm bureaus, individuals, and businesses who trust us to make a difference in our communities. We are so grateful for our community partners and donors who help provide the resources we need to reach our communities and improve their lives through learning and partnerships that put knowledge to work.

We are humbled by the opportunity to provide positive change within our community, and we thank you for the support you have provided our organization so that we can continue to do so. We hope you enjoy this Annual Report that provides just a snapshot of some of the great things that happened in 2021.

Tara Buerster
County Extension Director
Buerste2@illinois.edu

Staff Serving Edwards, Lawrence, Richland, Wabash, and Wayne Counties



STAFF

Yvette Anderson
Program Coordinator, 4-H

Debbie Buchanan
Office Support Assistant

Tara Buerster
County Director

Debra Collier
Program Coordinator, 4-H

Sam Gaither
Educator, 4-H Youth Development

Dana Hart
Office Support Assistant

Kirby Hunt
Community Worker, SNAP-Ed

Jane Jones
Community Worker, SNAP-Ed

Jessica Ochs
Program Coordinator, 4-H

Megan Pierson
Program Coordinator, 4-H

Sheri Pitts
Office Support Assistant

Theresa Reid
Office Support Associate, Fiscal

Jessica Simpson
Office Support Assistant

Carol VanMatre
Community Worker, SNAP-Ed

Lisa Simpson
Office Support Associate, Fiscal
(Retired May 31, 2021)

Savanah Summerfield
Community Worker, SNAP-Ed
(January – July 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.



Little Roots takes root in Edwards County



Edwards County 4-H Tag-A-Longs met at the Extension office on April 17 for a Little Roots Gardening Workshop. The attendees made “growing” bracelets and learned about the six basic elements plants need to grow and thrive. They also learned the three parts of a seed and completed a bean seed dissection.

Twenty-eight of the Tag-A-Long members will be taking part in the Little Roots Gardening program. This program was established in 2018 by University of Illinois Extension-Livingston, McLean and Woodford County educators. The program was piloted in 2020 by two other 4-H programs in the state.

The program increases interest in the 4-H gardening project areas, encourages youth to grow their own food and flowers, and encouraged youth to donate extra to those in need, as well as provide an opportunity for family engagement.

Participants received gardening calendars that guided the youth and an adult in growing six different plants from seed through harvest. They received radish, pumpkin, zinnia, and sunflower seeds, along with tomato and pepper transplants. The calendar provided weekly activities from mid-April through September. The youth learned about caring for their plants, pollination, insects, weather, plant parts, the life cycle, and plant care.



4-H is Growing True Leaders

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



131,628
Youth Affiliations



6,192
Adult Volunteers



1,597
Clubs



47,556
Fair Exhibits



2,159
Programs



2,257
Youth in Leadership Projects & Programs

Opportunity4All

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



24%
Minority Members



12%
Hispanic Members



788
Virtual Programs



142
New Program Sites





A glimpse of Canada

Wayne County Home Extension members held the annual International Night, at the Extension Office with 24 in attendance. Canada was this year's featured country. Sara McGehee of the Country Kids 4-H Club made a presentation about Canada. After the presentation, a meal featuring traditional Canadian dishes was served.



Engineering a boat from a popsicle stick

Lawrence County 4-H believes that every youth should be great creative thinkers to ensure a bright future. These skills were used in an exciting engineering workshop where youth built a popsicle paddle boat. Youth were encouraged to be creative in their designs to build the fastest popsicle paddle boat.



Cloverbuds treat guests

The New Hope Lucky Clovers Cloverbuds hosted a Boo Basket Drive-thru in the community. The 17 members purchased baskets and snack items they thought their friends would like. The members met an hour before their Boo Basket Drive-thru for supper and to fill the baskets for their guests. As the drive thru participants arrived, whomever invited that friend was able to get a basket and take it to their guest. As you can tell by the smiles on the faces, everyone had a wonderful time.



Cloverbud Camp huge hit

Wabash County youth age 4-7 participated in the first Cloverbud Camp. Youth painted flowerpots and planted a flower in their pot to take home. They learned how to keep their flowers growing. The participants painted cloverbud camp shirts with squirt guns, played fun team-building games, and made ice cream in a bag. It was a great opportunity for them to be together and build friendships that will continue to grow as they become 4-H members.





