A Note from the Director

It is a great pleasure to showcase the impact University of Illinois Extension has in our communities and demonstrate the positive outcomes of our outreach. These efforts are made possible by dedicated staff and one of our most important assets – our volunteers.

Our strategic efforts are designed to support the needs of the community. Residents identified community, economy, environment, food, and health as the “greatest concern in their overall well-being” through a University of Illinois research project. Local offices and staff provide programs focused on improving our communities within these “Five Issues” of Extension.

Local Extension staff operate programs focused on improving our communities around the issues of:

- Community Connectedness; Community Involvement and Leadership
- Economic Vitality and Community Resiliency; Workforce Preparedness/Advancement; Financial Well-Being
- Engagement with Home and Community Landscapes/Environments; Enhancing and Preserving Natural Resources
- Food Access; Food Production; Food Safety
- Chronic Disease Prevention and Management; Healthy and Safe Community Environments; Social Emotional Health

The pillars of our local educational outreach include 4-H and Youth Development, Community and Economic Development, Horticulture and Natural Resources, Local Foods and Small Farms, and Nutrition Education. In addition to our own educators, local staff members have access to Illinois campus experts who are leading researchers in their respective fields.

Being community members ourselves, we are privileged to lead these programs that help improve the lives of our neighbors and friends. It is our pleasure to serve you. We appreciate your continuous support of Illinois Extension and look forward to working with you in the upcoming years.

Jill Gebke
County Extension Director
jgebke@illinois.edu
Financial Report

OUR MISSION
To enable people to improve their lives and communities through learning partnerships that put knowledge to work.

Local Funding Sources
- Bond County Board
- Bond County Farm Bureau
- Bond County Association for Home and Community Education
- Bond, Clinton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington Counties Extension Council
- Clinton County Association for Home and Community Education
- Clinton County Board
- Jefferson County 4-H Foundation
- Jefferson County 4-H Youth Representatives
- Jefferson County Association for Home and Community Education
- Jefferson County Board
- Marion County 4-H Federation
- Marion County Association for Home and Community Education
- Marion County Board
- Washington County 4-H Federation
- Washington County Association for Home and Community Education
- Washington County Board
- Local Donations and Community Support

FUNDING SOURCES

- 32.13% Federal Funds*
- 1.21% Grant Funds
- 50.6% Local Funds
- 5.59% Reserved Funds**
- 10.48% State Funds

*Federal Funding provided for SNAP-Ed staff salaries, program supplies, and office space.
**Reserved Funds utilized due to the absence of some state funding.

1,200+ News Releases Published
622,938 Website Reach
Creative Economy Movement

In 2017, Greenville kicked off a new venture to encourage the arts in their community. Pam Schallhorn, community and economic development educator, presented a program to community residents on Developing the Creative Economy. Following the presentation, the group started a discussion on groundwork for an arts council in Greenville.

Schallhorn, along with Bill Walker, City of Greenville economic development coordinator, continues to meet with a group of interested residents to work towards enhancing and growing the creative culture of Greenville.

Walker explained, “When we started the creative economy effort, it was an unknown for Greenville. We were aware there were dozens and dozens of creatives here and that they were largely an untapped treasure. Over the year of discussions, we laid out that vast list of resources, which reached well over 100 artists, musicians, writers, creative businesses, etc., and then worked to find what efforts could be the most attainable.”

The group, which started with just a few residents, continues to grow. They identified the city’s creative assets, and then reached out to more community members, asking for feedback on the question, “What does a creative culture look like for Greenville?”

The group also identified community gaps that are barriers to creatively-based businesses. They then identified three projects they want to pursue that will foster a welcoming space for an artistic community. Committees were established to develop plans for a brewpub (which would have space for music nightlife), an outdoor amphitheater, and an arts center. A fourth committee focused on promotion was also formed.

“Committees of community leaders and creatives have formed to begin the work of turning those ideas into reality. Because of the series of community planning meetings, people living in Greenville are now playing a role in completing legitimate and realistic goals,” Walker said.

Schallhorn met with the community group for a session on creating an “action plan” for each of their projects. The committees can use these tools to help accomplish their goals.
Educational Forum for Businesses

STARTUP Jefferson County was created to fill the void when local Small Business Development Centers closed. The group began as a joint effort by Pam Schallhorn, University of Illinois Extension community and economic development educator, and Jonathon Hallberg, executive director of Jefferson County Development Corporation. The goal was to find a way to meet the needs of entrepreneurs and startup businesses in Jefferson County. A public meeting was held to discuss options. Participants decided on monthly forums for networking and training. Some of the participants even offered to present sessions at the forums.

