

Program Accomplishments

University of Illinois Extension

Madison-St. Clair Unit

March - April 2008

Community Development

Developing Community Leadership

- Illinois county officials are challenged to obtain necessary information to make informed decisions regarding policy and delivery of services. A goal of University of Illinois Extension is to provide county officials with opportunities to sharpen their skills and gain knowledge about their legal, administrative, and fiduciary responsibilities necessary to make informed decisions involving their constituency.

University of Illinois Extension programs provide local officials an opportunity to gain access to experts on current issues without leaving their home county. Presenters for the programs include university faculty, representatives of state and federal agencies, and community leaders with experience in the issues and challenges faced by local officials.

You all hear from your stakeholders, *Well, let's apply for a grant* as if that's the answer to every problem, when you know it's just not that simple. Competition is fierce for the little monies available, so it's important to make your grant submissions stand out from the crowd. It's equally important to know whether or not you belong in that crowd before you begin. What is the connection of an existing plan to the funding opportunity? This program helped officials know when, how, and even where to seek grants to make this process painless as possible and to understand what comes along with a grant that has been awarded. Don't get mired in paperwork, learn what you need to do it right from the start. And that's exactly what 5 county board members learned during this session.

Was Kermit Wrong! Is it easy being Green? Green communities, green buildings, green cars,-- more and more people are seeing green. What does it mean to be green? This program focused on how local governments can become environmentally sustainable while reducing the negative impacts they have on the environment with four local government officials attending.

As a result of attending our local government series, two St. Clair County Board members received 24 hours of educational credit needed to achieve the Certified County Official (Level 1) designation.

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Youth Development

Ceremoniously at the St. Clair County Board meeting in late April, certificates of accomplishment were presented to Larry W. Stammer, Jr. of Belleville and June Chartrand of Dupou. Upon receiving the Certified County Official designation, they are now eligible to advance to the Silver Level. The purpose of the CCO program is to strengthen the skills and leadership capacity of county officials. We are proud to recognize these two county board members for their professionalism and dedication to enhancing their knowledge through advanced education. This knowledge will increase their effectiveness in public office.

- The *Fayetteville Gateway to the Kaskaskia committee* continues to work diligently increasing the value and self worth of the community. Grants are being pursued to continue the implementation of the comprehensive plan developed within the past year. In the interim, clean up and beautification along with historic cemetery maintenance continue. University of Illinois Extension continues to assist in this planning and communication to the residents through a community newsletter.

Consumer and Family Sciences

Lowering Fat, Sugar and Salt in Diet

- In addition to the regular curriculum taught through the FNP program, 4th grade health fairs are very popular. Through an interactive game, students learn to choose **Healthy Snacks**. Students in the Bethalto, Edwardsville School districts and Wilson School in Granite City participated in March and April. Students were on a scavenger hunt complete with booklet containing a question to answer at each booth. Lights of red and green flashed in our booth helping the children to learn to make healthy choices. Approximately 1,000 youth participated in the activity.
- Employee Health Fairs are becoming popular, too. Madison County hosted a Health Fair for about 440 employees while The Department of Human Services in East Alton had about 70 for their event. Our teaching event was on the volume of sugar contained in soda. Needless to say, *amazed* is a good word to describe the reaction to the amount of sugar contained in soda, often consumed at an employee's desk. Comments from participants included:
 - ◆ *Wow, I need to take this display home to my children.*
 - ◆ *I drink a two liter in one day. Now that I see how much sugar is in a two liter I will need to re-think what I'm putting in my body.*
 - ◆ *My husband needs to see this. He drinks very little water, but has to have his Mountain Dew.*
 - ◆ *My boss told me to come look at this display...I love my Dr. Pepper.*
 - ◆ *I'm trying to get my wife to cut back on drinking soda; she needs to see this.*
 - ◆ *Since I stopped drinking soda, I've lost a lot of weight.*
 - ◆ *I would like to take a picture of your display so I can show my nieces and nephew just how much sugar is in soda. Maybe this will help them to think about why they need to cut back on soda and drink a little more water.*
- **Healthy Desserts**...Is this an oxy-moron? Did you know you CAN have your cake and eat it too? Seven senior citizens didn't want to miss this interesting class that taught you how to prepare exciting desserts that are healthy, too! They sampled and taste tested items that tickled their taste buds. They went home with lots of recipes to tempt their friends and family, too. This class began a **new partnership with Senior Services Plus in Alton...** University of Illinois Thursdays, programs for seniors.
- If you have diabetes, planning meals and shopping for food can be a real challenge. 17 participants learned more about shopping for food, eating out and menu planning at the **Eating Well with Diabetes Series** in March. Carol Schlitt, Nutrition and Wellness educator taught those

attending more about shopping for food, eating from home and menu planning with diabetes. Included in the classes were cooking demonstrations and tasting of different recipes and foods along with a shopping trip to a local grocery store.

