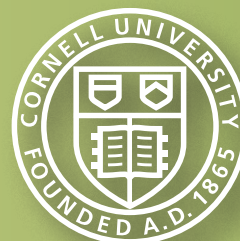


**Cornell Cooperative Extension** | **Erie County**

**2020**

**ANNUAL  
REPORT**





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Ruth Smith • *Finance Assistant*  
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John Whitney • *Agriculture Educator*  
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Tammi Kron • *4-H Educator - Livestock*  
Megan Burley • *4-H Educator - Clubs*  
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Xyricka Ferry • *Senior Nutrition Educator*  
Unique Brown • *Nutrition Educator*  
Brittany Denz • *Nutrition Educator*  
Christina Ezak • *Nutrition Educator*  
Mallory Hohl • *Nutrition Educator*  
Mary Janak • *Nutrition Educator*

#### EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

Kathleen Clayton • *Nutrition Educator*

#### HEALTHY CORNER STORE

Sheila Bass • *Healthy Corner Store Coordinator*

### CORNELL VEGETABLE PROGRAM

Julie Kikkert, Robert Hadad, Christy Hoepting,  
Judson Reid, Elizabeth Buck, Caitlin Tucker

### CORNELL LAKE ERIE REGIONAL GRAPE PROGRAM

Jennifer Phillips Russo, Kevin Martin, Andy Muza

### SWNY DAIRY, LIVESTOCK & FIELD CROPS

Katelyn Walley- Stoll, Josh Putman, Alycia Drwencke, Amy  
Barkley

### HARVEST NEW YORK - WNY

Cheryl Thayer • *Ag Economic Development Specialist*  
Becky O'Connor • *Farm to Institution Coordinator*  
Esther Kibbe • *Berry Specialist*  
Anika Zuber • *Dairy Processing & Marketing Specialist*

A year to remember... at this time last year, none of us could have predicted all that 2020 would bring with it. It has been a challenging year in so many ways, but there have been bright spots too. CCE Erie is here, supporting our community, and responding to needs brought on by the challenges while sharing the bright spots with you. For 106 years we have thrived as a statewide system and as a local organization because we respond to current issues and emerging needs in our communities with research-based solutions. CCE Erie has always adapted to the changes that come with time. But the breadth, speed, and all-encompassing nature of the changes due to the pandemic have left us - staff, volunteers, participants and our communities – breathless and racing to keep up.

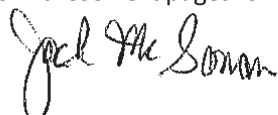
Most of our programming since the shutdown in March has been virtual, although there was limited in-person education during the summer/early fall. CCE Erie, along with the rest of the world, had to learn how to effectively use a variety of new technology and software. 4-Hers produced videos that taught skills, showcased projects, and highlighted community issues. The mere act of producing these videos was a learning process and new skill set for many youth. Our nutrition educators produced videos that highlighted the value of healthy foods and physical activity, and the educators are now producing podcasts. Virtual gardening workshops and agriculture training series attracted registrants from outside the county, and even outside the state. While nothing was 'normal' or usual, opportunities for new programs and reach to new audiences were the positive outcomes.

2020 was also a year of reckoning. CCE Erie's efforts in the past couple years, to become a welcoming, safe space for all to learn and grow, put us on a path of organizational reflection and change. But the focus on our national struggle with systemic racism and history of suppressing opportunities for blacks and other people of color, made it clear how important it is for CCE Erie to do the work to become an antiracist organization and to live our values.

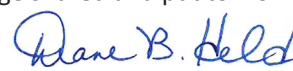
Our heartfelt hope for all of us is a new year where science-based research and solutions will help to overcome Covid, and our shared humanity will remind us that we truly are in this together.

Please read the stories in these next pages for a glimpse into how knowledge shared and put to work can change lives!

Jack McGowan  
President, Board of Directors



Diane Held  
Executive Director



## Estimate of 2020 Operations Funding

### COUNTY

Appropriation	\$ 347,986	
Grants & Contracts	\$ 10,000	
<b>Total County</b>	<b>\$ 357,986</b>	<b>11%</b>

### STATE

County Law 224	\$ 58,000	
Grants	\$ 493,395	
Fringe Benefits	\$ 716,671	
<b>Total State</b>	<b>\$1,268,066</b>	<b>40%</b>

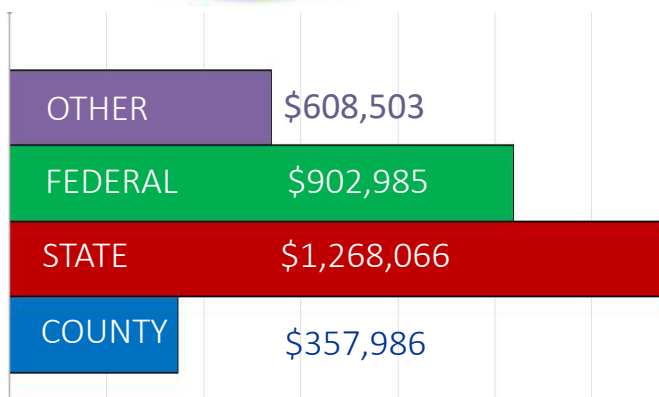
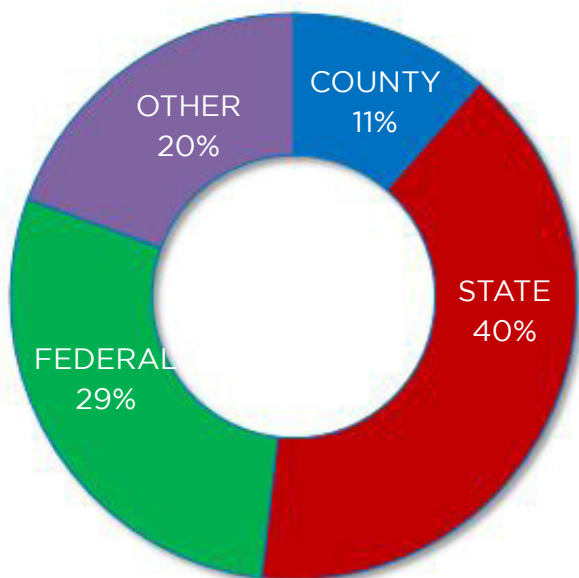
### FEDERAL

