

IMPACT REPORT 2023



Purdue Extension- Spencer County



Extension - Spencer County

WHO WE ARE

Our Mission

We deliver practical, research-based information that enhances lives and livelihoods.

Our Vision

We will be a leader in providing relevant, high-impact educational programs that transform the lives and livelihoods of individuals and communities in Indiana and the world.

Purdue Extension is Indiana's educational partner for life

WHAT WE DO

AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Serve as a research based, unbiased information source for county and state constituents on a variety of topics including: crops, ag business, livestock, natural resource, horticulture, small farms, urban ag, pesticide use, and land conservation.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Prepare young people to be leaders in their community and around the world through hands-on experiences alongside their peers and caring adults.

HEALTH & HUMAN SCIENCES

Provide 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.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Strengthen the capacity of local leaders, residents, businesses, and organizations to build resilient, inclusive and sustainable communities through research-based resources and processes.

NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

Works to make the healthy choice the easy choice where limited-resource Hoosiers live, eat, work, play and shop. The program is supported by two U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) educational programs: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

4-H/YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Summer Community Adventures Provides Youth with Summer Opportunities

Summer Community Adventures (SCA) continued for its 13th year in 2023, and its first year with Purdue Extension as the **lead planning organization**. SCA serves youth in **grades K-9** identified by the school counselor and meets weekly for 7 weeks during the summer. Educational sessions this year focused on health & wellness and local foods. A **\$10,000 Owensboro Health grant** supported 2023 programming costs as well as take-home bags of **fresh, locally grown produce**. **Fifty-three youth** took part in the program, with **52 being new to 4-H**. Bags of fresh produce from a local farm and bags of non-perishable food from **Bags of Blessings** were provided for 32 families enrolled in the program. One youth reported, "This is my favorite. We eat all of it". **938 pounds of produce** and 18 dozen eggs were provided to families this summer.



Students Gain STEM Skills through IN-MAC Lab

Spencer County 4-H received an **IN-MAC Lab** (Indiana Manufacturing Competitiveness Center) donation and collaborated with **Chrisney Elementary** to implement programming with youth **grades K-6**. Tools in the lab will provide youth skills needed to create a stronger, more competitive manufacturing ecosystem for Indiana and the nation. Over **200 youth** engaged in STEM activities by designing, creating, and engineering with 3D printers, a *Glowforge*, and coding with *Indicars*.

Trainings Help Identify, Address Youth Mental Health Issues

Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) provides adults 18 and older the tools to identify the signs and symptoms of a **mental health emergency** in youth. **Eleven courses** were provided certifying about **300 individuals** in YMHFA. Program participants indicated they **increased their knowledge and confidence** to assist a youth experiencing a mental health crisis.

10.2%

of youth will be diagnosed with a substance use disorder in their lifetime.

Source: Youth Mental Health First Aid**

Youth Take Part in Statehouse Day

With support from the Spencer County 4-H Association, **17 Spencer County youth** took part in the **Indiana 4-H Day at the Statehouse**, participating in tours, learning about Indiana's governmental structure and viewing a live legislative session.



HEALTH & HUMAN SCIENCES

Health Coalition Making an Impact

The **Spencer County Health Coalition** made great strides towards improving the health of our community in 2023 with Purdue Extension at the helm of the leadership team. The 2023 **Spencer County Community Wellness Forum & Annual Dinner Meeting**, hosted by the coalition as well as the Spencer County Tobacco Prevention & Cessation Program, included a resource fair with **15 community partners** showcasing what they have to offer Spencer County. More than **130 community partners and guests** attended this event to learn about the significant **Health First Indiana Funding**, get an update on coalition happenings, and learn from Memorial Hospital and Health Care Center Director of Medical Practice Management, Susan Weisheit. This event reached all sectors of our community including **youth, young adults, school administrators, law enforcement, county government officials, individuals in substance abuse recovery and more**. We are thankful for the support of our community, and we look forward to continuing our work in 2024!