- Bushels of apples were delivered to police departments throughout St. Clair County to kick off **Living Well Week**, March 10 to 15. Included with the apples was an invitation to join Extension staff for a healthy walk at the Henry White Farm where we enhanced the experience with a natural resource guide. The message for the week and every week is to choose healthy foods when selecting snacks and exercise routinely.

Food Safety

- Four dieticians joined us for a stimulating session discussing “**Hot Topics in Food Safety**” in April. Purdue University Professor, Robert H. Linton, presented the session on current food safety topics of interest. Linton is the assistant director of the Agricultural Research Program and the director of the Center for Food Safety Engineering at Purdue. He conducts research on the growth and inactivation of food borne pathogens in different foods. From Salmonella in peanut butter, to botulism in chili, to E. coli poisoning from raw spinach, food safety is a hot topic in the news. It is also an important subject for the food industry, for regulators and for consumers. This presentation uncovered some of the recent mysteries associated with food safety outbreaks and recalls, and helped consumers understand the “what, whys” and “how” associated with these food safety problems and learn of some of the potential future challenges we all must face
- The **Family Nutrition Program** serves lower income families in the area teaching food budgeting, food safety, and healthy meals. In March (2,785) and April, (5,910) individuals participated in the two county area with an additional 15,000 receiving educational information through educational fact sheets. Fruit juices, the featured topic for March explained the nutritional differences between fruit juice and fruit drinks.

Included in this lesson is an activity making spritzer using fruit juice and club soda. Initially, one parent said “*I’m not trying that, that don’t even sound good...club soda and juice, ach! Who thought to put that together?*” The FNP teacher convinced the class to try just a little. After they tried it, she couldn’t keep the glasses full as they kept coming back for more. One parent now plans to make this for her son’s birthday party...indicating that she is not buying soda for the party.

April focused on the oils in the food we eat. Most of the fats we eat should come from fish, nuts and vegetable oils. However, we must limit the amount we eat since there are about 120 calories in 1 Tablespoon of oil and 90 calories in ½ ounce of nuts (12 almonds or 7 walnut halves.)

- Want to stay healthy? Wash your hands.

The strategy seems simple enough, but a 2005 study from the American Society for Microbiology and The Soap and Detergent Association show that although 91 percent of adults say they always wash their hands after using restrooms, only 83 percent were observed doing so. Only 42 percent of Americans said they washed their hands after petting a dog or cat and only 32 percent washed their hands after coughing or sneezing. Hand washing is so low tech it doesn’t get the credit it deserves. The ***Clean Hands, Healthy Bodies*** program teaches this simple concept.



In March and April, volunteers taught 660 third and fourth graders how to properly wash their hands through the ***Clean Hands, Healthy Bodies*** program in partnership with the Madison and St. Clair County Health Departments.

Family and Consumer Issues

Preparing for Retirement

- Your **retirement housing goals** must extend into all the phases of your retirement life. Volunteers taught this class to 161 community residents providing ways to evaluate retirement housing needs; factors to consider when choosing a place to retire; descriptions of the types of retirement housing options; questions to ask yourself to help you decide whether to age in place or move.

Improving the Management of Family Resources

- Lois E. Smith, Extension Educator in Consumer and Family Economics, presented a program for the F.A.C.E.S. parent education class of District 7. Her presentation, “**Taking Control of Your Finances,**” covered influences on family spending, how to set smart goals, and designing a spending plan.
- *It’s all the STUFF—papers, bills and receipts, snapshots, magazine clippings, kids stuff, clothes... I spend half my time piling, sorting and moving it from one place to another.*

Is all the STUFF in your life driving you crazy? Too many toys? So many “important” papers from school. Pictures that you never get put away. University of Illinois Extension offered a unique workshop that may have helped the attendees find the answer. ***Finding Sanity in Today’s World: De-Cluttering Your Life*** helped the 19 participants develop a personalized plan of attack to clear the clutter. They learned how to reduce paper and clutter, easily locate those important notes and phone numbers, and create storage systems that work for adults and children.

Lois Smith, Consumer and Family Economics Educator, University of Illinois Extension provided easy-to-do tips to get started for an audience in Edwardsville.

