

# 2023-2024 ANNUAL PURDUE EXTENSION REPORT



RESULTS OF PROGRAMMING EFFORTS BY:  
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OUR AMAZING COMMUNITY PARTNERS; AND OUR DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS.

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**PURDUE**  
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# 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

## TEEN CULTURAL IMMERSION

In late July, Emily Skinner and Katie Ridenour travelled with Tami and 3 DeKalb County 4-H individuals to Bethel, Alaska, for a cultural immersion and teen teaching experience. Emily and Katie worked with youth in grades K-6 to deliver a day camp focused on art and environmental science called The Art of Nature. While waiting in the Anchorage airport, ready to head back to Chicago O'Hare, one of the teens shared, "We don't realize how much is happening in the world around us because we live inside our bubble." Each teen came home from this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity with lasting memories and are forever changed in all the best ways. They not only came home to their own community with a greater sense of cultural sensitivity and gratitude for all of the luxuries we don't even realize we have, but they made a lasting impact on younger kids in another state that 'do life' in a completely different way than those of us living in the Midwest. These types of 'stretching' opportunities are hallmarks of the 4-H program where we help kids see beyond themselves. It's a big world out there, and 4-H kids are making a difference!

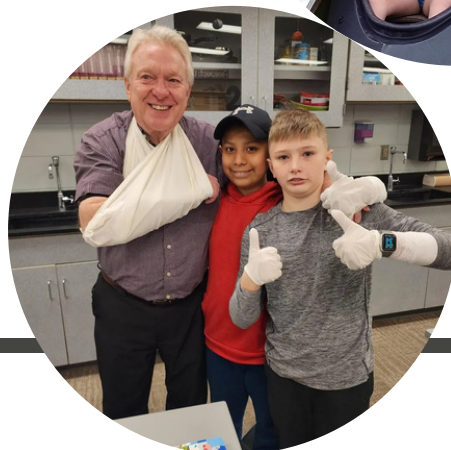


# 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

## BY THE NUMBERS

2023-2024 included:

- 2 Ignite by 4-H National Conference Participants
- 1 State 4-H Band Delegate
- 5 4-H Academy @ Purdue Delegates
- 11 Northeast Indiana 4-H Camp Counselors
- 27 Northeast Indiana 4-H Campers
- 279 afterschool program participants
- 282 Middle School Spin Art Participants
- 37 Cultural Context Participants (college)





# 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

## BY THE NUMBERS

- 270 Youth Conservationists
- 90 STEM Fest Youth Participants
- 102 4-H Faceoff Participants
- 59 STEAM Workshop Attendees, 30% new to 4-H
- 25 Grandparents University Students
- 20 Chef University Youth Chefs
- 27 Alaskan youth participants
- 22 Barn Quilters
- 22 Beginning Beekeepers
- 1 life-changing 4-H trip to Alaska





# 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

## A SAFE PLACE AFTER SCHOOL

Working with 158 middle school students in two school corporations, STEM concepts were explored, discovered, and validated through afterschool programming. In the fall, students engaged with the The Art of Nature, a curriculum co-authored by Tami Mosier, learning about environmental science. Practicing applicable skills and making good use of their time, in the spring, students learned how to budget and navigate limited food resources, how to use power tools, how to respond in emergency medical situations, and how to communicate like a professional.

Elementary school students at Carlin Park used both their right and left brains as they learned about art and science during 5 sessions of The Art of Nature. Monthly evaluations showed 75-94% of the 121 afterschool youth gained knowledge and awareness of environmental science.

## CREATIVITY BECOMES COMMUNITY

Twenty-two youth and adults participated in 4 educational sessions of barn quilting where they used geometry and color theory in a precise yet artistic manner for creative expression. 100% of the participants planned to do something with what they learned. Although an unintended outcome, most spoke more highly of the community connections made than the reason they joined the series to begin with, to successfully create a personalized barn quilt.





# HEALTH & HUMAN SCIENCES

## IN THE KITCHEN

### **Independence in the kitchen**

This monthly program empowers clients from Easter Seals/Rise by teaching them essential cooking skills tailored to special occasions and themes. Each month's focus not only highlights creativity in the kitchen, but also encourages participants to engage with their community's cultural events. For instance, making moon pies for the eclipse can inspire curiosity about science while enjoying a tasty treat.

### **Steps to a Healthy You**

With the Mediterranean diet being recognized for its numerous health benefits, this program's strong turnout indicates a community eager to improve their eating habits. The dual class offering shows the high demand, and it's promising that there are plans to continue this initiative into 2025. This could potentially expand into a series of workshops focusing on meal prep, grocery shopping, and cooking demos.