Smith-Lever	\$ 47,709	
Smith-Lever EFNEP	\$ 56,000	
SNAP Education	\$ 796,276	
Grants & Contracts	\$ 3,000	
<b>Total Federal</b>	<b>\$ 902,985</b>	<b>29%</b>

### OTHER SOURCES

Grants & Contracts	\$ 203,499	
Specialist Contract Support	\$ 14,030	
Enrollment & Program Fees	\$ 29,876	
Contributions	\$ 27,130	
Fundraising (incl. 4-H Market Sale)	\$ 294,150	
Interest & Miscellaneous	\$ 39,818	
<b>Total Other Sources</b>	<b>\$ 608,503</b>	<b>20%</b>

**TOTAL OPERATIONS FUNDING \$3,137,540**





# INSIDE:

Pages 4-20  
CCE Program Impact Stories

Pages 21 - 24  
CCE Program 'By the Numbers'



## Capital Project Update

After a year of continued searching and multiple purchase offers, the Board of Directors is pleased to have found a suitable property to become the new home for CCE Erie. As of this writing, 15 acres of land in the Town of Orchard Park are under contract for purchase and we are beginning the process to obtain the necessary zoning approvals prior to finalizing the agreement. Our friends at the Providence Farm Collective (PFC) have entered into a contract to purchase property next door to our purchase. We look forward to being neighbors with PFC and to exploring ways to enhance our collaboration to serve the farm community in Erie County. We have much work ahead to design and build a facility that will meet CCE Erie's current and future needs. We are hopeful that the multi-year process to find land for a new home is in the final stages and that we will soon begin the process of planning and fundraising to build the facility. This will ultimately be an effort that all CCE Erie stakeholders will have a role in, so get ready as we will need your help!



# CCE ERIE PROGRAM IMPACT STORIES

## Agriculture and Natural Resources Connecting to Research Spotted Wing Drosophila

This year was the 8th of trapping for the invasive fruit fly pest, spotted wing drosophila (SWD). To monitor a field, four vinegar traps were set out in late May and sorted weekly for presence of SWD adults. Once trap catch of SWD is sustained for two consecutive weeks monitoring stops for the year. The trapping network allows growers to better time control measures to when pest pressure in the field is rising.



## Agriculture and Natural Resources Connecting to Research Citizen Scientist Makes Early Detection Find in County Park After Invasive Species Training

CCE Erie was able to host a citizen science training to teach community members how to survey for the invasive insect, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA). CCE co-hosted the meeting with WNY Partnership for Regional Invasive Management (PRISM) and Charlotte Malmberg, with Cornell's New York Hemlock Initiative providing the training.

While originally only one session was planned, interest in the course was so high that a second session was added a month later. We were able to hold our 2nd training just before things shut down. In February, the trained volunteers set out to survey hemlocks in Chestnut Ridge Park. A survey by a trained volunteer a couple weeks later identified a small infestation of HWA located along one of the park roadways. Resources were mobilized to treat the area and keep this pest from spreading to more trees.



*Citizen scientists help detect Hemlock Woolly Adelgid in Chestnut Ridge Park, NY*



## Agriculture and Natural Resources Connecting to Research

Engaging Land Managers and  
Agricultural Communities to Apply and  
Evaluate Biological Control of  
Swallow-wort in New York

Black and pale swallow-worts are highly invasive plant species that negatively impact agricultural and natural lands.

In 2017, the leaf-feeding moth, *Hypena opulenta*, was approved for release as a biocontrol agent in the US. Bachman is working with a research team from the New York Invasive Species Research Institute whose goal is to develop and utilize a streamlined protocol for *Hypena* releases allowing land managers and agricultural producers to enter information on releases and effectiveness into the state designated on-line invasive species monitoring database.

We successfully established one release cage with the Town of Clarence where *Hypena* larva hatched and fed on swallow-wort plants at the site. Hopefully these moths will be able to successfully overwinter. We will be out at the site in late May 2021 watching for their emergence.



*Sharon Bachman (above) Swallow-wort release project - photo submitted by Sharon Bachman*

*Photo: C. Ebel, Master Naturalist Volunteer*



## Agriculture and Natural Resources - Connecting to Research:

Drawing Out Worms  
(Socially Distanced)

During his presentation at the September 2020 Erie County Master Naturalist Training, UB Professor Nick Henshue led participants through an activity to show how to determine if a site is infested with invasive worms (*Amyntas* spp.). The activity involves mixing ground mustard into a gallon jug of water and then pouring that mixture over a small area that you would like to survey. The mustard causes the worms to react similar to humans cutting hot peppers. There is a temporary skin reaction and the worms come to the soil surface to get relief where we can collect and identify them.

This was just one of the mostly hands-on sessions held that day. Fourteen people participated in the redesigned training allowing it to continue despite the pandemic. Normally this training would have been hosted in Ithaca, but the redesign allowed CCE to showcase the work of a number of our partners from local organizations and colleges. Sprague Brook County Park served as host site. Thankfully, no invasive worms were detected!





