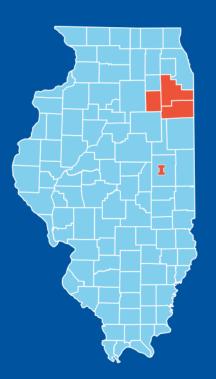




2018 IMPACT REPORT University of Illinois Extension Grundy, Kankakee, and Will Counties

ILLINOIS EXTENSION COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

University of Illinois Extension provides practical education you can trust to help people, businesses, and communities solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future. Based in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, Extension is the statewide outreach program of the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign.



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A Message from the Chancellor

The University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign is an economic engine and a driver of innovation, deeply rooted in the Illinois prairie and engaged statewide, from Cook County to Cairo. Illinois Extension brings the

University to your doorstep. Extension educators live and work alongside you in every county, allowing the university to support local leaders, businesses, farmers, and residents to address grand challenges and everyday problems with practical, research-based solutions. As a youth, my own 4-H experience inspired a rewarding career in agricultural research and higher education. Today, it's an honor to lead this great public university and deepen its commitment to serve the people of Illinois.

Robert J. Jones Chancellor, University of Illinois





A Note from the County Director

Our Illinois Extension unit continues to provide information and skills for our people and communities to make knowledgeable decisions that improve their lives. This report highlights a few of those impactful programs.

On July 31, our counties hosted University of Illinois College of ACES Dean Kim Kidwell as her last stop to complete her commitment to tour every Extension unit in the state since she became Dean in November 2016. She brought with her: Dr. Robert Jones, Chancellor of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Dr. Shelly Nikols-Richardson, Interim Associate Dean and Director of the University of Illinois Extension; Robert Flider, Director of Community and Government Relations in the Office of Chancellor Jones; and Kimberly Meenen, Assistant Dean for Advancement of the College of ACES. Staff, volunteers, partners and stakeholders of our communities shared with them the positive impact of Extension. It was a great honor to showcase the unit and to recognize that campus supports and appreciates our good work in the field.

I have greatly appreciated the opportunity to be a part of the University of Illinois Extension for the past 25 years. It has been my privilege to serve the residents of Grundy, Kankakee and Will Counties in my various Extension positions. I am retiring at the close of 2018 to begin new and different adventures. Thank you for your continued support of Extension.

Beth LaPlante County Extension Director





239

2018 Unit Programs and Outreach



Master Gardener & Naturalist Volunteers 8.049.75

Master Gardener Volunteer Hours

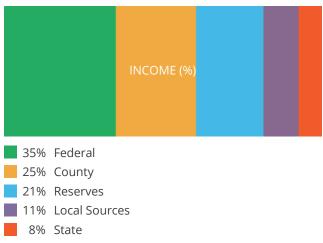
685 4-H Volunteers

14,385 4-H Members & Youth Reached with 4-H

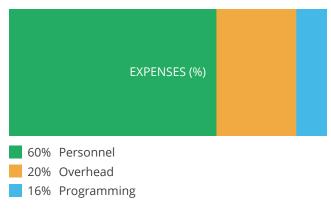
2.018 SNAP-Education Participants

19 **SNAP-Education Partners**

2018 Unit Financial Report



Federal funds include Illinois Nutrition Education Program grant monies. Local funds include donations from 4-H Foundations, 4-H Federations, United Way of Grundy County, United Way of Will County and also program fees.



What We Do & Why It Matters

University of Illinois Extension serving Grundy, Kankakee and Will counties provides research-based resources and programming to the people of these communities. Local program areas include:

- Family and Consumer Economics
- Local Food Systems and Small Farms
- 4-H and Youth Development
- Nutrition and Wellness
- SNAP-Education

Extension provides practical education you can trust to help people, businesses, and communities solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future.



2017-2018 Extension Council

Extension Council is a group of volunteers who each represent facets of their communities, share their needs and concerns, and serve as a catalyst and leader in shaping the vision of Extension for the local counties.

