

2020

IMPACT

REPORT



INDIANA'S EDUCATIONAL PARTNER FOR LIFE

PURDUE EXTENSION

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Purdue Extension programs reach all aspects and each stage in the lives of Hoosiers. That means Purdue Extension is your educational partner for life.

We're training tomorrow's leaders through Indiana 4-H Youth Development with hands-on experiences, even during a pandemic. We continue building on those skills with a wide range of workforce development training for all audiences, preparing people whether it's their first job or next opportunity.

We help Indiana's agricultural producers discover the world of digital agriculture to make their operations more efficient, productive and sustainable. And we share ways that they can grow food, and the strength of local communities, through urban gardens and farmers markets.

Purdue Extension champions mental health in Indiana by offering Mental Health First Aid courses, as well as community-based opioid prevention education.

We help rural communities and urban neighborhoods identify and capitalize on their greatest assets while increasing digital access across the state.

More than anything, we care about the people who call Indiana home, recognizing and responding to their needs as they arise. We partnered with Prairie Farms during the pandemic to redistribute milk to food pantries and communities with food deserts. Indiana 4-H youth and volunteers also navigated virtual and in-person events at county fairs and the statewide showcase this summer with no known COVID-19 outbreaks.

Purdue Extension is your educational partner for the small steps and giant leaps in your life. To find out more about Extension programs and resources in your area, read on and connect with your county Extension office.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Henderson".

Jason Henderson
Director, Purdue Extension
Senior Associate Dean, Purdue College of Agriculture

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On the cover – Top left: Crown Point, Indiana. Middle: Forestry and Natural Resources student interns participate in the Diversity in Faces, Spaces and Places of Natural Resource Sciences, funded by the United States Department of Agriculture. Right: 4-H'er Audrey shows her cow Disney at the state 4-H showcase.



WOODLAND

Keeping our forests healthy

When Byron and Jenny Morgan bought a 328-acre farm in Crawford County in 1984, they focused more on its 166 acres of cropland and less on its 172 acres of forest. These Hoosiers who are now Louisville, Kentucky, residents have never lived on the property, but Byron enjoyed farming on the weekends, “basically by myself, to release stress,” he says.

“I knew the forest was of value, but I didn’t have the knowledge and the time to get into it,” he adds.

That changed when the Morgans attended “Forest Management for the Private Woodland Owner,” taught by Ron Rathfon, Purdue Extension Forester at the Southern Indiana Purdue Agricultural Center. They have since implemented practices



they learned in the eight-week course, which included forest tours.

“You can look at pictures all day long and think you know everything — until you go into the woods,” Byron says. “We got real-life, practical information in a way we could understand. Ron’s an excellent teacher, and the people he brought in to complement his teaching were also wonderful.”

The Morgans have come to understand that a pretty forest isn’t necessarily a healthy one. Based on Rathfon’s suggestion, they hired a professional forester to walk their land, which Byron describes as hilly and mostly hardwood, and help them develop a long-term plan for its use.

Approximately 85,000 Indiana residents own property that includes 10 or more acres of woodlands. Purdue Extension foresters help landowners maintain the health and beauty of these ecosystems and their productivity for hardwood timber and wildlife habitat, now and for future generations.



Education & training

Indiana state legislators receive a field tour of the Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment, a long-term, large-scale experimental study of animal and plant responses to forest management.

90% of forest landowners in a 2019 course on controlling invasive plants indicated the knowledge gained would help them make management decisions over the next year.

PRESERVATION

ONLINE OPTIONS



Food preservation goes online

When done correctly, home food preservation can produce a bounty of safe and delicious food. If done incorrectly, it can lead to severe illness. Purdue Extension's Mastering Home Food Preservation team provides the most recent, research-based information to help people safely preserve foods at home.

The team offered an eight-session virtual series this summer, which was also recorded and can be viewed on the program's website and YouTube. The videos cover equipment needs, freezing, boiling water bath canning, making jam and jelly, pressure canning, pickling, dehydration and fermentation.

Over 500 people took one or more of the virtual courses. The series provided essential information for Hoosiers new to home food preservation, as over 80 percent of those surveyed before the course indicated they don't preserve food at home or haven't done so for many years.

Jessica Clark of Richmond, Indiana, wanted to can like her grandmother did, but the fear of endangering her family kept her from trying — until she learned food preservation techniques that are healthy, budget-friendly and safe from Purdue Extension.

A dehydrating workshop even taught Clark how to hide vegetables in her children's meals, and the fruit roll she makes in the dehydrator has become "one of my kids' favorite snacks, better than store-bought fruit roll-ups."

Clark is just one of many Indiana residents who preserve foods year-round using current, research-based information that Purdue Extension offers in hands-on events across the state.

86% of participants surveyed in 2019 food preservation courses said they would use resources and directions provided by Purdue Extension and the USDA.

Extension Educators demonstrate food preservation techniques at a 2019 Mastering Home Food Preservation weeklong training course in one of Purdue's food science labs.



Making A



DIFFERENCE

Creative, caring volunteers

If you grew up around Indiana 4-H Youth Development, it may call to mind youth showing animals at the county fair, completing a photography project, or building a robot. What we sometimes overlook are the dedicated adult volunteers who help make these programs successful.

With many 2020 programs modified for safety or moving online during COVID-19, however, volunteers had to learn, teach and interact with others in a virtual environment, stretching their skills.

That suited 4-H volunteer Sally Rushmore. She and a friend created the original dog program for Hamilton County as junior leaders, and she stayed involved through a stepson and grandchildren. She now works as an online dog trainer, creating videos and counseling dog owners by phone. When the county 4-H dog group couldn't meet in person, she filmed and posted videos demonstrating what to do for each level, one week at a time.

"What we didn't expect was that dog leaders from other counties were watching our videos on Facebook and having their 4-H'ers watch them! They became very popular across the state," says Rushmore, who hopes to repost them annually.

After meeting someone from Purdue Extension at a gaming convention, Dillon Waggoner volunteered to help Hamilton County 4-H create a virtual version of the Clover Gaming Connection board game design program. While some of the lesson plans remained the same, he sought out free software that would allow students to play board games in a safe, online environment.

"I'm a career coach at Ball State University. And one of the things I have enjoyed doing, probably my biggest professional interest, is using games or play elements for education or teaching concepts," Waggoner says. "So anywhere that I see there's some overlap there, I try to learn what I can about it, or if there's a way I can get involved." He learned alongside the youth participating and knows the tweaks he would suggest if they offer the online version again.

"We used the term 'resilient' a lot when we talked about kids this summer, but I think that goes for adults too," says Kati Sweet, Hendricks County Extension Educator in 4-H Youth Development. "Adaptability, flexibility, understanding, compassion and creativity were all key for volunteers this year."



In a 12-state 4-H volunteer impact study, 255 Hoosiers responded. Their top reasons for volunteering are to help others, make a difference or support a child in 4-H.

