2017 Impact Report
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION
SERVING COLES, CUMBERLAND, DOUGLAS, MOULTRIE, & SHELBY COUNTIES

ILEINOIS Extension
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
University of Illinois Extension staff are frequent contributors to local newspapers and news broadcasts. The Journal-Gazette Times-Courier in Coles County carries three weekly Extension columns:

- Dave Shiley’s “Over the Coles,” focuses on agriculture and natural resources.
- Cheri Burcham’s “Facts for Families.”
- “Yard and Garden,” written by Extension’s Master Gardener volunteers in Coles County.

Shiley also appears regularly on WCIA-TV’s morning “Ag Answers” segment, and his columns run regularly in the Champaign News-Gazette.

In her first year as dean of the U of I College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES), Dean Kim Kidwell has challenged Extension staff, campus-based faculty, and university researchers to take another look at how we work together for the benefit of Illinois residents.

She says that, “We have extraordinary researchers publishing in the most prestigious journals; yet, the transformative ability of this work is limited because few people outside of the scientific community are aware of these discoveries. We also have extraordinary Extension personnel performing magnificent work in our communities. However, very little of this work brings awareness to ongoing ACES research and teaching efforts.”

The dean’s goal is to close this gap and spark more collaboration among the three aspects of the college’s mission—Extension, teaching, and research—as a means of strengthening all three.

And she’s putting some scholarship money where her mouth is. Each of the 27 Extension units in Illinois will be able to award two $2,500 Extension to ACES scholarships to new students admitted to the College of ACES for fall semester 2018 and thereafter. Applicants will be ranked on the basis of academic achievement, leadership, and good citizenship.

Do you know a local youth who wants to attend the College of ACES in the fall of 2018? If so, please encourage him or her to contact your county’s 4-H program coordinator for details on how to apply for the Extension to ACES scholarship. The application process is simple. Priority will be given to incoming freshmen, but transfer students are eligible, as well. (And while current or past membership in 4-H is not required, it sure can’t hurt their chances!)

Kathy Reiser
County Extension Director
Aging: Everybody’s Doing It!
Eighty percent of Americans aged 65 or older have at least one chronic illness, and one in three older adults dies of Alzheimer’s or another form of dementia.

The good news is that older adults can do a lot to age “successfully” and be as healthy and independent as they can be for as long as possible.

In October 2016, University of Illinois Extension partnered with the LifeSpan Center near Mattoon to present a Healthy Aging Summit, “Aging: Everybody’s Doing It!” with presentations on three topics:

- Protecting against financial exploitation.
- The changing nutritional needs of older adults.
- Living your bucket list.

Research shows that older adults who set and work toward reaching personal goals live longer and healthier lives—whether those goals involve publishing a book, zip lining with the grandchildren, or appearing on “Wheel of Fortune.”

After the program, 56 percent of the participants reported being better prepared to develop their own bucket lists as a step toward aging successfully.

Arcola hosts “Community Swap”
After you’ve lived in a place for a while, you may take for granted the good things that attract visitors and new residents to your town. You also may have a tendency to overlook some problems that a newcomer would find troublesome or unattractive.

In late spring, Arcola and Monticello took part in “Community Swap,” a program that provided community members a chance to hear an objective assessment of their town’s strengths and weaknesses.

Several residents of Monticello anonymously visited a variety of Arcola businesses. They also analyzed the gateways to the community, checked out the town’s recreational and healthcare facilities, evaluated signage, and looked at many other aspects of the way Arcola presents itself to visitors.

With the help of community and economic development educator Ken Larimore, each town’s leaders compiled and presented their findings to leaders of the town they visited. Both Arcola and Monticello will use what they learned to make their community more appealing to visitors and prospective residents.

For further information about bringing the Community Swap program to your town, contact Larimore at 618-783-2521.
Career Development Events “plant a seed” for ag-minded students
Dave Shiley, local food systems and small farms educator with U of I Extension, collaborated with high school agriscience teachers throughout east-central Illinois to offer three FFA Forestry Career Development Events.

In Oakland, 54 students from five area schools participated in the half-day program, with 84 students from 10 schools taking part at Fox Ridge State Park. Another 94 youth from 10 schools attended a similar event he offered in Piatt County.

Through individual and team activities, students had the opportunity to learn forest management skills and to apply best management practices.

Tree-Health Seminars
According to the USDA’s Forest Service, healthy, mature trees add an average of 10 percent to a home’s value. So caring for those trees is well worth a homeowner’s time and effort. In response to an educational needs survey conducted in our five-county Extension unit, Extension educator Dave Shiley offered tree-care, pruning, and winter tree-identification seminars in several of our unit’s counties.