Grundy County Kelly Hitt Kris Kinsella Isabella Warmack Tia Warmack Victoria Wax Kimberly Wysocki

Kankakee County Christina Basham Shelby Basham **Janice Blanchette** Cathy Breeck Lucy James Kelly Knobloch

Will County Karen Bellot Teri Jecmen Karen Keller lim Price **Dianne Ross**

EXTENSION COMBATS CHRONIC DISEASES WITH HEALTHFUL EDUCATION

Chronic diseases are the leading causes of death and disability in the United States. Chronic disease care accounts for 86 percent of our annual healthcare spending. These illnesses develop slowly over time and there are no cures; however, people can live long lives with ongoing medical attention and self-management education. Extension provides low-cost educational programs to help people cope with some chronic illnesses. In 2018, Nutrition and Wellness reached 256 contacts through programs such as: I on Diabetes, Meals for a Healthy Heart, Healthy Brain Food, Diabetes Awareness, and Food and Drug Interactions.





HOME FOOD PRESERVATION PROVES NEW POPULARITY

Home food preservation is enjoying a resurgence. It is critical for people to know the dangers of improperly canned foods and the proper procedures for safety. In 2018, 102 contacts indicated knowledge gained in methods of home food preservation and food safety to reduce risk of mold and bacteria contamination. Audiences included local churches, Master Gardeners, and Certified Kitchen participants, and reported the following knowledge increases:

- Water Bath Canning: 78 percent
- Limited shelf life of home preserved foods: 98 percent
- When to Pressure Can Foods: 68 percent

PARTNERSHIP PROVIDES EDUCATION TO EMPOWER SENIORS TO SERVE

In collaboration with Catholic Charities, Extension provides in-service education for two older adult programs. The Senior Companion and the Foster Grandparents programs offer modest employment for older adults on a fixed income. Senior companions support homebound and needy adults by providing transportation to medical appointments, assisting with simple household needs, grocery shopping and regular social visits. Planned in-service education helps to improve the quality of life for both senior companions and their clients. Foster Grandparents help children to develop academic, school readiness and life skills by sharing their time and experience. Inservice education serves to strengthen these volunteers in their day-to-day activities. In 2018, 110 volunteers received in-service education.





TASTY TUESDAYS SUPPORT COMMUNITY

The places in which people live, learn, work, and play influence both health and wellness. Tasty Tuesdays programming is designed to support the local economy through Farmers Markets and other community buying opportunities. Conducted in a social learning environment through food demonstrations and taste testing, participants learn healthy food is fun and easy to prepare, healthy and tasty. Integrated into each class are food handling tips, food safety, food storage, and food preparation. The methods can be used immediately in the home environment. The three sessions in 2018 included 73 participants.

Northern Illinois Food Bank Partnership

The new Northern Illinois Food Bank South Suburban Center (NIFB) opened in April 2018. This site is a food pick-up point for local churches, soup kitchens, shelters, and other local organizations. According to NIFB, these south suburban counties are some of the highest-need areas throughout northern Illinois, with nearly 80,000 neighbors facing hunger everyday - more than half being children.

Needs assessment and discussion with key leaders in NIFB revealed that several organizations utilizing volunteers had not received the Illinois Department of Public Health required Food Handler Training or Certified Food Protection Manager's Training. According to Feeding America, more than half of all soup kitchens, food pantries and other meal programs rely entirely on volunteers. Although they are well intentioned, volunteers need food safety training too.

In July, Extension collaboration and training began at the new location, 171 S. Larkin, Joliet. This beautiful 18,000square-foot space enables NIFB to serve and train members of their 175 target agencies in Will, Grundy, Kendall, and Kankakee counties. In the first manager certification, 10 volunteers participated, and 10 more joined in a spin-off Food Handler Training held at Mt. Zion Church in Joliet. These volunteer food handlers work in three area churches.

Both training types will be on-going and more training dates are planned. Another 18 area participants received one of the trainings at other sites in 2018, including Camp Shaw-waw-naw-see.

We appreciate our Extension partner and are thankful for the opportunity to collaborate with them to provide local Certified Food Protection Manager Training for volunteers and staff who work directly with serving food at our locations.

