



EXTENSION
IN ACTION

Serving Bond, Clinton, Jefferson,
Marion, and Washington Counties

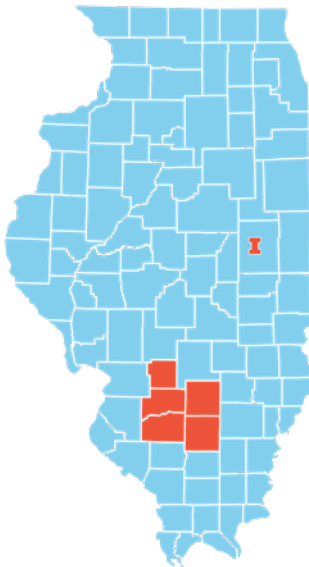
ILLINOIS EXTENSION 2022





Jordee Koehler
County Director

Addressing Local Needs Through Community Partnerships



Each year, we curate this look back on our impact for our community leaders. The report you are reading today culminates thousands of staff hours and, equally critical, volunteer hours. In this summary of our work by impact area, you will see the numbers spotlighting our reach, whether it is through 4-H programs, health education sessions, or pounds of food donated.

By “our reach,” I mean our greater community.
By “our reach,” I mean you.

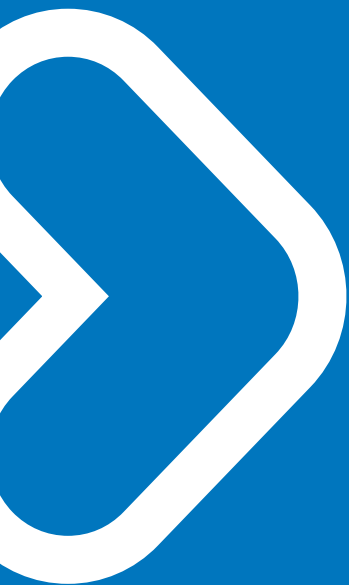
At University of Illinois Extension, we provide solutions with research-based strategies and empower leaders throughout Bond, Clinton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington counties. With our core attribute of leading with research, we conducted a Community Needs Assessment over the last year. One of the resounding themes in the outcomes report is the need for

improving financial literacy in our community. In this report, you will see how we are helping create a stronger community by incorporating financial literacy across all program areas.

Our community sponsors are listed on page 11 of this report. I hope to strengthen each of these partnerships through creative new ways we can continue to advance similar missions. I also aim to add many more partners to this list over the next year. Once you dive into these pages, you will undoubtedly see opportunities for your organization to actively team up for greater impact.

Many thanks for all you do.

Jordee Koehler
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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Community



Connectedness and Inclusion

A strong sense of community brings people together to support each other in times of need and growth. Accepting and celebrating differences creates an environment where all voices are important and heard. When strong networks of peers and organizations support youth and families, even the most vulnerable community members feel they belong and are valued.

In 2022, the 4-H team grew by adding a second youth development educator position. Bond, Clinton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington counties cover a large geographical area. In 2023, Kara Boozer and Amber Heern will focus on supporting area schools and teachers with research-based programs and materials they can use in the classroom. 4-H youth development classroom curriculum meets current state learning standards and can be adjusted to meet various classroom schedules.

Youth Programs Build Community

The 4-H program staff works to foster youth educational opportunities that encourage a sense of belonging. One of those activities is an open house in the fall for potential members and current members. The open houses allow new members to meet club leaders and get a taste of what 4-H offers, including a look at a wide range of projects.



Find out more about our 4-H programs.
extension.illinois.edu/bcjmw/youth-programs

Older members and leaders assist with various project and activity stations throughout the event. More than 120 youth attended the four open houses offered in 2022. In addition, 30+ adult volunteers helped facilitate the program.

Members Grow Through Service

Community service is a key component of the 4-H program. The 4-H pledge challenges members to pledge their hands to greater service. Throughout the year members have the opportunity to participate in community service activities with their clubs, their county 4-H program and with other counties in the area.

During National 4-H Week, youth from Bond, Clinton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington counties came together to complete more than 30 seasonal door decoration wreaths. The wreaths were then donated to area nursing home and assisted living facilities in each county.