- Nearly half have 11+ years of volunteer service
- Almost 2/3 participated in 4-H as a child
- 90% built new relationships
- 87% gained skills useful in other settings
- 79% learned to think from different perspectives
- 95% taught youth new skills
- 88% recruited new youth to 4-H

GET WalkIN'

Keeping walkers on track

After Clayton, Indiana, resident Melissa Phillips had back surgery several years ago, her doctor suggested walking to maintain her health. Phillips signed up for Get WalkIN', a Purdue Extension program that provides free informational — and motivational — emails.

The program has been a source of support for Phillips, who walks between 15 and 75 minutes daily year round. "Walking keeps the muscles in my back stronger, and I also feel so much better when I walk," she says. "The emails encouraged me to keep going."

Get WalkIN' participants receive 16 emails — two per week the first month and one weekly for the next eight weeks. The content is based on the research of Elizabeth (Libby) Richards, Associate Professor of Nursing, and tailored for Extension audiences.

"Get WalkIN' is a great example of putting faculty research into practice to improve individuals' health and wellbeing," says Stephanie Woodcox, Assistant Program Leader for Purdue Extension in the College of Health and Human Sciences.

Denise Current walks in her town of Veedersburg on busy days, or she may tackle a longer trail in nearby Covington when time allows. "My goal was to be active and to have a workout schedule that was consistent," she says.

As she walks in the early mornings, Current sometimes thinks about the content of her Get WalkIN' emails, from increasing her workouts to celebrating milestones.

Extension educators in counties across Indiana have offered Get WalkIN' since 2016, but the program proved especially valuable this year as walkers sought structure and inspiration when gyms and parks closed due to COVID-19.



Get WalkIN' was presented 26 times during the 2019–2020 programming year, reaching 682 individuals.





4-H



WORLD CHANGERS

Hackathon helping others

Struggling during the pandemic herself, 4-H member Cloee Kunstek thought about how others were coping — and channeled her awareness into a first place finish in Purdue Extension's Indiana 4-H World Changers Hackathon in April.

Cloee compiled a website of mental health resources available in central Indiana. "I wanted to be able to help people," explains the Carmel High School senior, who aspires to study computer science in college. "Being quarantined pushed the topic of mental health to the forefront of my brain."

"Cloee did a great deal of research, and her video was outstanding," says Rachel Haselby, 4-H Youth Development Extension Specialist in Computer Science.

The hackathon required students ages 12 to 18 to study a problem and propose a real-world solution. An in-person, on-campus event, with topics chosen to align with the four pillars of 4-H, was in the works when coronavirus closed schools.

"So all these kids are at home in the state of Indiana and they're bored out of their minds," Haselby says. "I thought, 'How fast can I put together an online hackathon?'"

Purdue Extension invited not just 4-H members but youth from around the state to participate, tapping their classroom teachers or parents as mentors. The students had four days to produce a video in which they discussed their problem and how it could be solved.

"Hackathons are really fun and force you out of your comfort zone," Cloee says. "They inspire you to learn a lot more than you might learn otherwise." She plans to continue expanding her website, which allows others to contribute resources and updates in real time.



Cloee Kunstek developed a website (left) to share mental health resources available in central Indiana.



In its first year, the Indiana World Changers 4-H Hackathon had 85 participants and seven mentors in the program.

Equal partners *in Ag*

Supporting women in agriculture

Nicole Hayden left teaching in 2013 to step into a new role on the family farm in southern Lake County after her mother-in-law retired from handling the farm's finances. In 2014, the two women attended the annual conference of Purdue Women in Agriculture together.

From bookkeeping and grain marketing to emergency preparedness and succession planning, the conference offered numerous topics that Hayden says fill an important gap. "In any business, there's extended education available, but there's not that much for us. If you're not in corporate agriculture, where do you go to keep learning?"

The Purdue Women in Agriculture team of Extension educators and specialists from around the state offers educational programs, resources and a supportive network to women employed in or involved with the agricultural industry.

Kosciusko County Extension Educator Kelly Heckaman has seen the organization's programming grow right along with women's roles in production agriculture and agribusiness. "In 2020 we're trying to meet every facet of the needs of women in agriculture because it's changed a lot," she says. But the overall message has remained consistent: "Women are equal partners in agriculture."

Hayden agrees. "Things are changing because the next generation is taking over," she says.

One such example is Purdue sophomore Abigail Powell, the organization's 2020 Emerging Woman in Ag Leadership Award winner. Powell, an agriculture business marketing and agricultural communications major who grew up in Marshall County, represented Young Ladies in Ag at the last Women in Agriculture conference.

"I want to be a spokesperson for women in agriculture," Powell says. "We are just as capable as anyone else, and we can bring valuable things to the table, especially on the business side and in communication roles."



Above: Purdue Extension Women in Agriculture recognized the contributions of three Indiana women this year. Lieutenant Governor Suzanne Crouch (L) and Karen Plaut, Glenn W. Sample Dean of the College of Agriculture (far right), presented the awards. Roberta Ressler (second from left) received the Leadership Award, Sara Creech (middle) received the Achievement Award, and Abigail Powell (second from right) received the Emerging Women in Agriculture Leadership Award.



*Wendy Feller of Silver Valley Farm near
Crawfordsville. (Photo: Nate Chute)*



SOCCER



for Success

New partners bring new youth to 4-H

Never let it be said that Purdue Extension isn't as quick and nimble as a forward driving a ball into the net.

When COVID cut short a fledgling soccer-based educational program, Extension educators from across the state created an at-home program instead, and in record time.

As part of Soccer for Success, a collaboration between 4-H and the U.S. Soccer Foundation, and at the invitation of Indianapolis Indians Charities, Purdue Extension last fall created a research-based curriculum that integrated soccer play with nutrition and youth development through mentoring. RightFit, an afterschool program funded by the Indians Foundation, provided funding and school sites, and Metropolitan Soccer supplied 44 college-aged coach mentors.

The partnership offered Purdue Extension a chance to connect with underserved youth, says Xiomara Diaz-Vargas, 4-H New Audiences Specialist. "Welcoming new audiences to 4-H requires learning about the communities first and intentionally reaching out to and partnering with them. 4-H Soccer for Success promotes harnessing our cultures for positive youth development."

Soccer for Success was piloted in four Indianapolis schools in January 2020 before coronavirus cut it short after 10 weeks. In response, Purdue Extension educators created Soccer and 4-H @ Home, a virtual program available in English and Spanish.

From mid-May through July, homebound children from around the U.S. explored soccer fundamentals and fun facts, food and nutrition, service learning, and diverse career options related to sports in agriculture, engineering, business, medicine and many other fields. They could even prepare food using instructional videos recorded and edited in Spanish and English by two Daviess County 4-H members. The program was open to all youth, and one segment highlighted opportunities in 4-H.

The National 4-H Council and four states have adopted Soccer and 4-H @ Home — it's the only bilingual program offered by 4-H nationwide — and Wide Open Schools, a 4-H community partner that offers free online learning experiences, chose the program for its website.



A DREAM

Students help design recovery center

A rendering in the office of Erin Belgarde, Strategic Planning Coordinator for the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians (TMBCI) in Rolette County, North Dakota, shows a dream becoming reality: the Turtle Mountain Recovery Center, a 100-acre campus with a central facility, supportive residences, confidence course, equine therapy stables, sweat lodge, medicinal garden and walking trails.

