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# COMMUNITY

## CONNECTIONS

THROUGH PURDUE EXTENSION

**EXTENSION ANNUAL REPORT**  
OCTOBER 2022 – SEPTEMBER 2023

## MEET THE STAFF

**Ophelia Davis**

*Agriculture & Natural Resources Educator*

**Annie Eakin**

*Community Wellness Coordinator*

**Grace Thompson**

*Health & Human Sciences Educator*

**J.J. Goldsberry**

*Nutrition Education Program Advisor*

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*4-H Youth Development Educator, CED*

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**Tammy Dodds**

*Program Assistant*

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*Program Assistant*



Extension - Lawrence County

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# 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

## 4-H Grows Here



Today, we regularly hear about programs struggling or declining in participation, and in the past few years, Lawrence County 4-H has struggled with this, as well. However, we have exciting growth to highlight this year.

- 4-H enrollment grew by 10% over last year.
- Multiple programs have returned after many years:
  - County Tractor Operator's Contest (includes tractors and mowers)- 18 contestants
  - Shooting Sports- 21 participants
- Animal Enrollment increased from 899 animals (2022) to over 1,009 animals (2023)- (number does not include dogs, cats, or poultry)
- Lawrence County 4-H Endowment was created
- Teen leadership opportunities grew with Presidents' Circle, Mini Day Camp Counselor Training, and increased Junior Leader activities and effectiveness.
- Members earned state awards and opportunities such as; State Junior Leader Council, competitive State 4-H Scholarships, and two national 4-H activities.
- Eight new 4-H project workshops were offered and many new and continuing SPARK Clubs were held.



## Junior Leader's Explore

Research shows teens benefit from positive opportunities to interact with others through overnight 4-H experiences, which help to develop deeper social skills. The Junior Leaders (with help of the 4-H Educator) plan and attend an annual Achievement trip (funded by running a fair food stand).

In 2023, 12 teens, four chaperones visited Cincinnati, Ohio July 24-25. The teens created proposals and voted on their desired locations. From there, they select their lodging, transportation, activities, and plan their meals. This year, they learned about the history, architecture, and pop culture related to the city by participating in a Food Tour. Each tried something they had never tasted before, and some rode public transportation for the first time. The final day let them have some fun at Kings Island, which ended up being more of a leadership and team building experience than anticipated as they worked to navigate the park together.

In 2022-2023, the Lawrence County 4-H program had

<b>1,209+</b>	Number of youth positively impacted by the Lawrence County 4-H program
<b>140</b>	Approved 4-H Volunteers
<b>34</b>	Active 4-H Junior Leaders
<b>165</b>	Youth attended camps, conferences, and leadership development opportunities throughout the year

*"During the Babysitter Training, I really enjoyed learning about the different crafts for different ages. The first aid lesson was very important information to have, but I hope I never have to use it. I am looking forward to using the information to start my own babysitting business."*

*Isabelle Barker, 8th grade participant, Babysitting SPARK Club*



# AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

## VET 106

The number of large animal veterinarians who can afford time and finances to make farm calls is decreasing annually across Indiana & the U.S. Since Vet 101 (17), in continued partnership with Purdue Extension-Washington County, Spring Mill Vet Service, and Purdue Ext-Lawrence County, a two hour Vet 106 program hosted 22 producers from across Area 2. Out of those in attendance, **50% planned to utilize recommendations to improve overall herd health and 50% were new to the program series.**

## Cattle & Canvas

Ag and Natural Resources (ANR) and Health and Human Sciences (HHS) Educators from Lawrence and Washington Counties hosted a program focused on beef program opportunities, healthy meal options using beef, and provided an opportunity for farm women to find fellowship. Registrations for this program were filled in less than one week. Ninety-two percent of attendees learned of Extension programming or opportunities they had no knowledge of prior to the event.



## 2023 Lawrence County Forestry Field Day

Lawrence County ranks first in the state for total number of woodland acres (~32,000). Purdue Extension-Lawrence County, in partnership with Indiana DNR, Lawrence County SWCD, and NRCS, hosted a forestry field day for 27 county timber

owners/managers in March. Program topics included: invasives management, wildlife value, wildlife management, timber management, timber marketing, and cost-share conservation programs. Approximately **94% of attendees reported wildlife value as the most useful topic, 100% reported they plan to utilize the information from program to influence their timber management decisions in the future.** Also, 88% intend to develop a timber management plan, while 100% requested more information on invasive species.