Thriving Youth

Thriving youth are the core of healthy, robust communities. Illinois Extension's mentorship-based youth development model focuses on social competence, academic success, career development, and community connection. The 4-H experience creates opportunities and environments for all youth to thrive now and in the future.



Show of Champions

Over the summer, local youth development staff offered a Show of Champions for top-placing 4-H exhibitors from Bond, Clinton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington counties. This event drew together 144 members with the same project interests. They exchanged ideas and saw projects from different perspectives.

Programs like this offer youth and leaders opportunities to strengthen their sense of belonging and inclusion in 4-H activities. The Show of Champions will be an annual event, rotating between our five counties. It's success sparked interest in a similar regional event for 4-H families. Youth staff from southern Illinois are working to offer a regional Show of Champions in the fall of 2024.

4-H by the numbers



880
4-H Members



1,977
4-H Projects Exhibited



102
4-H Clubs



130
Volunteers



3,666
4-H Experiences

Involvement and Leadership

When people volunteer or advocate for a local issue, they see themselves as part of the solution. Providing decision-makers with practical, timely, and research-based information gives leaders the tools they need to strengthen their communities and improve the quality of life in rural and urban areas throughout Illinois.



221
Volunteers across all program areas



\$402,625
Volunteer value across all program areas

Community partnership and involvement is a vital part of Illinois Extension. Local offices utilize volunteers for a wide range of programming needs. This allows a broader reach of educational content. More notable volunteer opportunities are 4-H leaders, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, and Advisory Council members. Additionally, Illinois Extension uses short term volunteers to judge at 4-H shows, teach workshops, help at community service events, and serve on committees.



Find out more about volunteer opportunities..
extension.illinois.edu/bcjmw/volunteer





Environment



Enhancing and Preserving Natural Resources

The survival of our planet depends on the quality of our water, land, energy, and air. These shared resources must be managed through sustainable practices that support ecological balance. In a changing climate, Illinois Extension helps Illinois residents make informed choices on stewardship of these natural resources to ensure sustainable environment and ecosystems supporting healthy living and climate resilient communities.

Bat Walk Draws New Audience

In August of 2022, Extension staff working in agriculture and natural resources hosted a Bat Walk in Centralia. The first program of this kind was a hit in the community. More than 40 people registered, most new to Illinois Extension programs.

The program focused on the ways to co-exist with bats in human-altered landscapes. Attendees learned about roosting, bat behavior, foraging, and how to observe and study bats in nature. The walk started at Centralia Community Youth Center and traveled to a local prairie land nature area at Centralia Foundation Park. The location made this program easily accessible for Centralia residents in a low income area who live within walking distance of the community center and park. The Bat Walk was a family-friendly event, with a mix of youth and adults of all ages. One couple shared that they were attending as a “date night.”

Engagement with Home and Community Landscapes

There is growing evidence that time spent around plants and in green spaces has many benefits, including improved health, better interpersonal relationships, and a higher quality of life. Sustainable home landscapes also increase property values and build stronger ecosystems for plants and wildlife.

Master Naturalist Training Welcomes Families

Master Naturalist certification has been slowly declining across the state in recent years. With Christina Lueking, horticulture educator, leading the charge, Extension engaged 10 new families with Master Naturalist activities during the summer. The effort was primarily made possible due to the work the 4-H team also contributed. Kara Boozer, youth development educator, came alongside the ag and natural resources team to develop and offer age-appropriate, interactive, fun projects for youth that coordinated with the curriculum all summer.

While their parents engaged in Master Naturalist lessons on pollinators, weather, forests, entomology, botany, and ornithology, youth participated in activities, including an outdoor scavenger hunt, a wooden snake craft, weed identification, and pollinator tagging.

Participant survey results indicate that the hybrid format was well received by busy families. The newly trained Master Naturalists are looking forward to the ways they can use what they have learned.



Food

Lavender Farm Interest Is on the Rise

As lavender farms gain notoriety in southern Illinois, local residents consider the viability of adding lavender to their landscaping or even growing it for resale. Seeing an increase in lavender questions, horticulture educator Christina Lueking presented a program on growing lavender in the 6a, 6b growing zones of southern Illinois.