## Taste NY at the Western NY Welcome Center

### Hand Sanitizer!

We were glad to have an opportunity to help the NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets during the COVID-19 pandemic. We cleared some space stacked as many boxes of NYS hand sanitizer and face masks as we could fit. To date, we distributed over 1,000 gallons of hand sanitizer and over 4,000 face coverings to 135 farms. About 42 farmers picked up directly from the WNY Welcome Center. The remainder picked up at our office in East Aurora, from a temporary location in Hamburg, or had the sanitizer delivered to their farm. This was a group effort by Taste NY staff, CCE Erie Ag staff, the Executive Director, and the regional Ag specialists who work in Erie County.



Molly Vigrass (left) and Renee Day (right) prepare sanitizer for delivery - photo by Diane Held. Top photo: Krehers help load sanitizer for delivery - photo by Justin Rogers

## Taste NY at the Western NY Welcome Center

### Vendor Spotlights

This series of narrated video slide shows has been a well received, widely viewed, offering since the first release in November of 2019. Through September 30, 2020 nine spotlights were completed and posted on the CCE-Erie web page as well as CCE-Erie and the Western NY Welcome Center's Facebook pages.

Spotlights completed to date have been compiled into a Facebook "playlist" which currently has 1,300 followers. Most spotlights have several hundred views with multiple shares and engagements. A few have had more than 1000 views (the highest so far is 1,700). In addition to discussing the vendor products and production along with history of the farms and businesses and future plans, spotlights include marketing tips and strategies shared by the vendors. One of the spotlights, "Bittner Singer Orchards," is currently the most popular post on the CCE-Erie Facebook page.

As part of the Taste NY initiative supported by CCE-Erie, approximately 20 marketing-related press releases and newsletter articles were developed and shared through print and social marketing with marketing and business promotional themes that also highlighted the more than 100 vendors represented in the Taste NY Market at the WNY Welcome Center.





## Taste NY at the Western NY Welcome Center Arbor Day

Whoops, our plans were uprooted! Our original Arbor Day festivities this year got sawed down due to COVID-19, but that didn't matter to the trees that were coming our way from the Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District. We had ordered 100 tree seedlings to give away for FREE, to benefit the community, on Saturday April 25, 2020. The goal was to still support local farmers, but this year we had to get creative. Voila!- an Arbor Day Drive Up was created. No need for customers to even get out of their car. Planting and care instructions, fun Arbor Day activities for the family, and Taste NY and other contributing organizations' information was included with the seedlings.



Staff deliver seedlings outside Taste NY at the Western NY Welcome Center, Grand Island - photo Renee Day

## Taste NY at the Western NY Welcome Center Farmers Market During COVID

Summer time means fresh produce, local food, artisan crafts, and sunshine. We had much of that this Farmers Market season. Things did look a bit different this year...more space in between vendors, face masks worn, hand sanitizer stations created, no delicious samples, and 6 feet away from your neighbors while waiting in line.

With participation from about 15 different vendors between June 25 and September 3, 2020 we sold over \$14,000 worth of fresh, local produce, sweet and salty kettle corn, farm raised meat, warm, artisan bread, delicious handmade pizzas, luxurious goats milk soap products, golden honey, crisp and juicy fruits, jams and baked goods! Taste NY is all about creating more opportunities for local food and farm vendors, and community members. We love working with farmers and small businesses to bring quality NYS products to people who need it, during a time that has been so difficult for most. At the very least, bringing some sunshine to each customer is what matters to us.



Taste NY Farmers Market - photos by Molly Vigrass



## Regional Ag Team:

Southwest New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crop Team (SWNYDLFC)



SWNYDLFC team - pictured left to right: Katelyn Walley-Stoll, Josh Putman, Amy Barkely, Alycia Drywencke



SWNYDLFC team member, Josh Putman

### Research and Grant Funded Projects – 2020

- \* *Dairy and Beef Farm Business Summaries*
- \* *Nutritional Variability of Forages on Dairy Farms with Dr. Kristan Reed, Cornell Dairy Cattle Nutrition Professor*
- \* *Risk Management on Farms*
- \* *Western Bean Cutworm Moth Monitoring*
- \* *Weed Management in Field Crops*
- \* *Beginning Farmer Training Program for Western New York's Minority and Low-Resource Farmers*
- \* *"So, You Want to Start a Farm?" Resource Guide*
- \* *Dairy Advancement Program*
- \* *Soybean Cyst Nematode Monitoring*

**Amy Barkley** is working with Kathleen McCormick, who has been communicating with a beginning farmer interested in not only renting a farm in our region, but also looking to raise broilers and meat goats. This aspiring farmer has the added challenge of learning beginning farming details, all included in the Guide to Farming in NY, including best practices, tax guidelines, insurance, etc. They will continue working with him to provide the tools he needs to begin a farm. Amy is also working on a SARE Partnership grant with the Providence Farm Collective to develop an on-farm training program for beginning marginalized farmers on how to raise and process broiler chickens. The goal of this project is to help these farmers develop an alternative income stream, become more self-sufficient, and provide them access to more traditional poultry meat. Other livestock species will be part of this project, and will be selected in the coming months.

**Katelyn Walley-Stoll** assisted with the development and delivery of CCE Erie's marketing workshops

**Alycia Drywencke** is working with 2 Erie county farms to receive Dairy Advancement Program funds for them to update their record keeping systems and install Dairy Comp 305.