Be Kind to Your Mind: Mindful nature walk
A large body of research has demonstrated that exposure to the natural environment improves people’s attention span and ability to cope with the stresses that come with modern life. Mindfulness—being intentionally focused on the present—also is a proven stress-reliever.

Extension family life educator Cheri Burcham teamed up with local foods and small farms educator Dave Shiley to offer a “Be Kind to Your Mind” nature walk at Forest Park in Shelbyville and at the Douglas–Hart Nature Center near Mattoon. Mindful walking techniques and nature journaling were two of the strategies participants explored as they learned more about how immersing themselves in nature can yield benefits to their physical and mental health and overall sense of well-being.
In March 2017, members of the Country Clovers 4–H Club had a chance to temporarily experience some of the effects of aging that their grandparents and other older adults must overcome as they manage activities of daily living. Among other activities, the 4–H’ers were tasked with:

- Reading printed material while wearing special eyeglasses that mimic the effects of cataracts and color-blindness.
- Tying their shoes with taped knuckles and/or gloves, to simulate loss of dexterity and sense of touch.
- Interpreting recorded words and other sounds that were garbled or otherwise distorted, to learn what it’s like to live with impaired hearing.

Extension family life educator Cheri Burcham led a discussion on what the youth had learned from the activities and how the experiences might change their assumptions and attitudes toward older people who might require a little extra help or patience every now and then.

Burcham also offers Walk in My Shoes for adult audiences—customer service staff, health care providers and others—who may want to learn more about the physical limitations that come with aging.

Research says people who are confident in their cooking skills tend to eat more balanced diets—a key to long-term health and well-being.

4–H Food Challenge ... accepted!
U of I Extension youth development educator Dana Homann teamed up with students at Eastern Illinois University (EIU) to offer the 4–H Food Challenge program in Charleston High School’s (CHS) culinary arts classes. The program was offered during the fall semester of 2016.

Modeled after the popular TV show “Chopped,” the CHS students had about a half-hour to prepare a safe, appealing and nutritious meal from several “mystery ingredients” and common kitchen pantry items. They worked as a team, and without recipes, to create a budget-friendly meal that they presented to judges from EIU’s dietetics program.

In the weeks leading up to the competition, Homann and the EIU students taught weekly lessons on nutrition, food safety, presentation, and other topics that complemented what they learned in their class’ regular culinary curriculum.
Dozens of 4–H members, leaders, and family members gathered on a cold January Saturday to package 15,486 meals for hungry families as part of a unit-wide, community-service project.

An average of 14.16 percent of people living in the Coles, Cumberland, Douglas, Moultrie, and Shelby Extension unit are living in poverty—and many of them rely on local food pantries to supplement their family income and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. All of the meals the 4–H’ers packaged were distributed to clients of food pantries within the unit’s five counties.

The Cumberland, Coles, and Shelby county 4–H Federations, and clubs in Moultrie and Douglas counties, donated the money needed to purchase the beans, rice, and other food supplies that went into the meals. The Illini Fighting Hunger student organization at University of Illinois assisted with purchasing and delivering the supplies.

About 50 students from Moulton Middle School and Arthur Grade School got some hands-on experience with drone technologies in October 2016, as they took a field trip to Lake Land College for a day of fun and serious learning.

U of I Extension staff collaborated with faculty and staff from Lake Land’s Agriculture Division to guide this activity-based design challenge that explored the science behind drones and how they are being used to solve real-world problems in agriculture, law enforcement, and other fields.

Through short classroom lectures and several activity segments, the youth learned about flight dynamics and aircraft types, safety and regulations, basic computer coding, and remote sensing and flight control.

To get a feel for how an aircraft lifts off the ground and maneuvers in the air, the students experimented with cardboard gliders.

Then they built their own drones, using miniature video recorders attached to foam gliders, and had a chance to see and discuss the video their drones had captured.

4–H National Youth Science Day (NYSD) is the world’s largest youth-led science experiment. Every year thousands of youth take part in the National Science Challenge focusing on important topics and issues relating to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).
Students from Shelbyville and Arthur took part in the 4-H Drone Discovery experience on National Youth Science Day. The day’s activities were co-sponsored by Extension and Lake Land College, which provided classroom space and instructional assistance.

Master Gardener Volunteers Serve, educate our communities

Nearly 60 highly trained Master Gardener volunteers continue to expand the capacity of Extension’s horticulture education programs in our unit. Last year, they documented 2,679 hours of service to local communities large and small.