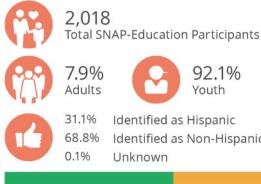
ARCHANA LIGGINS NIFB, AREA AGENCY SPECIALIST



SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EDUCATION (SNAP-EDUCATION)

SNAP-Education staff work with Illinois families in need to make the healthier choice an easier choice where they eat, shop, live, play, and learn. Through classes and workshops, and by collaborating with community partners to adopt research-based solutions to encourage healthier nutrition and activity choices, SNAP-Education positively impacts the families and communities we serve.

Serving Local Families



92.1% Youth Identified as Hispanic

Identified as Non-Hispanic Unknown

RACE OF PARTICIPANTS

- 47.7% White (963)
- **38.8%** Black (782)
- 3.4%
 - American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (69)

Our Community Partners



2018 ILLINOIS EXTENSION IMPACT REPORT 5



Serving Youth in Grundy, Kankakee, and Will Counties

Wherever you live, 4-H is there. Whoever you are, 4-H is the place where you belong and are part of the club, where you serve in the world where you live, where you act on matters important to you, and where you learn to accomplish the dreams you strive to achieve. Illinois 4-H empowers and prepares youth for success — for today, tomorrow, and a lifetime.

Program Reach



RACE

🗖 86 % Caucasian

- 9 % African American
- 5 % Asian, American Indian, Pacific Islander, 2 or more races, or unknown

3% Farm

86 % Non Hispanic14 % Hispanic



25 % Small Town under 10,000

34 % Suburb and Cities over 50,000

38 % Town 10,000 to 50,000



4-H Robotics Interest Continues to Rise

This year, local 4-H members spent hours building and programming their robots to Save the Planet! In addition, three new robotics clubs started, increasing the robotics program in Grundy, Kankakee, and Will counties to 415 youth. For the fifth straight year, the number of youth reached continued to grow.

The National 4-H Council Youth Engagement survey results show that youth in robotics have positive attitudes towards science and feel a sense of belonging in their robotics clubs. Youth reported that they love 4-H Robotics because:

- "I love it because we all get to fail together and win together."
- "It's fun! It makes you think outside of the box."
- "I can be creative, and I can do what I love the most, which is programming."
- "Not only do I get to do something I'm good at, but I can work with a team and do it well."
- "I learn a lot, and I could use what I learn in my future."

Youth in the program continue to learn about engineering and programming by building and programming LEGO robots. Why is this program important? One youth says it best, "I've been here since sixth grade, and the experience that I have is really life changing, and I'm not going to forget that!"



For the fifth straight year, 4-H Robotics SPIN Club participants were on the rise.



4-H Youth Help Fight Hunger

It has been said food insecurity is the "invisible" enemy because it is hard to see a problem when no one talks about it. According to Feeding America, in Grundy County alone, it is estimated almost 1 in 10 people are food insecure. Food insecurity is defined as limited or uncertain access to adequate food – ongoing struggle to avoid hunger. Grundy County 4-H sought to change that.

"When you think of 1 in 10 people, that's huge!" says Nalia Warmack, a 4-H youth who was part of a committee that organized the event. "It would be like walking into a room of 10 friends and realizing that one of them might be food insecure."

Working with Illini Fighting Hunger, a student organization on campus at the University of Illinois, and the State 4-H Office, more than 90 community youth and adults helped pack food in Morris. In total, 18,450 meals were packed resulting in more than 2,000 pounds of food. Packages were distributed by volunteers to local food pantries and crisis relief organizations including: We Care of Grundy County, Immaculate Conception Church of Morris, Help-4-Hope of Coal City, Methodist Church Food Bank of Minooka, and New Hope Presbyterian Church of Coal City.

This food-packing event has shown me how big of an impact can be made when people come together for the benefit of others.

JOSH ROSSI 4-H MEMBER AND EVENT PLANNER

But the impact of this event wasn't only from the food that was packed. It goes deeper than that. "It was wonderful to see the community rally around a positive 4-H event that will impact others in my area," says Josh Rossi, another 4-H youth who helped plan the event. "Participating impacted me by allowing me to serve my community and help others." It was wonderful to see the community rally around a positive 4-H event that will impact others in my area.

