

Purdue Extension-Lawrence County
924 16th Street
Bedford, IN 47421

P: 812.275.4623
W: <https://extension.purdue.edu/lawrence>



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS THROUGH PURDUE EXTENSION

EXTENSION ANNUAL REPORT
OCTOBER 2023 – SEPTEMBER 2024

MEET THE STAFF

Lesley Lodmell

4-H Youth Development Educator, CED

Kristan Rappold

Agriculture & Natural Resources Educator

Annie Eakin

Community Wellness Coordinator

Rebecca Payne

Health & Human Sciences Educator

J.J. Goldsberry

Nutrition Education Program Advisor

Dashia Meadows

Office Manager

McKayla Padgett

Program Assistant



Extension - Lawrence County

Purdue University is an equal opportunity/equal access/affirmative action institution.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



Making Opportunities Educational

The Lawrence County 4-H program strives to refine its routine processes to enhance youth skills in communication, critical for future job searches and scholarships. Youth often face challenges in effectively communicating their experiences and aspirations verbally, or in writing. They do not like to “brag” on themselves, while this is a crucial tool for future job searches, scholarships, and so much more. One key example is the revamped Outstanding 4-Her selection process, designed to highlight and reward exceptional 4-H members. Club leaders nominate candidates based on leadership, service, and growth. Nominees compile a life skills resume, similar to the Indiana 4-H Scholarship Process, documenting their 4-H journey, roles, and community service.

Selected finalists participate in structured interviews, showcasing their communication and leadership skills, as well as their dedication to 4-H values. **In 2024, 28 members were nominated, nine were interviewed, and ultimately, ten Lawrence County youth applied for state scholarships, with four receiving a total of \$5,000 in awards.** The 4-H educator, provides critical guidance through coaching and reviewing cover letters and resumes, preparing youth for future scholarships and interview success. Starting with the Outstanding 4-Her process helps youth become more competitive candidates.

The Spin Bike Initiative

Thanks to Premier Companies and the Indiana 4-H Foundation, Lawrence County acquired a Smoothie and Spin Art Bike, which teaches youth about nutrition, mental health, and physical activity. This bike appeared at multiple community events in 2023/2024, including the Lawrence County 4-H Fair, Farmer’s Market, and the Hoosier Uplands Back-to-School Bash, engaging over 3,000 youth and adults.

The bike initiates conversations on healthy eating and exercise, offering smoothies and even pumpkin hummus to show how easy it is to incorporate nutritious ingredients. The most common response from many skeptical taste testers was, “Wow! That is way better than I expected,” and they are pleased with a tasty way to incorporate more vegetables in their diet.

With the Spin Art attachment, youth create art to take home, expanding their understanding of art’s health benefits. The bike will continue to inspire and educate in 2025.



“Writing out the Outstanding 4-Her resume and being interviewed forced me to think on the spot while encouraging me to think about what all I have done in 4-H and how what I’ve done has impacted myself and others. The interview process helped me become comfortable and confident in speaking with others about what activities through 4-H I’ve done.”

Jacob Burrus, Indiana 4-H Leadership Accomplishment Scholarship Recipient, Lawrence County Outstanding 4-Her



AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Passing It On: Farm Transition to the Next Generation

The average age of farmers continues to increase as does the need to transition farms from one generation to the next. Since 2016, succession planning topics have been offered for farm families in Lawrence County and across Area 2. In early December 2023, **nearly 50 participants (several from Lawrence County) attended** a full day workshop entitled "Passing It On: Farm Transition to the Next Generation" featuring industry leading speakers from out of state as well as some more locally. When given action steps on what they planned to do after the program, nearly 85% planned to work on farm plans related to transition.

"Excellent program, want more programs like this in the future!"

Program Participant of the Passing It On: Farm Transition to Next Generation

Land of Limestone Master Gardeners

The Master Gardener Program in Lawrence County is a community-driven initiative designed to enhance gardening knowledge and promote sustainable horticultural practices. Sponsored by Purdue University, the program trains volunteers in various aspects of horticulture, including plant care, soil health, pest management, and sustainable gardening techniques.