As the most populous part of our five-county unit, Coles County has about 35 active volunteers who engage with the community by:

 › Recommending sound management practices for home and urban natural resources.
 › Creating and maintaining local demonstration gardens, including the Idea Garden at Sarah Bush – Lincoln Health Center (SBLHC).
 › Conducting hands-on gardening activities for youth at Douglas–Hart Nature Center and through 4-H.
 › Contributing to a safe, abundant food supply through advising area residents on home fruit and vegetable production.

While the vast majority of Master Gardener efforts focus on education, several committed volunteers also maintain the “Plant a Row for the Hungry” garden on the grounds of SBLHC. Last year, they grew and distributed more than 3,000 pounds of fresh produce to food pantries in Charleston and Mattoon.

Master Gardeners judge 4-H projects at local fairs.
With the help of Sean Covey’s book, “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens,” Extension youth development educator Dana Homann led seventh graders at Moulton Middle School in Shelbyville on a journey that their teachers believe will be life-changing.

The seven habits include being proactive, beginning with the end in mind, putting first things first, thinking win–win, seeking first to understand and then to be understood, working together to achieve more, and the importance of self-renewal.

Homann provided interactive lessons to students in the flex-time class once a week over a couple of months. Teachers reported witnessing students demonstrating the seven habits and using the terminology throughout the school day, talking about the habits to students not involved in the “7 Habits” program, reminding each other ways to organize and prioritize, and asking for resources to help them achieve goals set in “7 Habits.”

Student evaluations showed students could correctly identify and describe the seven habits. Ninety percent of the students listed ways they will apply the seven habits to their life, 93 percent described what they learned from the program, and 93 percent said they would recommend offering this again.
Participants experience “a month in the life” at Poverty Simulation

The Coles, Cumberland, Douglas, Moultrie, and Shelby Extension Unit now offers a three and a half-hour Poverty Simulation program that gives participants an eye-opening introduction to the challenges faced by the working poor and those living in severe poverty.

Staff with the Cumberland School District were among the first in our unit to experience the simulation. Program participants were assigned an identity as a family member living in poverty. During four “months,” they had to navigate their way through a variety of challenges relating to transportation, finding or keeping a job, keeping a roof over their heads, medical care, child care, feeding their families and more—all with limited time and extremely limited funds.

To find out more about bringing a Poverty Simulation to your community, phone any of our county Extension offices.

Recent hires bring experience, fresh ideas to local Extension programs.

Jennifer “Jenny” Lee became Coles County’s 4-H program coordinator in January of 2017. She came to Extension after 16 years as a conservation officer with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Diana Litteral replaced long-time secretary Karen Thilker in the Shelby County office in April. Diana previously was director of the Pregnancy Resource Center in Shelbyville.

In September, Elizabeth Hartke took on a full-time role as SNAP-Ed community worker in Coles County; she takes the place of Mary Kay Spannagel, who had worked part-time. Elizabeth came to Extension from Heartland Human Services in Effingham.

Jaylynn Maxey became Cumberland County’s full-time 4-H program coordinator in November after several months as a part-timer. Jaylynn is a 2017 graduate of the University of Illinois, where she studied crop sciences, leadership and business.
Welcome to the Real World helps students explore financial realities

Every semester, upperclassmen at Mattoon High School take part in University of Illinois Extension’s Welcome to the Real World (WTTRW) simulation as a culminating event in their economics class.

The simulation begins with the assumption that students have completed basic education for their chosen career, are single, and 25 years old. They live on their own and are independent with no financial support from family or others.

After they choose an occupation, they receive a monthly salary for that occupation. They then proceed through the “Welcome to the Real World!” simulation, in which they must deduct taxes, determine a savings amount, pay off a student loan, if applicable, and spend their "salary" on necessities and other items that reflect the career and lifestyle they have chosen. They learn how difficult it is to fund both needs and wants on a limited budget.

The Welcome to the Real World program also is offered through Shelbyville, Cumberland, Neoga, and Sullivan High Schools.

Cindy Overton inducted into Hall of Fame

Southsiders 4-H Club leader Cindy Overton, a 26-year volunteer, was inducted into the Illinois 4-H Hall of Fame. She has been a leader for her children’s, and now her grandchildren’s club, and is an integral part of the 4-H BBQ fundraiser and 4-H exhibitions.

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Barnyard Olympics

The first-ever Barnyard Olympics, sponsored by Rural King, involved 50 youth from six community clubs during the county fair. Members of the Coles County 4-H Federation planned and ran the event.