JOSH ROSSI 4-H MEMBER AND EVENT PLANNER



Grundy County 4-H hosted an food packing event and provided more than a ton of food for neighbors in need.



Volunteers were affected in a deeply personal way – showing that a little food and whole lot of caring, makes all the difference:

- "It has shown me how big of an impact can be made when people come together for the benefit of others." — 17-year-old volunteer
- "Making meals for others with our community was a great character building experience." — 15-year-old volunteer
- "This was amazing. I feel like I can do anything! I can save the world!" — 6-year-old volunteer





A Culture Kids club member shows her project at state fair.

4-H Club Celebrates Culture, Community

Grundy County is dedicated to expanding its programs to new audiences who could benefit from learning skills that transition into their daily lives and prepare them for future careers. By continuing the collaboration with the English Language Learners program at Morris Elementary School District #54, the Extension educator supplemented teacher curriculums with insect and butterfly programs. The Grundy County Latino Coordinator began presenting evening programs that focused on introducing 4-H programs to school families.

The families who attended were enthusiastic about the opportunities 4-H provides. "I can't believe you offer so much and I never knew you existed!" exclaimed a visiting parent.

Eventually, Grundy County formed the Culture Kids 4-H Club. The Culture Kids started with a community project in which they made tied fleece blankets for an animal rescue. They also planted vegetables in a community garden sponsored by the Grundy County Health Department. Using paper mache, they then created pole puppets that were entered into the 4-H Fair where one was selected to show at the State Fair.

In the short time the kids have worked together, parents are remarking on the improved confidence their kids are exhibiting. "He was always saying he wasn't good at anything and now he's excited about his creation and about what else he can learn," stated a mom.

Fair Time is a Special Time for 4-H'ers

Kankakee County 4-H members filled the 4-H year learning and mastering new skills and preparing for judging events in July and August. At the county level, 216 4-H members chose to exhibit projects, and more than 70 exhibited at the Illinois State Fair.

County highlights included the Garden Tractor Rodeo, which challenges the driving skills for local 4-H members taking the Small Engines project. At the fairgrounds, participants take a written test, driving skills test, parts identification and talk about maintenance procedures. They drive through a designated course using a provided garden tractor with attached mower deck. Scores are based on time and accuracy.



Another great part of fair is the Showman of Showmen Contest. It brings together 4-H'ers from beef, dairy, goat, horse, sheep and swine barns. Competitors are judged in all categories except their own species.





I am proud to be a Will County 4-H member, because it has helped me to get to where I am in life today. It helped me chose a college and career path, and to receive scholarships to help me pay for my endeavors.

BRITTNEY MUSCHETTO 4-H MEMBER

Participant Perspective: 4-H Opened Doors to the Future

4-H graduate Brittney Muschetto attends University of Illinois in the College of ACES, and she plans on a career in Extension after graduation. She credits her 4-H experiences for helping shape her future plans.

"Being a Will County 4-H member has given me many opportunities," she said. "I have had a lot of experience at state and national events. Our counties always have some of the highest representation at these 4-H events."

These opportunities include Junior Leadership Conference, Speaking for Illinois 4-H, and being a part of the Illinois 4-H Youth Leadership Team. Others have attended National 4-H Poultry Judging Contest, National 4-H Conference, and National 4-H Congress.

"We wouldn't be able to attend these events, or have such high representation without the amazing staff, volunteers, and leaders within our 4-H program," Muschetto said. "Each and every person in our counties wants to see our 4-H members succeed and achieve whatever they set their minds on doing."

"I am proud to be a Will County 4-H member, because it has helped me to get to where I am in life today. It helped me chose a college, and career path, and to receive scholarships to help me pay for my endeavors. Thank you to our local Extension unit for being more than just my unit, but for being my friends that have become family."

Exploring STEM Careers with Drones

In 2018, drones flew into our local unit and were a big hit! The 4-H and Extension staff held local programs for youth throughout Will County to teach them about drone flight and the commercial uses for drones.

Eighteen youth attended a full workshop about drone flight and how drones are used commercially, and they had the opportunity to create a drone obstacle course. Another eight youth participated in a three-session summer workshop and learned to fly a commercial drone and take pictures in order to map a "community."