4-H Youth Development

Leadership Skills

- **Training of New 4-H leaders** continues as leaders participate in the Valued Volunteers Orientation. In April, two 4-H leaders from St. Clair County participated in phase 6 of the Valued Volunteers Orientation. They are leading a club in Fairview Heights. When asked the most important thing learned about making 4-H hands-on learning, they replied “The types of questions to ask the youth (to process the activity)” “To let the kids lead in the discovery process.”
- In April, older 4-H youth held a **4-H Sewing Workshop** in which they taught basic sewing skills. Twelve young people from Madison and St. Clair counties gathered together to learn new skills and meet other youth with similar interests. Several younger 4-H members made a 4-H fabric holder to contain plastic grocery bags. Others chose to sew a 4-H locker caddy for their locker or room.



The following 4-H’ers conducted the workshop: Katie Raymond, instructor; Krista Raymond, Julie Sauls, Theresa Reinhardt, helpers, all of Alhambra Morning Glories 4-H club; Jesse Nosbaum, helper, Marine Stars/Jr. Ag 4-H club and Kim Tartar, 4-H parent.

After School Programming

- **4-H Teens Reaching for Success** youth continue to exercise leadership and community service skills throughout their daily work. For Living Well Week in March, the 4-H program was “turned over” to the students. The 4-H Coordinator developed the lesson for the day and then taught three students how to teach the lesson. After the 4-Hers were familiar with the lesson, they had to divide up the teaching among themselves and develop processing questions. On Monday, the

group focused on nutrition and used a website to calculate how many calories and servings from the food guide pyramid the students eat in a day.

On Tuesday, three students focused on friendship by role playing arguments and then created a friend want-ad. These students developed a long list of processing questions and tried to evenly divide the questions among themselves. When the students evaluated from which Living Well activity they learned the most, many said Tuesday because they learned about things they will use in the future.

The focus on Wednesday was money involving the sampling of name brand and off brand food. The students taste-tested and then voted the sample they liked the best. Next, the students who taught revealed the name brand samples and did a price comparison to see how much money could be saved by buying the off brand food.

On Thursday, three students led discussions on physical fitness. One of these students greatly increased his public speaking skills and confidence level since 4-H began last fall. He demonstrated great control over the group, was very assertive, and received positive feedback from his peers. The leadership skills for all of the students is improving over the year. Their attendance is proof that they understand responsibility and accountability.

- **Speak Out for Military Youth (SOMK)** participants wrote and performed a skit to develop into a Holiday Walk promotion video. Youth demonstrated exceptional leadership skills as they worked together to complete this task.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Natural Resources

- Have you had problems with weeds in your pond? Are you interested in learning how to stock a pond for great fishing? You don't have a pond, but would like to build one? These questions enticed 26 participants to attend a **Pond Construction** program. University of Illinois Extension Educators presented the program via teleconference. featuring a color slide presentation accompanied by the voices of: Dr. George Czapar, Bob Frazee and Dave Shiley as people from all over the state participated. Topics included site selection and construction, fish management and aquatic plant control.

Watershed Nature Center

- In March, spring classes resumed at the Watershed Nature Center. Exploratory hikes at the Watershed taught 17 home school students about looking for signs of spring. A Boy Scout troop of 19 worked on their World Conservation Award by learning about birds through activities and bird watching; a Brownie Girl Scout troop of 15 completed similar activities to earn a Bird Watching Badge. Thirty-five other girls earned their Watching Wildlife Badge on Brownie Girl Scout Day at the Watershed.
- April was a bustling time at the Watershed Nature Center, with spring classes in full swing. As part of the *Get Outdoors!* series, a **Spring Wildflower Walk** taught 11 adults and 7 youth about the life history and identification of spring ephemerals; a guest speaker led two **Frog Walks** to teach about frogs and toads of Illinois to 21 adults and 27 youth; and two guest speakers led a **Bird Walk** for 8 adults and 2 youth.
- Windows on Watershed for April brought Brad Walker of the Prairie Rivers Network to talk about the **Upper Mississippi River Education Program**
- Third grade classes from **Collinsville** and **Roxana** brought 78 youth and 19 adults to the Watershed for field trips that included exploratory hikes and dip-netting to identify aquatic macro-invertebrates. A class from **Alhambra** pre-K of 17 youth and 5 adults took a discovery hike. The middle school volunteer group, Friends in Touch, sent 5 youth and 2 adults to help

transplant native woodland plants to prevent erosion; a faculty sponsor and 5 Edwardsville High School student council members volunteered to help battle invasive species.

Home Horticulture Education

- Winter had them down, but they got rejuvenated and ready for Spring at the **Weekend Gardener** in early March. 176, a record attendance, attended a full day of workshops including Miniature Gardens; Not Your Grandmother's Annuals; Growing Backyard Grapes; the Right Perennial; Wildlife Nuisance Control; Indoor Plants and Air Quality; Creating a Habitat for Butterfly Gardening; Native Shrub and Trees; Container Gardening, Leaf Casting and much more.