“The students at Purdue did that for us,” Belgarde says of the campus design.

The Turtle Mountain Reservation covers 72 square miles next to the Canadian border, so Belgarde and others were surprised when a USDA-funded program matched them with Purdue Extension.

Michael Wilcox, Purdue Extension’s Program Leader for Community Development, started working with the TMBCI in late 2019 through the USDA’s Rural Economic Development Innovation (REDI) program. REDI funds technical assistance for up to two years to help rural towns and regions create and implement economic development plans. Purdue Extension Community Development leads REDI projects in Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin and North Dakota. These projects extend Indiana knowledge and know-how to help reshape other communities.

Wilcox and Nicole Adams, Clinical Assistant Professor in Purdue’s School of Nursing and a specialist in recovery-oriented systems of care, guided development of a business plan and clinical plan and identified additional partners. “They got Tribal Council buy-in and, by making sure the community was involved, got the community behind them,” Belgarde says.

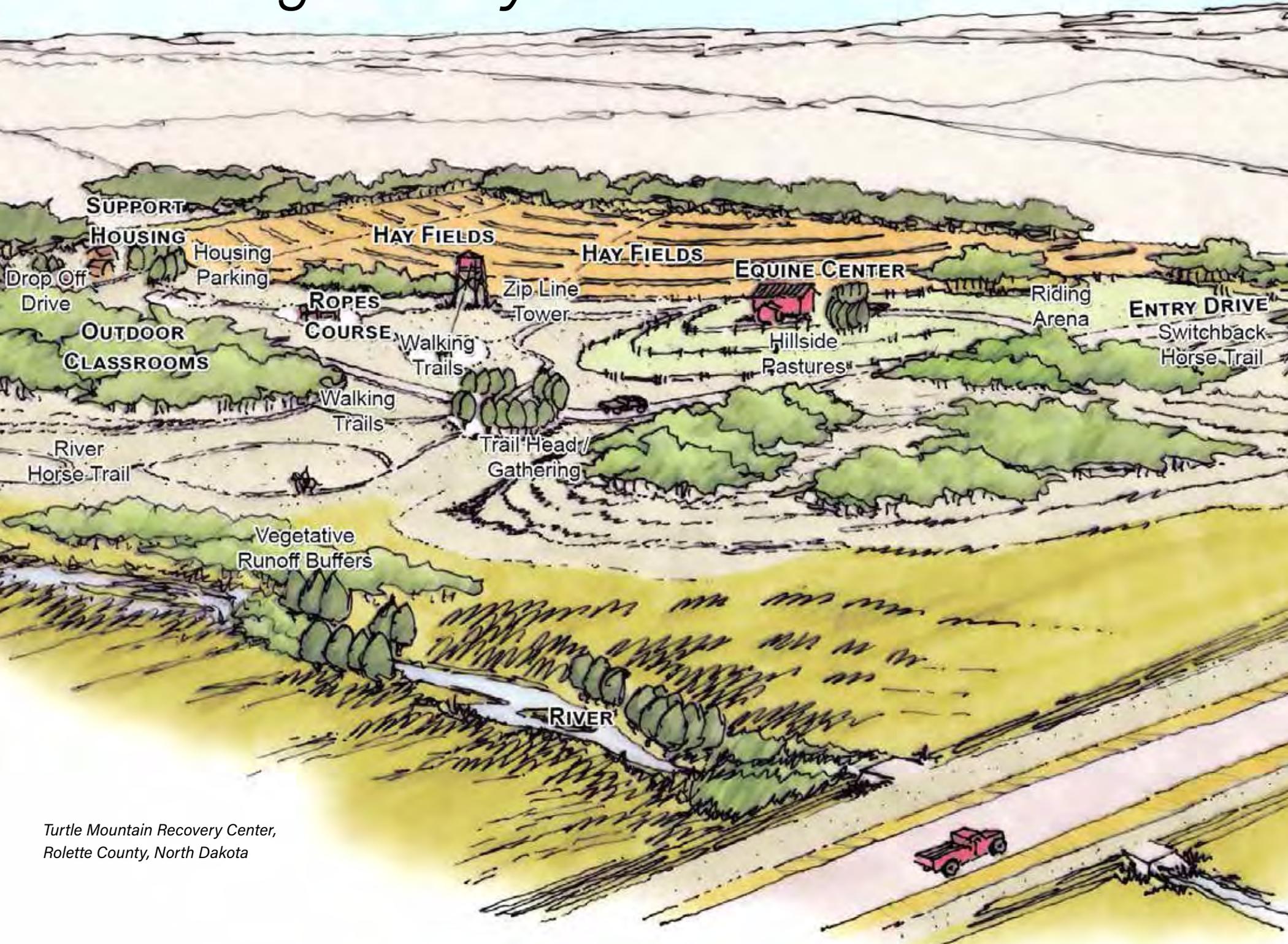
Aaron Thompson, Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture, agreed to design the campus landscaping and engaged his students in the effort. “Native Americans are visual learners,” Belgarde says. “When we got their drawings ... wow!”

Bringing together Indiana expertise in community development, recovery and design has led to a more holistic center. “This is a place where people want to be together,” Belgarde says. “To have the option for recovery on top of that, it’s going to be amazing.”



Erin Belgarde, Strategic Planning Coordinator for the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians in Rolette County, North Dakota, stands in front of the landscape planning for the Turtle Mountain Recovery Center, created by students in Purdue’s Landscape Architecture program.

Becoming Reality



Turtle Mountain Recovery Center,
Rolette County, North Dakota

MOVING



Elijah, a member of Bartholomew County Mini 4-H, submitted this photo of one of his projects for the 2020 virtual 4-H fair exhibition.

Forward



Keeping 4-H youth engaged and safe

Each year, Indiana youth learn and fulfill the 4-H pledge, vowing their hands to larger service and their health to better living from their club to their community, country and world.

As COVID-19 turned the world upside down, Indiana 4-H adjusted its programming to meet the needs of youth where they were — at home. All 4-H events were modified to meet social distancing guidelines or became virtual. This summer, all 92 counties held virtual 4-H fair events and 56 counties held modified in-person fair events following social distancing and mask covering guidelines.

In Benton County, 4-H leadership worked closely with the Benton County Health Department to develop guidelines for a modified in-person county fair. They adapted a show-and-go policy where animals were brought in only for the day of the show. Poster and static projects were dropped off at the fairgrounds ahead of the fair.

Addison, a five-year Benton County 4-H'er, explained that despite the uncertainties and changes this year, she still worked hard on her 4-H projects.

"I wasn't sure if we were going to have a fair this year, but I still got up early in the morning to work with my animals. Because school has been online since March, I've actually had more time to work on my projects than in past years," says Addison.

While many other youth activities around the state were canceled, all 4-H'ers were able to exhibit their projects through virtual and in-person options. All in-person county fair and state 4-H showcase events were successfully held with no known COVID-19 outbreaks.

"The learning which occurred this summer looked different, but young people across our state continued to develop mastery in their project areas," says Casey Mull, Assistant Director of Extension and 4-H Youth Development Program Leader.



Addison, a five-year 4-H'er, shows her sheep at the Benton County Fair.

