2017 Impact Report
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION
SERVING BOONE, DEKALB, & OGLE COUNTRIES

ILLINOIS Extension
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
Welcome to University of Illinois Extension’s 2017 Annual Report. Every new year presents us with the opportunity to look back and appreciate all that has been accomplished by the staff, volunteers, and youth in our programs. This year has been a great year of achievement and growth for Extension. We have provided top-notch education in Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle counties this past year and are looking forward to a great 2018!

Volunteer Opportunities Await

Our 4-H youth are learning BIG-M concepts: belonging, independence, generosity, and mastery. If you haven’t taken the time to get to know 4-H we have lots of volunteer opportunities available for you so just call your local office. Our next generation of leaders is growing and learning and they are ready to take on the task of making our communities vibrant and alive.

Our Master Gardener and Master Naturalist volunteers have been busy. They are involved in their local communities helping all of you grow healthy vegetables and fruits, beautify your landscapes, and appreciate nature. Again, there are many opportunities for you to get involved as a volunteer and give back right in your own community.

Achievement

I am proud to represent the staff and volunteers in our unit—the hardworking people who make all of our programming happen. This annual report highlights just a few of our major accomplishments and outcomes for 2017. You will find information about our accomplishments in nutrition, energy and environmental stewardship, and 4-H youth development. We know that our programs help people improve their lives whether they are growing more vegetables, caring for their homes, appreciating nature, developing leadership skills, making new friends, or following their passions!

Looking Forward

The state budget crisis has deepened our financial challenges locally and will continue to hamper us in 2018, but we still look forward to a bright future. University of Illinois Extension has adapted to local needs for more than 100 years, and we will continue to serve our local communities for many years to come. University of Illinois Extension is part of the solution to the challenges we face in Illinois and we are looking forward to solving those challenges with our local partners.

Janice McCoy
Interim County Extension Director
Extending Knowledge... Changing Lives
University of Illinois Extension is the flagship outreach effort of University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, offering educational programs to residents in all 102 Illinois counties. Since it was established in 1914, 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.

Serving Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle Counties
University of Illinois Extension is divided regionally into 27 units throughout the state. Our Unit 2 serves Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle counties. Staff includes an Interim County Director (Janice McCoy), four educators that offer programs in the areas of Nutrition & Wellness (Marilyn Csernus), SNAP-Ed (Veronica Skaradzinski), 4-H Youth Development (Johnna Jennings), and Energy & Environmental Stewardship (Peggy Doty). We accomplish our work through our many partnerships with community organizations, schools, and government. We also have program coordinators and community workers that assist in our programming efforts. In addition, volunteers in our 4-H, Master Gardener, and Master Naturalist programs extend our reach.

Extension Council
The Extension Council is a volunteer advisory council that participates in decisions made about the educational programs Extension will provide in the multi-county unit. The council meets quarterly to provide valuable input to the local staff.

Thank you to the individuals who serve on our Unit Extension Council.

**Boone County:**
Ellen Genrich
Bill Hall
Pam Stock
Jane Zien

**DeKalb County:**
Kris Aves
Sally DeFauw
Emily Plapp
John Prendergast
Toney Xidis

**Ogle County:**
Dan Dietrich
Lisa Hinrichs
Michelle LaPage
Stephanie Wascher
Volunteers are essential to the success of our programs. If you are interested in volunteer opportunities with University of Illinois Extension, please call any of our offices and we will be happy to work with you to find the volunteer opportunity that's the best match for your interests, talents, and availability. Opportunities are available in our 4-H, Master Gardener, and Master Naturalist programs. 411 individuals volunteered over 22,000 hours, valued at $535,232 to Extension programs.

**Illinois 4-H Hall of Fame 2017**

**BOONE COUNTY**

Dee Sternhagen was instrumental in bringing robotics to the Boone County 4-H program. She has been the organizational leader who recruited mentors, wrote grants, worked with club officers and promoted the team through both FIRST and 4-H. Furthermore, she started a Lego robotics camp which used mentors from the Flaming Monkeys 4-H club as teachers. Eventually that camp lead to the development of a 4-H Lego League club in Boone County. Dee is always willing to help other clubs get started and provide help and guidance to other mentors.

**DEKALB COUNTY**

Lynette Limberis is one of those individuals that does not believe in sitting on the sidelines and waiting for someone else to volunteer. She began volunteering as the co-leader of the 4-H Clover Climbers Cloverbuds and three years later she stepped-up to lead the DeKalb Choreboys and Choregirls community club. Lynette goes above and beyond what is expected of her. She encourages club members to try new things and have experiences they would not necessarily have anywhere else. She also is the first person to step up and volunteer for leading county project days, community service activities, fundraising events or working on a special county committee. Lynette has a dynamic personality and a great love for 4-H and what it has to offer youth. She truly takes the extra step in leading youth in making the best better.