NOW Counseling Digs In

Purdue Extension has forged a strong partnership with **NOW Counseling**, an organization that focuses on **addiction recovery and mental health** through culturally sensitive therapy, counseling and case management services. Extension provides a **weekly life skills session** that covers topics such as personal finances, job skills, managing challenges, healthy living, and others. In 2023, a **\$985 Growing Together mini-grant** was received. The grant, a partnership between Master Gardeners, Extension Educators, and Community Wellness Coordinators within Purdue Extension funded the creation of **raised-bed gardens** at both the men's and women's houses in Rockport. Residents, many of whom had **no experience with gardening**, were able to participate in the process from start to finish. What began as small seeds soon blossomed into cauliflower, cabbage, turnips, onions, kohlrabi and more. Participants were educated on the importance of **good nutrition** while **learning how to cook** the fresh food that they harvested themselves from their garden. This collaboration will continue in 2024.

AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

UAV Program Prepares Potential Pilots

In recent years, the role of **Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)** in agricultural production has become more defined and the technology more accessible to producers. To help producers learn how to make the most of this technology, Purdue Extension's UAV Program covers topics related to the operation of UAVs as well as prepares participants to take the **FAA Part 107 Remote Pilot Test** required for commercial or hobby UAV use. This two-day program was offered in 2023 with 9 participants. All reported increased awareness of legal issues, safety protocols, and troubleshooting techniques as well as a better understanding of applications associated with UAV technology. Following the program, **4 participants took and passed the FAA test**, with an average score of **93 percent**.



Youth Learn Gardening Skills and Importance of Proper Nutrition

"Lettuce" Eat Healthy, a Purdue Extension collaboration with local schools since 2012, teaches youth about **vegetable gardening, plant science and proper nutrition** through interactive sessions and hands-on activities during the school day. Students plant lettuce, radishes, onions and spinach in container or raised-bed gardens at the schools, care for the plants through the growing season and enjoy salads made from the vegetables at the end of the program. In 2023, the program was offered at **5 elementary schools** (David Turnham, Lincoln Trail, Nancy Hanks, Chrisney and Luce) and reached over **200 students**.



Exam Training Helps Applicators Meet New Requirements

New pesticide application regulations from the Office of Indiana State Chemist eliminated direct supervision rules and now require all restricted-use pesticide applicators to be fully certified. To help applicators become certified, a **SW Indiana Purdue Extension collaboration** offered local training sessions to prepare applicators to take the private applicator **Core and Category 14 exams**. Two training sessions were held at **Ivy Tech-Evansville**, with **100 participants** taking part. In the afternoon following each session, participants could schedule an exam slot at the Ivy Tech testing center. A strong majority of participants indicated they **felt better prepared to take the exam as a result of attending**, with an **88% pass rate** and 77 individuals receiving OISC certification.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Leadership Program Trains New Community Leaders

Purdue Extension began a partnership with **Leadership Spencer County** in 2019, introducing the Purdue Community Leadership curriculum into the program. The third class of the revamped and enhanced program completed in November 2023 with 9 graduates. Sessions were held monthly at locations throughout Spencer County with facilitated sessions and activities on a variety of **personal, professional, and community leadership development topics**. Upon completion, participants are encouraged to become more **involved in the community and take on leadership roles in community groups and organizations**. The 2023 class partnered with the **Isaiah 117 House** as their community project, assisting with landscaping and general clean-up around the new Perry-Spencer location, currently under construction in Chrisney.



