



Extension - Elkhart County



*INDIANA'S EDUCATIONAL PARTNER FOR LIFE*

## **Elkhart County Annual Report**

**October 2022—September 2023**

## From our Director...

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Dear Extension Friends and Community Supporters,

When I reflect on this past year, I think about the new community partners we have made, the new and innovative programs created to meet the needs of Elkhart County, and most importantly, you - the people we serve and our stakeholders.

The Cooperative Extension system has been around since 1914 and has a rich history of being the educational partner for life, and that remains true today. Reading some of the history of Extension around the state and in Elkhart County, you can see a lot of progress in programing efforts and how our world has changed. In the early days, Extension Agents conducted demonstrations with crops, home canning, and youth programing. While we still have some of these activities today, the world looks different, and so do our programs. From demonstrating the benefits of UAV's in modern agriculture, to educating people about modern health practices and financial management or preparing youth for 21st century careers, we are meeting the needs of our community, providing skills and preparing for today and beyond.

One thing has remained constant over the years, we still meet local and statewide needs of the people in our community. Our annual report just scratches the surface of the impact made with over 200 educational opportunities offered and a glance at the over 37,000 volunteer hours of which many of you have given back to our community. This year the independent sector values a volunteer hour at \$31.80. If you do quick math that is over \$1.1 million invested back into Elkhart County.

As we look towards the future in serving Elkhart County, I look forward to the opportunities, innovation, and creativity that we are all a vital part of. I think about what our community will look like with total access to broadband internet, and the new technology in our daily lives, but most importantly, the personal connection that Extension makes with each of you to make a positive impact in your lives.

Ever Grateful,

Robby Kelly

County Extension Director

Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development

# Program Impact and Statistics

## **Educational Outreach**

Number of Educational Programs taught: 230

Total Teaching Hours: 360

Direct Educational Contacts: 7243

## **Volunteer Value**

The overall value our Extension volunteers have given to our community this past year is worth more than \$1.1M

181 Extension Homemakers

120 Master Gardeners

686 4-H Adult Volunteers

## **4-H Numbers**

2,866 total 4-H enrollment, grades K-12

3,702 total 4-H exhibits

3,064 total 4-H livestock exhibited

57 4-H Clubs

## **Clients**

5,964—Total number of incoming telephone calls

2,310—Total number of walk-in clients

## **Social Media**

YouTube—6.6k total number of views, 327 total hours watched

Elkhart County 4-H Facebook —176,843

Purdue Extension Elkhart County Facebook—25,128

Instagram—10,257



# Agriculture & Natural Resources

## Beginning Farmer Signature Series



According to the USDA the average farmer is just over 57 years old. When you think in terms of farming there is a great need for education for new farmers, learning everything from human resources and financial planning to business management.

In the fall of 2022 Elkhart County provided a 6-part workshop series to give tools to new and beginning farmers to assist in their success. Following completion of the program, 100% of the participants ranked their knowledge of farm planning and access to resources as a 4 (with 5 being “a lot”) whereas prior to the program, 100% ranked their knowledge in these categories as a 1 (no knowledge).

## Master Gardeners

The Purdue Master Gardener Program is a volunteer training program designed to meet the gardening information needs of the community. Specifically, the program aims to provide information and technical assistance about gardening and home horticulture through trained and certified volunteers.



Over the 2023 growing season, Michiana Master Gardener Association (MMGA) answered 150 calls on the diagnostic answer line. Michiana Master Gardeners have also hosted their annual Garden Tour, Garden Expo, and hosted the open show in Ag Hall during the Elkhart County 4-H Fair. The proceeds from the Michiana Master Gardeners' Annual Garden Tour supports a variety of community projects.

The Elkhart Airport Community Garden donated 237 pounds of produce to the Church Community Services Seed to Feed program. Master Gardeners have weekly work sessions at the garden where volunteers can put their knowledge into practice in the company of fellow volunteers. Since 2004, the Master Gardeners have donated over 16,000 pounds of food to the organization.

# Community Wellness

## Growing Together Community Garden

The Chamberlain Community Garden was awarded a \$1,200 Growing Together mini-grant. This grant was used to purchase small equipment and plant starts. The garden helped foster many community relationships. We partnered with the Boys & Girls Club in Goshen to have students come to the garden once a week during the season. During each week there were about 5-8 club members that helped with planting, watering, and harvesting the garden. This was led by our wonderful garden coordinator volunteer Cindy Hartzler-Miller.



There were also many educational opportunities in garden. Master Gardener Gwen Ferland taught about bugs, soil, and watering. Health and Human Sciences Educator Emily Christ provided lessons on nutrition and food demos. The garden provided 238lbs of produce which was then donated to the Goshen Boys & Girls Club. Each week we had a produce stand during pick up time that the Garden Club members helped with and the food was free to the families.