Lueking shared which varieties can be grown for floral or essential oils, creating valued-added commodities for growers in the area, as well as pruning and harvesting details. The group toured a local commercial growers farm and saw the steam distilling process of the lavender for the oils.



91
Master Gardener and Master Naturalist Volunteers



1,784.75
Volunteer Hours Donated



586.50
Volunteer Continuing Education Hours



1,128
Pounds of Produce Donated

Food Production

Whether large commercial agriculture operations, small farms, or community and backyard gardens, the future of our food supply relies on use of practices that boost production and capacity. Growers at all levels benefit from effective, efficient, and sustainable approaches to cultivating produce, crops, and livestock that feed their families, communities, and the world.



Growing Together Grant Supports Community Gardens

Through the Growing Together Illinois grants, our teams have increased access to fresh fruits and vegetables in low-income communities to help food-insecure families. Grant funds help repair garden beds and purchase supplies to plant and harvest produce at two locations, Mt. Vernon Community Garden (\$1,900) and Salem Community Garden (\$2,000). With staff support, community volunteers — including 4-H members and Master Gardeners — grow and donate their harvest to local food pantries, including the Salvation Army Food Pantry in Centralia and Park Avenue Food Pantry in Mt. Vernon. More than 1,000 pounds of produce were donated.

The SNAP-Ed team then visited the food pantries to provide nutrition programming on how to prep, cook, and store the produce. Using the MyPlate for My Family curriculum, they shared recipes aligned with the produce donated to the food pantries.



Learn how you can get involved.
extension.illinois.edu/bcjmw



Health

Chronic Disease Prevention and Management

More than half of Illinois adults have a known chronic health condition, with many facing inequities that make improving their health more challenging. People of all ages need trusted and reliable research-based information to make health decisions that improve their quality of life. With our community partners, we deliver creative and sustainable solutions to assure that these supports are available when and where people need them.

Illinois Junior Chefs

Safe and Healthy Kitchen Habits for Youth

The Illinois Junior Chefs (IJC) program is a big hit every summer. IJC is a week-long cooking day camp for youth ages 8-13. Participants learn cooking basics to prepare healthy meals for their families, along with kitchen and food preparation safety practices. SNAP-Ed staff members offer IJC in communities where a significant number of youth are eligible for free and reduced lunches. Approximately 140 youth attended the ten sessions in Marion and Jefferson counties.

The IJC program is offered to youth free of charge, and they receive their own cookbook with more than 25 recipes they made in class, along with additional healthy recipes for beginning cooks. SNAP-Ed programs are multi-layered to reach both youth and adults in eligible areas.

I just want to thank you for what you are teaching the kids. Sometimes it takes someone other than Mom to get kids to try something new!

Illinois Junior Chefs participant's parent

Healthy and Safe Community Environments

Personal health decisions are influenced by the broader community and environment where we live. By working together, we can create environments where healthy choices are the easy choices. Classrooms, school cafeterias, food pantries, workplaces, and other environments play an important role in promoting health and wellbeing.

Our Strategy in Action: Healthy Cents

Library Partnership Brings Gardening Fun to Youth

An interest in gardening and healthy eating has sprouted at Centralia Regional Library. SNAP-Ed community outreach worker Krystal Pruden teamed up with library director Diana Donahoo to plan a family event at the library during Spring Break. Ten library patron families participated in the Healthy Cents Container Gardening lesson, which included an egg hunt throughout the library. Pruden, with the help of library staff and Master Gardener Kathy Kingsley, hid Easter eggs filled with planting seeds.



The engaged audience asked about the types of produce they can grow at home and how to take care of their plants. As a result of this program's success, more Illinois Extension programs are planned at Centralia Regional Library and other libraries throughout our five-county area.

Grand prize "golden eggs" were exchanged for garden pots that the youth could paint and use to plant their seeds. Following the egg hunt, families learned about container gardening for small spaces, specifically, how container gardens are used to save money in their grocery budget. The importance of reading and following the seed packet directions was stressed, since that will result in better growth of the plants. They also discussed how and when to start seeds, when to transplant seedlings, and how the whole family can be involved in caring for a container garden.



