



the Extension Line

November/December 2025

Happy Holiday Season to All,

Diversity is “the presence of a wide range of human differences within a group or society.”

In the past few weeks, I’ve traveled from central Indiana to Mamou, Louisiana, and Denver, Colorado, for family celebrations and Extension events. What I saw and felt reminded me how our country is filled with kind, caring, honest, and generous people.

No matter where I went, the same concerns came up—having enough food, finding the right gift, making sure the cake tasted good, and enjoying time together. We talked football, weather, and crops—corn, soybeans, rice, and crawfish alike. The children did their chores and homework while the little ones laughed and played.

In Extension work, it’s the same everywhere. Whether at state, district, county, or club meetings, we all work toward one goal—bringing happiness to others. Whether it’s donating, volunteering, or sending a kind note, each act spreads joy. Diversity truly is a gift. It keeps us learning, informed, and inspired. Our world is exciting and beautiful because of its differences.

No matter where we live, we all hope, work, and pray for happiness.

Wishing you a happy, healthy, and peaceful holiday season.

—Betty

P.S. Keep your calendar of events handy—no excuses for missing out on the fun!



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the Extension Line



*Embracing Change
to meet
Tomorrow's
challenges*



Extension - LaPorte County

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the Nook



5th Annual Free Clothing & Small Household Items Giveaway

The 5th Annual FREE Clothing & Small Household Items Giveaway was a huge success! A huge thank-you to Kitchen Kin for starting this event four years ago and guiding us again this year—it ran so smoothly! Thanks to the Fairgrounds for the week-long rental, Janet and Thom Gourley and Della Wittgren for the trucks and trailers, and Rita Flores for storing donations.

Most of all, thank you to our 31 amazing volunteers who donated 460 hours of time, energy, and laughter. Together, we gave away 14,000 items to those in need and supplied several organizations, including:

LaPorte County Salvation Army, Brickyard Healthcare, Indiana Veteran's Home, Community Resources, St. Jude House, LaPorte County Animal Shelter, Solid Waste District, CareForReal, Northside Housing Men's Shelter, and Goodwill.

THANK YOU EVERYONE for making this event possible!



Fall District Meeting

This year's fall district meeting was hosted by Lake County and held at the Adonna Banquet Hall in Schererville, IN. Updates on many topics including State Conference being moved from Noblesville to Nashville, IN and held June 15-17, a week later than before.

LaPorte was represented well with 10 members present and Patty Day presented with a certificate celebrating her 80th birthday! The spring meeting is in Starke County March 31st

Halloween at Pioneer Land

Our first Halloween event was a huge success! We handed out over 500 cans of Play-Doh in Pioneer Land at the fairgrounds, along with a "thinking of you" heart for every family. Perfect weather, big smiles, and so much fun for all. Thank you to everyone who stopped by!



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Taste of Extension

The recent Taste of Extension gathering was an afternoon of delicious food and engaging conversation. The highlight of the afternoon was the keynote speaker, Harry Holtkamp, director of the NEST. Harry did a wonderful job explaining how the NEST operates and the importance of this shelter in LaPorte County.

IEHA WEEK

IEHA Week began with choosing an organization to honor and thank for their volunteer work. This year, members recognized CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) by delivering cheerful goodie bags filled with water, tissues, candy, apples, and pocket hearts with special notes attached. In addition, 150 pocket hearts were shared with LaPorte Community Schools mentoring volunteers. The week concluded with a taco bar and dessert luncheon to celebrate our dedicated members who are always there when needed.

As we reflect on this meaningful week—sparked by the Taste of Extension, strengthened through fellowship, and fulfilled by Make a Difference Day—we're reminded that together, we embody the mission of IEHA and transform communities, one act at a time.





the Nook

Upcoming Holiday Retreat

Celeste and her committee have been working hard planning the holiday retreat! It will be held at the Health Foundation of LaPorte. \$20.00 per person, the food is catered by Cafe' Trilogy. RSVP's are due to Karen Barnhart by November 21st. The committee is asking that you drop off your donated holiday cards to the Steady Stitchers Studio by December 1st.



Extension Homemakers Triumphed in the Scavenger Hunt!

A total of ten members took part in the exciting quest to discover various architectural features in LaPorte. Prizes were awarded for the most items found as well as for the greatest distance covered. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated!

Happy Birthday Homemakers!

November

Theresa Lebo 11/11
Sharon Erwin 11/18
Barbara Swanson 11/27
Della Wittgren 11/27
Judy Swiger 11/28★
Dee Hughes 11/29★

December

Sandy McEnterfer 12/7
Karen Schultz 12/18
Sandy Roth 12/22
Bonnie Stoner 12/22★
Beverly Baima 12/22
Kathy Plemons 12/31★



Mark Your Calendars

Holiday Cookie Exchange
Friday, November 21, 2025
from 2:00 - 4:00 pm at the
extension office

there will be gingerbread
cookies to decorate as well as
the cookie exchange! Please
bring two containers of equal
size, one empty & the other
full of cookies. Please RSVP
to the Extension office at
219-324-9407

Council Meeting
at the Extension Office
December 10, 2025
3:00 - 6:00 p.m.
carry-in dinner

Holiday Council Party
December 4th, 2025
@ Healthcare Foundation
11:30 sign in
12:00 lunch
\$20 due by Nov. 21st

January 12, 2026 Monthly
Social @ the Extension
Office from 2 - 4
Fairy Wands & Games!!

Chrissie Cubical

The 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's Disease

Chrissie Lai, HHS Educator, recently taught a lesson on The 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's Disease. The session was well attended and sparked thoughtful discussion about recognizing early signs and supporting loved ones living with memory loss. Participants also enjoyed interactive brain games that helped illustrate the importance of keeping our minds active. It was an engaging and educational program that encouraged awareness and proactive steps toward brain health.