## Southern Indiana Beef Producer Tour (SIBPT)

In April, the Indiana Beef Tour was co-organized by Purdue Extension Lawrence and Washington Counties for at least 25 producers to visit and tour other beef cattle operations within Northern Indiana and Michigan. **The five day tour included 15 stops where common management practices** were observed and discussed by owner/operators to help Indiana producers with improving their herds and farming operations. This tour has been happening since the mid 1990's, with a brief halt in recent years due to COVID-19 restrictions – 2023 was the year it started rolling again.

## Lawrence County Pond Workshop

In late July, a two-hour program was hosted in partnership with Purdue Extension-Lawrence County, Lawrence County SWCD, and NRCS featuring pond care and maintenance. A total of 27 attended the program held at Sugar Creek Sporting Clays in the southern part of Lawrence County. Three presenters representing IDNR and a privately owned specialty pond business, covered topics over suitable soils for pond development, fish stocking rates, habitat management, algae & aquatic plant maintenance. **This was the first time to attend a pond related program for 95% of the respondents.**



# HEALTH & HUMAN SCIENCES

## Encouraging Self-Awareness through Social-Emotional Learning

In the past couple of years, schools in Lawrence County have seen an increase in vaping among middle and high school students which prompted a sixth-grade teacher at Shawswick Elementary to request a program that could educate students about the dangers of vaping. The **CATCH My Breath program is designed to inform and empower students to make healthy choices and choose to be vape free.** This curriculum uses a peer-leader approach to encourage students to talk openly with their peers about their thoughts and current knowledge of vaping. CATCH My Breath is the only school-based vaping prevention program that is proven to reduce the likelihood of vaping among youth.

There are four lessons made up of group discussions, activities, and real-world practice. **Students learn about the effects of vaping on one's physical, mental, emotional, and financial health.** They also learn about marketing strategies, refusal skills, and the chemicals commonly used in vapes. In total, **67 students** at Shawswick Elementary received this information. There was not a formal evaluation completed by the students, but they showed information retained through a poster-making project where they used marketing strategies and knowledge learned about the dangers of vaping to create anti-vape posters which they presented to their classmates. One of the teachers shared after the program that she hopes more schools are interested in this program in the future because the information and activities were perfect for her students.

## Block Party: More Than Just Blocks

Building towers with blocks is a childhood experience that many can relate to, but block play can teach important skills that are essential for development. **Playing with blocks can help children eight months to eight years learn skills related to math, science, literacy, gross and fine motor development, and social skills.** Parents are an integral part of this learning process and can help turn block play into a learning experience. During a Block Party event, parents are educated on how to utilize blocks in an intentional way while actively playing with their child(ren). This hands-on event allows parents to practice what they've learned with guidance from the Health and Human Sciences Educator.

In May, 21 children and 13 parents attended the Block Party held at the Bedford Public Library. After the event, **100% of participants said that they intend to play with blocks with their child.** There was also an increase in knowledge related to how block play expands learning skills in children.



*"I loved the program! We have not had any issues this semester after your program. Prior to the program, we had a few issues. I feel that the kids took a lot away from your program. I too, am hoping that the knowledge you gave them will carry with them beyond their 6th grade year!"*

*Mrs. Butterfield, 6th Grade Teacher, Shawswick Elementary*



# NUTRITION EDUCATION COMMUNITY WELLNESS

## Food as Medicine Grant Collaboration

In June we began our second year of the Lawrence County Food As Medicine program. Funding from IU Center for Rural Engagement/iHOPE funded food and incentive items for the free program. Fifteen participants regularly attended and received two meal kits per week over six weeks. During classes at Bedford Housing Authority: Hamilton Courts, Nutrition Education Program Advisor (NEPA), JJ Goldsberry, provided education and demonstrated recipes that participants were able to sample and Health and Human Science Educator (HHS), Grace Thompson taught about financial planning and budgeting. In addition to the Food As Medicine program, the IU Center for Rural Engagement/iHOPE funds also went to support the Food, Fun and 4-H program that provided families with monthly meal kits through July, August, September and October. Twenty-one families received a total of 103 kits.