During the summer, more than 75 youth had the opportunity to take part in a Drone 101 mission. They learned how to fly drones and how drone flight can be turned into a future career. Youth created race courses and competed against one another to test their flight skills. Youth in the workshops reported having a positive attitude towards science and STEM careers.

One adult leader reported, "This is great! My kids do not get to experience technology like this. This opens their eyes to many more jobs they don't even know exist."



Consumer Economics: Extension Teaches to Reach More

"All My Money: Change for the Better" is a train-the trainer curriculum designed so that agency staff serving low resource individuals can facilitate personal finance concepts without being experts themselves.

The consumer economics educator trained twelve individuals from Grundy, Kankakee and Will counties on how to facilitate the curriculum to their clients. Lessons include:

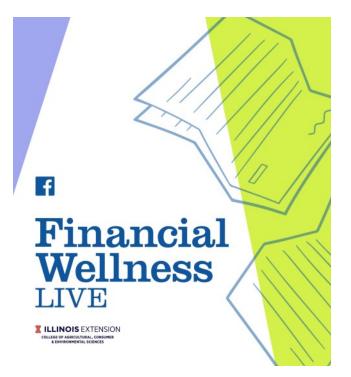
- Who am I with Money?
- Tracking Spending
- Savings
- Spending Plans
- Money Services
- Credit (three sessions)

The training was hosted at the Kankakee County Extension office over two days in September 2018. The facilitator teaches lesson one, and by the end of the second day the participants practice teaching the curriculum to each other. Participants get to experience "All My Money" in a very personal way, since money impacts all of us. They can study the material, learn from it and teach the information quickly.

Participants of the class said that the most useful aspects of the training were the activities, as they "put the information into perspective" and "the materials and facilitating method were very helpful in understanding the details." More training dates are planned for 2019.



"All My Money" is just one example of how Extension Educators teach others to teach so more people can learn.



Extending Knowledge

Coming in 2019: Financial Wellness LIVE

In 2019, a local educator will join two other University of Illinois Extension consumer economics educators for a new Facebook LIVE series. The trio will answer financial life questions and tackle timely topics during monthly lunch-and-learn events live from the state Extension Facebook page.



Check out upcoming LIVE series at https://www.facebook.com/UIExtension/events

Extension Promotes Lifelong Learning

The Kankakee Community College Lifelong Learning Institute offers classes geared toward people age 50 or better. These stimulating, intellectual, and cultural activities are affordable and high quality. Classes take place in an environment that fosters learning and individual participation.

Extension collaborated with Kankakee Community College to provide courses during the spring and fall semesters. Sixty-three enrolled and topics included:

- Eating Well as you Age
- Food and Drug Interactions
- The Internet: Finding Reliable Information
- Healthy Brain Food



Check our website for more learning events https://web.extension.illinois.edu/gkw/

Blueberry Patch Unites Community

Since 2006, every March, volunteers are invited to a 50year-old blueberry patch for a work day, well-dressed for the weather and armed with tools and good cheer. Today, that partnership between University of Illinois Extension and Rehoboth Mennonite Church in Pembroke Township continues to improve the church's patch, which previously had not been maintained for many years. Consequently, it became weedy, bushy and somewhat inaccessible.

Each work day starts with an educational session about growing and managing blueberries and nutritional benefits of blueberries, followed by hands-on activities including: pruning the bushes, weeding, and burning or shredding the cut branches. The work is followed by a luncheon provided by the Rehoboth Church. Volunteers followed up with other tasks, including harvesting and marketing the crop in late summer.

Volunteers report they enjoy their contribution to others, while learning about blueberry production. Some planted blueberries at home. Through this event, the Pembroke Township community has welcomed about 600 visitors to the area, coming as blueberry 'U-Pickers' and/or volunteers. The selfless contribution to support the blueberry patch and church is always much appreciated.



Every March, volunteers come out to help maintain the decades old blueberry patch in Pembroke Township.



A partnership between University of Illinois Extension and Rehoboth Mennonite Church in Pembroke Township has yielded sweet results. About 600 visitors now come to the area to pick and purchase the blueberries.