**OGLE COUNTY**

Sheryl Hopkins is a critical part of the Ogle County 4-H Fair, especially the after-fair logistics. Sheryl and her husband, Lyle, coordinate the Blue Ribbon Livestock Auction book and complete transactions from the sale. Sheryl has been a supporter of the Ogle County 4-H Program since she became the leader of the Pine Creek Valley 4-H Club. Sometimes it is the people who work behind the scenes that deserve the recognition the most and Sheryl has definitely proven to be one of those volunteers.
Outstanding Master Gardeners

The University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener program in Boone, DeKalb and Ogle counties are pleased to recognize individuals who obtained the Outstanding Master Gardener award in September 2017.

Randy Calvert, (pictured below) from Stillman Valley, completed his Master Gardener training in 2004 and has given over 700 volunteer service hours and 235 continuing education hours. Randy has provided steady and supportive leadership to the Master Gardener program including coordinating the hotline, teaching lessons at Heritage Farm and assisting with landscaping ideas at a Habitat for Humanity home.

Leah Patapack, (pictured above) from Oregon, completed her Master Gardener training in 2011 and has given almost 600 volunteer service hours and has completed 85 continuing education hours. Leah has provided leadership for the Jr. Master Gardener Program, Mighty Monarchs, has been part of the speaker’s bureau, and part of the Ogle County Fairgrounds Gardens committee. Leah is a great listener and is wonderful at keeping people on task in a kind and patient manner.

In DeKalb County, John Prendergast (pictured below) also earned the State Outstanding Master Gardener distinction. John continues to be one of DeKalb County’s most active Master Gardener. John has been involved in a variety of projects including the DeKalb City Planters, Hallgren Park Gardens, DeKalb County Community Gardens, and the Horticulture Help Desk.

Master Naturalist Volunteers

Seventy-four people have successfully graduated from the Master Naturalist program in the last five years and are active in volunteer service in our communities. The purpose of the training is to create a corps of volunteers who can assist with hands-on land management and other stewardship activities. Extension supports conservation partners in our counties by training capable workers who have a foundation of knowledge in natural resources.

Boone County Conservation District (BCCD) takes full advantage of our trained volunteers. Master Naturalists participate and learn continually from professional land managers. These individuals work together on a variety of project activities based upon the time of year. The Master Naturalists volunteered 352 hours in 2017 for the BCCD, nearly an hour a day of service.
Farm Strolls
Agricultural Connection
There is no better way to learn about something than to actually experience it. Our Farm Strolls are one way to connect people to the agriculture and small farm community. In 2017, 26 farms in Boone, DeKalb, & Ogle counties opened their property to over 650 community members. The self-guided tours were diverse and included such things as learning where your food comes from, fiber-making for the clothing industry, and farming techniques and processes.

The mission of the Farm Stroll program was simply to help the community understand where their food comes from and the diverse ways in which agriculture contributes to the local economy. Some farmers gave walking tours or wagon rides of their operation and some even sold their local produce or products during the stroll. The farms varied from family farms with livestock, corn or beans, to orchards, fiber mills, cheese producers, a winery, and even an alpaca farm.

The farm strolls educated people and farmers reported increased business in their Community Supported Agriculture ventures, farmer’s markets stands, as well as an increase in foot traffic on the farms that are open to the public for business. Dick Little, White Pines Ranch owner, who was a stop on the Ogle County farm stroll said, “I think it’s a good idea, it acquaints people with what’s going on in the county besides corn and soybeans.”

A participant phoned our Boone county office to say that she really enjoyed the stroll and that her children and grandchildren live out of state and do not have this opportunity in their hometown. They have plans to bring their families home for the 2018 Farm stroll.
Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) is a statewide educational program whose goal is to help students, teachers, and the general public gain a greater awareness of the role of agriculture in the economy and society. Thousands of farm products are in the world around us—our plates, in the clothes we wear, in the medicine that makes us well, and in earth-friendly fuels and plastics.

With less than 2% of our population involved in production agriculture, many people don't know the source of their food and fiber. Americans spend less of their total income on food than any country in the world—only 11%. (National Ag Day, 2017)

In 2017, AITC provided 568 programs to schools in Ogle and Carroll counties, making 12,158 contacts through these programs, impacting 131 teachers in these communities.

Ag in the Classroom is offered through the University of Illinois Extension Ogle County in partnership with Ogle County Farm Bureau, Carroll County Farm Bureau, Ogle County Soil & Water, and Carroll County Soil & Water.