Eighteen pages of evaluative comments were collected from participants including the following:

- think this year's program book, speakers and lesson topics were the best in several years. I had a hard time deciding which ones to attend.
 - (I) Did a better job choosing correct plants
 - Excellent program, variety of topics and awesome speakers! Thank you!
 - Got more than my monies worth.
 - (Enjoyed) Getting good information from experts with great knowledge
 - Every class was excellent
- Twenty-three individuals accepted for training in the **Master Gardener program** in Madison and St. Clair Counties began training in mid-January and continued until the first of May on a weekly basis. These Master Gardener interns graduated to join the current 150+ active Master Gardeners in supporting the work of Extension's horticulture program. Master Gardener trainees learn about vegetable gardening, ornamental plants, small fruits, tree fruits, plant pathology, plant identification, environmental problems, herbicide use, insect control, soils and fertilization, annuals and perennial, and turf. Following classroom training, they will be working in a volunteer capacity for a minimum of 60 hours.

Recent graduates include Alice Adcock, George Edwards, Leonard Gnojewski, Bill Hatton, Kay Johnson, Karen Mueller-Fisk, Carolyn Potter, Christiana Pretti, **Edwardsville**; Louis Headen, Diane Runyan, **Belleville**; Brian Archer, Sarah Dunn, Dolores Stover, **Swansea**; Judy Dare, **East Alton**; Vivian Hassenstab, Julie Parker, **Smithton**; Larry Kniepkamp, **Freeburg**; Alfred Nickle, **Moro**; Kenneth Rattler, **Centreville**; Catherine Swalley; Dick Wagner, **Highland**; and Carolyn Wanagat, **Collinsville**.



- Master Gardeners volunteer for Extension in the community in a wide variety of ways including sharing their knowledge through **community presentations**. Presentations in March and April include:
 1. **Soil testing**, the topic of the day for Bill Klopfenstein (Edwardsville) when he addressed the Retired Laborers of State of Illinois with 23 attending.
 2. Ron Smith (Dow) explained how to select **Small Trees** for a group of 15 Alton Seniors at Alton Senior Services Plus as part of the University of Illinois Extension Thursdays program.
 3. The Granite City Garden Study Club requested a speaker on **Roses** taking Julie Hamilton (Edwardsville) to their group.
 4. **Butterfly Gardening and Container Gardening**, took Jim Noble (East Alton) to the Maryville Public Library to speak.

5. Sam Lutton (Belleville) traveled to Trenton to teach twenty members of the Trenton Tumble Weeds Garden Glob more about **pruning**.

- Greg Stack, U of I Extension horticulture educator, shared his knowledge with ten local gardeners as part of a statewide program. The program focused on how to incorporate **vines** into the home garden. Participants learned what to look for in vines and how to care for them.
- Focusing on the basics of growing and caring for **orchids**, Jennifer Schultz, U of I Extension horticulture educator presented a program on Growing Orchids for participants all over the state via teleconference including a group in Madison County.
- Master Gardeners teach others to spread the information which happened via two programs in March. Jim Noble (East Alton) and Ray Kirkman (O'Fallon) taught 31 volunteers from the community to teach the class, *Seasonal Care of Home Landscape*. These 31 volunteers are now teaching the class to approximately another 250 people in our communities.
- Jennifer Fishburn, U of I Extension horticulture educator, presented a program via teleconference. Ten community residents got new ideas for containers and how to put together plant combinations for a beautiful visual impact in the class *Containers with Pizzazz*.

Urbanization: Moving Away from Agricultural Roots

- Students participating in the **Illinois Ag in the Classroom program in St. Clair County** learned about George Washington Carver's life and research. Students learned his importance to agriculture and the economy of the south.

Exploring the concepts in economics of supply and demand along with market resources, goods, services and free enterprise, an auction brought them to life. Students were given tokens, and bid on items like Frisbees and Beanie Babies (donated items). They even had a chance to bid on the air in the classroom and a piece of trash. They learned that demand is weak when the items seem to have no use or value- like the lack of demand for peanuts before Carver demonstrated their usefulness.

- Fourth graders in Madison County went back in time to look at technology in agriculture while comparing to the **technology** relied upon today. *Madison County C.A.R.E.E. (Conservation, Agricultural Resources, and Environmental Education)* program presented this lesson in 74 classrooms reaching 1,697 students.

CAREE also organized an Envirothon for local high school teams. As in years past, the Triad team will be representing the County at the State event in May.

CAREE is co-sponsored with Madison County Farm Bureau, Madison County Soil and Water Conservation Service, and University of Illinois Extension.

Orange areas are one of four program areas of focus for University of Illinois Extension.

Blue is the identified issue for Madison-St. Clair unit within the program area.

Black describes the programmatic activity conducted within the two-month period.