“Participants in the monthly STARTUP forums gain business knowledge, networking opportunities with other local business owners and an opportunity to ask questions about things they need to move forward in their businesses,” explained Schallhorn. “The setting is laid-back and informal, but allows for open inquiry on business topics from local experts.”

I think this group is great for people like myself just starting out in business. It’s a great resource.

PARKER JOHNSON, OWNER S.I. DRONE SOLUTIONS

Each forum features a different topic and speaker. The topics are driven by the group and focus on the subjects they want to explore. For example, local computer programmer and real estate developer, Russell Brown discussed “How to use the Internet for Business.”

More recent topics have covered different areas of finance and marketing, such as “How to Make a Profit,” which touched on profit and loss statements along with ways to minimize spending and maximize profit. Participants also explored the legal structure of a business and the general process of incorporating for forming an LLC.

STARTUP Jefferson County includes a growing number of county business owners, as well as prospective business owners. The forums are fast-paced, casual and very welcoming. Support for small businesses is vital to keeping rural communities alive. Details on their upcoming meetings can be found in their Facebook group Start Up Jefferson County.

Parker Johnson, owner of S.I. Drone Solutions, attended STARTUP Jefferson County with the hope of continuing to learn from the group.

Cheyenne Frick, who attended her first forum in October, recently opened Buona Vita Boutique in Mt. Vernon. Her shop started online out of her condo in Orange Beach, Ala. When she relocated to southern Illinois, she was determined to have a physical store and loved downtown Mt. Vernon. Things are going so well that she is hoping to open a men’s clothing store in the same neighborhood.

Downtown Mt. Vernon shop owners, including Buona Vita owner Cheyenne Frick, are working to draw more business to their shopping district. STARTUP Jefferson County gives them a chance to work towards that goal.
Produce Safety Alliance Trainings

The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) produce rule impacts a wide range of growers. Although the specific date depends on the size of their operation, by 2020 all farms that have more than $25,000 in annual sales will need to be in compliance with FSMA. Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) Grower Training is a required component of the FSMA that will impact their business.

Laurie George, local food systems and small farms educator, is among a small number of professionals in the Midwest who are certified to lead PSA trainings.

As the only “Lead Trainer” in Illinois, George has been instrumental in bringing PSA trainings to the area. The popularity of small farms selling produce at farmers markets and locally-sourced food continues to increase. More growers will need to complete the PSA training in the next few years.

The FSMA is the first ever mandatory federal standard for growing, harvesting, packing, and holding fresh produce. Although farms that have an average annual value of produce sold of under $25,000 are excluded, they must keep documentation to support the exemption, so it is in the grower’s best interest to complete the PSA training to ensure their understanding of the law.

The workshops, led by George, instruct farms on best practices when growing raw agricultural commodities. Topics covered in workshops are worker health and hygiene, soil amendments, production water, post production water, harvesting, and controlling wildlife in production fields.

The first phase of farm compliance for the FSMA went into effect in January 2018 when farms with over $500,000 in annual sales were required to have completed the training. Farms considered “Small Business” that have no more than $500,000 in annual sales must complete their PSA training by the end of January 2019.

The last phase for training will be those in the “Very Small Business” category, which have between $25,000 and $250,000 in sales. They must complete their compliance training by the end of January 2020.

George is certified to not only lead the PSA Grower Trainings, but also certified to lead “train the trainer” sessions. This will be a vital role in the process as more PSA Grower Training sessions are in demand to meet the needs of area growers.

Illinois Extension, in cooperation with the Produce Safety Alliance, is the only source of PSA Grower Training.
Gardens Grow the Community

It’s no secret that community gardens are a way for people to cut down on their fresh produce costs while getting to know others in the community. They also provide donations to local food pantries and have become an important teaching tool.

Over the course of the summer, Extension and Master Gardeners coordinated community gardens. The volunteers harvested and donated more than 500 pounds of produce to various community outlets.

The gardens vary as much as the communities served; they are a mix of straw bale, raised bed, and traditional plots. They draw in a diverse group of gardeners, as well. The gardens at Hoyleton Children’s Home and Spero Family Services are planted, maintained, and harvested by children. Other locations include two Community Link sites, and Legacy Assisted Living all in Breese, three different Marion County Housing Authority sites, raised beds at Pavey Chapel in Mt.Vernon, and traditional community gardens in Mt. Vernon and Salem.