We leveraged so many wonderful relationships with North Goshen Mennonite Church, Iniesta Nursey, Goshen Environmental Center, La Casa Inc, and the Chamberlain Neighborhood Association. This project has beautified the neighborhood and has also fostered a strong sense of community, promoted education, and encouraged sustainable practices.

# 4-H Youth Development

## Juntos 4-H Engaging Latino Youth

To bolster our college & career readiness offerings, school-based programming and DEI efforts, we worked to rebuild the Juntos 4-H program. We obtained a \$7,600 grant extension and hired a translator as well as a new program coordinator. A three-week, six-hour Juntos 4-H afterschool experience was held at Goshen Junior High School for 7th-8th grade students. Twenty-two Latino youth participated and twenty of them enrolled in 4-H. The youth learned about food science, food safety, nutrition, personal finance and outdoor education. All survey respondents indicated that this was their first 4-H activity and that they would be interested in meeting in-person about the same topics in the future. We will have the first official Juntos 4-H cohort in the fall of 2023.



## Michiana 4-H Camp Creating Leaders



Fostering a culture of trips is critical to keeping youth engaged throughout their 4-H careers. A five-day camp was organized for 115 youth from Elkhart, St. Joseph and Marshall Counties. Youth in grades 7-12 were given the opportunity to attend camp as counselors to include monthly trainings for youth. Topics covered included: emergency planning, risk management, conflict resolution and youth behavioral expectations. Survey results indicated that serving as a camp counselor helped them make new friends, become more independent, improved their self-confidence and their ability to lead, made them more responsible and increased interest in other 4-H related activities.

## Animal Science Day Camp

Less than 1% of the world's population is involved in production agriculture, making people less aware of farm practices and where their food comes from. The Animal Science Day Camp engaged 30 youth participants learning more about animal agriculture production, healthy eating, and careers in agriculture via hands-on lessons. When asked what was something you learned today participants said: "Different animals have 4 stomachs," "temperature of meat," and "how to give shots." CM report also indicated: 96% of participants value taking care of something other than themselves, 90% of participants met someone new, 86% said they learned how their actions affect the safety of food produced by their animal. Nearly 100% indicated they know what people are looking for when they buy animal products.



## Career Development Events



Indiana 4-H and FFA have a long tradition of partnering together to provide a space to increase youth knowledge on a variety of subjects in a competitive format. Career Development events focus on a specific subject area increasing their skills in teamwork, critical thinking, leadership and much more. This year over 40 youth in Elkhart County competed at the area and state level career development events including: Milk Quality and Products, Livestock Skillathon, Horse Bowl and Hippology, Horse Judging and Dairy Cattle Evaluation. 90% of the participants said they have learned something new that they will use from these experiences. They said they learned about future careers, how to better select animals and food products.



## **Extension Board Members**

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Extension Board members are elected by the Advisory Committee. The Extension Board meets with the Purdue Extension Educators several times throughout the year and offers feedback on the types of programs being conducted and also provides input for program needs. This board is an integral part of our Extension program.

Our Extension Board members are:

President Jeff Kitson, Vice-President Kara Sutton, Secretary Joe Guerrero, Emilie Blough, Joel Holsopple, Lisa Honey, Dan Hummel, Karen Meade, Jerold Miller, Regina Morehouse, Gloria Moser, Kathy Overholt, Don Prough, and Craig Yoder.

## **Advisory Board Members**

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The Advisory Committee is comprised of individuals from community leaders, agencies and businesses who have knowledge of Extension work. Their responsibilities are to attend the annual meeting, vote for Extension Board members and provide input throughout the year to Extension Board members and Educators. Those members are:

Jeff Beerbower, Stacy Bowers, Sarah Burton, Andrew Bylsma, Dan Carlson, Melissa Cloud, Kathleen Cripe, Larry Cripe, Jeff Culp, Cheryl Gall, Andy Gall, Jill Garris, Chris Gillam, Barb Heeter, Jim Hess, Valerie Jacobs, Amanda Jamison, Fred Jessup, Tom Kercher, Nick Kieffer, John Leer, Timothy Leer, Lynn Loucks, Brenda Mestach, Dana Miller, Matt Morehouse, David Neff, Maggie Okponobi, Debra Pepple, Brent Reed, Ashley Reed, Harold Schmucker, Missy Schrock, Chris Stager, Shelly Steury, Jeff Taylor, Michael Telschow, Amanda Torres, Vonnie Trumble, Gail Weybright, Patty Willaert, Amy Willhelm, David Williams, Jean Williams, and Randi Yoder