### **Cooking Matters**

This 8-week program addresses the critical intersection of nutrition and social support for new mothers. By providing cooking education, it helps participants develop healthy habits for themselves and their families while also fostering a support network. This could lead to better outcomes for both maternal and child health.



# HEALTH & HUMAN SCIENCES

## THE FINANCES

### **Where Does Your Money Go?**

The budgeting program has demonstrated tangible results, with participants gaining essential skills to manage their finances effectively. Success stories, like saving for a vehicle and new tires, illustrate the real-life impact of financial education. Expanding this program to various community centers helps reach a broader audience, ensuring that more individuals can benefit from sound financial practices.

### **Captain Cash**

Engaging with third graders to teach them about earning, saving, spending, and borrowing lays the groundwork for responsible financial habits. This early education is crucial for fostering a financially literate generation, helping them make informed decisions as they grow.



# HEALTH & HUMAN SCIENCES

## CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

### **Parents Forever**

This court-mandated program is more than just a requirement; it provides valuable resources and best practices for navigating parenting challenges, including blended families. By supporting parents in learning effective co-parenting strategies, it helps create healthier family dynamics and better outcomes for children. Steuben County holds these programs monthly with over 100 participants in 2023-24.

### **Steuben County Non-Profit Interagency**

The monthly meetings not only facilitate networking among non-profits but also provide educational components that enrich participants' knowledge and skills. This collaborative approach enhances community resources and encourages innovative solutions to local challenges. In Steuben County there are over 54 agencies that attend these monthly meetings.



# AG & NATURAL RESOURCES

## KEEPING THINGS LOCAL

In 2024, Reba emphasized on her area of expertise, horticulture. This year, she was able to work with local stakeholders to provide programming and hands-on learning experiences in plant biology, environmental conservation, soil sciences, and many other topics. These programs provided residents of Steuben County more knowledge and guidance on gardening, vegetables, pests and diseases, and conservation practices to improve water quality. The local stakeholders who she visited and presented frequently with included The Heritage Club, Fremont Public Library, Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Steuben County YMCA.

Reba also assisted over 100 residents with diagnostic calls. Anything from tree health issues to insect ID, she was able to find resources and answers for those that called.



# AG & NATURAL RESOURCES

## IN BLOOM

Reba and other Ag Extension Educators throughout the state have successfully received a federally funded grant through the North Central Extension Risk Management Education Program. This \$47,356 grant will work with Indiana Cut Flower Growers throughout the state to address the five areas of risk management in hopes of sustainability for their businesses.

While prep for this grant project has been in the works, the grant will officially kick off in January with an Annie's Project for Cut Flower Growers to introduce and implement risk management skills for new and experienced cut flower growers. The course will focus on nurturing skills in new business development, financial management, strategic marketing, competitive production practices, and liability geared toward fostering sustainable growth. Be on the lookout for this program held on Monday evenings for 6 weeks, January-February.



# AG & NATURAL RESOURCES

## OUT IN THE GARDEN

Steuben County Master Gardeners have a passion for gardening and a wealth of knowledge about gardening and horticulture. This volunteer group is actively giving back to our community through numerous projects that create a greener community.

In Steuben County, our volunteers donated **616 hours** this year. Most often they are found planting flowers on Hoosier Hill, providing expert advice at the Farmer's Market all summer, judging projects at the county fair, and presenting to local service organizations. According to the value of volunteer time from the independent sector, this year the Steuben County Master Gardeners donated a total amount of **over \$21K in volunteer time** to Steuben County! With all that time they made new connections with 1,037 adults and youth.

This spring Purdue Extension is excited to host an 8-week Master Gardener Course where participants will learn more about soils, plant nutrition, insects, diseases, and best management practices in the garden. Classes will be held jointly between the Dekalb County office and Steuben, on Mondays and Wednesdays.



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## SAFE KIDS, SAFER COMMUNITY

The Safe Sitter® Program equips young adolescents with essential skills and confidence to safely care for themselves and younger children. This nationally recognized program focuses on preparing participants to handle various situations they may encounter while babysitting or staying home alone.

Important life skills that are taught during this program include, first aid and rescue skills, such as CPR, childcare skills, and life and business skills. Other important skills such as confidence, decision-making under pressure, and leadership skills. This is a great class to prepare students for real-world scenarios in babysitting and home safety.

This program was taught twice this year by Dana and Reba in collaboration with the Steuben County YMCA and Cameron Memorial Hospital. Participants were able to learn these important skills to take care of their younger siblings or to kick start their own babysitting business.