Edwards County teen has a love for her community




Emma Wiseman is a 9-year member of the Ellery Panthers 4-H Club in Edwards County and currently serving as the song and recreation leader. She has held many other positions including vice president. She not only served her club, but also represented her county by serving as president of the Senior Federation during the 2020-2021 4-H year. Emma has served as a leader and takes on leadership opportunities, attends conferences, organizes activities, volunteers at many workshops, participates in various community service projects, and serves on countless committees. Although Emma loves her projects, she really enjoys finding ways to help others and be a part of the community. Emma received the I Dare You Award. The purpose of the I Dare You Award is to dare young people to achieve their highest potential and to influence others through the lives of leadership and service. She also received the Cream of the Crop Award, which focuses on interpersonal leadership, the Soil and Water Conservation Award, and the 4-Her of the year award this past year.



Richland County teens help others be healthier



Illinois 4-H Healthy Teen Ambassadors began in 2021. Richland County 4-H members Victoria Zwilling and Karlee Piercefield were among the 15 ambassadors who attended the National 4-H Summit for Healthy Living. The summit brought teens from across the country together virtually to gain knowledge and skills to address issues facing nutrition education, physical fitness, and wellness. Now, Zwilling and Piercefield are healthy living changemakers in Richland County.



Victoria wins state award



Victoria Zwilling, an 8-year member of the County Clovers 4-H Club in Richland County, received the state award in Natural Resources and Environmental Science for her work in environmental stewardship. Victoria is eager to share her passions with the youth of her community.



4-H in a Bag has been a huge success



January through April, area youth have received a “4-H in a Bag” activity with resources to complete the 4-H at Home activities.

- January: Explosion in a Bag for Tag-A-Long members; What’s in a Bottle for older youth
- February: Fresh Chef
- March: Origami
- April: DIY Birdfeeder

Youth have been very receptive to the at-home kits.



YouTube Channel is a huge hit



Lawrence County Federation youth are dedicated to bringing programs and information to the 4-H members of Lawrence County. During the holidays, 10 federation members made demonstration videos on how to make their favorite holiday treat. They are also creating 4-H project videos to help new members navigate their first year of 4-H. The youth in Lawrence County have really taken the incentive and utilized technology for furthering the 4-H program in our community.



4-H Week is back

Richland County had a jam-packed week of fun during 4-H Week, held the first week in March. Events included a movie night at the Newton Drive-in and a Road Rally. Clubs also participated in painting the county green with window displays to the theme Adventure Awaits. The Federation collected canned food items throughout the week to donate to local food pantries.



Youth learn CPR and first aid

The Wayne County Extension program and Fairfield Rural Fire Department hosted a child and babysitting clinic that included basic first aid and CPR. Six youth attended and received their CPR certification to support their babysitting business.



Food Advocacy Team supports summer lunch program

Edwards County 4-H received a \$1,000 food security grant from the Illinois 4-H Foundation, The Brandt Foundation, and Compeer Financial. These generous donors are investing in the next generation of food access leaders.



Ava and Addison Anderson were instrumental in securing the grant, representing all Edwards County 4-H clubs and members. Ava is a member of this years Food Advocacy Team. The program supports the Albion Ministerial Alliance summer lunch program.

The Food Advocacy Team works closely with the youth-led projects dedicated to creating food security in their community.





4-H'ers get in the Kitchen

Wabash County 4-H'ers made treats as part of a program at the Ruritan Building in Allendale. They measured ingredients, learning the difference between a liquid and dry measuring cup. They mixed the ingredients to make patriotic pancakes on the griddle. Part of the lesson included learning how to tell when their pancake was fully cooked. They learned to chop vegetables and how to cook sausage, so they could incorporate those ingredients into the omelet in a mug recipe. The youth can now make a breakfast meal for their family.



Teens learn tools to help with mental health

Health is an important part of 4-H; after all, there is an H that is dedicated to it. Exercise and good nutrition are part of having good health, as is mental health. University of Illinois Extension partnered with Lawrenceville High School for a six-part series for youth in freshman English. The program, Your Thoughts Matter, teaches youth how to define mental health, how to talk about it with family and friends, and how to help themselves and others. Lawrence County High School Social Worker Mrs. Fitzgerald was present for all sessions.



Youth learn to break stigmas around mental health by altering the language they use, as well as learning how to build their resilience. This series was not intended to be a resource for those in crisis. If you or someone you know is struggling with a mental health issue, please seek professional help immediately.

It is very vital for youth to comprehend the role of mental health in our overall well-being. We want to teach them to be a part of the solution and give them the means to promote action.
SAMANTHA GAITHER, LAWRENCE COUNTY 4-H YOUTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Fall Fun Fest brings new members to 4-H

4-H Fall Fun Fest was held at Beall Woods. The kids met new friends that might be joining 4-H, and they participated in some fall themed games, such as jack-o-lantern matching and fall bingo. They also made pumpkin catapults and magnets. They ended the night with a s'more and hot dog roasted over the fire.