Certified Master Gardeners share their expertise through outreach activities such as workshops, demonstrations, and community gardening projects. They collaborate with local schools to establish educational gardens, teaching students about nutrition and environmental stewardship. Some

recent activities in which the Land of Limestone (LOL) Master Gardeners have participated in leading are lessons at Green Thumb Garden Club and tending to the donation garden with Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). **The garden resulted in donating 398.4 lbs of produce to L.I.F.E. Food Pantry and Becky's Place.** Additionally, Master Gardeners support community gardens that provide fresh produce to under served populations, improving food security in the area. In the last three months **LOL Master Gardeners have contributed almost 200 hours of volunteer time, along with almost 100 additional hours furthering their education.**

The program not only enriches the community's agricultural knowledge but also fosters connections among residents, promoting collaboration and shared learning. By empowering local volunteers, the Master Gardener Program contributes to a healthier, more sustainable community in Lawrence County.



25+

Active Land of Limestone Master Gardener members

2748

Collectively, active LOLMG earn a total of Volunteer hours this program year

LOLMGs earn a total, for continuing educational hours this program year

50.5

398.4 lb

of produce was donated from the community garden to L.I.F.E. Food Pantry and Becky's Place

62

Number of producers within the county who are member of the Lawrence County Cattleman's Association



HEALTH & HUMAN SCIENCES

Empowering Lawrence County: Food, Family, Money, Health

Over the past 6 months, the Health and Human Sciences (HHS) extension educator has delivered a range of presentations and educational programs, and participated in community collaborations to support health, wellness, and literacy in Lawrence County.

HHS Program Delivery

Food & Nutrition: Upon request, the Health and Human Sciences Educator, Rebecca Payne, presented a 45-minute session on added sugars to the Lawrence County Arc (LARC), highlighting the health impacts of excessive sugar intake. During a follow up visit, **all 15 participants reported an increased awareness of sugar content in food and beverages after attending the program.**

Social, Emotional Learning: In partnership with the Hoosier Uplands Afterschool Program, Lawrence County Extension educators delivered **yoga and mindfulness programs to approximately 25 K-2 students at Hatfield Elementary School and 25 3rd-5th grade students at Burris School.** The program introduced basic yoga poses that student

can practice daily to calm their minds, slow their breathing, and relax their bodies. These techniques were

highlighted as valuable tools for managing feelings of anxiety, fear, anger, or worry. This program runs monthly through the end of the school year.



Collaborations

The HHS educator's involvement in strategic initiatives included participating in a Strategic Doing project with partners from Stone Gate, Hoosier Uplands, the IU School of Public Health, and the Center for Collaborative Systems Change. This collaboration is focused on revitalizing the adult literacy program in Lawrence County, an essential resource aimed at enhancing community capabilities and empowerment.

Health Coalition Meetings

The HHS Educator also actively participated in coalition meetings with several key community groups, including the virtual Smoke-Free Lawrence County coalition (focused on tobacco cessation), the Lawrence County System of Care Coalition, Breastfeeding Coalition of Lawrence County, Lawrence County Community Action Team, and the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) Local Steering Committee.

Promoting Extension Work and Health and Human Sciences

In a collaborative effort with the Orange County both county HHS Educator cohesively gave presentations about Cooperative Extension Services and public

health at the AHEC Health Expo in Mitchell. **This event reached approximately 240 high school students, introducing them to essential health and public service topics.**



Leadership Lawrence County

Beginning in September, the HHS Educator joined the Leadership Lawrence County program, a 12-month initiative designed to deepen understanding of local leadership dynamics. This experience will equip her to contribute more effectively to community-focused initiatives throughout the county.