All in-person county fair and state 4-H showcase events were successfully held with no known COVID-19 outbreaks.

FARMERS TO

Sharing milk with those in need

When many states introduced stay-at-home orders this spring and summer due to the COVID-19 pandemic, one result was significant disruptions to the food supply chain. News reports shared stories of farmers dumping milk while consumers began experiencing purchase limits for dairy and meat products in grocery stores.

While there was never a shortage of milk, dairy producers faced the challenges of shifting milk for one market (such as cheese production or school milk cartons) to another, causing processing, logistics and transportation issues.

Purdue Extension partnered with Prairie Farms to distribute gallons of milk to those in need as part of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farmers to Families Food Box Program. Due to Extension's broad presence in all 92 Indiana counties, Extension Educators and Community Wellness Coordinators have coordinated milk redistribution from Prairie Farms to local food banks, pantries and non-profits across the state.

"Pantries often have difficulties getting milk because it is hard to store," says Melinda Duckett, Purdue Extension Nutrition Education Program Community Wellness Coordinator for Hendricks, Putnam and Parke Counties. "Milk is a great source of protein and we are grateful that through this partnership we can connect milk with the people who need it."

More than 9,000 gallons of milk were distributed to local food banks, pantries and non-profit organizations in central Indiana.



Laurynn Thieme, Purdue Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator for Delaware County, delivers milk to area food pantries.

FAMILIES



Receiving the milk at a time of such turbulence for our community — the first months of the pandemic — was very welcome. Throughout the pandemic, we have served an average of 550 people on a weekly basis, and this milk was very much appreciated. It greatly helped our community members through these difficult times and allowed them to further stretch their limited budgets.

*– Jacqueline Hanoman, Executive Director,
Ross Community Center*



GROWING

Produce in a food desert

In the Renaissance Pointe neighborhood in southeast Fort Wayne, the nearest grocery store is three miles away. That makes access to healthy food a challenge in an area where census data indicate low incomes and low vehicle access for many residents.

To increase access to affordable fresh food, the City of Fort Wayne converted a former firehouse and three-quarters of an acre of vacant space into an urban farm in 2015. Soon after, the city partnered with Purdue Extension – Allen County to manage the Johnnie Mae Farm, named for long-time community advocate Johnnie Mae White.

The farm’s mission is to provide affordable produce and education. The market, open on Friday afternoons, is a popular place for community members of all ages to gather and learn.

“It means a lot to me because it allows me to continue cooking fresh and teach my children to eat fresh, rather than buying processed food,” says neighborhood resident Veronica Gabriel. “It’s like a community event every Friday — you look forward to it, because you get to truly meet your neighbors.”

Thanks to the farm’s commercial-grade kitchen, partner organizations like Parkview Health can offer nutrition and cooking classes, and Extension staff demonstrate recipes using specific vegetables. Seed packets are also available to those who’d like to start their own gardens, like Gabriel, who says, “We wouldn’t have had that experience without coming to this farm.”

Terri Theisen, Extension Educator in Horticulture and Urban Agriculture, says what they plant is determined by what neighbors want to buy and enjoy eating. Staff “really listen and absorb what our community is showing and telling us that they would like support with,” she says.

“This project is so much more than growing carrots in the city,” says Theisen. “We grow people, we grow relationships, we grow partners.”



Above: A community member selects produce at the Johnnie Mae Farm Friday market.

Left: Terri Theisen, Extension Educator in Horticulture and Urban Agriculture, shares gardening advice with a local family in Fort Wayne.

In 2020, Johnnie Mae Farm produced 3,076 pounds of produce, serving 678 customers.

PARTNERSHIPS

PRECISION

Gaining digital skills

When Lori DuBois, an instructor at Heartland Career Center in Wabash, talked with agricultural business and industry leaders about the skills students need in the workplace, they wanted employees who understand digital technology and can make data-informed agricultural decisions.

She struggled to find this type of program to model, so a Wabash County Extension Educator introduced her to Austin Pearson, Extension Director for Tipton County, and John Scott, Digital Agriculture Extension Coordinator. They had hoped to someday develop a high school curriculum in precision agriculture, so a partnership was born.

The result is a two-year Precision Ag program, which offers dual credit with Vincennes University's Agricultural Center and meets Indiana's Career and Technical Education guidelines. The 20 students from seven different school districts enrolled in the program earn a UAV license and applicator's license, collect and analyze weather station data, and build a smaller weather station to connect it to the cloud.

"With Purdue Extension, it was a good marriage," says DuBois. "They understand agriculture and the skills and certifications, but they also understand education and how we need to meet objectives and standards and tie them into a classroom setting." She's excited to train a generation of agriculturists who are passionate about the field and can innovate to solve problems.

"The Precision Ag class at Heartland is the successful culmination of years of work, research and development of a curriculum that prepares students to bring immediate value to agriculture producers and agribusiness. The experiences, certifications and education prepare them to immediately enter the workforce or move on to a collegiate program with significant advantages," says Howard Halderman, President of Halderman Real Estate & Farm Management and parent of a Precision Ag student.



Above: Students in the Heartland Career Center Precision Ag program take turns flying a UAV.

Right: Austin Pearson, Extension Director for Tipton County, demonstrates the UAV controls for Tyler Whitesel, a student in the Precision Ag program.

"The Precision Ag program at Heartland has changed our son from dreading school and mediocre grades to a motivated A-B student who talks about going on to college to finish this program and the professional agriculture careers he is now interested in!

What a value-added education this program is giving him to focus on his future and motivate him to do better right now."

- Brad Rody, District Forester with Indiana Department of Natural Resources and parent of a Precision Ag student

AGRICULTURE





CULTIVATING



SKILLS

Training and tips from Extension Master Gardeners

When COVID-19 forced many of us to observe stay-at-home orders last spring, people looked to hobbies like gardening to enjoy the outdoors while stuck at home. But people new to growing food needed to know where to start.

The Purdue Extension Master Gardener (EMG) program was designed for moments like this. The program trains gardening enthusiasts as volunteers to assist Purdue Extension with home horticulture education in Indiana communities.

The EMG program quickly pivoted to offer online tools. Spring training for EMG volunteers was quickly converted from in-person to virtual. For fall, John Orick, Purdue Extension Master Gardener State Coordinator, worked with a team of Extension Specialists and EMG county coordinators to host the first-ever statewide virtual basic training for EMG volunteers. They trained 495 participants from 34 counties, hosting 14 live webinars covering core topics and county-based sessions for volunteers to connect with others in their region.

"I would highly recommend the Purdue EMG Basic Training," says Betsy Bosway of Indianapolis. "I was slightly skeptical about how a virtual format might work, but my experience far exceeded my expectations. The program offered us the best of the best, with an expert lecturer each week giving us advice on their areas of expertise. Each participant, whether in a large city or rural area, benefited from the virtual format." Bosway plans to volunteer in the EMG educational demonstration gardens at Holliday Park in Indianapolis.

Meanwhile, Rosie Lerner, Extension Specialist in Consumer Horticulture, who frequently serves as a resource to the EMG program, launched a regular video series shared on social media, "Tips for First Time Gardeners." She demonstrated proper techniques for key gardening skills, such as container gardening, controlling weeds, proper watering, when to harvest and tidying the garden for fall.

