



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
EXTENSION

# SOUTHERN UPDATE



Unique Program Uses  
CYFAR and FNP to Address  
Educational Needs of  
Young Parents

## Southern Regional Office

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## Expectant Young Parents Get Education, Support From Unique Extension Program

The Extension mission to help people “put knowledge to work” has resulted in a unique educational program for Franklin County teens and young adults who are expecting their first child. *Preparing for Parenthood* is a monthly class designed to meet the specific needs of expectant young parents.

“It initially began as a program for pregnant girls,” says Jennifer Newbury, FNP community worker and coordinator of the program. “But, as fathers showed an interest, the class was expanded to include them and encourage them to be involved in raising their child. Each month, approximately 40 expectant parents attend.”

The program includes a specific health issue and a nutrition topic, and the expectant parents learn about the various agencies that can provide services for them and their babies.

The “Ask a Doc” segment of the program gives participants a chance to ask a doctor (or physician’s assistant) any question related to their pregnancy or general health.

“Through our CYFAR initiative, the class also includes parenting topics such as *What to Expect in the First Few Months*, *Car Seat Safety*, and *Poison Lookalikes*,” adds Alice Hunt, family/consumer community worker who assists with the program.

Transportation for participants is provided by the H Group (Human Services), and attendance incentives are provided by SIU Family Medicine.

“These young parents are extremely appreciative of the reliable information they receive at this program,” says Newbury. “Many of them continue to participate after their babies are born, which is a strong indicator of the program’s effectiveness and impact.”



# GIFT Gardens Will be Growing in Southern Illinois

Last fall, the Southern Region Strategic Initiative Committee was charged with developing a region-wide programming effort that met the following criteria:

- Must align with federal, state, and local initiatives
- Must be interdisciplinary, sustainable, non-political, and provide opportunities for new partnerships
- Must be exciting, visible, and attractive
- Must show quick impact

Wow...that's a tall order! But after several meetings, the committee unanimously agreed that the initiative should center on **Healthy and Safe Food**. The committee has proposed to the Southern Region that "One or more youth-led, adult-assisted food production program(s) will be initiated in every county in 2010."

We have two goals for 2010:

1. One or more community "GIFT" garden(s) per county (GIFT = Growing Illinois Food Together)
2. At least one "GIFT" garden must be youth-led, adult-assisted

During March and April, counties should assess community gardens to determine if it will be youth-led, adult-assisted; identify and recruit partners; recruit youth; and recruit volunteers. Marketing materials will be provided by April 15.

For more information about the "GIFT Garden" project, contact committee chair Jody Johnson, [jjhnsn@illinois.edu](mailto:jjhnsn@illinois.edu). The detailed timeline was provided by Carol Schlitt in a March 1 email to county directors and educators.

**Are you using Pidgin yet? Contact Peter if you need help!**

## Personnel Update

- Karen Tilashalski is the new visiting outreach associate, 70 percent time. Her work is with the ExCEL 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Grant in the Madison-St. Clair Unit. She is based at the Edwardsville Extension Center and can be reached via email at [karentil@illinois.edu](mailto:karentil@illinois.edu). Karen's degrees are from SIU-Edwardsville. Her MS is in education, and her undergraduate degree is in elementary education. She has more than 30 years of experience in education: as a presenter/trainer, administrator, parent counselor, teacher, and resource specialist. She is a life member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Interviews for the 4-H Youth Development position in the southernmost region were recently conducted. An offer has been made to the finalist, and we are awaiting signed acceptance.

### Calendar Items

Regional Advisory Committee  
March 10  
Regional Office

County Directors Meeting  
March 16  
Jefferson County Office

Randolph County  
Program Review  
March 17

Regional Advisory Council  
March 18  
Jefferson County Office

Southern Region 4-H Update  
March 23  
Jefferson County Office

Southern Illinois  
Camp Association Meeting  
March 30

Regional Meeting  
March 30 (p.m., tentative)

Extension Week  
April 18 – 24

Regional Meeting  
April 27 (tentative)



Work together to create a program display for your office ...  
*brought to you by thoughts we generated at the FISH Market Place.*