NUTRITION EDUCATION

COMMUNITY WELLNESS

Lawrence County Community Involvement

Cambridge Square-Bedford

Purdue Extension is grateful for its long-standing partnership with Cambridge Square-Bedford. For over five years the Community Wellness Coordinator (CWC), Annie Eakin, has partnered with the Service Coordinator at the property, who nominated Purdue Extension to apply for Glick Community Relief Funding. Funds received from the Community Relief Fund have built and stocked an on-site food pantry, built and planted six raised garden beds, offered boxes of various produce and dairy to residents, brought the farmers market on-site while giving residents vouchers to spend at the market, and provided nutrition education. **Since 2019, this partnership has been granted over \$60,000 that has gone directly to improving healthy food options and physical activity at Cambridge Square.** Grant funding awarded for 2024-2025 will continue the same work and add quarterly congregate meals.

Lawrence County Baby Shower

Purdue Extension-Lawrence County had a presence at the Lawrence County Community Baby Shower on August 17th at Hope Resource Center. Meal kits were purchased by IU Health Bedford for participants of the Baby Shower. Funding and bags for the food were provided by Caresource. The Purdue Extension-Lawrence County CWC provided guidance on the recipe selected and distributed the meals at the event. **A total of 23 vendors participated and 88 moms were signed up to attend.**



Oct 2023 – Sept 2024



Food for Health Program

In July, a Food as Medicine program was offered to residents at Cambridge Square Apartments. The Community Wellness Coordinator, Annie Eakin, received funding for this program from a Lawrence County Community Foundation Pennington Grant. Funding was utilized to purchase meal kits prepared by Lost River Market and delivered to residents who registered for the program. For four weeks, participants engaged in lessons from the Eat Smart, Live Strong (ESLS) curriculum. Taught by the Purdue Extension Nutrition Education Program Advisor (NEPA), this curriculum is designed to help older adults improve their health and well-being by increasing their fruit and vegetable consumption while participating in daily physical activity. The NEPA demonstrated how to prepare the food included in each kit.

Each week, a new recipe was introduced and participants were taught how to add vegetables to common or familiar meals. One such meal was Garden Sloppy Joes. Traditionally, we think of Sloppy Joe as meat, sauce, and bun, but the recipe added diced vegetables to make the meal more filling and healthier. **On average, 30 residents participated and received meal kits.** Residents were excited to go home with supplies and knowledge to make the meal. When the NEPA returned for a new lesson, wonderful stories from the residents were shared about how they prepared the meal and how well they enjoyed it.

"Residents at Cambridge Square really enjoy learning about new nutritional meals that they can cook themselves. Having J.J. come in and show the residents how to cook the meals is a game changer as they grow confidence to cook the meal at home with their meal kits provided."

Brittany Moore, Resident Service Coordinator

EXTENSION BY THE NUMBERS

33,310+

Total Minutes
of education
provided to
youth and adults
within the
community



209+

**Educational
Programming**
sessions held from
Oct. 2023–Sept. 2024



6,156+

Total Number
of in-person & virtual
education participants

*Numbers illustrated here are combined from educational efforts for all program areas from Oct. 2023–Sept. 2024.

2023–2024 Lawrence County 4-H program

1,161+

Number of youth positively
impacted by the Lawrence
County 4-H program

129

Approved
Volunteers

24

Active 4-H
Junior Leaders

175

Youth attended camps, conferences,
and leadership development
opportunities throughout the year

4

Lawrence County 4-H members received
Indiana 4-H State Scholarships



21,081+

Social Media
reach from Oct. 2023 – Sept. 2024

Follow us on Social Media



@PurdueExtensionLawrenceCounty



Purdue Extension-Lawrence County



@purdueextensionlawrenceco



8

Eat Smart, Live Strong
lessons tailored for Senior Citizens

113

Contacts made
Oct. 2023–Sept. 2024

9

Eat Smart, Move More
lessons held Oct. 2023 –Sept. 2024

90

Contacts made
during ESMM lessons

66

**Coordinated Approach
to Child Health**
lessons held Oct. 2023 –Sept. 2024

1,267

Contacts made
v CATCH lessons

Nutrition Education Program Data
provided for Oct. 2023–Sept. 2024



Extension - Lawrence County

Purdue University is an equal opportunity/equal access/affirmative action institution.