Projects Showcased

Every year, Wayne County projects are displayed at the DuQuoin State Fair in August and September. This allows the hard work of the 4-H members to be showcased to the extended region.





Master Gardeners and 4-H members bring life to our communities

There is growing evidence that exposure to plants and green space provides many benefits, including improved health, quality of life, ability to concentrate, and relationships with others. Sustainable landscapes can create environmental benefits for all through supporting pollinators and other important contributors to ecosystems.

Master Gardeners Darla Bradham and Debbie Fearn worked on a variety of projects throughout Edwards County. They planted containers outside offices in Albion, and with the assistance of 4-H members, planted containers outside a local church. They also assisted the Blue Ribbon 4-H Club with putting in a pollinator garden at the Edwards County Fairgrounds for everyone to enjoy all summer.



4-H Members Skylar Greathouse and Cayden Owings helped Master Gardener Darla Bradham plant containers at a local church.



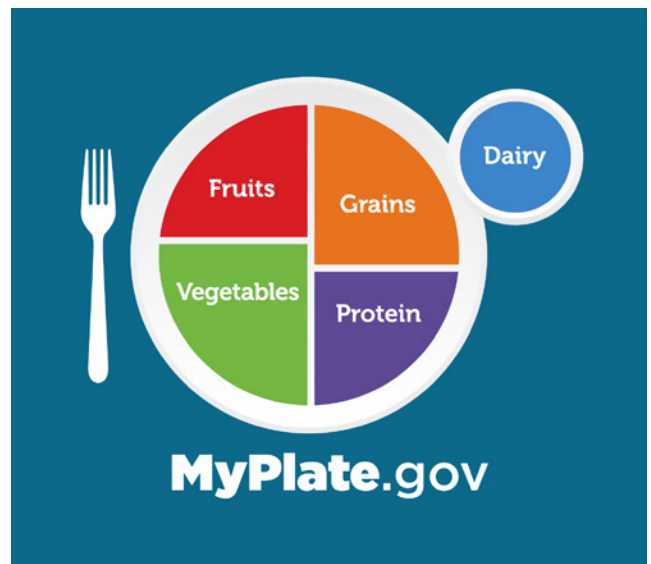
Pre-K students learn to plant

The Master Gardener program participated in the Spring Fling event for Pre-K students and families at Richland Elementary School in Olney. Master Gardener Debbie Fearn taught children about planting flower seeds, and together with County Director Tara Buerster, helped children plant marigold and zinnia seeds in egg cartons to take home and eventually transplant. It was a great evening with 64 children coming through the gardening station.



Virtual nutrition classes help families

The SNAP-Education team created alternative ways to help clients without meeting in person. They transitioned lessons to synchronous and asynchronous instruction. The team brought “My Plate for My Family” lessons to life online and had great participation in the 5-county area.





SNAP Community Workers Carol VanMatre and Savannah Summerfield

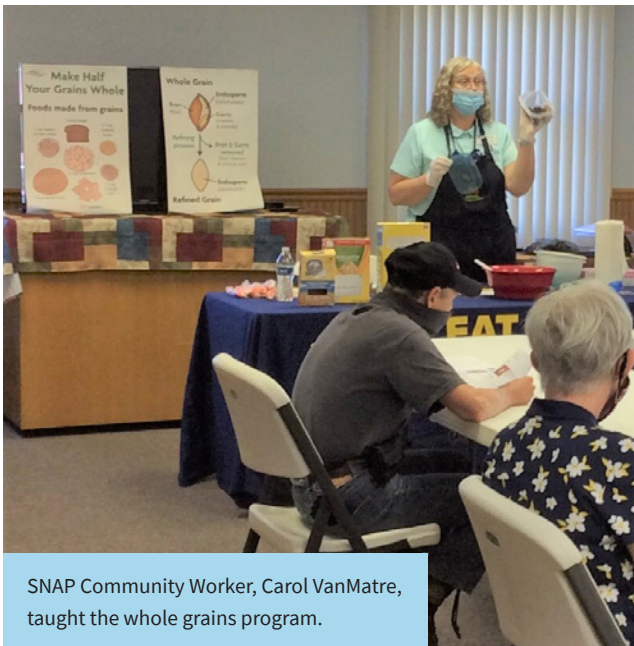
Extension teaches nutrition at Fairfield Summer Reading Program

Carol VanMatre and Savannah Summerfield, SNAP-Ed community workers, provided information on nutrition and physical activity to parents, caregivers, and children in attendance at the Fairfield Public Library's Summer Reading Program.



