Since 1914, Extension has served Macoupin County residents as a “one-stop shop” with a variety of educational programs. Our role is to market and deliver research-based educational workshops, publications, and direct responses to questions. We also communicate local research needs to our state university land grant partners, University of Illinois. The University has provided research in Illinois since 1862, so it’s a name people know and trust. Our “customers” are also our partners. Local citizens help us identify local issues that need to be addressed, deliver educational programs to other and coordinate resources including our volunteers.

Paula D. Robinson
County Extension Director
Macoupin on the Move – Women Out Walking

The three month program was offered free of charge to participants and was conducted in Carlinville and Staunton. Participants received a pedometer, walking log book, incentives, educational materials, and the support of group leaders and team members. More than 300 people signed up for the program. This program received grant funds from Office of Women’s Health. At the first meetings, there were more than 175 people in attendance at the two locations. During the first session, participants completed an initial assessment of weight and body measurements (waist and hip). At the end of the 3-month program, weight and body measurements were repeated to gauge participants’ success. Participants attended monthly educational programs and received wellness newsletters and recipes. Topics to be offered include: What to Eat and Why, Eating on the Run, Focus on Fruits and Vegetables, and Healthy Grains. At the end of the program, the following information was compiled from the participants:

1. After completing Women out Walking, my current physical activity status is:
   (78%) 1. I exercise (walk, swim, bike, etc.) more now.
   (20%) 2. I exercise or walk about the same now.
   (2%) 3. I exercise less now.

2. During the walking program, I used my pedometer:
   (81%) 1. All the time.
   (19%) 2. Part of the time.

3. In the future, I plan to use my pedometer:
   (70%) 1. Yes, all the time.
   (30%) 2. Yes, part of the time.

4. After completing Women out Walking, my current nutrition status is:
   (73%) 1. I consume (eat or drink) more fruit or vegetables now.
   (26%) 2. I consume about the same amount.

Other results:
Steps by individuals
31% - Averaged more than 10,000 steps a day
33% - Averaged 5,000 – 9,999 steps a day
36% - Averaged less than 4,999 steps a day

Reduction of Waist Measurement
74% had reduction

Weight by individuals
10% - Lost more than 10 pounds
33% - Lost 5 – 10 pounds
35% - Lost 1 – 5 pounds
78% - Lost weight

72% - Reduction of Hip Measurement

Senator Deanna Demuzio participated with employees of the Children’s Garden Day Care as they walked during a break. Every employee of the facility participated in Macoupin on the Move – Women Out Walking.
4-H Club for Comets!

University of Illinois Extension formed a special interest 4-H club this fall that focused on the topic of comets. Members studied and conducted experiments on topics such as comets, electromagnetics, and particle dispersion. A 4-H special interest club is a short-term club that meets a minimum of six times to focus on a specialty area. Mary Ann Pollitt, retired Girard Elementary teacher volunteered to lead the club and teach the sessions. The club concluded with a field trip to the Challenger Center where they were able to serve in positions of mission control and astronauts. The youth conducted experiments and simulated systems needed to monitor air control, temperature and other elements of a successful mission.

Royal Lakes

Thirty-five youth participated in Royal Lakes 4-H. The children learned about 4-H projects such as nutrition and character education. Since Macoupin has started this program, Royal Lakes youth have attended field trips, holiday baking workshops, day camps, and a job shadow summer program. This small community is made up of 95% African-American and 80% of the residents are low income.

Special Needs 4-H Club

Macoupin County 4-H also reaches our citizens with special needs. We have approximately 65 clients from two developmentally disabled centers in the counties as 4-H members. As 4-H members, they learn about nutrition, character education, life skills and project work. Members also participate in the county 4-H fair shows. 4-H teens and adult volunteers judge the projects that these participants bring and interact with these members.
Weather Watchers

Anyone familiar with Illinois weather knows that storms can produce markedly varied rainfall and snowfall patterns within short distances. A volunteer program designed to increase the number and density of recording locations was coordinated by the Illinois State Water Survey and the National Weather Service, in cooperation with Extension. Forty interested persons attended the training workshop. Requirements to participate include access to internet for reporting, an enthusiasm for watching and reporting weather conditions, and a desire to learn more about how the weather can affect and impact our lives.