I have been so happy working in the garden and watching the vegetables grow. My grandson has been out at the garden with me numerous times to water. He loves being able to pick the lettuce to eat.

COMMUNITY GARDEN PARTICIPANT

The community garden sites in Mt. Vernon were among those that saw their first growing season in 2017. To encourage the new gardeners, Illinois Extension educator Laurie George offered a six-week Beginner Gardening Class at the community center adjacent to the garden at Veteran’s Park in Mt. Vernon. The classes were not limited to those with garden plots in a community garden. Area residents with home gardens, or wanting to start home gardens, were welcomed as well.

The six sessions included Soil Health, Weed Identification, Insects, Diseases & Diagnosis, Composting & Mulching, and Companion Planting. George met with the participants once a month for three months later in the year to cover the fall gardening topics Fall Crops, Cover Crops and Composting, and Fall Garden Clean-up.

The Mt. Vernon garden closed out the season with a fun Halloween event. Picker Treat invited area residents into the garden to meet the gardeners and enjoy some fun. Families were encouraged to wear costumes, and a local photographer was on hand to take free photos. Gardeners had a chance to pick out their garden bed for the 2018 gardening season. Youth could “picker-treat” the garden for candy and bob for apples.

The Mt. Vernon Community Gardens have been awarded a Growing Illinois Food Access grant that will allow the garden to expand from 16 beds to 40 for 2018. The additional space will allow more residents to have garden plots and allow for dedicated educational beds. This will also allow for more produce donations in the community.

Beginner Gardening classes are offered at the Rolland Lewis Building for those with plots in the local community garden or any area residents interested in learning more about gardening.
A Speaker’s Bureau Sprouts
Master Gardener and Master Naturalist volunteers have established a Speaker’s Bureau to bring University of Illinois research and expertise to local communities. Interested volunteers participated in trainings on presenting programs that are provided by Illinois Extension educators. Available programs include:
- Bargain Gardening
- Container Gardens
- Create a Shady Garden Respite
- Design a Flower Bed with Seasonal Interest
- Easy Care Native Plants
- Emerald Ash Borer
- Energy Efficient Landscaping
- Late Summer and Fall Colors in the Garden
- Season Care for the Home Landscape
- Seed Saving
- Tea Gardens
- Vermicomposting

Participants are honing their presentation skills at their Master Gardener and Master Naturalist meetings through the winter.

Speaker's Bureau requests will be made through local Extension offices or online at web.extension.illinois.edu/bcjmw

I love monarchs and want to build them a place to thrive in our community. I can’t control everything, but I can control my little square on this earth by planting lots of milkweed.

MASTER NATURALIST TRAINEE

Local clubs and organizations now have access to research-based education on a wide range of horticulture topics right in their home communities through the Speaker’s Bureau.

Master Gardener & Master Naturalist Volunteers
The Master Gardener and Master Naturalist programs are popular volunteer opportunities with Illinois Extension. The Master Gardener program has been in Illinois for over 40 years. Comparatively, Master Naturalist is a much younger program having just four years under their belt locally. Both are national programs.

The programs are a perfect outlet for those with a love of gardening and/or nature who have a desire to share their knowledge with their community. These passionate people present school programs, teach at garden shows, write for local newspapers, share information at the farmers market, participate in species monitoring programs, work for prairie restoration, and manage community gardens.

98 Volunteers
3,085+ Volunteer Hours
2,000+ Direct Contact
50+ Projects & Programs
$74,526 Value to Communities
Growing, Preserving, and Cooking with Herbs
Program coordinator Chris Lueking, Master Gardener volunteers, and local Chef Jeff Fairbanks presented a class on growing, preserving, and cooking with herbs.

The program was very well received. In the evaluations, participants indicated they would like to attend more classes on cooking with things harvested from the garden.

Tree Fruit Schools
Tree Fruit School is an annual educational program offered at two locations, Mt. Vernon and Hardin. Speakers included university professors, pathology experts, and industry professionals.

Attendees have the opportunity to visit with speakers and ask questions about specific situations. Local businesses attend the sessions to stay up to date with industry research, too.

Birding by Ear
Program coordinator Gail DeVilbiss presented a program for local Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists and the Carlyle Nature Society on “Birding by Ear.”

It is common to hear the call and not see the bird. Participants learned to listen and break down bird songs to determine which bird is calling. The process of visualizing a bird call is done using a spectrogram, and several calls were played alongside the visual spectrogram.

