



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.

## Math and Science *CAN* Be Fun!



Career opportunities, leadership development, and the desire to learn were the outcomes for Chicago area students who attended Extension's Applied Science, Math & Technology Academy last summer. "The program is a blessing," said one mother, who added, "My child really enjoyed everything exposed to him." He and 2,300 other students from south Chicago communities attended weekend workshops and field trips that covered radio voiceover applications, Web design, electricity basics, and urban gardening. They also had the opportunity to explore career training requirements.

Motivating youth to embrace math and science is a challenge, but Cook County Extension staff assembled experts who described practical and "hip" uses for science and math and coordinated field trips for the youth to attend Black Creativity 2005: Engineering the Future, the Museum of Science and Industry, the Annual Flower and Garden Show, and the Culinary and Hospitality Institute of Chicago. To sustain the career interests of the youngsters, their school teachers were provided with various technology tools to supplement their instruction.

## Planting and Planning for the Future

Imagine 3,500 excited children carrying a tree sapling home to plant in their yard. That's what happens in Monroe County where fifth grade students learn about their role and responsibility in environmental stewardship with the help of University of Illinois Extension.

The award-winning program, *Environmental Stewardship and Outdoor Education*, is

designed to enhance natural resources and environmental science curricula in schools. Students receive activity pamphlets dealing with conservation, an introduction to GPS and GIS, and the opportunity to participate in 11 interactive mini-



workshops on trees, fish, snakes, birds, and other wildlife of Illinois. Sessions on reducing, reusing, and recycling illustrate ways students can have a positive impact on the environment. Maps generated from collected GPS data demonstrate the role technology plays in environmental stewardship, and those 3,500 trees will become a permanent reminder about Extension's impact.

## Locally Grown, Locally Good

More than just new recipes were shared when the Extension team in Adams and Brown Counties introduced more than 1,200 Quincy-area consumers to where their fresh market foods originate. With the help of a chef's competition, attendance at the weekly farmers market quadrupled as Extension educators helped visitors increase awareness of the importance of a

sustainable local food system. This Extension event increased consumer awareness of available local food products and producers resulting in increased purchasing of local products and consumption of fruits and vegetables. One of the more than 40 local fresh food vendors indicated his colleagues all benefited from increased sales, which could lead to greater economic sustain-

ability. The event built relationships between both producers and consumers. With the help of funding from a USDA North Central Regional SARE grant, the Quincy consumers now know their weekly farmers' market is "Locally Grown, Locally Good."



## Don't Get Caught in the Eye of the Storm

The good intentions of community-minded citizens often run afoul of the Illinois Open Meetings Act; but with U of I Extension's help in Macoupin and Montgomery Counties, public officials and taxing boards have learned the essence of practicing good public policy. After attending Extension's seminar, "Don't Get Caught in the Eye of The Storm," nearly 100 elected and appointed local officials now understand how to avoid media scrutiny and trouble with the law. Officials of one township board pledged to immediately revise their methods of operation, and the Macoupin County clerk commented that "This program provided very valuable and informative information for both new and longer term government officials." Specialists from the Illinois Attorney General's Office, governmental associations, and the University of Illinois outlined rules and responsibilities for local officials, who may find themselves operating in a legal maelstrom when it comes to conducting the public's business in the open.

## From Our Heritage, Grows Our Future

Today the heritage of Dudley Smith, a pioneering Christian County farmer who urged us not only to embrace technological advancements, but also to address the long-term stewardship and sustainability of agricultural practices, allows Extension to show tomorrow's farmers how to achieve increased profitability and improved environmental conditions. Since 2001, more than 1,100 farmers across the nation and around the world have attended Extension seminars at the Dudley Smith farm near Pana, where they have learned about integrated crop and livestock production systems and implemented those practices on their own farms. Extension's Dudley Smith

Initiative illustrates the economic and environmental impacts of new agricultural production systems. Extension and research initiatives at the Dudley Smith farm include energy production, sustainability of small rural communities, as well as rebuilding the Illinois livestock industry. According to one producer, "Utilizing Management Intensive Grazing over continuous grazing techniques has enabled us to stay profitable every year on a pasture based enterprise."



## Lighting the FUSE for Family Success

"I plan to finish high school." "I spend more time with my daughter now." Those were among the participants' comments in Extension's FUSE program in Whiteside County, where Hispanic and Latino families are learning about the positive impact of education on their lives. In conjunction with Sauk Valley Community College, U of I Extension works monthly with participants enrolled in *Families United for a Stronger Education* (FUSE), which is conducted in both English and Spanish. Currently,

FUSE is hosting a career and culture program, convening experts on various topics with Extension staff facilitating its new Latino cultural arts curriculum. Participation in the program has increased by 250% over the past two years, helping Hispanic and Latino families become integrated into Illinois communities.



## Dairy Barns, Diplomas and Digital Extension

It's 5 a.m. in the milking parlor, and along with a herd of Holsteins is a computer-based Extension program designed to improve the management skills of dairy farm managers who can't travel far from home. This creative Extension outreach initiative awards a U of I Graduate College Dairy Certificate when students complete five classes and associated laboratory requirements. The "on-demand" aspect allows the 521 registered students from Illinois to Australia to put on their learning caps when it can be conveniently worked into their milking schedule. With funding help from C-FAR and commercial interests, the Dairy Certificate Program is the epitome of Extension's use of the Internet and other technologies to advance the cause of education and is the only U.S. educational dairy program with international student enrollment.

University of Illinois—U.S. Dept. of Agriculture—Local Extension Councils Cooperating  
University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

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.