**Josh Putman** is sampling soils from soybean fields in Erie county as part of ongoing efforts supported by the CAPS program and the NY Corn and Soybean Growers Association to survey for the economically impactful pest, the Soybean Cyst Nematode.



## Regional Ag Team:

### Harvest NY

Midway through this year, our CCE Erie Farm to School program was rolled into a new CCE Harvest NY Farm to Institution program. In this new capacity, Farm to School work in Erie County continued with support from **Cheryl Thayer** and **Becky O'Connor**, and some new regional and statewide initiatives were launched. A notable project was the development of the 30% NY Eligible Product Database, in collaboration with the NY State Department of Agriculture and Markets. The database includes products that qualify for the NY 30% Initiative, a program that provides an increased per-meal reimbursement to schools that use 30% or more of their lunch budget to purchase foods grown, raised, or produced in NY state. Many of the products listed in the database are available in most areas of NY state, and Harvest NY Farm to Institution staff gathered and included information to show these products qualify for the initiative—a process that is time consuming and difficult, and for which many schools simply don't have capacity. During this process, Harvest NY also assisted some producers in becoming NY Grown & Certified, a designation that has value beyond Farm to School.

Buffalo Public Schools has launched an innovative new school food truck to serve meals to local students and their families. In the same way CCE connects farmers to school nutrition programs across the state, CCE helped support the new food truck project.

From the berry side of things in Erie County, **Esther Kibbe** regularly scouted at a few farms which helped inform her weekly berry blog. She also visited farms to address specific concerns and answered numerous calls from growers large and small.

She published over 25 blog posts, 13 articles in the Veg Edge newsletter and 20 articles in the Lake Ontario Fruit Program's newsletters, helped to organize a substrate strawberry workshop in February and did independent blueberry research through the summer, to be presented at the expo in January. Esther spoke at several grower meetings and workshops (before COVID), including a very well-attended virtual meeting (over 200 registrations).



*Buffalo Farm To School Food Truck - photo by RJ Anderson*

## Regional Ag Team:

### Lake Erie Regional Grape Program (LERGP)

The Lake Erie Regional Grape Program offered Coffee Pot Meetings virtually this growing season. Coffee Pot meetings were started years ago in an effort to connect with local growers to address their needs during the growing season. These meetings are typically hosted by grape growers in the region that are willing to invite the group into their barn/garage. LERGP brings coffee, doughnuts, the latest research information, and pesticide applicator recertification credits.

This year, due to the restrictions in place from the COVID-19 pandemic, the group was unable to conduct business as usual. In an effort to continue the sharing of important research, as well as maintaining the collaboration of ideas from the growers, **Jennifer Phillips Russo** and the LERGP team was successful in setting up Virtual Coffee Pot meetings. Each meeting featured a management topic with faculty and extension panelists. In addition, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) both approved offering pesticide recertification credits at these meetings to aid growers. For each meeting one credit was available to both New York and Pennsylvania licensed pesticide applicators.

The LERGP offered 13 opportunities to receive pesticide recertification credits in 2020. There were 13 Virtual Coffee Pot Meetings total with 13 Guest Speakers and 457 total participants in the meetings with 183 attendees in the third quarter. This unintentional platform was so well received by our stakeholders, that they have requested we continue to offer Virtual Coffee Pot Meetings in the future.

## Regional Ag Team:

### Cornell Vegetable Program (CVP)

During the summer of 2020, the CCE Cornell Vegetable Program specialist Julie Kikkert collaborated with weed scientists from Cornell University and the NYS Integrated Pest Management Program to evaluate the Weed Zapper (an electric discharge system where a high voltage bar passes slightly above the crop canopy to electrocute any weeds that are taller than the crop) on four farms in Western NY. The Weed Zapper systems are owned and operated by two of the farms. Fields of table beets, cabbage, soybeans and edamame received Weed Zapper treatments multiple times throughout the season. The team worked with the farms to document weed growth before and after treatment, along with overall effectiveness and crop safety. The Weed Zapper was effective at killing multiple weed species, but varied in efficacy. Crop damage occurred in table beets at the highest setting. The overall goal of this project, funded by the New York Farm Viability Institute, is to evaluate the system for weed control, highlight optimum conditions for use, and provide growers with an economic assessment supporting the decisions to adopt new technology.

**Elizabeth Buck** is partnering with Providence Farm Collective working with their farmers to develop commercial vegetable production skills. She provides technical support to the Seneca Nation of Indians as they expand their vegetable operation, and is partnering with NRCS to assist with a series of gardening classes for Seneca Nation members. Numerous farm visits, phone calls, and texts allowed her to troubleshoot production issues and help growers adopt IPM practices. Weekly pheromone trap checks at 3 sites provided locally-informed sweet corn pest pressure data to growers raising sweet corn in or selling into Erie County. Elizabeth's support and training at the produce auctions in Chautauqua, Allegany, and Orleans Counties, on Covid-19, helped them put reopening plans and procedures in place. All three of these auctions send a large amount of fresh, affordable produce into Erie County by supplying distributors, food hubs, farm stands/farmers markets, charitable food organizations, and individuals. Had the auctions not been able to open, many people in Buffalo

and Erie County, including people served by institutional buyers and charitable organizations, could have been affected by the disruption in produce supply.

