



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
EXTENSION

# EXTENSION IN ACTION

Fall 2004

The Joint Council of Extension Professionals is a collaboration of University of Illinois Extension employee associations. These associations are working to enable people to improve their lives and communities through learning partnerships that put knowledge to work.

## UI Tax School Reaches 6000 Tax Professionals Annually



The University of Illinois Tax School is a highly successful Extension program with a 60-year history of providing federal taxation education to tax professionals. The program reaches over 6,000 practitioners annually and is intended for those who prepare taxes for others, including CPAs, accountants, attorneys, enrolled agents, and bankers.

The program draws practitioners from Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Kentucky, California and Wisconsin. The workbook used in Tax School is written and published at the University of Illinois, and is used by 14 other states who provide similar Extension programs.

It is estimated that practitioners attending the Tax School prepare over 1.5 million tax returns annually. By keeping practitioners up-to-date on new tax laws and reviewing complex tax situations, the Tax School helps assure that taxpayers pay no more or less tax than is due.

## Reaching Out To Hispanic/Latino Audiences

University of Illinois Extension partnered with the Hispanic/Latino Coalition of Will County to conduct a one-week day camp for 100 Hispanic youth, ages 8-12, at Sator Sanchez School in Joliet. Campers participated in hands-on activities from 4-H Camp Clover curricula – Latino Cultural Arts, Food Guide Pyramid Revisited, and Aerospace. Campers received lunch each day, a t-shirt, and participated in sports activities including soccer, basketball, volleyball, and jumping rope.



In the final evaluation, parents responded that they sent their children because it was a good activity (97.5%) and they wanted their children to learn new things (95%). Ninety-five percent of the families indicated their children learned new skills and 100% said they would send their children to a similar activity. Ninety-two percent of the families would encourage their children to join 4-H and 85% would attend other Extension programs.

## Extension Helps Unemployed Find Jobs

In a city beset with factory layoffs and business closings, Macon County Extension conducted a community event to introduce people to jobs, financial assistance, and retraining opportunities.

In its third year, the Decatur Community Marketplace offered 581 jobs and 36 openings in union apprenticeship programs, and attracted employers as far away as Champaign. Over 20 employers, four labor apprenticeship programs, as well as 12 educational services and financial institutions offered information regarding employment opportunities.

Extension teamed up with the Decatur Area Labor Management Committee to host the Community Marketplace, which drew hundreds of attendees for the third successive year. Both employers and prospective employees indicated they were pleased with the results and would return again. Several employers indicated that many open jobs were filled that day or that potential employees were identified.



## Cooking Schools - Obesity and Healthy Lifestyles

The numbers are staggering . . . it's an epidemic . . . it's obesity. The National Institute of Health reports the number of overweight children in all race and gender groups has doubled in the last two to three decades. Currently, one child in five is overweight.



To teach children good nutrition and the importance of physical activity, U of I Extension conducted 62 week long cooking schools throughout 19 Southern Illinois counties, most from low-resource areas.

Over 850 boys and girls ages 8 to 14 learned about nutrition, food safety, cooking healthy foods, and exercise as a part of life. Test results indicate participants significantly increased their knowledge about nutrition and food safety and often reported an increase in physical activity.

## Youth Detention Center Harvests Rewards

The Sangamon County Juvenile Detention Center may seem an unlikely setting for a positive relationship between Sangamon-Menard Master Gardeners and teens. During the summer of 2003, four Master Gardeners inspired twenty youth on probation to grow a vegetable garden.

As the rototiller dug up bricks, shoes and assorted garbage in the lot, the kids worked hard removing the junk and working the soil. Hesitant to participate at first, the

youth soon learned that gardening can be contagious.

The kids listened to instruction and guidance from the Master Gardeners, worked hard, and donated over 100 pounds of produce to the Central Illinois Foodbank.



Each youth practiced leadership skills by guiding other youth participants. The Master Gardeners became a positive role model for the youth by sharing the work, worries, and sweat. Success helped secure an \$1800 grant to support an enhanced program in 2004.

## IPM Technique Benefits Apple Producers



Apple production is among the most pesticide-intensive crops. The economic survival of more than 350 commercial apple growers in Illinois, with approximately 6,000 acres of orchards, is threatened by crisis over pesticide use.

The standard control procedure for summer apple diseases is to spray trees with fungicides 6-8 times until approximately two weeks before harvest. Between 2001-2004, 14 orchards in Illinois compared the standard procedure to a weather-based, disease-warning system which uses Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles. The amount of fungicide required was dramatically less for the IPM method. Many apple growers have already begun implementing IPM techniques realizing that utilizing these methods can cut costs by 48%,

pose less risk to the environment and human health, and delay development of resistance to fungicides while protecting fruit yield and quality. For more information visit:

<http://veg-fruit.cropsci.uiuc.edu>.

## Seminar Addresses Long Term Care Insurance

No one wants to waste money paying for an insurance policy they cancel before utilizing, but unfortunately this happens to many people who buy long-term health care insurance.

"What You Need to Know about Long-term Care Insurance", developed by Extension Consumer and Family Economics Educators, is offered as a teleconference seminar designed to help people make informed decisions about long-term care insurance before they make a purchase.

During the last three years, 413 people received the information packet and approximately 275 people participated in the seminar.

Evaluation data indicates that consumers are helped throughout the decision-making process: from collecting information and comparing options to deciding whether long-term care insurance is an appropriate financial tool for their situation.

For more information on these and other University of Illinois Extension programs, contact your local Extension office or visit our website. [www.extension.uiuc.edu](http://www.extension.uiuc.edu)

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