Many participants were exposed to this method of understanding bird song for the first time and commented how helpful it will be in identifying bird calls.

Salem Garden Bench
The Salem High School Construction 2 class partnered with Illinois Extension and the Salem Community Garden over the winter.

The garden needed a new work bench after theirs was damaged in a storm. The class built a new bench to replace the damaged one.

Not only did they build the bench, but the students also delivered it to the garden and set it in place for local gardeners. The bench looks nice and is well made so it will be useful for years to come.
Winter Tree Identification

Chris Evans, research forester for Illinois Extension, presented a workshop on Winter Tree Identification to over 30 participants. The class was presented at the Washington County Conservation area.

Participants learned the vocabulary and terminology needed to use a dichotomous key. This is a tool that asks questions in a series of two. Each choice is followed by another set of two questions. The process of eliminating one possibility progression will eventually lead to properly identifying a given tree. These keys are also available for wildflowers, mammals, fish and other items in nature to aid in proper identification.

After the classroom portion of the workshop, participants trekked into the woods putting new skills to work using the key.

Evans also shared additional ways of identifying trees by observing clues such as habit, location of the tree, fragrance of the bark, overall shape of the tree, carryover fruit, and more. Evans describes this as his “Gestalt” method of proper tree identification.

You have a pond, not a swimming pool.
MIKE HOOE

Pond Management Workshop

In the summer, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) fisheries biologist Mike Hooe gave a presentation on pond management, weed identification, and pond stocking. The program was made possible by a partnership between Illinois Extension, IDNR Fisheries, Marion County Soil and Water Conservation Office, and the United States Department of Agriculture office in Marion County.

Participants were able to bring in vegetation samples from their own ponds to have Hooe identify. He spoke with them about different types of vegetation, and how and when to use herbicides, if needed.

Hooe shocked the pond and showed attendees the different types of common fish for pond health management. He talked about feeding the fish, when to stop, and common parasites, including harmless ones. The audience learned about the main causes of fish kills, along with how and when to test the oxygen level.

Hooe offered advice on stocking ponds including what type of fish to use, how big they should be and how many per acre are recommended depending on the type of fish. He also explained which fish compete with others for food, which fish don’t do well in local ponds, and what breeds have a low reproduction rate.

The program offered practical advice for area residents with farm and backyard farms used for hobby fishing.
**BOND, CLINTON, JEFFERSON, MARION, AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES**

**2017 IMPACT REPORT**

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### 4-H and Youth Development Program Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Adult Volunteers</th>
<th>4-H Club Members</th>
<th>Traditional Clubs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bond County</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinton County</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>240</td>
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<td>Washington County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marion County</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson County</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4-H Clubs

- **46** Community Clubs
- **27** Special Interest Clubs

#### Educational Programs

- **132** Short-term Programs
- **43** Long-term Programs

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**8,278 Youth Reached by Programs and Clubs**

- **960** 4-H Club Members
- **1,764** Long-term Program Participants
- **5,590** Short-term Program Participants
4-H Shows
A year’s worth of work comes together at 4-H project show time. Show days in each county are different, but some things transcend county lines. 4-H shows give youth the opportunity to exhibit what they have learned through their project work during the 4-H year.

General project exhibitors may share with a judge stories of failed attempts before coming up with a finished project. They get suggestions from the judge on improvements and learn interview skills, which will help as they tackle job interviews, school presentations, and more. Animal exhibitors demonstrate how they have fed and cared for, and maybe even trained, an animal to get it ready for the show ring. Showmanship, teamwork, and responsibility are just a few of the skills they learn along the way.

In 2017, 643 youth exhibited more than 5,000 entries, with 175 members advancing to the Illinois State Fair General Projects Show. This is a 25% increase in State Fair exhibitors from 2016. Almost 25 local youth exhibited at the State Junior Horse Show, and another 35 took to the show ring during the junior livestock shows at the Illinois State Fair.

As some youth took to the show ring for the first time, others were bidding a passionate farewell. In the final auction of her 4-H career, Adrian Austin donated her barrow to raise funds for Marion County 4-H.

“This was my way of attempting to give back to the organization, and I was so overwhelmed with the support we received. The barrow sold for $4,300, but the generous donations that were made by the crowd didn’t stop with the sale of my pig. Ultimately, we were able to raise over $16,000 in donations for Marion County 4-H.

“Trying to put my 4-H experience into words is a difficult task because of the great impact the organization has made on my life,” Adrian Austin shared as she addressed the crowd at the Marion County Youth Livestock Auction.