**Caitlin Tucker** conducted 50 farm visits with urban growers in the City of Buffalo providing technical assistance to growers on pest management, soil health, cover cropping, and food safety. Caitlin co-organized the Greater Buffalo Urban Agriculture Tour held in September. This tour was funded by an AgEnhancement Grant from Farm Credit East and showcased 6 urban farms across Buffalo, the services they are providing to their communities, and most importantly provided an opportunity for public officials and agriculture service providers to learn how they can support urban farmers and ensure that urban farming in Buffalo continues to flourish. She assisted with grant writing and virtual workshops in the county and created a Food Safety for Urban Ag Video for Journey's End Refugee Services covering the principles of food safety, worker health and hygiene, post-harvest water management, scouting for pest damage, and assessing risks. She co-developed a 5 Part Virtual Training entitled Essentials of Food Safety for Farmworkers and a 5 Part Virtual Training entitled Food Safety for Wash/Pack Facilities.



*Caitlin Tucker co-organized the Greater Buffalo Urban Agriculture Tour - photo John Whitney*



## 4-H Youth Development

### Going to Mars!

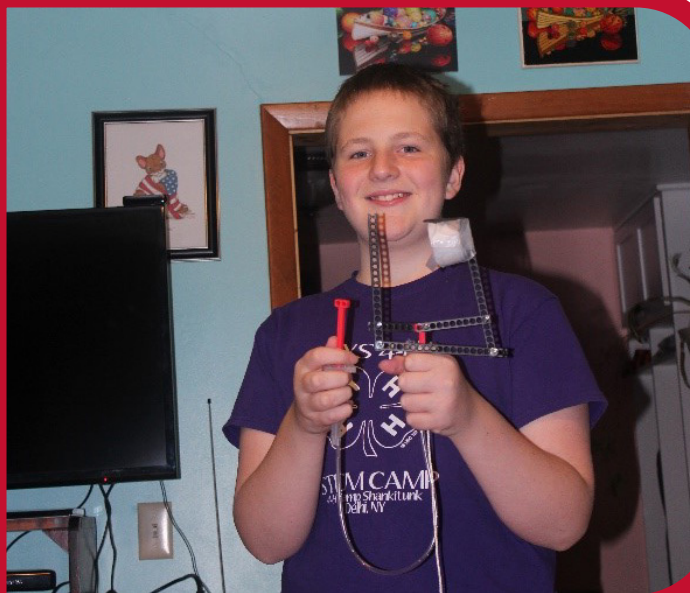
Nathan Geiger had planned on going to NY STEM camp at Camp Shankitunk in June this year but like so many things this year it got cancelled. When we found the article in the Erie County speed read about the virtual National STEM Summit, Mars Basecamp, we thought that would be a great opportunity for Nathan since in school he had finished a science section on Mars. Once registered, he received a STEM kit in the mail for the summit.

Among a number of activities over the 3 day summit was a team activity, using Infini D, a 3D computer graphics program to complete some Mars missions. Some of the Mars missions were to figure out how to help a Mars colony prepare for storms in the area, what to do about animals that escaped the colony, and what to do with a shipment of bees they received.

After helping the Mars colony, the kids had to use TinkerCAD to design their own Mars Base. On Sunday, the kids participated in a career panel discussion with a software engineer for Infini D -the mars mission simulations, a Mars rover driver from NASA, and an engineer from SpaceX, a company that designs, manufactures and launches advanced rockets and spacecraft.

Nathan really enjoyed this experience, and hopes to attend the National STEM summit in person in Washington, DC.

Story contributed by: Ann Geiger



*Nathan Geiger shows off his STEM Mars Base projects - photo Ann Geiger*



*Nathan Geiger shows off his STEM Mars Base projects - photo Ann Geiger*

## Summer Community Action Project: Conversations on Black Lives Matters

4-H teen leaders from the Youth Community Action Network (Youth CAN) program in Buffalo identified the need to address racism during the time of COVID-19. During their 4-H summer employment program, they decided to write and produce dialogues to demonstrate how to respond to negative statements made about the Black Lives Matter movement.

Teens in 4-H in Buffalo needed opportunities to build skills even though COVID-19 limited their ability to meet in person. They also saw an increased interest in the topic of racism in the United States and they wanted to capitalize on that interest by doing a project to bring greater awareness and understanding to the Black Lives Matter movement. The Urban 4-H Program re-tooled its regular summer employment to address the challenges presented by COVID-19. To protect the safety of all participants, we planned and implemented a summer program that was largely virtual, with some in-person gatherings at a city park. During the summer, the 4-H Educator used the 4-H Public Adventures curriculum to guide teens to develop and implement a project to address racism.

Teens wrote, directed, and produced four videos of themselves conversing in dialogues that addressed criticisms of the Black Lives Matter movement. The teens learned the LARA method (Listen-Affirm-Respond-Add) for responding to microaggressions then developed the dialogues using this method. The teens produced the videos in partnership with their 4-H Educator and a 4-H volunteer.

Collaborator: Sherman Webb-Middlebrooks, 4-H leader and founder of the WIN Initiative

Special funding sources:  
City of Buffalo Mayor's Summer Youth Employment  
Program



*Conversations on Black Lives Matters - photo by Sara Jablonski*



*Conversations on Black Lives Matters - photo by Sara Jablonski*





## 4-H Youth Development

### Teen Summer Employment Program

The 4-H Youth Community Action Network (Youth CAN) program in Buffalo, NY was able to offer its summer program for the sixth year in a row even when COVID-19 required that we offered the majority of our program online.

Youth in 4-H in Buffalo, NY continue to need career development support even while COVID-19 is impacting the ability for our 4-H Program to run meaningful programming.

With support from local government funding, 4-H was able to run a summer program that included paid internships for 9 teen leaders. Teens participated in a project planning and skill building internship working 20 hours per week for 4 weeks earning minimum wage.

Teens reported an increase in job readiness skills through their participation in the summer program especially in these skills: creativity, time management, and ability to work with adults. In their internships, teens learned skills as varied as how to improve their singing to how to use 3-D modeling software.

