



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
EXTENSION

Extension in ACTION

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.



4-H Youth Obesity Program Yields Changes

Obesity is a growing problem for American youth, particularly for African American and Latino youth from lower income and less educated families. DuPage County's 4-H program recently collaborated with county government and nine neighborhood resource centers to address this issue by providing the 4-H Show Stopping Healthy Hopping Program (4-H SSHH) to 333 disadvantaged minority youth.

The goals of this 8-week program were to improve youth's physical fitness and address their basic developmental needs of belonging, independence, mastery and generosity.

More than just a jump rope program, 4-H SSHH used positive youth development best practices to effectively engage youth and ensure positive outcomes, such as meeting their developmental needs and improving behavior and attitudes.

An average survey response of 3.7 (with 4.0 indicating full agreement) revealed that participants experienced success (a measure of mastery) by taking part in this program. Eighty five percent agreed that exercise can be fun and 66% of youth jumped at least 75% of the allotted time, indicating changes in behavior.

Center Directors also reported that some youth attended the centers more regularly, lost weight, and continue to jump rope.

Guiding Generations and Building Character

"Great ideas given with a positive approach", comments one Whiteside County teacher after UI Extension presented the *Building Up Character* program to her class.

Seven hundred K-6th graders in over 140 sessions learned the importance of positive character by participating in this program.

An Extension Youth Development Educator and a Family Life Educator teamed up to address the pervading need for character education in the local

school system by teaching the importance of positive character.

Results indicated:

- 87% of 6th graders reported they were less likely to cheat as a result of the program
- 72% of teachers reported significant improvement in student's knowledge of positive character
- 71% of 6th graders reported at least some increase in the targeted traits

Enthusiastic teachers commented, "The material is presented with fun interesting content that engages children at the grade level" and "...the lessons were presented so the children could understand the important information."



Behavior Improves with Terrific Teachable Moments

Teachers and childcare providers continually strive to develop positive character traits, such as respect and responsibility, in the children they supervise.

Today, more than 1200 *Terrific Teachable Moments (TTM)* booklets developed by UI Extension Educators are in the hands of teachers and childcare providers, impacting an estimated 25,000 children throughout Illinois.

Of those who received *TTM* training, 146 returned impact evaluation surveys and

reported they had carried out 954 hours of *TTM* activities with 4620 children.

Sixty percent said *TTM* helped them address negative behaviors quickly and 73% said

TTM helped them reinforce positive behaviors. Seventy-two percent saw positive changes and attributed "most" or "some" of those changes to the *Terrific Teachable Moments* curricula.



Making a Difference in the Lives of Youth

The University of Illinois Extension 4-H Youth Development program reaches more than 281,000 youth (ages 5 through 19) and 25,000 adult and teen volunteers annually.

These youth represent a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds and live on farms (6%), in small towns (41%), large towns (31%), suburbs (4%), and large cities (18%).

Studies show that 4-H members do better in school, are more motivated to help others, feel safe to try new things, achieve a sense of self-esteem, develop lasting friendships and are less likely to become involved in anti-social behaviors.

Youth Development professionals are also active in research, have generated over \$1 million in educational grants, and have partnered with business and industry. These dollars have generated opportunities for youth to work directly with scientists and explore career opportunities.

These youth are preparing themselves to take leadership positions in their communities and work for positive outcomes for Illinois citizens.



Richard W. Clark,
Interim Assistant Dean
and State 4-H Director

Managed Grazing Workshops Proved Successful

Mechanics of Grazing is an ongoing on-farm workshop held throughout Illinois. This workshop focuses on the “how to” aspects of implementing a management-intensive grazing program, potentially increasing operator net income.

Workshop topics include designing effective fencing and watering systems, determining the size and layout of paddocks, and measuring available forage.

Participant surveys conducted one year after attending a workshop showed the following practices were adopted:

- 340 acres were converted to management-intensive grazing
- 222 head of livestock were grazing on management-intensive acres for the first time

- 5 farms installed smooth-wire permanent fence and “portable” electric fences
- 7 farms seeded legumes and/or grasses.
- 6 farms conducted soil samples and were better able to estimate the amount of available forage.

Workshop sponsors included University of Illinois Extension, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the USDA Risk Management Agency.



Sea Grant Inspires Medicine ‘Take Back’ Programs

Prescription medicine usage increases every year in the United States. However, when prescriptions expire or are no longer needed, they often end up in wastewater treatment plants and can contaminate waterways.

Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant (IISG), a new Extension partner, along with the U.S. EPA, developed a resource kit for communities to start ‘take back’ programs designed to collect unwanted medicines. Over 160 resource kits have been distributed and over 100 local officials have been trained to use these kits.

As a result of this program, approximately seven 55-gallon drums of household medicines were collected for safe

incineration in Sangamon County alone. Kendall County’s collection program, which began this summer, provides opportunities for residents to drop off medicines at the police station anytime. And in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, more than one ton of pharmaceuticals and controlled substances with an estimated street value of half a million dollars have been collected.



Plan Well to Retire Well

Today, retirement can last 30 years or more, and with more employers replacing pension plans with 401(k) plans, the pressure on individuals to save and invest wisely for retirement is more important than ever.

Turning to University of Illinois Extension’s *Plan Well, Retire Well* website can enable people to make financial decisions today that will help ensure their financial security tomorrow.

Released in 2003, the website’s five sections help people understand the benefits of tax-deferred savings plans. In addition, interactive worksheets throughout this secure website located at www.RetireWell.uiuc.edu allows users to input financial information and “learn by doing.”

Over 60,000 individual users have visited the *Plan Well, Retire Well* website and 18% of users return to the website for more retirement information. Most recently, in an effort to help motivate women to invest, video vignettes of women talking about finances were added.

University of Illinois—U.S. Dept. of Agriculture—Local Extension Councils Cooperating
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This newsletter is brought to you in cooperation with the Alpha Nu Chapter of Epsilon Sigma Phi, Illinois Extension Agricultural Association, Illinois Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, and Illinois Extension Professionals for Youth Education.