More information about Agriculture in the Classroom can also be found by going to the Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom website:

www.agintheclassroom.org
Field Studies
Environmental education helps young people take what they learn in the classroom and put it into real-life practice.

1,905 students from multiple counties had the opportunity to experience outdoor field studies through University of Illinois Extension’s environmental education at the Natural Resource Education Center (NREC). The unique partnership with the local forest preserve provides the perfect hands-on learning environment for studying the natural resources of northern Illinois. Peggy Doty, extension educator, along with Connie Handel, extension community worker, provide field trip opportunities for teachers and their students in the spring and fall. The field studies incorporate current learning standards and align with classroom curriculum creating an exciting learning opportunity!

Kim Hulmes, fourth-grade teacher at St. Mary’s Elementary said, “taking my students on environmental education field studies, offered and led by Extension staff, makes what the kids learn from books a reality. It is not just words but real experiences. Seeing and hearing the students’ excitement when witnessing and feeling the actual grasses and forbs brings the joy of teaching to life.”

Summer Day Camp
Summer camp also has an environmental education theme with five week-long education opportunities. Some camps are designed for seven-to-nine-year-olds while others are for nine-to-eleven-year-olds. The day camps are each based on a theme and are cross-curricular in education style.

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KIM HULMES, TEACHER

One of the activities this year required the drawing of a line graph to get the carrying capacity of a habitat. One camper asked if what we were doing was called a line graph. He was reassured that it was and he responded, “Well now I get what a line graph is!” It turned out in fourth grade he struggled to understand line graphs and camp brought the answers. Summer camp provides youth an opportunity to reduce their nature deficit as well. Many youth today spend a great deal of time indoors and camp is an opportunity to learn to appreciate the outdoor world.
Growing good kids by igniting a passion for learning, success, and service through a unique gardening education is what the Junior Master Gardener program is all about.

In 2017, Ogle County conducted two Junior Master Gardener programs with over 60 kids! Extension partnered with the Oregon Park District and the Belvidere YMCA to provide hands-on learning opportunities in our gardens for youth in the community with the help of our Master Gardener volunteers.

Junior Master Gardener inspires young people to be of service to others through service learning and leadership development projects, and rewards them with certification and recognition.

Children can get involved in exploring their world through meaningful activities that encourage leadership development, personal pride, responsibility, and community involvement. Youth involved in the program develop critical thinking skills, and the ability to identify community concerns and take action to address them through individual and group projects.

The Junior Master Gardener program is an international youth gardening program of the University Cooperative Extension Network. JMG engages children in novel, “hands-on” group and individual learning experiences that provide a love of gardening, develop an appreciation for the environment, and cultivate the mind.

School nutrition professionals from around DeKalb and Boone counties attended a Learning Institute Day this past year. In DeKalb County, Director of DeKalb Community Gardens Dan Kenney engaged participants with a discussion on Farm to School and DeKalb County’s success working with gardens in schools. SNAP-Ed Educators Carol Erickson and Veronica Skarazinski, and Nutrition and Wellness Educator Marilyn Cserrus provided the audience with information on other topics throughout the day including breakfast after the bell, customer service, merchandizing, and using suggestive selling for reimbursable meals. Attendees were motivated to start the process of implementing new strategies in their lunch rooms.

The Boone County training took place in Capron Elementary School’s beautifully decorated cafeteria, which staff were excited to show off. Attendees participated in several activities throughout the day and looked forward to implementing new ways to make their cafeteria even more inviting for students this school year.

The ABC’s of School Nutrition project is sponsored by the Illinois State Board of Education and University of Illinois Extension.
Veronica Skaradzinski, SNAP–Ed educator, uses the Nutrition Environment Food Pantry Assessment Tool (NEFPAT) to identify best practices and guide the change in creating healthier pantry environments in Boone (1 pantry), Ogle (1 pantry), and DeKalb (3 pantries) counties. The average scores from these pantries places them in the gold bracket, which means they are implementing many best practices. To further increase the reach of these pantries to make health a priority, their work with Extension has included incorporating nutrition messages throughout the shopping areas, offering healthier food items as meals, increasing healthy recipes available to pantry clients, and training pantry volunteers on indirect nutrition promotion strategies. Pantry volunteers and clients have stated they are more aware of nutritious options available in the pantry. Direct education provided by SNAP–Ed community workers has been a key piece as well. Clients of the food pantry get excited when they get to try a new healthy food sample or learn something new about an unfamiliar produce item. These combined efforts reinforce health messages, which has been shown to create behavior change in individuals to better their well-being.