Workshops emphasize project and career skills

Coles County 4-H’ers took part in workshops on livestock judging, sewing, candle-making, scrapbooking, and cake decorating. Above, Stephanie Gannaway leads a candle-making workshop that combined science and business basics.
Operation: Safe Kids Leaves Lasting Impression
Fifth-graders at Cumberland Elementary School took part in Operation: Safe Kids (OSK), a five-week program that gave them a chance to develop skills necessary to care for themselves when they are home alone. Extension staff and community volunteers taught lessons on fire safety, internet safety, self-confidence, farm safety, water safety, first aid and poison control.

Volunteer presenters included Chuck Layton of the Toledo Fire Department, Rhonda Cash of the Cumberland County Farm Bureau, Austin Birch from the Mattoon YMCA, and Cris Ingram of the Cumberland County Health Department.

A secondary goal of OSK was to teach the kids about careers in health and safety. The highlight of the program was when the Air Rescue Consortium of Hospitals (ARCH) medical helicopter landed in the schoolyard. The ARCH nurse, paramedic and pilot talked about their careers and let the children explore the MedEvac chopper.

Awaiting the arrival of the MedEvac chopper

Cumberland County 4-H By the Numbers
- 8 4-H clubs (community and special interest)
- 84 4-H club members
- 25 Club leaders
- 324 Total youth involved in club, school and other programs

Some highlights
COMMUNITY SERVICE TREE-PLANTING PROJECT
Cumberland County 4-H teamed up with Cedar Ridge Nursery owner Jonathan Kay to plant trees throughout the county. In two days, 4-Her’s helped plant 11 trees in five locations. The nursery provided the trees for the project, in which youth learned about proper transplanting techniques and how trees help improve the environment for everyone.

At the beginning of 2017, a new 4-H club dedicated to the study and enjoyment of horses was formed. The members met throughout the year, and took part in several summer horse events and shows.

Vernon and Jane Miller, both former Cumberland County 4-H members, were inducted into the Illinois 4-H Hall of Fame. Jane was a leader for 30 years and Vernon is a beef superintendent. Thelma Bishop, who turned 100 in 2017, was named a Lifetime 4-H Supporter.
Fifth graders at Arthur, Atwood–Hammond and Lovington schools took part in the 4–H Health Jam that immersed them in exercise activities, experiential study of body systems, exploration of health careers, and an assessment of personal eating habits. The youth also participated in an eight-week “Walk across Illinois.”

At the end of the nine-week experience, the youth showed impressive gains in their knowledge of the long-term effects of their health practices today:
- 64 percent of students gained knowledge in the effects soda has on the body.
- 59 percent indicated that they learned a lot about the link to soda and obesity.
- 31 percent had a better understanding of how to read a food label.
- 51 percent had a greater knowledge of the health dangers of eating fast foods on a regular basis.
- 87 percent had a greater understanding of portion distortion and what recommended portions in each food group looks like.
- 69 percent indicated that they learned the health effects caused by an unhealthy diet.
- 61 percent indicated they had a better understanding of where their food comes from.
- All 63 students indicated that they reached their goal of 60 minutes of daily activity for eight weeks.

Extension also offers the Health Jam program in Shelby County schools.

**Healthy habits the focus of Moultrie-Douglas Health Jams**

Nearly 150 youth in Tuscola and Arcola had a chance to experience beginning visual arts and horticulture 4–H projects through the summer meals program coordinated by the Douglas County Health Department.

**CHEMICAL LOOK-ALIKES AT FARM SAFETY DAY**

Extension staff presented a lesson on chemical look-alikes at the Moultrie–Douglas Farm Safety Day. More than 250 students from Arthur, Arcola, Tuscola, Sullivan, Lovington, Atwood–Hammond, and Villa Grove learned how to properly store and identify common household chemicals.

Phyllis McReynolds, long-time leader of the Sunnyside Flea–Flickers 4–H Club, was inducted into the Illinois 4–H Hall of Fame in August. She has been active in 4–H for more than 50 years.
The Shelby County 4-H Federation challenged our community clubs to do two community-service projects this year, and nine of the 12 eligible clubs met the challenge. Some of their group projects included caroling at nursing homes, collecting items and packing Pride Packages, collecting food donations for local food pantries, and Blessings in a Back Pack, just to name a few.

Individual 4-H members also were challenged to take part in at least three community service projects. Fifty-three members met the goal, and were awarded community-service medals at Achievement Night.

NEW SHOOTING-SPORTS CLUB FORMS
The new Shelby Shooters 4-H SPIN (special-interest) club was formed in October 2016, with Aaron and Kelly Barringer serving as leaders. Club membership was 46, with 14 youth who were new to 4-H. The club met on Tuesdays and Thursdays from October through March, with three eight-week sessions covering BB guns and air rifles. Volunteers James Gratz and Karl Kunzeman assisted with the weekly shooting sessions.