*Purdue Extension Marion County - Demonstration
Gardens at the Indiana State Fairgrounds*



*Rosie Lerner, Extension
Specialist in Consumer
Horticulture*

Tips for First Time Gardeners video series

- 20,270 views on Facebook
- 5,002 views on Twitter
- 2,751 views on YouTube
- 4,096 likes, comments and shares on social media



Staff of the Indianapolis Public Library System participate in a Navigating Difference session at the Central Library in downtown Indianapolis.

- *All 600+ staff of the Indianapolis Public Library attended Navigating Difference training throughout 2017–2019.*
- *108 managers and supervisors completed three-day intensive training.*
- *500 staff built cultural awareness skills in a half-day workshop.*
- *In surveys after the three-day training, 75% of respondents reported increased confidence in taking steps to navigate cultural competence effectively.*

Connecting across diversity

“How do we expand our community’s leadership base?” “How do we get the next generation involved?” “When new professionals arrive, how do we help them thrive and join our community?”

Kris Parker, Purdue Extension Community Development Regional Educator, says she frequently hears comments and questions like these in her community development work. Navigating Difference, a three-day, research-based cultural competency training program offered by Purdue Extension, can help address them.

The program is designed for those who want to deepen their knowledge, skills and appreciation for connecting across diversity with clientele, coworkers and community members. Its five modules include elements from social justice, intercultural communication and organizational development. Trainers also offer a half-day interactive workshop on the first module, cultural awareness.

When the Indianapolis Public Library System’s (IPLS) director of human resources attended Navigating Difference, she knew it would help IPLS improve outreach and service to underserved and vulnerable populations. Those groups might include homeless patrons, new immigrants and refugees, low-income families and individuals, and people with disabilities, including mental illnesses that make social environments challenging.

She sought funding and advocated for the entire IPLS staff of over 600 people to take the three-day or half-day workshop.

The Navigating Difference Team recently won the National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals Diversity Award for their work with IPLS. It also received the 2020 Unsung Diversity Hero team award from the Purdue College of Agriculture.

WELCOMING



ENVIRONMENTS



Healthy Children

Keeping kids active

When I Am Moving, I Am Learning (IMIL), a signature program for caregivers of young children offered by Health and Human Sciences Extension, moved online due to COVID-19, that change benefited early childhood education professionals in multiple ways.

IMIL uses nine different sessions to encourage children's movement and healthy food choices each day.

Deanna Azbell, owner of Little Hands Big Hearts Daycare in Wabash, recently completed her bachelor's degree online, so attending Zoom sessions came naturally to her — and more easily fit into her schedule during lunch and nap times.

The course confirmed her current nutrition program and provided new ideas for activity. Her 2- and 3-year-olds don't recognize that moving to music with the video game "Just Dance" is exercise. She also gained ideas for creating new blocks from household materials.

The video format still felt personal, says Azbell. "When you're working in childcare, especially in-home, you don't get the interaction with other people. Not only was it a training, but also we got to talk to each other, so I got to hear what people are doing in their childcare centers."

For Peg Neireiter, an adjunct instructor of early childhood education at Ivy Tech's Evansville campus, IMIL offered a lifeline to her students, who must complete a 150-hour practicum. As Ivy Tech courses moved online and childcare centers closed temporarily, students were allowed to use IMIL to help fulfill those hours.

Their feedback was overwhelmingly positive. When centers reopened, student teachers used what they'd learned, sharing ideas with other center staff. "It's kind of a two-way street," says Neireiter. "The teachers learn new ideas from our students, and the students are learning things from the classrooms they're in."



When participants were surveyed after six online sessions of I Am Moving, I Am Learning in April and May:

- 97% of participants said they understood a lot/some of how motor development influences one's overall health.
- 96% said they understand a lot/some of the impact of good nutrition on children's overall health and development.
- Over 99% said they are extremely or somewhat likely to build in movement activities with children that achieve 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity.

CRUCIAL CARING

First aid for our mental health

Despite being a 4-H member for 10 years and having a master's degree in Agricultural Sciences Education and Communication, Britt Copeland sensed he needed additional tools to serve as a new Extension Educator in 4-H Youth Development and Agriculture and Natural Resources for Jefferson County.

The Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) program offered by Health and Human Sciences Extension appealed to Copeland, especially the Youth MHFA program offered in partnership with 4-H. "Adolescence in particular is an extremely volatile time for youth. With an adult, not everything seems like it's the end of the world. When you're in high school and in that bubble, a small challenge can be amplified greatly," Copeland explains.

The Youth MHFA course trains adults who interact with elementary through high school-aged youth. The course introduces common mental health challenges for young people and teaches a safety action plan to use with youth. Copeland took the course to build his own skills but found it so useful that he became a program facilitator. Copeland now helps others learn the signs and symptoms of mental health challenges that youth can experience.

Copeland and the MHFA team have trained correctional officers, social workers, school personnel, parents, and Indiana 4-H staff and volunteers. He stresses that the course doesn't train individuals to be mental health professionals. "It gives ordinary people a set of skills to help — not to diagnose, but to help — until you can get professional treatment or emergency personnel arrive."

The course also helps decrease the stigma associated with mental health challenges, says Copeland. "Especially now, with the pandemic and decreased socialization, mental health is more important than ever."

"In the past two or three years, I've had students come up to me with more complex difficulties than I've seen in the past. This course gives us the opportunity to have tools to give students hope – hope for the future."

- T.R. Campbell, Band Director for Rushville Consolidated High School and Benjamin Rush Middle School, who attended Youth Mental Health First Aid



AGRICULTURAL



OUTLOOK

Timely topics for the ag industry

As farming and food processing were recognized as essential functions during the pandemic, Indiana producers steadily continued their operations in an environment that seemed to change day by day. Normal communication channels were suddenly different, too.

“Farmers had such a thirst for knowledge,” says Katrina Hall, Director of Public Policy at Indiana Farm Bureau. “We had COVID layered on what’s happening in trade and what’s happening in prices. The livestock producer and the grain farmer became acutely aware of the fragility of the food supply chain.”

Many farmers and ranchers in Indiana and surrounding states, as well as agribusinesses and financial entities that interact with them, rely on Purdue’s Center for Commercial Agriculture as a source for vital economic information and market outlook reports, especially in a year like 2020 when markets changed rapidly.

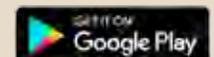
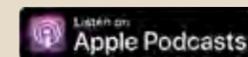
The center, staffed largely by faculty from Purdue’s Department of Agricultural Economics, has delivered educational resources since 2011. “All of us teach classes and do research, but our primary focus is Extension,” says Michael Langemeier, Associate Director and Professor of Agricultural Economics.

As the pandemic impacted production agriculture in unfamiliar ways and virtual events replaced in-person meetings, the center’s website, recorded webinars and podcasts addressed timely topics related to commercial farming, the livestock and packing industry, supply chains, food supply shortages and the ethanol industry. The Purdue University-CME Group Ag Economy Barometer serves as a monthly, nationwide index of producer economic sentiment, based on a survey of 400 agricultural producers.