22,000+
SNAP-Ed Reach



784
Health Education Sessions



23
K-12 School Partnerships



8
Partnerships with Emergency Food Sites



19
Policy, Systems, and/or Environmental Changes Adopted by Partner Organizations



Contact us to partner on programs.
extension.illinois.edu/bcjmw



Economy



Financial Wellbeing

Financial instability can negatively affect physical, mental, and social health and can ultimately lead to bankruptcy. Illinois Extension provides financial wellbeing resources for all ages and life stages which helps improve self-sufficiency, reduces the need for communities to provide support services, and creates opportunities for individuals to protect and build wealth.

New Program Area Growth

In 2022, the unit added a new financial educator and initiated finance programming for Bond, Clinton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington counties. Educator Jamie Mahlandt began a social media campaign on Facebook and Instagram called “Mindful Mondays.” Each Monday, she posts a timely finance-related fact aimed at helping the average consumer. The posts have been widely popular, reaching 13,174 people. Sharing the posts to community pages in the area has also brought new followers to our social media accounts. The likes and follows before initiating Mindful Mondays were 1,303 likes and 1,421 followers. After the first three months of Mindful Mondays, the likes and followers increased to 1,349 likes and 1,482 followers; 3.5% and 4.3% increases, respectively, for the quarter.

The purpose is to launch Extension’s new focus on personal finance to the local community, to reach a large audience quickly, to determine the topic areas that draw the most interest, and provide current information to the community in a timely fashion. Weekly posts are a great way to provide the most current information to the community since social media can garner a large audience in real time. In addition, some educational opportunities are best received in small doses. When it comes to a topic that may seem overwhelming, like taxes, small amounts of information at a time may be

more palatable and effective in supporting a call to action. Providing tools to support behavioral changes in community members is a monumental task that may benefit from a baby-step approach, as small changes may add up to a significant outcome.

One of the benefits of adding a finance program focus is how well it pairs with other program areas. For example, in the spring of 2023, Mahlandt is partnering with youth development educators Kara Boozer and Amber Heern to provide the Welcome to the Real World (WTTRW) program to local middle and high schools. WTTRW is designed as a series of learning activities that culminate in a simulation experience in which youth choose a post-graduation path and make a series of related “real world” decisions like exploring careers, making housing choices, learning to manage their finances, and learning to budget.



2,131
Economy Program Attendance



15
Educational Economy Sessions



13,174
Mindful Mondays Reach on Facebook



85.8%
Needs Assessment Participants that felt Financial Education Will Benefit the Community



Learn more about our Finance programs.
extension.illinois.edu/bcjmw/finances



PLANTS FOR AROMATHERAPY

In January of 2022 at Meyer’s Greenhouse in Nashville, horticulture educator Chris Lueking led a program on growing eucalyptus and curly willow plants to use for winter aromatherapy. The 20 participants learned some of the growing habits, pruning tips and seed starting techniques followed by a hands-on workshop to assemble a hanging bundle for their shower or kitchen. They received garden seeds to start their own plants at home and tips on curly willow designs.

People often focus on growing plants for food or for landscaping, but gardeners grow plants for a wide range of reasons including aromatherapy. Aromatherapy should not be used instead of medical treatment, but it may ease stress, boost feelings of relaxation, and improve sleep.



LIVESTOCK CLINIC

4-H livestock clinics are a great way for youth to learn about caring for and showing their animal science projects. In small counties, it’s hard to conduct a clinic if there are just a few members in a given animal project area. However, when we bring together the members from all five of our counties, we have enough participants to host livestock clinics. In 2022, the workshop day was hosted by Marion County, and it will rotate among our counties at a different location each year. Almost 60 youth attended to learn about their choice of beef, sheep, swine, and goats. Volunteers talked to the members about care and nutrition, along with preparation and showing. Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA) training was also offered for participants. This training is an annual requirement to show in 4-H and many junior show associations. In 2023, Washington County will host the clinic and YQCA training.