Children’s Health Program

The National Institutes of Health has selected Macoupin County as a site for the National Children’s Study, the largest study of child and human health ever conducted in the United States. The extensive population-based study looks at the health and development of children by following them from before birth to age 21. The study seeks information to prevent and treat some of the nation’s most pressing health problems, including autism, birth defects, diabetes, heart disease and obesity. Saint Louis University, the sponsoring organization, expects to enroll 250 participants from Macoupin County for each of four years starting in 2009. Extension will play a role in securing pregnant women for the study.

Junior Leadership Academy for Local Students

Junior Leadership Academy, a joint 4-H effort by the Extension offices in Macoupin and Montgomery counties, helps high school students learn leadership skills, become aware of career opportunities and gives students an opportunity to learn about local business. Approximately 15 students from Macoupin County participated by meeting six times throughout the school year to attend academic leadership sessions or visit local businesses to learn what knowledge and skills are needed in the future job market. Funding for the Academy is provided by the Illinois 4-H Foundation.
In 2006, Macoupin County had a teen pregnancy rate of approximately 11%. Schools and community agencies have requested University of Illinois Extension help provide parenting skills to these teenagers. Parenting Classes for Teens and Young Adults is provided twice a year and cover topics such as ages and stages, challenging behaviors, sleeping through the night, the no stage, and toilet teaching. The classes are held during the school day when childcare is not an issue. Schools have been supportive of this program by allowing their teen mothers and fathers to attend.

For 12 years, the Agricultural Literacy Program has stressed the importance of agriculture and the role it plays in our everyday lives.

Thanks to the support of the program’s sponsors, the agricultural literacy program reached more than 3,377 students (unduplicated) and 645 educators through 263 classroom programs, teacher inservices, hands-on learning kits, agricultural literacy materials and newsletters.

As they learn about trees, Brighton 3rd graders examine a variety of tree seeds and leaves.

Educators utilize a map as they try one of the activities in the new Illinois mAGic.
Recycling education programs were presented to third grade classes in eight Macoupin County schools. A total of 590 students and 37 adults participated in the hands-on program. The program coincides with the Illinois State Learning Standards. Lessons emphasized that the landfill is not the answer to the garbage mass. Biodegradable products were demonstrated. Students filled four mini-landfills with organic waste, shredded newspaper, plastic and aluminum. These mini-landfills were left in the classroom for the students to watch the changes as the materials did or did not decompose.

Shirley Emerson, Extension Worker, shared recycling information to Children’s Garden where the youth learned how to recycle newspaper, plastic, and aluminum.

Clean Hands in Macoupin County

More than 4500 Macoupin County children from Head Start to 5th grade have learned about proper hand washing by using the Glow Germ program. The program uses a black light and special lotion to show students the many germs present on their hands, and to reinforce the proper technique necessary to clean hands to remove bacteria. All children in Head Start and kindergarten received a nailbrush and a sticky cling for the home bathroom mirror to remind them of the 20-second handwash procedure. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that every year, more than 164 million school days are lost due to illness; and many of those illnesses could have been avoided if children had washed their hands correctly.

Master Gardeners’ Volunteer Hours = More than $14,000

Thanks to the volunteers’ research skills and dedication to educating the public, gardeners around Macoupin County have learned how to grow healthier vegetables, protect valuable shade trees, and enrich their communities with flora displays. In 2007, Macoupin County Master Gardeners tendered close to 800 volunteer hours. The value of the volunteer hours (Points of Life and Independent Sector—$18.00 per hour) equals an estimated $14,000 given back locally. Local projects include school gardens, public beautification, demonstration plots, and presentations to adults and youth.
Community Service Important to the 4-H Members

4-H members are encouraged to develop and practice skills to become helpful or useful in their club, community, country and world. 4-H community service projects allow youth and adults to work together and to help others at the same time. Community service projects take many forms depending on the club. Some Macoupin County projects included:

- Food Pantries
- Community Beautification
- Military Care Packages
- Recycling
- Macoupin County Historical Society
- Local Libraries
- Holiday Baskets for Families
- Senior Citizens
- School Supplies for Students
- Animal Shelters

Lucky Birds 4-H members travel to a local nursing home to visit residents during the Holiday Season.