“The economic data that the center puts together is very much cutting-edge,” Hall says, adding that farmers are open to new ways of receiving information. “Over the course of the year, having access to virtual opportunities has really caught on. People are accustomed to it now.”



*Check out the center's podcast, **Purdue Commercial AgCast**, on Apple Podcasts or Google Play.*



Flourishing



Communities

Purdue committed to regional rural development

A resilient region has, at its foundation, thriving communities, explains Maria Marshall, Professor of Agricultural Economics and new Director of the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (NCRCRD). Funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA) and the land-grant universities in a 12-state region, the center addresses issues critical to the growth and impact of rural communities.

The NCRCRD recently moved to Purdue University for the first time in its nearly 50-year history. The center works with Extension professionals, researchers and their partners to create resilient communities and economies, develop leadership and civic engagement, and promote community health and wellness.

"Purdue and the College of Agriculture have always had a deep commitment to rural development. Interdisciplinary strengths are what we can bring to the rest of the region for the betterment of rural communities across the nation and world," says Marshall.

One of Purdue's key goals for the NCRCRD is the creation and maintenance of a north-central regional panel dataset as a shared resource, enabling and motivating collaboration across states and across research and Extension.

Another goal is to build on an NCRCRD priority initiated at Michigan State University, the center's former home. There, the 1890 historically Black land-grant universities and 1994 Tribal Colleges and Universities supported by NIFA were more deliberately involved in rural development.

There are two 1890 universities and 20 1994 colleges and universities in the north-central region. "We want to build on that to foster rural development through diversity, equity and inclusion efforts," says Michael Wilcox, NCRCRD's Associate Director and Purdue Extension's Assistant Director and Program Leader for Community Development.



Maria Marshall, Director of the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development

Emily Proctor, Tribal Governance and Leadership and Community Engagement Educator, Michigan State University Extension – Emmet County, wanted to work with her counterparts in Minnesota and Wisconsin on a joint community development program, with a tribal nations member as the lead. NCRCRD facilitated that collaboration. "Who would be willing to spend some funds and time to allow us to create, dream, try new programs and try new things? That's what NCRCRD did," Proctor says. "That allowed us to grow not only our programming, but our relationships. ... It helped sow the seeds of collaboration, of intertribal and interstate work, across land-grant systems."

#pickperry

Building over time

Erin Emerson, Executive Director of the Perry County Development Corporation, knows community change doesn't happen overnight. But with sustained effort and an assist from Purdue Extension's Community Development team, Perry County is identifying and capitalizing on its best assets.

The transformation began with the workshop Transforming Your Local Economy, leading to Perry County's participation in the Hometown Collaboration Initiative (HCI). In HCI, volunteers analyzed community data and sought input from a diverse mix of local people to choose a focus on digital placemaking. The result was a unified community brand and marketing campaign. Included was a new website, www.pickperry.com, which highlights all the reasons to start a business in, live in, or visit Perry County.

Emerson and others continued to work with Extension's Community Development team, conducting parks and recreation surveys to create a community engagement report. The results were leveraged to gain funding to renovate the community's pool. Borrowing best practices learned from Purdue Extension, a survey and task force on rural childcare challenges resulted in the launch of a not-for-profit and a childcare center that currently serves over 60 Perry County families.

Perry County has hosted Digital Ready Business workshops to help local businesses expand their online presence and participated in regional development through the multi-county Stronger Economies Together program. The county also conducted a feasibility study for a shared commercial kitchen to pair with the Tell City farmers market, serve as a catering and event space, nurture the high school culinary arts program and foster local food businesses.

"Purdue has a team of people who are willing to get creative, who have access to all kinds of data, and who are willing to step in and be that outside facilitator, which is so key in all communities, but especially rural communities where we tend to be in our silos," says Emerson.



Members of the Pick Perry Team proudly display some of the awards the initiative has earned since its launch.

Perry County Development Corporation won a gold category award for the **Pick Perry Campaign** in the 2020 Excellence in Economic Development Awards. Given by the International Economic Development Council, the awards recognize the world's best economic development programs and partnerships, marketing materials, and most influential leaders of the year.

To enjoy the best of Perry County, check out pickperry.com.



60,240

ACRES OF HOOSIER NATIONAL FOREST

just waiting to be explored

FYI... THAT'S MORE THAN ANY COUNTY IN INDIANA.

If you don't live here, you should be jealous.

#pickperry

CONNECTED



Community members work together to distribute food to agencies and pantries. Photo: Fayette County Food Council

CONCERNS

A comprehensive approach to community development

In 2018, a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation study on county health rankings reported that Fayette County ranked 92nd — the least healthy county in Indiana. Community members were dismayed, but also determined to improve their standing.

Their efforts had begun a few years earlier, when a group of volunteers worked with Purdue Extension's Community Development team to form Fayette County Community Voices. Recognizing that key community concerns were often intertwined, this nonprofit organization focuses on education and literacy, community health and environment, development of public spaces, and social and cultural life.

Becky Marvel, Fayette County's Nutrition Education Program Community Wellness Coordinator, recognized food insecurity as a key community health concern. She taught nutrition education in after-school programs and helped ensure that underserved members of the community have access to fresh produce with special farmers market events.

Community Voices also formed a Food Council to provide nutrition education and resources through community partnerships and collaborations with organizations like Gleaners Food Bank, HATCH and the USDA's Farm to Family program. This year the Council coordinated a special food distribution for veterans.

After creating a community action plan through Extension's Enhancing the Value of Public Spaces: Creating Healthy Communities program, Community Voices applied for grant funding and collaborated with the nonprofit Discover

Continued >



Nursing students Lexi Shriver, Erin Ryan and Rachel McDade (L to R) visited agencies and interviewed residents as part of a community health assessment.

In 2019, 93 nursing students on 11 teams conducted community health assessments in Fayette County.



Connersville to develop The Oasis. A vacant lot converted to a green space, community garden and performance venue, The Oasis capitalizes on the connection between public space and community health. The educational garden provides fresh produce in a downtown food desert and a place to enjoy walking paths and concerts.

Other Purdue centers and departments have also partnered with Fayette County to improve community health. The Regenstrief Center for Healthcare Engineering received \$1.1 million over three years to reduce prescription opioid abuse and increase patient access to addiction treatment and recovery services.

That effort to combat opioid misuse is multidimensional, explains Lee Ann Robertson, member and former president of Community Voices. “What they’re looking at now are health issues within the community that influence addiction — food security, poverty, joblessness, mental health and lots of things.”

Fayette County benefits from these partnerships, and so do Purdue students. Carmen Jones, Clinical Assistant Professor in Nursing,

Left: A community planning meeting. Above: Tent and garden boxes in The Oasis.

“With some of the really significant things that are happening within the county, Purdue Extension, Community Voices and Discover Connersville have all worked together collaboratively to move the community forward.”

