

EXTENSION EXPRESS

WINTER 2026 EDITION

COUNTY EXTENSION DIRECTOR | KELSEY GUADARRAMA

I hope that all our stakeholders, volunteers, and members had a wonderful holiday season! The LaPorte County Extension Team is ready to serve you and the community. Please reach out to us if you want programming or would like to partner in 2026.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT | LAUREN ALLISON & KELSEY GUADARRAMA

PROGRAM YEAR OUTLOOK |

We are so proud of all of the hard work and dedication of our 4-H members this past year and we are looking forward to another successful year. Here are a few things to look forward to:

- 4-H Intro: We will be going to Westville to talk about 4-H and all the awesome opportunities it has to offer. If you know of a school that would like us to come in for a day to talk about 4-H or host a program please let us know. We love going to the schools.
- Ag Days: Save the date for March 11th and 12th as we work with Farm Bureau to host Ag Days!
- 4-H Camp: We plan to host 4-H Camp again in June with Lake, Starke, and Porter. This year we will need 4-H Volunteers to attend as chaperones! If you are interested reach out to Kelsey and Lauren.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS |

We started working with the Youth Service Bureau of LaPorte County for the 2025-2026 school year. Our first session really got the kids moving and working together.

JUNIOR LEADERS |

Youth in grades 7-12 have the opportunity to participate in our Junior Leaders program, offering opportunities to develop leadership skills and participate in service projects. Please reach out to Lauren if you have idea for service opportunities within our community this year.

MINI MONDAYS |

Mini Mondays are offered to all mini 4-Hers (grades K-2) in LaPorte County. These are fun filled Monday evenings when mini 4-Hers can explore different areas of 4-H. These evenings have helped Educators connect with parents to explain 4-H or answer any questions before the mini 4-Her enters the 4-H Program.



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AG & NATURAL RESOURCES | JESI DAVENPORT

PURDUE ON THE FARM |

Purdue on the Farm efforts in LaPorte County continued to grow this year, with three field scouts completed to help monitor crop conditions and gather valuable, on-farm insights. These visits provided a closer look at local production practices, crop health, and the challenges our farmers face throughout the season. Looking ahead, we hope to expand the program next year by incorporating on-farm trials or hosting a demonstration to further support applied learning and local decision-making. If you are interested in partnering or opening your field for future work, please reach out we'd love to collaborate.

FEED THE FARMER PROJECT |

This fall, my secretary Sue Salisbury and I completed a successful Feed the Farmer project, partnering with the Purdue Farm Stress Team and LaPorte County Farm Bureau to support local producers during the busy harvest season. Together, we assembled and distributed 100 snack bags to farmers across the county, delivering them directly to the fields where they were hard at work. It was a meaningful opportunity to connect with our agricultural community, offer encouragement during long harvest days, and remind farmers how appreciated they truly are.

AG ENGAGE CONFERENCE |

The 2026 Ag Engage Conference will be held on February 19 in Bloomington, bringing together farmers, ag professionals, students, and community members for a full day of education and networking focused on managing risk and improving farm operations. Hosted by Purdue Extension's EDGE in Ag team (formally the Women in Ag team), the event features keynote speaker Zoe Kent and a wide range of breakout sessions on labor trends, mental health, pesticide application, modern technology such as drones, nutrition, and innovative land-management tools. This annual event is designed to empower Indiana's agricultural community with practical insights, skill-building, and valuable connections. Register now!

HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES | CRISSIE LAI

GRACE LEARNING CENTER – MONTHLY HEALTH LESSONS |

The ongoing partnership with Grace Learning Center continues to provide monthly, interactive health education sessions focused on chronic disease prevention, healthy eating, and overall wellness. These sessions are designed to support individuals and families experiencing economic challenges and emphasize practical, realistic strategies for improving health. Participation has remained steady due to strong community engagement and trust built through consistent programming.

A MATTER OF BALANCE – ACTIVE THIS QUARTER |

A Matter of Balance (MOB), an evidence-based falls prevention program for older adults, is being implemented this quarter to address concerns related to fear of falling and maintaining independence. The program focuses on:

- Building confidence in managing falls
- Increasing strength and balance through guided exercises
- Encouraging lifestyle changes to reduce fall risk

DINING WITH DIABETES |

Planning and coordination for the Dining with Diabetes (DWD) program continued during the January–March quarter in partnership with Grace Learning Center. DWD is an evidence-based diabetes self-management program that supports participants through:

- Nutrition education tailored to diabetes care
- Healthy cooking demonstrations and food tastings
- Goal setting and practical strategies for healthier living

Program logistics and session dates will be shared once finalized.