Educational Retreat

Chair Yoga - Led by Theresa Dzoga-Borg

The Chair Yoga session was a great success, aligning perfectly with the Extension Homemakers' mission to promote lifelong learning, health, and community involvement. The event encouraged members to prioritize self-care and highlighted the value of simple, accessible fitness practices.

Recipe Corner

Peppermint Brownie Bites

Prep: 30 mins | Cook: 12 mins | Total 42 mins

Servings: 24 mini brownies

Ingredients

- Non-Stick Baking Spray
- 24 Candy Cane Mint Flavored Candy Kisses, unwrapped
- 1/2 cup Crisco All-Vegetable Shortening
- 1 large Egg
- 1 cup Sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon Peppermint Extract
- 1 cup All-Purpose Flour (1 cup = 125 grams)
- 1/3 cup Unsweetened Cocoa Powder
- 1 teaspoon Clabber Girl Baking Powder
- 1 Pinch Kosher Salt



Directions:

- Preheat oven to 350°F / 177°C and spray a mini muffin tin with non-stick spray.
- Unwrap candy kisses in advance for easy access.
- In a stand mixer, beat shortening, egg, and sugar until fluffy (about 2 minutes). Add peppermint extract and mix.
- Combine flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, and salt in the mixer and mix on low until just combined.
- Scoop dough into 1 Tablespoon balls and place in the muffin tin.
- Bake for 10 to 12 minutes until centers are rounded and edges are firm.
- Quickly press a candy kiss into each warm brownie after removing from the oven.
- Let brownies cool completely in the pan; the kisses will melt and firm up the brownies.
- Optionally, after 5 to 10 minutes, press the melted kisses to flatten.
- Store in a sealed container at room temperature.

inquiringchef.com/peppermint-brownie-bites/

Recipe Corner

Instapot Hawaiian Chicken

Prep Time: 5 min | Cook Time: 13 min | Yields: 6-8 servings

Ingredients

- 3 lbs. chicken breast (diced into bite sized pieces)
- ½ cup soy sauce
- ½ cup ketchup
- 1 cup pineapple juice
- 2 tsp. grated garlic
- 2 tsp. grated ginger
- 2 tsp. toasted sesame oil
- 2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 2 cups pineapple chunks
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. pepper
- 2 tbsp. sherry vinegar
- 2 tbsp. oil
- Parsley, for garnish (optional)



Instructions

1. Start by setting your Instant Pot to the Sauté function on High. Add in the oil and diced chicken breast and mix well.
2. Add in the soy sauce, ketchup, pineapple juice, grated garlic, grated ginger, toasted sesame oil, Dijon mustard, pineapple chunks, salt, pepper, sherry vinegar, and mix well.
3. Place the lid on and set to Pressure Cook on High for 8 minutes. Once the Instant Pot is done pressure cooking carefully do a quick pressure release until it has fully vented. Remove the lid, give it one final mix, and serve.
4. Top with some fresh parsley and enjoy!

Recipe can be found at instantpot.com/blogs/recipes/hawaiian-chicken

MADE BY *You*

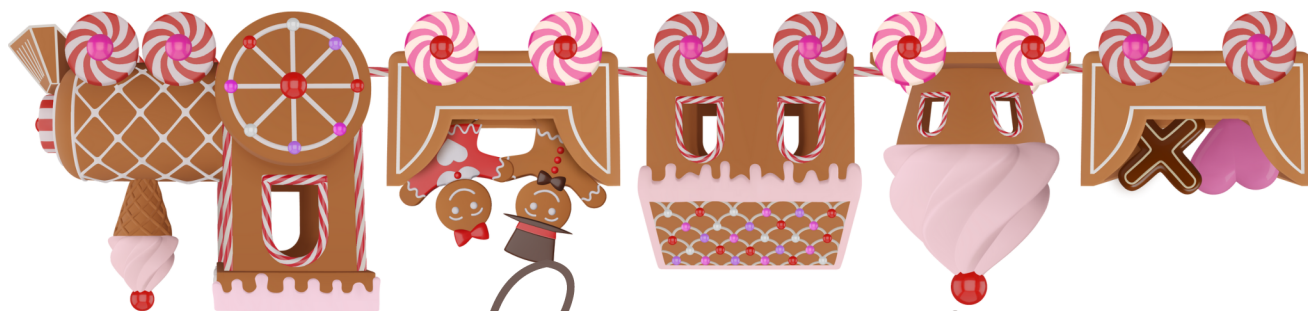
Materials Needed:

- White air dry clay (or a large clay bead)
- Small pine cones
- Thin gold wire
- Gold ric rac or ribbon for the crown
- Scissors
- Hot glue gun
- Gold and white embroidery thread
- Tissue paper

Directions:

1. Take a small section of modeling clay and roll it into a ball to make your angel's head.
2. Attach a small ball of clay to the base of your pine cone with a dab of hot glue.
3. Once your glue has set and your head feels firmly attached to your pine cone, you will add your little gold crown. We used a small section of gold ric rac.
4. Before you glue down both sides of your crown, make a hanging loop with your thin embroidery thread.
5. Once you have glued down your embroidery thread hanging loop, glue both ends of your crown.
6. For the wings: cut a 3-4" piece of gold wire, bend both ends toward the center, and twist.
7. You can leave your wire wings as is or you can add some delicate tissue paper to the inside of the wings, simply add tiny drops of glue to your wire and press it into your tissue paper. Trim the excess tissue paper, leaving only what you need for the center of your angel wing. We decided not to add facial features to our pine cone angel because we like the simplicity of a blank face, but you could certainly add eyes, a mouth, and rosy cheeks to your angel, if you desire.





Happy

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