– Lee Ann Robertson, Fayette County Community Voices



Above: (left to right) Lee Ann Robinson, Becky Marvel, Sharon McQueen and Carolyn Bunzendahl attend the opening of The Oasis. Top right: Plans for 2nd Street Park. Bottom right: A gateway welcomes Connersville residents to The Oasis.

brainstormed with Health and Human Sciences Extension leaders to determine where her students could conduct community health assessments and make a difference. In 2019, 93 nursing students in 11 teams traveled to Fayette County to make physical observations and meet with residents. Students then analyzed and reported on their findings to county leaders, who plan to work with Purdue to implement the recommendations and apply for grants to aid local health initiatives.

In another collaboration with Purdue's Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, juniors in Assistant Professor Aaron Thompson's landscape architecture studio class designed a corridor from Connersville's 2nd Street Park to The Oasis, connecting the downtown area public spaces and enhancing community wellness and quality of life.

"I felt like Extension was the glue there and so Extension was the connector to the university. I really love working with the university; to me it's a no brainer, and I think every county office should try to do that," says Becky Marvel, Fayette County Community Wellness Coordinator.





Grants *for good*

Indiana 4-H Foundation supports community COVID needs

As county Extension offices responded to community needs during the COVID-19 pandemic, staff at the Indiana 4-H Foundation also wondered how they could help fellow Hoosiers. They knew 4-H Youth Development Extension Educators would be a great resource to determine community needs.

“The Extension Educators are so smart and frugal. They know exactly what their county needs, and they have relationships with those local food banks and entities that are helping people on the front line,” says Shelly Bingle, the Foundation’s Executive Director. So the Foundation offered grants to support county projects.

In each county, 4-H Junior Leaders and club members took the lead with help from adult volunteers. Projects included donating food assistance and volunteer time to food pantries and school backpack food programs; creating sharing gardens or providing seedlings and gardening information to community members; care packages for health care workers, first responders and educators; and creating activity packets for isolated nursing home residents.

In Montgomery County, 4-H Junior Leaders shopped for and donated 366 pounds of food items to the FISH (Feeding Indiana’s Hungry) Food Pantry in Crawfordsville.

The number of people coming into the pantry has doubled lately, says pantry coordinator Ellen Simpson. “The donations they made were a lot of items that often aren’t distributed, like flour and sugar. At the pantry, we buy what we can afford. But any items people bring in that are outside the norm are a blessing, which people sometimes don’t understand because they’re used to having the basic necessities.”

Grant funds were available for the first time in 2020 thanks to a charitable trust established by late Purdue alumna and former Indiana 4-H Foundation Board President Nola Gentry. This seed money and additional funds raised by Foundation board members and the general public funded awards to 43 counties for a total of nearly \$40,000 in assistance.



Grace Simpson and Jenna Bushong of Montgomery County 4-H Junior Leaders select fruit for the FISH Food Pantry in Crawfordsville.

The Indiana 4-H Foundation awarded \$39,285 in COVID-19 assistance grants across 43 counties.

FARMERS MARKET

Synthesizing safety guidelines

When pandemic-related stay-at-home orders were issued in the six weeks leading into Indiana's farmers market season, Purdue Extension staff like Tamara Benjamin, Assistant Program Leader and Diversified Agriculture Specialist, sprang into action.

Producers and market masters faced a confusing array of guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control, the Indiana Governor's office and local health boards. Extension staff recognized that regularly updated guidelines and cheat sheets would be a lifeline for producers who rely on markets for income — as well as the customers they serve.

Benjamin worked with Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Educators from several counties, Extension Specialists, market masters, producers, the Indiana State Department of Health, Indiana Cooperative Development Center, Indiana Farm Bureau, and the Indiana State Department of Agriculture's Indiana Grown initiative to develop a series of best practices for farmers markets.

Covering guidelines for infrastructure, preventing contamination, consumer interaction and communication, tip sheets helped market masters and vendors stay abreast of which products could be sold and how to cap capacity. Similar guidelines were issued for producers who sell at farmers markets.

As a backup where regulations might prohibit a market or the products sold, the team also drafted guidelines for alternative delivery systems for local producers.





FUN &



GAMES

Building skills and making friends

While some Indiana 4-H programs had to be moved online during the pandemic, some were virtual by design.

Early this year, Brooke Haldeman, Gibson County Extension Educator for 4-H Youth Development, was planning an online escape room event with David Ackley, former Pike County Extension Educator. Youth in grades 3 through 12 would choose topics such as science, mathematics, healthy living and reading/writing comprehension, answer a series of questions to solve a puzzle, gain the code, and unlock the virtual escape room.

When COVID-19 hit, Haldeman and Ackley invited other counties to participate, resulting in 840 4-H members from 88 Indiana counties and a few other states joining in. The 10-week program offered two puzzles a week for each of three age groups.

More than 200 families joined a Facebook page where participants shared hints and tips, allowing 4-H youth to take a leadership role in guiding others toward a solution. "The part the kids enjoyed the most was the challenge and being able to share that with each other," says Haldeman.

Tabatha Carroll, Vigo County Extension Educator for 4-H Youth Development, wanted to reach youth

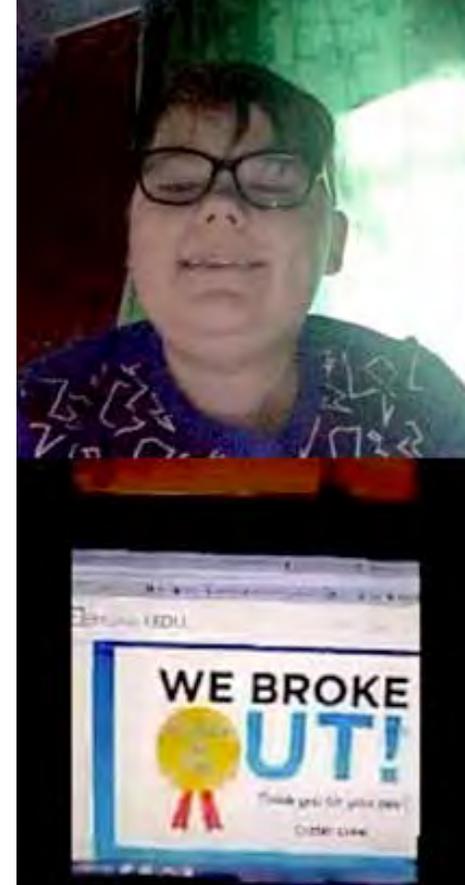
her group might not normally interact with. Her thoughts went to gaming and youth who feel more comfortable meeting new friends online.

"Minecraft seemed like the perfect way to do that because it's safe and familiar to a lot of kids, and there's so much you can do in it as far as team building and leadership and working together with others," says Carroll. So she started a Minecraft 4-H Club.

Minecraft is an endless virtual world that players work together to create, building anything they like with different blocks. Players work toward achievements, so the club would log in and find out who needed help or wanted to work on a new goal. The group can build on their world each time players log in.

There are multiple ways to create what a player is building, so youth develop problem-solving skills. Players also mentor each other by sharing their skills and end up with new friends across the state or country.

Through game play, youth are developing skills including leadership, team building, problem solving, design and building, and creativity.



Above: This 4-H'er and his grandmother worked as a team from different locations, messaging back and forth to find answers and break out of the Escape Room. Left: Part of the Vigo County 4-H Minecraft world.