It's been a 'fruitful' success. We worked hard to restore and improve the productivity of the blueberry patch...We are grateful to Extension's outreach.

ELDER ROSE COVINGTON Rehoboth Church

When asked what impact the Extension-Church partnership had made in the community, Elder Rose Covington said, "It's been a 'fruitful' success. We worked hard to restore and improve the productivity of the blueberry patch. Local community members and others used the forum to socialize. We are grateful to Extension's outreach and we hope the effort will be sustained."

Extension gratefully acknowledges all volunteers, including Rehoboth Mennonite Church for the use of its blueberry patch and meeting room for education. Many groups sent volunteers: Mennonite Church of Champaign, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (also marketed berries), Kankakee County Extension Master Gardeners and staff, Olivet Nazarene University students, Catholic Diocese of Joliet, friends from Indiana (who also provided education on pruning), and The Nature Conservancy for mowing weeds in the patch.

Edible Walking Trail Harvests Benefits

Imagine our public spaces full of plants that produce an abundance of fresh, delicious food each year — edible forest landscapes of fruit and nut trees, berry bushes, and more. Imagine kids, adults, local businesses, and organizations all working and learning together to repair the ecosystem while increasing access to local, sustainable food.

The University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists partnered with the Village of Aroma Park and the Kankakee Elks Club to start the first Edible Walking Trail in Kankakee County.

Edible forests are perennial ecosystems full of a large diversity of fruits, nuts, herbs, vegetables, and wildflowers. Once established after two to three years, forest maintenance becomes minimal or can be discontinued altogether. The benefits of public edible forests include:

- An abundance of healthy free food for generations of people.
- Improved ecosystem health, with more native plants, biodiversity, wildlife and pollinator habitat, healthier soil, cleaner water and air, and sequestered carbon.
- Direct educational experience with plants, ecology, and agriculture for the public.

The plant material used was donated by local gardeners. Each year another 10 feet will be added to the trail. The walking trail wanders along the Kankakee River and through local woodlands. To visit the edible trail, follow the trail to Riggs Grove in Aroma Park.



Extension volunteers team up to start edible trail.



Kankakee Master Gardeners bring beauty to the brave.

Honoring Veterans with New Views

The forgotten landscape beds at the Manteno Veterans Home were an eyesore for all who visited the many men and women who call this facility home. Three master gardeners took this challenge on as their special project of the year, meeting every Monday at 7 a.m. and sometimes spending Saturdays gathering donated plants from area nurseries. Not one plant shop turned down their request for free plants. The fitting red, white and blue theme is carried out throughout the entire multi-acre property.

The Master Gardeners logged many hours meeting and gardening with the Veterans. The work of beautifying this veterans home became contagious. Staff went out on their break time to pull a few weeds. The groundskeepers were taking more pride in their work because it was getting so many compliments. Family members were taking a stroll around to see what new thing had been planted or trimmed since their last visit.

Wanting to take the beautification idea a step further, they were named Kankakee's first Certified Wildlife Habitat. This certification states that they have food and shelter for native wildlife.



To learn more about the Master Gardener and Master Naturalist programs, visit https://web.extension.illinois.edu/gkw/



Partner Perspective: Helping People Grow in Many Ways

Extension education is so much more than learning facts; it is living and learning through doing. The Go Green Garden Club for Adults with Disabilities is a partnership between Cornerstone Services, Trinity Services, Special Recreation of Joliet and Channahon at the Joliet Park District, and the Will County Master Gardeners.

The program meets each week during the six-month growing season, and Master Gardeners teach participants how to start seeds, transplant, and care for and harvest fresh vegetables, herbs and flowers. This program encourages healthy lifestyle through physical activity with gardening, better food choices with fresh produce and simple recipes utilizing what is grown. This long-term program also provides an opportunity for members to increase socialization and take leadership and educator roles within the group.