DeKalb County Salvation Army Food Pantry

Food Pantries Learn Best Practices to Improve Food Security

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Diabetes in Latino American communities is an urgent problem. Diabetes rates are almost twice those of non-Latino whites (American Diabetes Association). According to the 2016 U.S. Census Bureau, Latinos represent 20, 11, and 10 percent respectively of the population in Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle counties.

The Nutrition and Wellness team developed a two-part Latino diabetes series. The objectives of the series was to introduce Extension as a trusted source of diabetes education, and identify diabetes-related educational needs of Latino audiences. Marilyn Csernus, nutrition and wellness educator, collaborated with the League of United Latino American Citizens (LULAC) to market the program and provide a translator. The series was offered in Ogle and Boone counties with nineteen participants.

Survey results reveal that the Latino community is seeking diabetes education and is open to Extension providing the education. Survey results will be used to expand on the diabetes education curriculum for future offerings.

- 100% would like to learn more about healthy cooking for diabetes
- 100% would like to learn more about lifestyle changes to manage diabetes

Illinois ranks 46th out of all 50 states as one of the worst for foodborne illness outbreaks, accounting for 6.1% of all outbreaks in the country. The FSSMC course consists of eight hours of classroom education, concluding with an exam. Ninety-eight food service professionals attended the 2017 course, which was offered quarterly in Ogle County.

99 percent of the students were successful in passing the 80-question FSSMC exam at the completion of the course. The FSSMC helps decrease the risk of foodborne illness and allows food service professionals to remain in the labor force.

Veronica Skaradzinski, SNAP-Ed extension educator, joined Extension in March. She serves both Units 2 and 4 and is teaching evidenced-based programs that focus on nutrition education and obesity prevention through promoting behavior change. Skaradzinski provides professional development opportunities and assistance with systematic or environmental changes. She works with low-income schools, food pantries, community agencies, and youth programs to implement simple changes that make the healthy choice the easy choice.

Skaradzinski has a passion for helping others make healthy changes and believes small changes can make big differences over time.
BIG-M Reaches New 4-H Latino Families
Belonging, independence, generosity and mastery are the pillars of 4-H and University of Illinois Extension is taking these pillars to first generation 4-H Latino families. Four new community clubs serve nearly 70 children in Boone & DeKalb counties.

4-H clubs provide the tools and skills needed to empower Latinos through the 4-H program. Cultural and group activities increase member participation and retention. Incorporating the entire family into the Latino 4-H program is important and our Spanish-speaking program coordinators help families understand the program.

The clubs have been learning about problem solving skills, personal goal setting, cultural identity and awareness, positive relationships, public speaking, college and career readiness, community service, and leadership. In DeKalb County there are also two special interest clubs meeting monthly: A Book Club and a 4-H Healthy Kids Club. The clubs are looking for adults to join as leaders and mentors. If you have an interest in helping young people succeed, join us!
For several years, there has been a Science Siesta program aimed just for girls, but no longer was that the case for the 2017 year. Back in March, the University of Illinois Extension conducted the first Boys’ Science Siesta for boys in grades fourth to sixth. This multi-county effort reached 96 boys and was held at the Discovery Center Children’s Museum in Rockford.

Boys’ Science Siesta was an action-packed program that combined hands-on science, an opportunity to meet real scientists, study particular field of science and to spend the night in an awesome museum. Ten male scientists from northern Illinois came and shared information with the participants about their college field of studies, as well as what they do within their careers on a daily basis.

Following the face-to-face interaction with the scientists, youth participated in activities based on the “Wonderwise” curriculum developed by the University of Nebraska. The curriculum highlights the work of scientists and then translates their work into hands-on science based activities that were fun and engaging. Participants chose one of three workshop tracks for breakout sessions – Vet Detective, Parasite Sleuth and Urban Ecologist.

Seventy classrooms in Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle counties participated in the chick embryology and incubation program. As a result of this program nearly 1,900 students experienced life science with hands-on activities as they watched the growth and development of baby chicks hatching in their classrooms.

Teacher training is conducted yearly and taught by University of Illinois campus specialist Dr. Ken Koelkebeck and Extension 4-H Youth Development Educator Johnna Jennings. Teachers participating in the training are provided all the resources they need to successfully hatch chicks.

“Students are engaging in the scientific process through this program,” said Johnna Jennings, Youth Development Educator. “They predict what will happen, observe the incubator on a daily basis, record what is happening, and if they don’t have chicks hatch they can make assumptions about why that might have happened.” Students become inquisitive about the process of hatching and learn that something very small can affect a hatch. For instance, a slight variation in temperature can create a failed hatch.

Students can take what they learn in the embryology program and apply it to other scientific processes as well.