Internship host sites: Cornell Institute for Translational Research on Aging (CITRA), Cornell NanoScale Facility (CNF), Cornell Garden-Based Learning, Dr. Ruchi Mathur, Open Buffalo, Healthy Corner Store Initiative, Ujima Company, Inc.

Special funding sources:

City of Buffalo Mayor's Summer Youth Internship Program, Erie County Youth Bureau Primetime Program

## 4-H Youth Development

### Kids Growing Food For Their Community

How can we help? This was the question Erie County 4-H Poultry members asked when deciding on a community service project. Raising chicken and turkey projects to donate to local food pantries became the answer.

4-H youth learn each year about the importance of proper nutrition for their market projects along with finances and quality assurance to guarantee a wholesome product for the consumer. While they have this understanding about animals, they also realize the necessity for good nutrition in their community.

With distribution assistance from FeedMore WNY, 4-Hers donated 19 turkeys, and 61 chickens to food pantries so families could enjoy a holiday meal together.



Erie County 4-Hers - photo Tammi Kron

## 4-H Youth Development

### How Does 4-H Teach About Disappointment?

We think outside of the box and challenge our youth to be creative and overcome the challenge set before them. The 4-H Livestock program did just that in August 2020 with the postponement of in person 4-H livestock shows. Youth learned this year that traditional shows are not required to feel a sense of accomplishment. The absence of in person competition was certainly missed, however, youth learned new life skills.

Through workshops, youth learned how to create videos and take pictures of their project animals that were then submitted and judged by an official. Youth had the opportunity to participate in a “reveal” show while the judge presented the comments on each class naming the top 4 animals of each species. 4-Hers also had to rise to the challenge of finding new ways to find potential buyers of their 4-H livestock project animals. Members came up with creative and exciting marketing strategies! They created videos that were posted to YouTube, hosted zoom meetings with potential buyers, made numerous phone calls and wrote many letters. The livestock market projects were then sold via an online auction - the culmination of the members hard work was a successful auction.





## SNAP Education Northwestern Region- Work About Town

Virtual 'Eat Healthy, Be Active' Series

During COVID, the Northwestern SNAP-Education region led by CCE Erie was faced with the challenge to translate classes from hands-on programs in community organizations into virtual, dynamic lessons from zoom links. By developing engaging virtual activities – like open discussions, interactive visuals, and polls- the SNAP-Education team dove in to leading a six lesson series of classes that developed lifestyle skills ranging from budgeting and meal planning, to healthy meal modifications and energy balance. One participant, Emma – a mother of two in Niagara County, attended every single virtual lesson of the series.

Since COVID shuttered a lot of the activities for her children, she noticed that her family was beginning to gain weight and feel the effects of being stuck at home. “I want to live better for myself and for my kids”, Emma said of her motivation to join Cornell Cooperative Extension’s SNAP-Ed program. She committed to creating healthy opportunities in her household and instilling habits that her kids can build into their lives. Emma credited the flexibility in virtual classes as a key to her commitment, saying calling in made attendance possible with her busy schedule. She followed along every week and felt that the classes not only gave her a space to learn, but were a source of support for her questions and accountability for her goals.

In six weeks’ time, Emma offered some important dietary changes in her home that propel health but also stretch their food budget further. “I make sure we have vegetables every single day now”, Emma shared. “I prepare and prep ahead of time. It’s so much easier. I can go to [Wholesale Store] and get steaks, and I learned that one serving size of steak is the size of your palm, so I cut them and portion them out. I do this for steak, chicken, tuna steaks – and I proportion them out and save... I learned a lot. I now turn it all into 3 or 4 nights of servings instead of one night.” Emma even noted that her bloodwork has improved since she engaged with the classes. She is so thrilled with her experience that she has signed up her children to take SNAP-Ed youth classes with the Niagara Liberty Partnership Program to keep the momentum going. We are so proud of all the small changes Emma and her family have put into action to build healthy lifestyles.

## SNAP Education Northwestern Region- Work About Town

FVRx (Fruit and Veggie Prescription)  
with Harvest NY

SNAP-Education collaborated with Harvest New York (HNY) and the Field and Fork Network (FFN) on a pilot community-supported agricultural program distribution, free for low-income populations. CCE Erie was awarded a food system planning grant available through the United Way and funded by the General Mills Foundation, that supported the HNY and FFN pilot. The idea was to demonstrate that subsidies to provide low-income residents with fresh produce can impact both health costs and outcomes. The Independent Health Foundation agreed to fund and support the CSA portion of the program, and identified community members with risk indicators like high blood pressure, diabetes, etc. Distribution occurred every Monday at Westside Community Services in Buffalo, NY, and will continue through November. Porter Farms of Elba, NY provided 50 boxes each week filled with seasonal produce, including leafy greens, onions, melons, peppers and squash.

SNAP-Education worked with Independent Health to facilitate the nutrition and healthy lifestyle education components of the work. Through food demonstrations utilizing available produce, to weekly paper and electronic resources, there was a lot of recipe inspiration and support. SNAP-Ed also offered a series of classes to build healthy lifestyle skills, focusing on managing food budgets, meal preparation, and building nutrition into eating habits. While the program wrapped up in November 2020, the results have not yet been analyzed to fully realize the impact on participants. It is hoped that the data from this pilot program will inform expanded programming.

Small changes add up to  
**BIG WINS!**



#MyPlateMyWins



SNAP Ed Educator Brittany Denz

## Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

In February, I started an in person class at Matt Urban Community Center in Buffalo, working with a group of 20 students from different cultural backgrounds. Then in March, we had to begin remote learning due to Covid, which meant no more in person classes.