“Thank you to everyone who made this possible, but also to all those who made my 4-H experience truly life changing! Our program here in Marion County will always hold a special place in my heart!”

Austin’s donation spurred the start of the Marion County 4-H Foundation. Although the group is new, they hosted the first fundraiser by holding a food stand at Antique Power Days. They are already actively supporting the Marion County 4-H program by providing funding for awards, scholarships for youth to attend 4-H camps and conferences, and other program needs.
Food Challenge
The Illinois 4-H Food Challenge gives teens a chance to show off their cooking skills. Working together, teams create a healthy food dish from a limited pantry of food items. The teams give a presentation on their meal for a panel of judges. Their presentation includes the key nutrients in the dish and their important nutritional role. Students are also evaluated on their understanding of safe food handling procedures.

The limited pantry supplies represent staples that are common for individuals or families to have on hand. The exercise is a step towards independence as these teens are learning skills that will be of benefit as they tackle living on their own in a few years.

In 2017, the Illinois 4-H Food Challenge reached 184 students at Greenville High School, Nashville Community High School, Oakdale Junior High, and Okawville High School. Then current Nashville Community High School Principal Mr. Pasero shared, “I see the value in a program and partnership such as this...giving the kids the creative confidence to prepare a healthy meal for themselves, especially heading into summer when school is out of session.”

Youth Fighting Food Insecurity
Youth in Bond, Clinton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington counties know that food insecurity is an issue in their communities.

4-H members are working to make food accessible to those in need in a variety of ways.

- **Illini Fighting Hunger** brought more than 100 4-H members and their families from all five counties together for a second year to package more than 12,000 meals for local food pantries.

- **The Mobile Market**, which is a mobile food bank, in Nashville, reached an average of 75 clients each month. Teen volunteers are involved in planning, setup, tear down, and on occasion, delivery of food to senior centers, nursing homes, and local food pantries.

- **Sorento Mobile Market** is brought to the area by a partnership between 4-H, His Way Learning Academy, and We Stand in the Gap. They serve an average of 115 clients each month and have provided over 58,650 lbs. of food in the past year for community members.

- **Harvest for the Food Pantry** in Bond County is an annual partnership between Bond County 4-H and Greenville FFA. Teens from both groups collect both food and monetary donations for the Bond county food pantry.

- Both Bond and Washington county youth are collecting food donations for local school backpack programs. The program is geared toward children who may go without meals outside of school hours.
Leaders/ Hullabaloo 2
There are more than 200 4-H leaders in Bond, Clinton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington County. For the second year in a row, club leaders gathered for a Unit-wide leaders’ meeting. Hullabaloo 2 provided leaders with an opportunity to participate in workshop sessions on a wide range of topics. Not only were they able to build their leadership skills, but they also benefited from a chance to network and share ideas with club leaders from other counties.

4-H Hydroponics Gardens
Through partnerships with local high school agriculture programs, 4-H has been able to assist in the build of 14 hydroponics gardens in seven different high schools. The gardens are used in the agriculture classes; students are responsible for building and caring for the hydroponics gardens and plants. The produce from the gardens is used to supplement the school lunches for the students involved in the garden. In some cases, produce is also supplied to the school lunchroom for other students to enjoy, as well.

Teen Teachers
More than 50 teens have been trained to teach lessons in Clinton, Jefferson, and Washington Counties. Those teens have presented the Honeybee Challenge, Rockets to the Rescue, and Incredible Wearables to 750 students. The science-based programs are part of the National Youth Science Day initiative through 4-H to bring hands-on STEM programs into classrooms. Each lesson provides students with a “real world” challenge to solve using popular technology and engineering. Being a Teen Teacher gives high school students the chance to develop new skills for future careers while starting to build a resume. They work with Illinois Extension staff to learn the program curriculum materials and practice presenting the program to grade school students.

Barn Quilts
The Barn Quilt SPIN Club in Washington County has grown by leaps and bounds. The group has now completed 14 barn quilts for display around the county. Requests from local farm owners to have blocks placed on their barns keep rolling in. A map of the various barn quilt locations around the county is in progress. The goal is for the quilt block map to be a self-guided tour that will draw tourism to the area. The map includes historical information on the quilt blocks and on rural Washington County.
Smarter Lunchrooms

Ashley Hoffman is the visiting SNAP–Ed educator for Illinois Extension, serving communities in Bond, Clinton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington counties. She provides evidenced-based professional training and technical assistance in agencies and organizations that serve limited-resource families, such as schools, early childhood centers, and food pantries. Throughout 2017, Hoffman conducted 30 school foodservice trainings with 74 food service staff people from 28 different schools.