COMMUNITY

Actively managing natural resources

Conservation through Community Leadership is bringing different interest groups together to plan the future of Cedar Creek, which flows 31.9 miles from northwestern DeKalb County through the center of Auburn and into Allen County, where it joins the St. Joseph River.

The program, a partnership of Purdue Extension and Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, helps communities plan and think through environmental challenges. They used the Tipping Point Planner, which helps communities directly link data to their local decision-making processes. "Cedar Creek presents a unique challenge," says Allen Haynes, natural resources coordinator in DeKalb County.

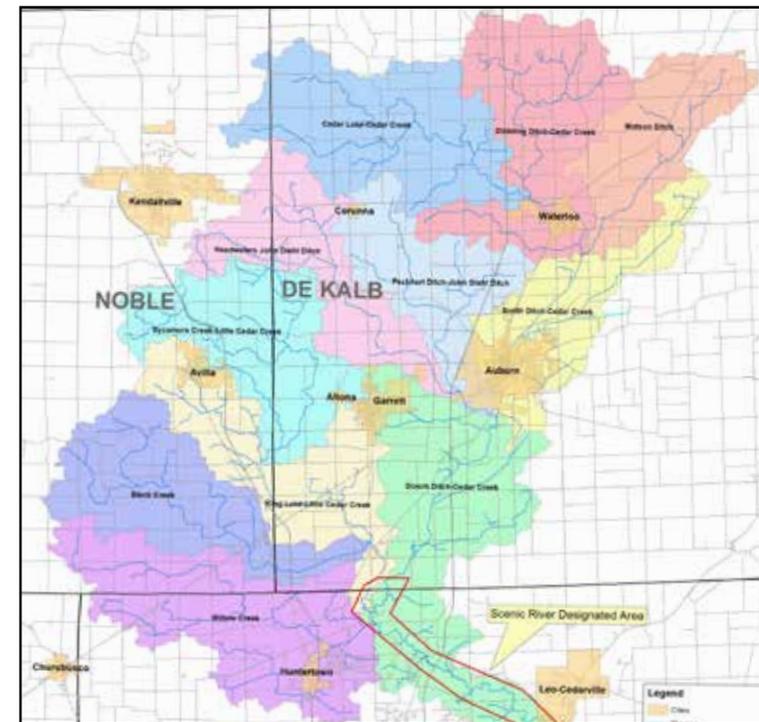
The Indiana Department of Natural Resources in 1976 designated a portion of Cedar Creek that crosses county lines as one of only three in its Indiana natural, scenic and recreational river systems. But the two counties govern and manage their sections of Cedar Creek differently, and environmental, agricultural and recreational groups have long debated its use, Haynes says.

"Everybody had pieces of this thing, but it was so fragmented that nobody knew what the puzzle looked like," he says.

Although everyone wanted to preserve the integrity of the designated area, "We didn't know how to manage it in a way that all parties are served well," Haynes explains. "It wasn't, 'What needs to be done?' but more, 'How do we do it?'"

This year Kara Salazar, Assistant Program Leader and Extension Specialist for Sustainable Communities, and her team pivoted largely to online programming to help the Cedar Creek Collaboration begin addressing natural resource conservation, agriculture and land use planning issues related to Cedar Creek.

"Purdue Extension has given us the facilitation piece," Haynes says. "Giving everyone an opportunity to come to the table is a good first step. We're going to end up with an action plan."



Cedar Creek Watershed

Conservation



Since 2014, Purdue Extension and Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant have collaborated with 22 communities on their environmental planning efforts, using the Tipping Point Planner and Conservation through Community Leadership programs to successfully address environmental challenges.

> *Statistics*

9,209 learning event sessions (structured educational programs offered to the public in person or via technology)

82,142 educational contacts via in-person programs

156,356 educational contacts via technology programs

> *Website statistics*

557,183 new and returning users

2,140,652 page views

> *Social media statistics*

20,505 engagements (likes, comments, shares)

14,566 total followers

- **Tips for First Time Gardeners** video series

20,270 views on Facebook

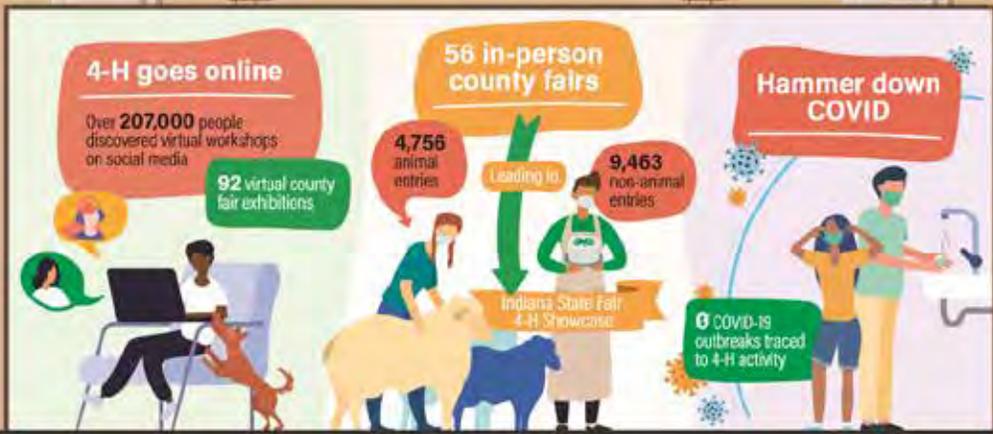
5,002 views on Twitter

2,751 views on YouTube

4,096 likes, comments, shares on social media

Statistics are current as of 1/5/2021. Extension website metrics provided by Google Analytics and Extension social media metrics provided by Hootsuite and Twitter Analytics. Social media statistics represent state-level Purdue Extension accounts and do not reflect accounts for the 92 county offices.

INDIANA 4-H SAFELY NAVIGATES A PANDEMIC



PURDUE EXTENSION *Indiana's Educational Partner for Life*

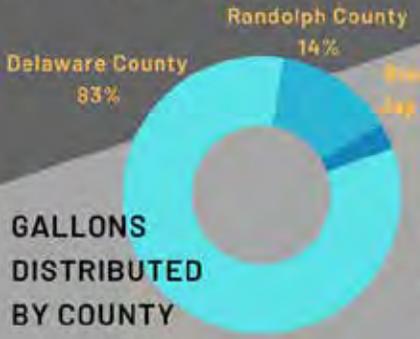
Purdue Extension touches every aspect and each stage of the lives of Hoosiers. Partnering with Indiana's residents, we are growing food and growing communities, training tomorrow's leaders, championing mental health, caring for communities, and helping Hoosiers respond to a STEM world and prepare for their first job. Extension delivers practical, research-based information that transforms lives and livelihoods, and we'll continue our work to make life better for Indiana's residents.

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Purdue Extension & Prairie Farms Community Dairy Efforts

Over **10 Weeks**, **9,000 Gallons** of milk were distributed across East Central Indiana in partnership with Purdue Extension- Delaware County, Prairie Farms Dairy, The Muncie Food Hub Partnership, and countless other community organizations!

IN THE NUMBERS





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