In my group, was a woman who was very engaged in the EFNEP program, she always asked questions about food and exercise. She had a family that included two boys ages 8 and 11, and she was very concerned about cooking healthy foods for them. Through remote learning, I wanted to be sure that I continued to show how to prepare healthy foods, so I made smoothies with them via Zoom. I also made a black bean salsa and gave them ideas on how to incorporate this recipe in other meals, for example using the salsa on chicken, potatoes, adding rice and rolling into a tortilla shell, or adding it to morning eggs. Toward the end of the series, the woman asked if I would join her family via Zoom while they made their traditional homemade naan bread. I was excited to be part their family tradition.

The whole family participated in the process: dad made the homemade yogurt, the children helped mom measure and mix the ingredients, (normally they would use only white flour however the woman learned in class how much healthier whole wheat flour is, so she used that). Because the bread takes time to rise, they had already prepared loaves ahead of time in order to show me the finished product. It was a nice experience for them to share with me, and they saved a loaf in the freezer for me, when we can meet in person again!



Participant engages in a learning activity - photo Kathy Clayton



## Healthy Corner Store Initiative (HCSI)- Work About Town

Funded by Blue Cross Blue Shield of WNY Blue Fund

This was a challenging year for all and the Healthy Corner Initiative (HCSI) store owners stepped up to extend their support in local underserved communities. Among other issues, food access and healthy options continued to be needed more than ever. HCSI store owners “answered the call” by giving away food boxes, distributing 100 turkeys, participating in fun challenges to adopt healthier practices, and community outreach. These activities and opportunities directly impacted their neighborhoods. Customers shared sincere appreciation to have access to fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods. After an event, one store patron said, “It’s really good to have these stores in our community, we need these kind of stores in our neighborhood.” The patron suggested that we reach out to other stores in underserved locations that she knew of and said, “There’s nothing there...”

There was no task too big or too small to give back, one of the first participating store owners shared, “I don’t care if we have the event at my store, we just have to help the community, and they need help very bad.” This was such a heartfelt comment, as the HCSI store owners continued to provide healthier options to customers, while attempting to keep their businesses afloat. From distributing over 300 Health Bucks valued at \$1600 (HCSI coupons used to purchase fresh produce and healthy foods), reducing gasoline prices to 99 cents/gallon at certain times, and distributing face masks and hand sanitizer in local communities, the store owners generous support continues in communities that have some of the biggest challenges and highest need in our county.



Healthy Corner Store - photo submitted by Sheila Bass



Healthy Corner Store - photo submitted by Sheila Bass

## Master Gardeners - Work About Town

Did Our Erie County “Home for the Gnome” Sign Recieve National Attention?

The talk of the town in East Aurora and beyond during the month of October was the house on Oakwood Avenue with a very large, mechanical spider which moved up and down and wiggled its legs. I didn’t catch this while crowds were gazing at the spider, but walking down the street in mid-November I noticed our “Home for the Gnome” pesticide-free lawn campaign sign right there next to the sidewalk.

While outreach on the campaign has slowed this year due to the pandemic, new materials are being developed for use in county libraries and at events next year.



House on Elmwood Ave in East Aurora displays a Home for a Gnome sign  
- photo by Sharon Bachman

## Master Gardeners- Work About Town

Oh My! Is that a Murder Hornet I  
Just Saw?

With the confirmed arrival of Asian giant hornets in Washington State this year, sharp-eyed Erie County residents checked in with the Master Gardener hotline volunteers when they saw abnormally large hornets. Thankfully the ones we see in Western New York are not the Asian hornets (also known as ‘murder hornets’ because they attack honey bee colonies). While the Asian hornets do not come after humans their stings can be serious.

Unlike the Asian hornet, the European hornet has been reported in the US for over a 100 years, with the first reported here in New York in 1840. European hornets feed on crickets, grasshoppers, large flies, caterpillars and workers of other yellow jacket species which is what callers to the office have described. While European hornets are dangerous and should be approached with caution (if you need to), their stings are much less painful than the venom of the Asian hornet.

If you see a large hornet and want to confirm that it’s not the Asian one, try taking a picture from a safe distance, then zoom in on the stripes on the abdomen. If the stripes on the back have smooth edges, it could possibly be the Asian giant hornet. If the stripes look like an upside down crown, it’s likely the European type. Reports from the public are very helpful in identifying when a new pest of significance has arrived in our area, so keep the reports coming!



## Master Gardeners - Work About Town:

Volunteers Reach Service Milestone,  
Together with 90 Years of Service

Hats off to 3 Master Gardener (MG) volunteers who reached service milestones this year and were recognized at the December 2020 Program.

Betty Walter has been with us from almost the beginning - trained in the 2nd year of our Program. Celebrating 40 years of service, Betty, along with her husband Carl, took advantage of the opportunity to improve their horticulture knowledge and service to the community in 1980. We sincerely appreciate Betty's dedication to our program. For a number of years, Betty served as Program Historian helping to document our Program through her many years of service. Betty shows no sign of slowing down. Amazing! Thank you!

Along with Betty we have two volunteers reaching 25 years of volunteer service: Martha (Marty) Yagle and Fran Evans. Marty has served in several MG Program leadership positions and also on our Board of Directors. She is the founder and champion of our Communities in Bloom trainings offered in both urban and suburban locations, seeking to create more beautiful landscapes in Erie County. When I first joined the CCE staff, I had the pleasure of working with Marty on an IPM Grant with Erie County.