POTTING PARTY

In response to the interest in succulents in recent years, Chris Lueking hosted a potting party at Evergreen Plant Co. in Greenville in April of 2022. Lueking led the group through techniques for establishing a new planter and safely transplanting existing plants, as well as long term care. Succulents appeal to a wide age range of plant enthusiasts, and due to their current popularity, they are widely available. This makes them a great project for new and experienced gardeners. They come in a large variety of shapes, sizes, and colors so they are an easy fit to most home decor. An added benefit of succulents is that as they grow and thrive, many are easy to propagate. This is great news for anyone who wants to grow plants on a budget. Ten local residents participated in the event, all of whom were new to Illinois Extension programs.



KEEPING HEARTY HEART PUMPING UP AT RECESS

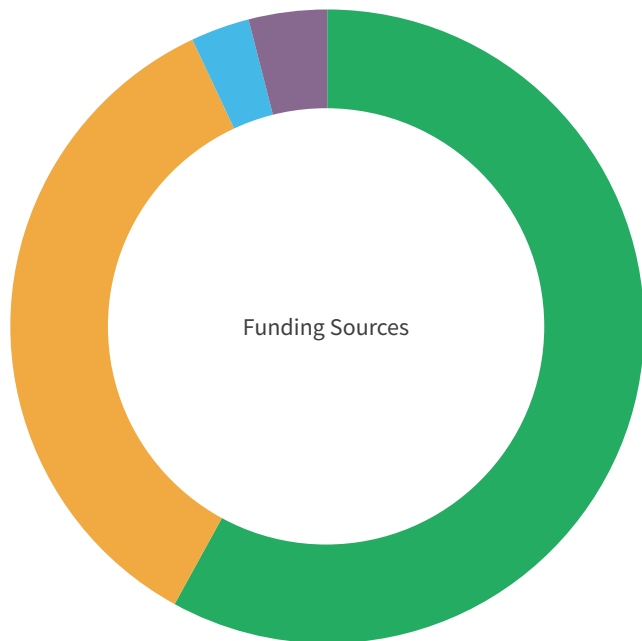
The OrganWise Guys® is an evidence-based program that uses fun characters representing body organs to teach children about making healthier choices. The curriculum is linked with a number of Illinois Learning Standards for kindergarten through second grade. Community worker Kristen Buttrum was thrilled when a Bethel Grade School kindergarten teacher shared that her students talk about ‘Hearty Heart’ at recess. “They run around playing, and stop and say, ‘Let’s check our Hearty Heart and see if we’ve pumped him up.’ They put their hand over their heart and check to see if they can feel it beating fast.” These kindergarten students are learning to make manageable changes for their health that they can see working in their everyday lives. Schools must have 50% of their students eligible for free or reduced lunch in order to participate in SNAP-Ed programming.





Extending Knowledge...Changing Lives

University of Illinois Extension is the flagship outreach effort of University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, offering educational programs to residents in all 102 Illinois counties. Since 1914, Illinois Extension has been an integral part of people's educational experiences. Communities have come to rely on Extension for its practical, research-based educational offerings. Through learning partnerships that put knowledge to work, Extension's programs are aimed at making life better, healthier, safer, and more profitable for individuals and their communities.



- 58% County Government
- 35% Federal Funds (Including SNAP)
- 3% State Match & Ag Premium Fund
- 4% Gifts & Donations



- 60% Salaries
- 4% Program Expenses
- 9% Leases
- 5% Benefits
- 12% Administrative Costs
- 5% Utilities
- 5% Equipment

Community Sponsors

- Bond County Board
- Bond County Home and Community Education
- Clinton County Assoc. for Home and Community Education
- Clinton County Board
- Clinton County Extension Foundation
- Jefferson County Board
- Jefferson County 4-H Foundation
- Jefferson County 4-H Auction Committee
- Marion County Board
- Marion County 4-H Foundation
- Marion County Home and Community Education
- Riechmann Bros.
- Washington County Board
- Washington County 4-H Auction Committee
- Washington County Extension Education Foundation

Thank you to the individuals and businesses who locally supported our funding efforts in 2022.

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Clinton County Extension

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Jefferson County Extension

3452 Broadway
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Marion County Extension

1404 E. Main, Rt 50 East
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ONLINE



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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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