

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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## Purdue Extension- Spencer County



Extension - Spencer County

# WHAT DOES PURDUE EXTENSION DO?

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## **EXTENSION DOES**

### **AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES**

Extension strengthens all areas of Indiana's agriculture. From new and aspiring farmers to multigenerational experts, and small farms to commercial enterprises, we provide objective diagnostics and best practices. Building on our foundation of face-to-face instruction for Indiana farmers, we ensure Indiana remains at the forefront of American agriculture with global reach.



## **EXTENSION DOES**

### **4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

By teaching the value of teamwork and a strong work ethic, Purdue Extension and Indiana 4-H are preparing today's youth to become tomorrow's leaders – whom we'll all need to overcome the challenges of the future.



## **EXTENSION DOES**

### **HEALTH & HUMAN SCIENCES**

Purdue Health and Human Sciences Extension provides education to people of all ages in Indiana's 92 counties. The community is our classroom – where we bring university information to the local level and help people strengthen families, spend smart, eat right, and live well.



## **EXTENSION DOES**

### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

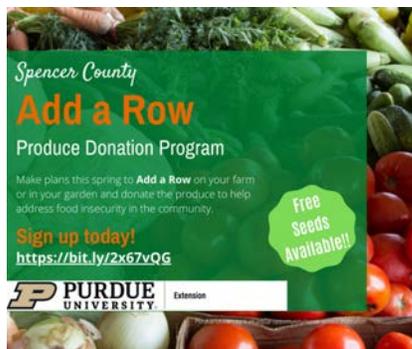
Since its inception in 1914, Purdue Extension has helped strengthen the entire state of Indiana and continues to do so today. Extension helps provide communities of all sizes, urban and rural, with the resources and opportunities they need to succeed – from enhancing public spaces to creating positive change.

# COVID-19 RESPONSE

The year 2020 brought changes and challenges to so many, and Purdue Extension was no exception. From event cancellations and virtual programming to addressing community needs arising directly from the pandemic, 2020 was certainly no ordinary year. Below we highlight some of our COVID-19 response efforts in Spencer County.

## E-learning Video Series

As schools closed their doors and sent students home for e-learning, Purdue Extension stepped up to help Spencer County teachers and students supplement their learning through short, daily videos featuring STEM experiments and wellness activities. Videos were provided through the end of the school year and Wellness Wednesday activities continued through the summer. Some of these videos were featured on the national 4-H At Home blog and were also highlighted within Extension as innovative responses to the pandemic. Videos are still available on the Purdue Extension-Spencer County YouTube channel.



## "Add a Row" Produce Donation Program

Economic implications of the COVID-19 pandemic made food insecurity a particularly crucial issue. Food insecurity rates in the county were around 10% prior to the pandemic and food pantries and other food relief services saw increased utilization as the effects of the pandemic set in. As a response, Purdue Extension developed the *Add a Row* Produce Donation program that encouraged local farmers and home gardeners to plant extra and donate it to the local food pantries. The program resulted in 6 participants donating 134 lbs. of produce to the North Spencer Community Action Center and the Christian Resource Center.

## Spend Smart, Eat Right and Live Well Webinars

Although in-person programming was halted, virtual education continued. Financial webinars were provided to the community including *Taking Control When Your Income Drops* and *Food Budgeting & Meal Planning*. These presentations encouraged budgeting and money management skills to help families navigate potential changes in their income.



## Local Government Roundtables

As part of a statewide effort, SW Indiana Community Development Educators hosted a series of *Local Government Roundtables* via Zoom in the beginning stages of the pandemic shutdowns. These sessions provided an opportunity for local government officials to connect, share ideas and communicate needs as the pandemic began to affect local government functions.

## Stress and Mental Health Webinar Series

After hearing about rising stress rates and concerns from our communities, Health & Human Sciences educators in SW Indiana teamed up to offer a 12 week webinar series. Various topics related to managing stress, financial hardships, household responsibilities, and mental health were addressed. Over 100 individuals from Spencer and surrounding counties participated.