Melvin B. lives in a small group home setting for adults with developmental disabilities, and he began attending Go Green Garden Club in 2017. "He enjoys the opportunities it has provided for learning, social engagement and connecting with peers from other provider agencies in the area as well as the University Will County Master Gardeners," said his social worker. "Melvin's brother and sister-in-law (his primary family) moved to Maryland in early 2018. The opportunity to engage with others in the Go Green program became even more important to enrich the quality of his life in the community. "

The opportunity to engage with others in the Go Green program became even more important to enrich the quality of his life in the community.... The experience of watching him learn and teach others is priceless.

EXTENSION PARTNER LICENSED SOCIAL WORKER



Melvin B. is a proud member of the Go Green Garden Club mentored by the Will County Master Gardeners.

During a visit to see his family in Maryland, Melvin asked his brother and sister-in-law to purchase a flat of flowers when they were shopping. Upon return to their home, Melvin took great pride in teaching them how to dig a hole, prepare the roots of the flowers for transplanting, plant the flowers, water the flowers and provided instruction for ongoing care of the flowers.

"Although, as a Licensed Social Worker, I am very aware of Melvin's ability to learn and educate others, the experience of watching him learn and teach others is priceless," she said.

"Melvin often makes self-deprecating comments referencing a childhood where he was often bullied and picked on because of his developmental disabilities. And even more valuable, is that Melvin believed in his own learning from Go Green that he felt confident to teach others and pass his knowledge forward. Go Green is not just about growing plants, it is ultimately about growing people."



Learn more about Master Gardener programs https://web.extension.illinois.edu/gkw/



College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

ACES Dean Visits Local Counties

On July 31, University of Illinois College of ACES Dean Kimberlee Kidwell visited our local unit as her last stop to complete her commitment to tour every Illinois Extension unit. She visited all 27 units across the state since she took on the new role in November 2016.

"I have witnessed amazing things that demonstrate the invaluable work being done across Illinois by Extension and 4-H," Kidwell tweeted following the tour.

During the visit to the tri-county area, local staff, volunteers, partners and stakeholders shared the positive impact of Extension throughout the day. Highlights of the visit included: a Murder Mystery youth camp in Grundy County, the Master Gardener children's garden for CASA in Will County, Extension projects in the Pembroke area of Kankakee County, and meeting with local 4-H members who work with robotics.

It was a great honor to showcase the unit and to recognize that campus supports and appreciates our good work.

BETH LAPLANTE EXTENSION COUNTY DIRECTOR



4-H members shared their STEM projects with Dean Kidwell and also recognized her for the completion of her 27-unit tour of Illinois Extension.

I have witnessed amazing things that demonstrate the invaluable work being done across Illinois by Extension and 4-H.

DR. KIMBERLEE KIDWELL DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF ACES



Master Gardener volunteers speak with Dean Kidwell at a potluck lunch during her tour of the local Extension unit.

Additional dignitaries joined Dean Kidwell, including Dr. Robert Jones, Chancellor of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Dr. Shelly Nikols-Richardson, Interim Associate Dean and Director of the University of Illinois Extension; Robert Flider, Director of Community and Government Relations in the Office of Chancellor Jones; and Kimberly Meenen, Assistant Dean for Advancement of the College of ACES.



To learn more about the College of ACES, visit https://aces.illinois.edu/





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Megan Walsh



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Nancy Kuhajda Program Coordinator Master Gardeners kuhajda@illinois.edu

SNAP-Ed Community Worker

Janet Moody, SNAP-Ed, Kankakee County

Office Support Staff

Debbie Gaffield — Kankakee County Marsha Kerschke — Kankakee County Judy Lemenager — Kankakee County Mariana Maldonado — Will County

Extra Help Staff

Elena Cabral, Latino Program Coordinator — Grundy County Anthony Warmack, Program Staff — Grundy, Will Counties Megan Ward, Clerical — Grundy County





Community members and volunteers prune blueberry bushes in Pembroke Township.



Participants make spiced blueberry jam during Hands-on Food Preservation in Joliet.

Cover photos: (Top left) A young participant created a nutritious summer dessert with fresh fruit. (Top right) Participants make spiced blueberry jam during Hands-on Food Preservation in Joliet. (Bottom) 4-H youth unload two tons of food donations to a local food pantry.

University of Illinois ~ U.S. Department of Agriculture ~ Local Extension Councils Cooperating

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