You're not ready until you are DIGITAL READY



Statistics courtesy of Pew Research Center, December 2016

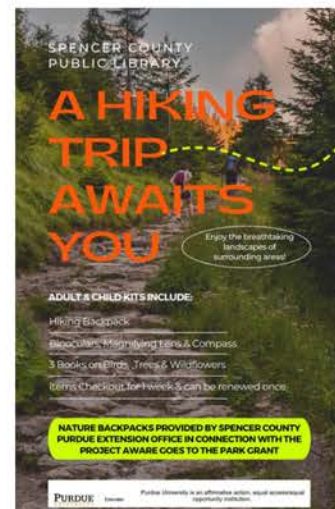
Purdue Extension Helps Businesses get Digital Ready

With over 90% of US adults online, many of which are making online purchases through cellphones and other mobile devices, often through links found on social media, it is crucial for small businesses to have an effective online presence to connect with, and sell to, their customers. **Digital Ready Businesses**, a 12-session, virtual course designed to help **small businesses** become more **digitally savvy** was offered twice in 2023. The hour-long, hands-on sessions include topics such as **Claiming Your Online Turf, Website Basics, Virtual Storefront, Search Engine Optimization, Social Media Plan and Content, and more**. Participants may choose sessions "a la carte" or register for all 12. Additional Digital Ready courses are planned again for 2024.

NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

Nature Backpacks Help Families Get Outside

Funded by the **Indiana Department of Health**, the **Nature Backpack** program created nature backpacks for **three local library locations** (Rockport, Dale & Chrisney), the Purdue Extension office and the Nature Center at **Lincoln State Park**. Visitors to the library, Extension Office and park can check-out the backpacks, which contain binoculars, magnifying glasses, nature resource guides and suggested nature and mental health-based activities. The Spencer County Health Coalition, along with Purdue Extension, promoted the availability of the backpacks to community members, emphasizing it as a **free way to have a fun day outside**. The public is encouraged to check out the backpacks and use them to explore the outdoors at our city, county, state and national parks in Spencer County.



A Successful Summer Feeding Program Continues

Construction projects at David Turnham and Chrisney Elementary Schools left the schools unable to host summer feeding sites, so adjustments were made for 2023. As a result, **Lincoln Heritage Public Library** hosted the program in conjunction with the **Summer Community Adventures** program (see 4-H section for details). North Spencer School Corporation prepared and distributed “**grab and go**” lunches (and breakfast for the next morning) on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. A total of **3,931 meals** were served over 20 days of service. Library programming strategically scheduled before and after summer feeding improved access for participants. Families indicated they **appreciated the convenience of the “grab and go” meal option** as well as the **healthy foods offered**.

NEP Success Stories

The Nutrition Education Program Assistant provides **fun health and nutrition lessons** to both adult and youth participants throughout the county, teaching **food safety, money-saving tips** and providing participants opportunities to **sample new foods and learn new recipes** to use at home.

Highlights in 2023 include:

- Lessons at **Spencer County Public Library** (youth) and **Lincoln Heritage Public Library** (adults)
- Adults at **NOW Counseling** learned about **healthy eating** and how to cook garden produce they grew
- Virtual lessons focusing on **saving money on food** reached participants through the **Christian Resource Center**
- Lessons for students at **David Turnham Education Center** and **Rockport Elementary**
- During the summer, nutrition lessons were given for youth at **Summer Community Adventures**
- Seniors reached through impactful programming at **The Waters of Rockport**.



PENCER HIGH SCHOOL



CONTACT US

Purdue Extension-Spencer County

1101 E. CR 800 N.

Chrisney, IN 47611

Hours: 8:00 AM-4:00 PM, Monday-Friday



(812) 362-8066



www.extension.purdue.edu/spencer



facebook.com/PurdueExtensionSpencerCounty



[Purdue Extension-Spencer County](#)

Office Staff

Nicholas Held—nheld@purdue.edu

Agriculture & Natural Resources

Community Development

County Extension Director

Jennifer Mayo—allen393@purdue.edu

4-H Youth Development

Megan Jaspersen—mjaspers@purdue.edu

Health & Human Sciences

Erin Meyer—meyer258@purdue.edu

Community Wellness Coordinator

Danica Williams— will1179@purdue.edu

Nutrition Education Program Assistant

Pat Cochenour—pcocheno@purdue.edu

Office Manager



Extension - Spencer County

It is the policy of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service that all persons have equal opportunity and access to its educational programs, services, activities, and facilities without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability or status as a veteran. Purdue University is an Affirmative Action institution.

This material may be available in alternative formats.