Shelby County’s Spark Shooters 4-H SPIN (special interest) Club continues to be popular. As older members grow in their knowledge, they’re able to help younger 4-H’ers advance more quickly. Each year, the members exhibit at the fair and hold their own achievement night—with demonstrations.

A few 4-H highlights
CLOVERBUDS COME TO WINDSOR AND HERRICK
In Windsor, children in all kindergarten through second-grade classrooms took part in monthly 4-H Cloverbud activities that focused on healthy living, nutrition, community service, citizenship, visual arts, and more. In Herrick, kindergarteners and first graders took part in Cloverbud Clubs.

10 PROJECT WORKSHOPS OFFERED
Hands-on workshops are one of the best ways to help youth develop their project skills, and those offered in Shelby County last year included: pinch-pot clay, goats, Cooking 101/102, robotics, aerospace, cake decorating, sewing, scrapbooking and canvas painting.

JACKIE BECK WINS STATE AWARD
Shelbyville’s Jackie Beck was one of just 10 4-H’ers throughout the state who earned the Illinois Farm Bureau’s coveted Leadership, Citizenship and Professionalism (LCP) award.

FEDERATION MEMBERS LEAD AND MENTOR
Shelby County’s 4-H Federation is made up of 14 older youth who take an active role in planning programs and special events for 4-H’ers throughout the county. They serve as junior leaders and mentors to younger members, serve our volunteers at the annual leaders appreciation dinner, and take part in a variety of community service projects. Their efforts make a difference in our local 4-H program and throughout the county.
Financial Report
The 2017 operating budget was $659,880. Extension is funded through a combination of locally raised, county board, state, and federal dollars, which are returned to the community through educational programming.

2017 OPERATING BUDGET ($)

- County Board: $271,930
- Local Source: $71,800
- Gifts/Donations: $5,600
- State County Board Match: $223,425
- Program Income: $6,900
- Federal Income: $18,000
- State Income: $62,225
These volunteers donate their time to help Extension unit staff plan educational programs that meet the needs of communities throughout our five-county unit.

Jackie Beck (Shelbyville)
Shannon Breen (Tuscola)
Marilyn Dufford (Sullivan)
Gail Helton (Charleston)
Kyle Kroll (Bethany)

Jay Maxey (Greenup)
Macey Maxey (Greenup)
Julia Miller (Hutton)
Ian Pendergast-White (Ashmore)
Kevin Pierce (Mattoon)
Curt Rincker (Shelbyville)
Mike Sowers (Greenup)
Jim Sparks (Greenup)
Gloria Spear (Humboldt)
Tammie Syfert (Mattoon)
Kathy Thomas (Sullivan)

Russ Tomblin (Shelbyville)
Phil Walk (Neoga)
Sarah Walk (Neoga)

We also thank County Board members Roy Clapp (Cumberland), Gary Gergeni (Shelby), Dave McCabe (Moultrie), and Nancy Purdy (Coles) for their frequent participation in council activities.

Coles County office
707 Windsor Road, Suite A
Charleston, IL 61920
Phone: (217) 345-7034
Mon – Fri: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
(Closed 12 – 1 p.m.)

OFFICE LOCATIONS
Cumberland County office
102 S. Meridian, P.O. Box 218
Toledo, IL 62468
Phone: (217) 849-3931
Mon – Thu: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
(Closed 12 – 1 p.m.)
Closed Friday

Moultrie-Douglas office
122 S. Walnut St.
Arthur, IL 61911
Phone: (217) 543-3755
FAX: (217) 543-3757
Mon – Fri: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
(Closed 12 – 1 p.m.)

Shelby County office
1125 W. N. 2nd St.
Shelbyville, IL 62565
Phone: (217) 774-9546
Mon – Thu: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
(Closed 12 – 1 p.m.)
Friday: 8 – 10:40 a.m.

Please send general email inquiries to:
uie-ccdms@illinois.edu

CHECK US OUT ON FACEBOOK
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Coles County 4-H: facebook.com/ColesCounty4H
Coles County Master Gardeners: facebook.com/ColesCountyMasterGardeners
Cumberland County 4-H: facebook.com/Cumberland-County-4-H-Illinois
Moultrie-Douglas 4-H: facebook.com/MoultrieDouglas4H
Shelby County 4-H: facebook.com/Shelby-County-IL-4-H

ILLINOIS Extension
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

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University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.
If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in any program, please contact the county Extension Office.
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