

# EXTENSION EXPRESS

FALL 2025 EDITION

## COUNTY EXTENSION DIRECTOR | KELSEY GUADARRAMA

I would like to say a quick thank you to all of our stakeholders, volunteers, fair board members, and all those that helped make 2025 successful for LaPorte County!

## 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT | LAUREN ALLISON & KELSEY GUADARRAMA

### PROGRAM YEAR HIGHLIGHTS |

We are so proud of all of the hard work and dedication of our 4-H members this past year. A huge thanks goes to all the adult volunteers and families who helped support their learning journeys. Here are a few highlights:

- 4-H Participants: 1,086 (1% increase)
  - 882 4-H Youth
  - 204 Mini 4-H Youth
  - We celebrated the graduation of 79 Senior Members, 56 of whom were 10-year 4-H members
- County Fair Static Entries: 1215
- County Fair Animals Entered: 3742 (includes duplicate animals that show in multiple classes)
- State Fair: 151 Static Entries
  - 42 Merit Award Winners
- State Fair: Animal Entries
  - 220 (includes duplicate animals that show in multiple classes)
- 4-H Camp: In partnership with Lake, Starke, and Porter Counties, we had another great year of 4-H camp, reaching 74 campers with the help of 37 counselors.

### 4-H JAMBOREE |

We will be hosting an enrollment kick-off event at the Small Projects Building on October 7<sup>th</sup> from 6-8pm.

### Community Connections |

- We will be continuing our partnership with the Youth Service Bureau of LaPorte County for the 2025-2026 school year with 8 sessions throughout the year.
- In partnership with LaPorte County Soil and Water, we will be leading a station at Kankakee Valley River Days with local 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes in September. This event reaches over 1,300 kids each year, and we are excited to be part of it once again.



## CONTACT US

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## AG & NATURAL RESOURCES | JESI DAVENPORT

### PINNEY PURDUE FIELD DAY |

The Pinney Purdue Field Day was held on August 20, bringing together over 450 participants. Attendees heard from experts on topics including crop disease management, weed pressure, corn production strategies, and even a “Stop the Bleed” session focused on emergency preparedness. The day provided valuable research-based insights and practical tools to support farmers and the ag community.



### ROW CROP ANNUAL BBQ |

The LaPorte County Row Crop Annual BBQ was recently hosted at Minich Dairy Farm, offering community members a firsthand look at the work behind our local ag industry. Guests had the opportunity to connect with farmers, learn more about what it takes to be involved in agriculture, and enjoy a great meal together. The event served as a wonderful way to advocate for agriculture while building stronger connections between producers and the broader community.

### UAV TRAINING |

LaPorte County will be hosting a UAV (drone) workshop on September 16–17 to help participants prepare for their FAA Part 107 license exam. This hands-on course has already proven successful—I was able to pass my Part 107 exam on the first try after completing it! With this certification, we now have the ability to use thermal drone technology for agriculture right here in LaPorte County. From monitoring crop health to assisting with livestock management, UAVs open the door to new, innovative tools for local producers. We're excited to bring this resource and service to our community.

## HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES | CHRISSIE LAI

### GRACE LEARNING CENTER – MONTHLY HEALTH LESSONS |

The monthly partnership with Grace Learning Center continues to provide interactive health education sessions centered on chronic disease prevention, healthy eating, and wellness. These sessions are designed for individuals and families experiencing economic challenges and have maintained steady participation through strong community engagement.

### CAPTAIN CASH – BACK IN SCHOOLS |

This quarter, the Captain Cash youth financial literacy program returned to schools, equipping students with practical money management skills. Through fun, interactive lessons, students learn about earning, saving, spending, and sharing money. The program emphasizes developing lifelong financial habits and has been well-received by both teachers and students.

### DINING WITH DIABETES – RETURNING TO GRACE LEARNING CENTER THIS FALL |

Dining with Diabetes (DWD) will return to Grace Learning Center this fall. This evidence-based program helps participants learn how to manage diabetes through:

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

Confirmed session dates will be shared once finalized.

### COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT |

This quarter's outreach expanded to reach underserved populations, with a focus on older adults, school-aged youth, and low-income residents. Programs remain grounded in accessible, research-based education that meets community needs and fosters long-term well-being.