# 4-H/YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



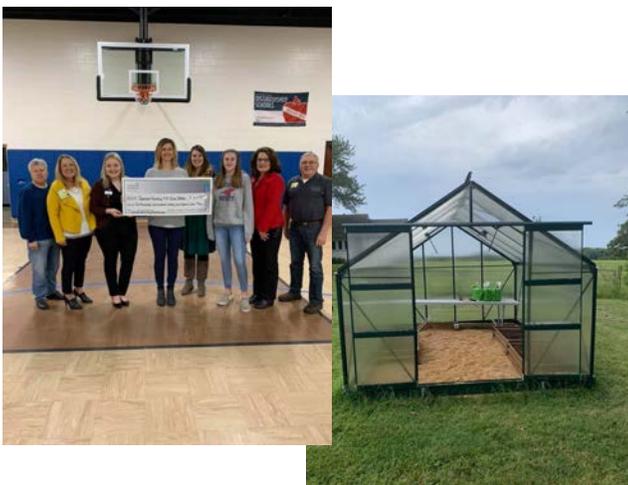
## STEM Clubs Bring New Youth to 4-H

New after school **STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Clubs** were formed at Luce and Nancy Hanks Elementary Schools. Offered initially for 30 youth per club, the Luce club quickly filled and a second session was offered to accommodate all interested participants. Students participating in the clubs were then able to **transition to local 4-H Clubs**. While currently on hold due to COVID restrictions at the schools, the clubs are planned to resume in the future.



## Greenhouse Provides New Opportunities for Elementary Students

Funded through a **\$7,000 grant from the Spencer County Community Foundation**, Purdue Extension established a new greenhouse at Chrisney Elementary. The heated greenhouse complements the existing school garden, which is utilized for educational programming during the school year and in the summer, by providing an opportunity for students to grow plants through the winter months as well. The greenhouse will be utilized for **Extension programming with the youth** as well as **school gardening activities**.



## 4-H Goes Virtual in 2020

As with so many activities and events in 2020, COVID-19 had a direct impact on our 4-H summer activities, including 4-H Camp, 4-H Fair, summer garden club and others. Staff and volunteers worked hard to provide alternative, virtual activities so that youth didn't miss out. **4-H Camp featured a take-home activity kit** including a t-shirt, nature scavenger hunt, s'mores supplies, and a birdhouse building kit.

Summer **Garden Club participants took part in virtual sessions and at-home activities** with supplies provided by the 4-H Association and reached more youth participants than the previous year's in-person club. And the **virtual 4-H Fair provided youth the opportunity to complete projects** by uploading project photos and having them judged in a virtual setting; receiving judges feedback and ribbons as usual. The 4-H Association even provided virtual fair entertainment, including a magic show and concert.



# HEALTH & HUMAN SCIENCES



## School Programs Equip Students for Good Health

Now more than ever it is vital that students recognize the importance of healthy habits and good hygiene. Purdue Extension HHS provided **hand-washing education to 522 students at Luce Elementary, Lincoln Trail Elementary, and David Turnham Educational Center.** Utilizing black light technology, students were able to visually see “hard to clean” spots and learned proper techniques to wash away germs. Additionally, **92 students learned about healthy choices** through MyPlate activities and nutrition lessons.

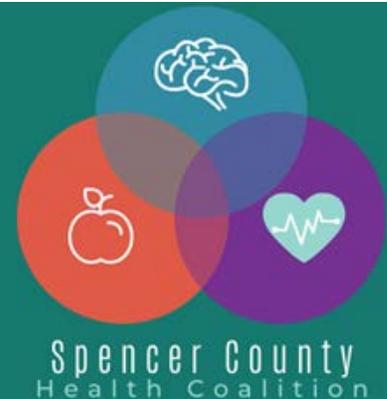


## Spencer County Gets WalkIN'

**132 local residents** participated in the virtual *Get WalkIN'* program, a 12 week virtual program designed to **increase physical activity through walking.** As the pandemic hit and we were all stuck at home, many residents took advantage of this email based program that sent weekly resources, tips, and reminders to get out and move.

## Spencer County Health Coalition Launched

Following the Indiana Healthy Community assessment process through the Wellness Council of Indiana, it was determined that many great things were happening in Spencer County, but collaboration was needed. The **Spencer County Health Coalition** was launched in May with Purdue Extension staff holding spots on the leadership team. Opportunities for HHS programming abound through the **Worksite Wellness work group** and **yielded food and nutrition education programs for Kimball International and St. Meinrad** employees.



# AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES



## Workshop Helps with Farm Bill Decisions

The implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill presented producers with the challenge of once again determining the best ARC/PLC decisions for their farm. *Evaluating Your 2018 Farm Bill Options* was presented in collaboration with the Farm Service Agency and provided participants with an **overview of the farm bill details** as well as a **demonstration of decision-making tools and resources**. Participants were also provided an opportunity to schedule their enrollment appointments with FSA staff. The workshop was attended by 30 local producers who indicated they were **better prepared to make Farm Bill decisions as a result of attending**.



## Recognizing and Responding to Farm Stress

Targeted towards those working regularly with farm clientele, *Communicating with Farmers Under Stress* focuses on the often taboo subject of **farm stress and mental health**. Eleven participants in the local workshop, consisting of lenders, input suppliers, and agency staff, learned from trained facilitators about **common farm stressors, recognizing and responding to stress signals and finding professional help for individuals**.