*“The class was great last night and that recipe was delicious! Thank you!”*

*Feedback provided by a program participant*

## Junior Jacket 5K: A SUCCESS!

The first Junior Jacket 5K in Mitchell was a success! The event was a project derived from the Mitchell Junior High Health Class in the spring of 2022. The student-lead and inspired event was funded by the Lawrence County Community Foundation. Eighty-four people participated and 167 food items were donated to the Mitchell Junior High Food Closet. The 5K had several objectives including, offering an additional avenue for community connection through physical activity, giving junior high and high school students community leadership opportunities, and to serve as an opportunity to stock the in-school food closet.



Nutrition Education  
Program Data provided for  
Oct. 2022–Sept. 2023

**20** Eat Smart, Move More  
lessons held Oct. 2022 –Sept. 2023

**135** Contacts made  
during ESMM lessons

**94** Coordinated Approach  
to Child Health  
lessons held Oct. 2022 –Sept. 2023

**1,705** Contacts made  
at CATCH lessons



# NUTRITION EDUCATION

## COMMUNITY WELLNESS *(continued)*

### *Growing Together Grant*

Collaboration works best when all partners mesh well for a common purpose. The Purdue Nutrition Education Program, Purdue Extension–Lawrence County, Lawrence County Master Gardeners, and Lawrence County Soil & Water Conservation Department (SWCD) were **awarded \$1,500 they cohesively presented on behalf of the Growing Together Grant**. When the grant was awarded, it gave the Nutrition Education Program Advisor (NEPA), J.J. Goldsberry, the opportunity to teach, *Eat Smart, Move More* to women living at Becky’s Place. A main goal of the grant was to grow donations within the community’s gardens. The Master Gardeners grew and harvested produce using plots at the Bedford Garden Park, which was then donated to Lawrence InterFaith Endeavor (L.I.F.E.) Food Pantry and Becky’s Place, a transitional shelter for women and their children.

Each week, the NEPA worked to incorporate the harvested produce into the lesson. Vegetables like beets, squash, zucchini, bell peppers, and spinach were just a few of the items used during recipe demos. The vegetables were also used to show participants how to preserve the produce for later use. Ladies sampled dishes like: roasted vegetables,

sautéed beet greens, squash salsa, baked zucchini sticks, and skillet lasagna.

Topics included the MyPlate breakdown, the importance of incorporating more fruits and vegetables into meals, meal planning on a budget, easy family snack ideas, and nutrition label reading. The program was a success and the ladies appreciated the fresh produce they were given weekly.

At the end of summer, partners hosted a project celebration and invited the community to learn more. About 30 people attended. By the end of September the collaboration at the garden yielded **1151 pounds of produce and herbs harvested and donated and 147 volunteer hours**. The garden is still producing into the fall and the groups involved are considering applying for funding to continue the project.



***“Becky’s Place appreciates Purdue Extension Nutrition Education for providing to the women and children at BP this summer. We learned many ways to handle, prepare, and preserve fresh produce. J.J. taught life skills, from chopping, shredding, and baking, to substituting healthy alternatives and planning meals on a budget. The women at Becky’s Place will take these learned skills with them wherever they go. Providing this program for us has, and is, changing real lives.”***

*Ginny Fullen, Volunteer Coordinator*

**1** Eat Smart, Live Strong  
(\*New Senior Curriculum)  
lessons held Oct. 2022–Sept. 2023

**2** Contacts  
made  
at ESLs lessons

**29** Teen Cuisine  
lessons held  
Oct. 2022–Sept. 2023

**440** Contacts made  
at Teen Cuisine  
lessons



# EXTENSION BY THE NUMBERS

**42,290+**

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



CLIENT  
CONSULTATIONS  
**1,490**

COMMUNITY  
& COALITION  
MEETINGS  
**152**



**10,783+**

**Total Number**  
of in-person & virtual  
education participants



**432+**

**Educational Programming**  
sessions held from Oct. 2022–Sept. 2023

\*Numbers illustrated here are combined from educational efforts for all program areas from Oct. 2022–Sept. 2023.

2022–2023 ANR Program Statistics:

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

**79**

Four graduating seniors in Lawrence County received scholarships of \$1,000 each sponsored by LCCA

**\$4,000**

**25+** Active Land of Limestone Master Gardener members



Collectively, active LOLMG earn a total of Education/Instruction and Volunteer hours annually

**450**

**63,180+**

**Social Media**  
reach from Oct. 2022 – Sept. 2023



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