In addition to food service trainings, Hoffman conducted four Smarter Lunchroom makeovers. As part of this program, she conducted studies to see if there was any change in tray waste after the Smarter Lunchroom program was implemented.

As a result, Dr. Nick Osborne Primary Center tray waste decreased by 7% for fruits and 4% for vegetables. At JL Buford Intermediate Education Center, fruit waste was reduced by 16% and vegetable waste was reduced by 19%. At Zadok Casey Middle School, vegetable waste decreased by 16%. One of the students at Buford shared that a friend encouraged her to eat a salad and try Italian dressing. She said, “I loved it! It tasted great!”

Another significant school program was Breakfast After the Bell, which was piloted at Patoka Community Unit School District 100. Breakfast After the Bell is a state mandated program that requires schools with 70% of the students eligible for free and reduced lunch to offer breakfast options for their students after the school day begins.

Patoka offered a walk–by option for high school students where they could pick up a quick on–the–go option that they could eat on the way to class. Elementary school students were offered an option that was provided to each classroom. This breakfast menu was made of selections that were easy for younger students to eat in a timely manner without creating a mess in the classroom.

After the Breakfast after the Bell pilot, breakfast participation in the school rose from 29% to 71%. Studies find that students who eat breakfast at school, closer to test-taking time, perform better on standardized tests than those who skip breakfast or eat breakfast at home.
It’s Fun to Be Healthy
The mother of a Head Start student at Dr. Andy Hall Early Childhood Center in Mt. Vernon stated, “I just want you to know, my son is really paying attention to what you are teaching him about ‘Go Foods and Whoa Foods.’ Every time I give him something to eat, he has to tell me if it is a ‘whoa food’ or a ‘go food.’ The other night we were having carrots at dinner, and he said carrots are a ‘go food,’ so you can eat all you want of them.”

Lunch Time Activity Stations
Since starting the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) activity stations at Greenville Elementary school the students are eating more of the vegetables provided to them. Sweet and dilly carrots have been added to the school lunch menu because of the popularity of the recipe. Because of the impact of the NSLP activity stations during lunch, staff has been invited to do them during breakfast at school, as well.

Cooking School
More than 400 area youth between the ages of 8 and 13 attended the 26 Illinois Junior Chef sessions offered in Bond, Clinton, Jefferson, and Marion counties over the summer. Cooking schools can only be offered in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligible communities and is free to participants. The camps are very “hands-on.” Participants make different recipes every day. They learn about nutrition while they work on basic cooking skills. Since they made the food themselves, many are willing to try new foods. Not only useful, but cooking school is fun, too, according to participants. A student from the New Baden cooking school exclaimed, “This is so much fun; I wish we had cooking school every day, all summer long!”

The Great Garden Detective
A fourth-grader at Iuka Grade School was proud to share with SNAP-Ed staff that she had helped grow a garden for the first time over the summer.

She used what she learned from the Great Garden Detective Program and followed up with some research on her own. Her family grew tomatoes, peppers, and lettuce with success. The student is planning on having a garden again this summer.
In 4-H, I learned that hard work pays off.
KIERSTAN, CLINTON COUNTY

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Greenville
David Ratermann, Vice-Chair
Breese
Deanna Ratermann, Secretary
Germantown

Mike Claypool
Centralia
Brent Schorfheide
Hoyleton
Regina Donoho
Iuka
Linda Summers
Nashville
Kelly Elias
Breese
Kimberly Taylor
Nashville
Jonathan Hallberg
Mt. Vernon
Jason Timm
Iuka
Michelle Haller
Pocahontas
Lilly Trapp
Sorento
Paula Kiselewski
Woodlawn
Bill Waggoner
Alma
Helen Leonhardt
Salem
Connie Williams
Salem
Cyndy Mitchell
Mt. Vernon
Jan Woker
Greenville
Wayne Polczynski
DuBois
I want to send a big thank you to the organizers of the cooking camp that took place at Bethel Grade school in Mt. Vernon this week. My son participated for the first time this year and we were very impressed! The skills and confidence gained have been great. And today, the students prepared and served a meal to their families. Our three children are involved in many camps this year, and none of them, besides this, were free to us as a working family. What an awesome thing to provide!

CARRIE, COOKING SCHOOL PARTICIPANT’S PARENT