# Friends of Extension

The 'Friend of Extension' is awarded to those individuals and businesses whose contributions have enhanced Extension's outreach. Past recipients are:

1980.....	Maureen Neterer	2006.....	Doloris Cogan
1981.....	Dr. Robert Abel		Phil Neff
1982.....	Glen Byler		Phil Stiver
1983.....	Jerry Zahner	2007.....	Nancy Brown
1984.....	Carol Kauffman		Jim & Janice Gawthrop
1985.....	Margaret Weybright	Spring 2008.....	Dean & Eleanor Morehouse
1986.....	Herman Bullard	Fall 2008.....	Michiana Master
1987.....	George Neff		Gardener Association
1988.....	Pam Lamb	2009.....	Elkhart County Extension
1989.....	Elkhart County Farm		Homemaker's Association
	Bureau Credit Union, Inc.,	2010.....	Jim Maddux
	Insurance Companies	2011.....	The Papers, Inc.
	Cooperative Association	2012.....	The Farmer's Exchange
1990.....	Kenneth Smith		Dennis Sharkey
1991.....	Lloyd Hess	2013.....	Eileen and Bemis Martin
1992.....	Melvin Cross	2014.....	Andy and Cheryl Gall
1993.....	Keith & Doris Hostetler	2015.....	Michael Christofeno
1994.....	Joe & Donna Hibschman	2016.....	Dave Hess
1995.....	Dorothy Kercher	2017.....	Terry Shewmaker
1996.....	Dean DeVoe		Jerry Goshert
1997.....	Marvin & Gladys Boht	2018.....	Charlie and Beth Phillips
1998.....	Key Bank, NBD Bank,		Don and Colleen Prough
	First State Bank, and Gindor, Inc.	2019.....	Jim and Debra George
1999.....	Barbara Jewett	2020.....	Jill Garris
2000.....	Tom & Maureen Kercher	2021.....	The 4-H Auction Team:
2001.....	Wayne & Jan Robinson		<i>Brian Campbell and Renee Troyer Campbell,</i>
2002.....	Kenneth Pletcher		<i>DJ Rhoades and Brent Carrick</i>
2003.....	Nancy & Bob Hawkins	2022.....	Harold Schmucker
2004.....	Carlisle & Shelly Roose		
2005.....	Mike Maloney		

# Extension Staff

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**Robby Kelly**, County Extension Director, Extension Educator  
4-H Youth Development/Agriculture & Natural Resources-Livestock—kelly115@purdue.edu

**Crystal Van Pelt**, Extension Educator  
Agriculture & Natural Resources, Plants — cvanpelt@purdue.edu

**Sthele Greybar**, Extension Educator  
4-H Youth Development — sgreybar@purdue.edu

**Corey Sharp**, Extension Educator  
4-H Youth Development — sharp22@purdue.edu

**Emily Christ**, Extension Educator  
Health & Human Sciences—ewitters@purdue.edu

**Lindsey Caterina**  
Community Wellness Coordinator—lwalejew@purdue.edu

**Julie Miers**  
Nutrition Education Program Advisor—miersj@purdue.edu

## Support Staff

Brandy Cavanagh, Office Coordinator — bcavanagh@purdue.edu  
Nancy Borkholder, ANR, Educator Assistant— nborkhol@purdue.edu  
Penny Conover, 4-H, Database Specialist — pconove@purdue.edu  
Jenn Fink, HHS, Social Media Manager — fink24@purdue.edu  
Susan Stine, 4-H, Volunteer Coordinator — sstine@purdue.edu

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## Connect with Us

<http://www.extension.purdue.edu/Elkhart>



PurdueExtensionElkhartCounty  
ElkhartCounty4-H



@PurdueExtElkhart



Purdue Extension Elkhart County

# Telling Your Extension Story

**Purdue-CARET is the Purdue University branch of the national CARET (Council for Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching) organization. The purpose of the PCARET is to provide a means for Indiana citizens to have input into program development, budgetary matters, and legislation. Members work with decision makers at all levels - local, state, and national. Members of Purdue-CARET are:**

- Telling the Purdue Extension Elkhart County story to county, state, and federal elected officials by attending legislative events in the county, and inviting them to our county events.
- Attending two area meetings per year - spring and fall.
- Attending a state meeting at Purdue in the fall.
- Attending the state legislative luncheon in Indianapolis in January.

It is important to communicate with legislators. We depend on legislatures for leadership, and that means they must make the tough decisions based on what they feel is right and based on the best information at hand. **Communicating is your chance to contribute.**

**Learn more by visiting:**

<http://pcaret.org>



Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds

17746 County Road 34, Suite E

Goshen IN 46528-6898

574-533-0554

<http://extension.purdue.edu/elkhart>

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