Head Start Students Learn Good Nutrition

Emphasis on healthy eating and the introduction to a variety of foods, especially fruits/vegetables are keys to a healthy lifestyle. Monthly programs that include foods was presented to the 121 preschool children. Physical activities including simple stretches that encourage the child to teach their family members. Macoupin County Head Start locations are in Benld, Carlinville, Brighton, and Thayer.

Senator Deanna Demuzio visits with the children at Carlinville to discuss eating healthy. She read the Dr. Seuss book, “Green Eggs and Ham” to show children that they should try new foods.
“Teacher Tidbits” Offered by Macoupin County

All the Kindergarten – 5th grade teachers in the county are receiving Teacher Tidbits, a newsletter designed for elementary educators. Each month, U of I websites are featured on the first page of the newsletter. The rest of the newsletter includes information that may assist the teacher in their personal life and in the classroom. The free newsletter is sent electronically to seven of the nine school districts in the county. The other two districts receive a paper copy. Articles are written by U of I educators. Response so far to the newsletter has been very positive. Teachers have commented that the websites are very beneficial to their classroom instruction. This newsletter reaches more than 250 teachers.

How we do it . . .

Extension brings resources from the University of Illinois through weekly news columns and news releases sent to the media outlets including radio and newspapers. Last year, 243 news releases were distributed helping local residents learn about programs and subject matter information.

Macoupin County mails 16 different newsletters to clients who are seeking information on specific topics. During the last year, more than 8,000 newsletters were mailed from the Extension office.

Diagnostic Testing is used to solve problems and answer questions quickly, and to identify insect and plant diseases affecting farmers’ fields and home owners’ gardens and lawns.

How Extension Gets Funded

Extension is funded through a three-way partnership—federal, state, and local. Counties receive indirect benefits from federal funding through specific programs and through support of the University of Illinois College of ACES and Extension centers. But the largest single source of income to counties in any given year is County Board Match funds through the state Department of Agriculture budget approved by the Illinois General Assembly. The second largest source of funds for Macoupin County is the County Board. County Board funding comes through a referendum. Local funds are generated through donations from business, organizations and the Macoupin County 4-H Foundation.
The Macoupin County Extension Council participates in identifying local needs, providing guidance in program planning and evaluating our programs. These Council volunteers along with 200 additional volunteers extend Extension’s work throughout the community and keep us accountable. The members during 2007-2008 were:

Diane Bowman, Chesterfield
Jennifer Brown, Gillespie
Jan Cloud, Shipman
Cara Duncan, Carlinville
Ethan Eades, Hettick
Annette Edwards, Girard
Doug Gaines, Worden
Wanda Hammann, Carlinville
David Humphreys, Carlinville
Kristine Jarden, Bunker Hill
Molly Karnes, Bunker Hill
Ed Marburger, Mt. Olive
Eileen Nichols, Girard
Robert Quarton, Palmyra
Olga Rives, Carlinville
David Sanson, Carlinville
Christine Simmons, Royal Lakes
Alice Tebbe, Mt. Olive
Delbert Walk, Carlinville

**Additional Resources**

**West Central Regional Director**
Ryan Hobson
217-241-4644

**East Peoria Extension Center**
309-694-7501
Jennifer Hunt – Consumer & Family Education
Dave Seibert – Animal Systems
Jay Solomon – Engineering Technology

**Edwardsville Extension Center**
618-692-9434
Robert Bellm – Crop Systems
Elizabeth Wahle - Horticulture

**Springfield Extension Center**
217-782-6515
Patrick Curry – Community Economic Development
George Czapar – Integrated Pest Management
Dan Dawson – Prevention Education
Patti Faughn – Family Life
Jananne Finck – Nutrition and Wellness
Duane Friend – Natural Resources
David Robson – Horticulture
Jodie Tate – Natural Resources
Judy Taylor – Youth Development
Heading for the Check Out Lane

We hope you have enjoyed learning more about our educational programs. Extension is enhanced by staff from campus and from other parts of the state, and they are certainly one of the secrets to our success! We hope to keep our local Extension “store” fully stocked but fiscal pressures from the state and federal partnerships have created a growing concern that someday our shelves may not include as many items as they have in the past.

We look forward to offering a variety of educational programs through the Extension “store” in Macoupin County.

Extension Program Staff
Tosha Cantrell-Bruce
Annette Cole
Amy Dewitt
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Connie Niemann
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