**PURDUE UNIVERSITY** Extension

**FARMING IS MORE THAN AN OCCUPATION, IT IS A WAY OF LIFE.**

**IT'S ALSO PRONE TO BIG STRESSORS.**

**7.5x** higher risk for accidental death compared to all occupations

**71%** decrease in net farm income since 2013

**72%** Indiana farmers who feel jeopardized by the trade situation

**Do YOU know**

- self-help strategies to manage chronic stress?
- how to reach out to someone experiencing chronic stress?

The long term effects of chronic stress are potentially devastating for you and

your family    your operation    your community

Contact your local Purdue Extension Office and ask about Farm Stress Management programs. [extension.purdue.edu](http://extension.purdue.edu)

**PURDUE UNIVERSITY** Extension

Transforming lives and livelihoods

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service is an equal access/equal opportunity institution.

## Enhancing Farm Business Partnerships

*Farming Together: Enhancing Your Worth as a Farm Business Partner*, a succession planning workshop series offered across Indiana focused on **skills assessments, job descriptions, measuring financial performance and legal aspects** for farm families to consider as they transition to the next generation of management and ownership. Twelve participants, consisting of 5 local families, took part in the Spencer County workshops and indicated they felt **better prepared to develop and implement their succession plans as a result of attending**.



Enhancing  
Your Worth as a Farm  
Business Partner

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



## Leadership Spencer County Grows Leaders

Purdue Extension began a partnership with **Leadership Spencer County** in 2019. The revamped and enhanced program began with a retreat in February at St. Meinrad Archabbey. Participants met monthly at locations throughout Spencer County and participated in presentations and activities on a variety of **personal and professional leadership development topics**. The 2019 class concluded in November with 8 graduates. Since completing the class, participants have been busy becoming **involved in the community and taking on leadership roles**, including several members involved with the organization of the Spencer County Marketing Committee.



Speaker Series "Empowers" Spencer County **Empower Spencer County**, Spencer County's Hometown Collaboration Initiative (HCI) capstone project, brought a series of leadership development speakers to the county in 2019. The series included sessions led by local Educational Consultant and Happiness Coach Kim Strobel on "**The Science of Happiness**" and "**Making Happiness a Habit**", a hands-on workshop on **effective communication**, presented by Dr. Fred Whitford of Purdue University, and 525 Foundation founder Becky Savage sharing her tragic story of losing two of her children to drug overdoses and what **communities can do to address the opioid crises**. The series attracted over **100 participants in its first year**. While currently on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Leadership Spencer County plans to continue the series in the future.



# NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

## North Spencer Head Start Establishes a Preschool Garden

As the result of a **Growing Together Grant** a **preschool garden** was established on the playground facility at North Spencer Head Start consisting of three self-watering planters. The planters were ordered and then COVID-19 hit. While the growing season and educational opportunities were limited because the facility was closed a good portion of the summer, there was still the opportunity to **plant a fall garden that was ready when the students returned in September**. Gardening curriculum has been implemented in this facility and **all produce harvested from the gardens was used in the classrooms or sent home with Head Start families**.



## Farmers to Families Food Box Distributions Help Those in Need

With the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic, **food insecurity rates in Spencer County rose quickly and without warning**. Assistance was needed and the USDA provided that help. As part of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, the USDA purchased and distributed boxes of fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products, and meat products to food banks, community and faith-based organizations, and other non-profits serving Americans in need. St. Meinrad and St. Boniface Catholic Churches led the charge. NEP helped to connect them to other service agencies and churches to provide a county wide effort to get boxes to those who needed them. A total of **6 distributions** were held from June to October 2020 with **315,864 pounds of food being distributed**.



## NEP Quick Facts

- Free hands-on and virtual lessons were held at senior housing units, schools, individual homes, food pantries, parks, and libraries. Individuals and families enjoyed ideas for using what they had on hand to provide a **healthy meal, fun physical activities, and easy recipes**.
- One senior couple receiving a USDA Food Box benefitted from ideas on **preserving and meal planning** and appreciated learning how to use these items so they wouldn't have to throw them away. Many in the county were connected to valuable resources to assist them when money was tight.
- Youth learned about **healthy habits to practice at home**. One homeschool group loved making their own turkey pinwheels with spinach so much that their mom had to buy the ingredients to make more. Even the little one, who thought she didn't like spinach, enjoyed them!



# PURDUE EXTENSION

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*\*We continue to operate in a "by appointment only" status for in-person visits due to COVID-19 restrictions. Please call the office or email a staff member directly. If we are not able to address your request by phone or email, we will be glad to schedule an in-person visit.*

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Extension - Spencer County

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