Whole Grains Class

Carol VanMatre, SNAP-Ed community worker, taught Wayne County residents tips for eating whole grains and making half of their grains, whole. They learned the difference between whole and refined grains, how to read a food label, how to purchase affordable whole grains, and ways to incorporate whole grains in their diet. Staff demonstrated how to make a simple recipe for snack mix.



SNAP Community Worker, Carol VanMatre, taught the whole grains program.

Soils, plants, containers, oh my!

Master Gardeners answered the call when the Boy Scouts of Richland County asked for a program on soils and gardening. Debbie Fearn and Darla Bradham brought soil samples and plants with them. Each Scout making a container to take home.



Master Gardener Darla Bradham showed attendees different soils.



Master Gardeners Debbie Fearn and Darla Bradham are pictured with some of the Boy Scouts and the planters they made during the workshop.



Yes You Can! teaches safe canning

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. Vulnerabilities threaten food safety from the supply source throughout the distribution chain. Practices that enhance safe growing, handling and preservation, serving, and storage all comprise the most effective strategy to reduce the social and economic impact of foodborne illness.

Mary Liz Wright, Extension nutrition and wellness educator, taught basic food preservation in Edwards County. Participants received the latest, home food safety guidelines, learned scientific methods for preserving food safely, and had the opportunity to test their dial-gauge pressure lids.



Educator Mary Liz Wright discusses safe food preservation.



Lisa Simpson retires after years of service to Illinois Extension

With over 35 years of dedicated service to Illinois Extension, Lisa Simpson retired May 31. Lisa served in various clerical roles at the county and unit level during her tenure and ended her career as the fiscal secretary for the unit. A retirement luncheon was held on May 27, followed by an open house at the Wayne County Extension Office. Several attended to wish Lisa well in her new adventures.



Kirby Hunt

SNAP-Ed Community Worker – Richland County

Kirby Hunt joined Extension July 14 as a community worker for the SNAP-Ed programs. She worked in the childcare field for over 20 years. She provides programming in Richland County and assists fellow community workers in other counties.



Dana Hart

Office Support Assistant – Edwards and Wabash Counties

Dana Hart joined Extension on July 20 as an office support assistant and works out of the Edwards and Wabash County offices. Dana grew up in a Jasper County 4-H family, and her father worked and retired from Extension. Dana previously worked for several years in the local community college system. Dana enjoys interacting with the community members and youth involved in the programs provided by Extension.



Jane Jones

SNAP-Ed Community Worker– Edwards and Wayne Counties

Jane Jones joined Extension on November 29 as a community worker for the SNAP-Ed program. She has many years of field experience working with youth and families in various capacities. Jane offers programming in Edwards and Wayne counties. She looks forward to bringing her agricultural connections and appreciation for the foods we consume into her programs.



EXTENSION COUNCIL MEMBERS

Kathy St. Ledger, Chair
Terry Bruce, Vice-Chair
Justine Basnett, Secretary

Rhiannon Anderson
Kelley Biggs
Jim Brewer
Paul Bruinsma

Haleigh Buchanan
Kacie Haag
Sara McGehee
Tonya Potts

Doug Raber
Jan Ridgely
Don Robbins

OFFICE INFORMATION

Lawrence County

10722 Cherry Blvd.
Lawrenceville, IL 62439
(618) 943-5018
Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 4:30 PM
(Closed 12 - 1 PM)

Edwards County

350 N 7th St
Albion, IL 62806
(618) 445-2934
Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 4:30 PM
(Closed 12-1 PM)

Richland County

306 South Fair Street
Olney, IL 62450-2236
(618) 395-2191
Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 4:30 PM
(Closed 12-1 PM)

Wabash County

738 N. Market
Mt. Carmel, IL 62863
(618) 262-5725
Tuesday - Thursday, 8 AM - 4:30 PM
(Closed 12-1 PM)

Wayne County

2B Frontier Dr
Fairfield, IL 62837
(618) 842-3702
Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 4:30 PM
(Closed 12-1 PM)

ONLINE



Search: Edwards County 4-H

Search: 4-H Lawrence County Illinois

Richland County Illinois 4-H
<https://www.facebook.com/RichlandCountyIllinois4H>

Search: 4-H Wabash County, Illinois

Wayne County 4-H
<https://www.facebook.com/wayne.county.il.4h>

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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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