Last but certainly not least, is Fran Evans, who joined the ranks of the nonagenarians this year, but continues to stay actively connected to our Program. Fran created a niche for himself by offering horticulture information and pH soil testing as a regular at the Hamburg Farmer's market. Through the years, Fran has been a tireless supporter of our plant sale. Even this year when we weren't able to hold a plant sale, Fran donated plants from his garden to raise funds for the Program when he moved into assisted living.

## Master Gardeners - Work About Town:

Help to Establish and Tend the Only  
Municipal Garden in the USA Honoring  
Victims of Domestic Violence

In September 2020, the 5th year anniversary of the establishment of the Tribute Garden along the Niagara River, project leaders received a plaque from New York State recognizing them for their efforts and noting that this is the only municipal garden in the US honoring victims of domestic violence.

In addition in November, the Master Gardener volunteers who worked on the project since its beginning, were notified that the Tribute Garden received a 'Great Place in Upstate New York' designation from the Upstate NY Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA)! The next step is to determine if the garden is eligible for consideration for the national APA award.

Master Gardener volunteer, Jerry Byrwa said, "Great news and thanks for sharing. We have a great team and hope we can land the Great Place in America award. It is a beautiful location."

Congratulations to all our volunteers involved in this project – Jackie McGuire, Jerry Byrwa, Linda Mayer and Paul and Peggy Koppmann.



*Betty Walters, Master Gardener Volunteer, reaches 40 year milestone.*



*Grandmother and granddaughter share time in their new garden - photo by Gail Wells*



*Gardening supplies are prepared for Buffalo residents - photo by Gail Wells*

## Master Gardeners - Work About Town

Creating and Honoring Memories  
with a Freedom Garden

One of the Buffalo neighbors that my son and I moved soil into their garden bed as part of the Freedom Garden efforts in June of 2020, was a grandmother and her young granddaughter. They were both very excited to be gardening together. Their small garden bed was tucked in near the back corner of their house. While there were other gardens at the residence, the grandmother was pleased to have a garden space of her own where she and her 4-year old granddaughter could decide what to plant, and through this opportunity pass on the love and knowledge of growing to a new generation.

As we moved the soil, she pointed out the carefully tended yellow petunias in a neat row in front of the house. Yellow because it was her mother's favorite color. (This thought inspired me as it was also my father's favorite.) While we were there, I noticed she had red lily leaf beetles munching on some Asiatic lilies growing along her fence. This is a newer invasive pest harming lilies in ornamental gardens. I shared with her that like many pests, it's helpful to scrape off eggs and remove small larvae to keep damage in check.

Thanks to the soil, plants and support provided through Master Gardener Gail Wells' Freedom Garden effort and garden guides from the CCE Erie Seed to Supper program, the family was able to enjoy the harvest from their garden throughout the summer.



# CCE ERIE

## PROGRAMMING BY THE NUMBERS

### AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES Training And Engaging

- Hosted WNY Honey Producers beginning beekeeper 5-part class series for 20 people.
- Held 3 WNY Forest Pest Taskforce meetings for stakeholders, private landowners, municipalities, industry reps, homeowners and educators.
- Along with NY Flower Industries Association and area growers, hosted a Greenhouse School which provided training on best practices for bio-control, plant disease season in review, Department of Agriculture and Markets updates, human resources and new labor laws, emerging invasive species and more. 47 growers and industry representatives participated.
- Held 2 field sessions for 9 trained CommuniTree Steward (CTS) volunteers pruning trees in MLK Park and surveying for gypsy moth egg masses with staff from NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.
- With assistance from our Master Gardener program, continued our partnership with the County Environmental Management Council (EMC) to promote healthy, pesticide-free lawns through the Safe Home for the Gnomes campaign. Outreach was limited due to the pandemic, yet 33 people still took the pledge.
- Marketing Workshops – 2 marketing workshops (one pre and one post COVID) titled “CCE: Minding Your Marketing Ps and Qs” hosted a combined 41 participants. The second session used Facebook’s private group option with 35 participants.
- Farmland for a New Generation Regional Navigator
  - Provided individualized assistance to 18 farmland owners and 19 farmland seekers.
  - Developed and mailed a brochure about the NY Farmland Finder to 900 agricultural landowners.
  - 21 farmers and landowners, both farming and non-farming, received practical advice on finding, leasing, and marketing farmland during a 4 session workshop series co-organized with CCE Associations in Broome, Essex, Madison, and Oneida counties.
  - 26 people learned about how to select, evaluate, and buy land at auction during two webinars about finding urban land to farm





## 4-H

Number of Clubs: 28

Number of Club Members (excluding Horse Club Members): 324

Number of Independent Members: 124

Number of Horse Club and Project Members: 112

Special Interest: 20

### Volunteer Hours:

180 Volunteers contributed 29,175 hours with a value of \$741,920

- Livestock sold in virtual auction: 133
- 315 Public Presentations, 50 of which were held virtually on Zoom
- STEM afterschool program—at YMCA afterschool program, Buffalo Public School #76 Herman Badillo Bilingual Academy--20 participants
- 4-H National Youth Science Day at the UB Computer Science Department; 60 youth attended
- Civic Engagement Programs
- Youth CAN Program – 25 youth
  - Hosted Community and Police Speakout for community, 75 people in attendance
  - HYPE (Healthy Youth Positive Energy) – 6 youth
  - Tech Changemakers – 8 youth
  - Offered 10 educational activities to 137 people in the community to increase their digital literacy
- 4-H Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
  - Partnered with UB Masters of Social Work Program
  - Shared “Needs Assessment on Intercultural Competence in Erie County 4-H” with CCE board and NYS 4-H stakeholders
  - Analysis of needs assessment data with 4-H youth
  - Erie County 4-H represented NYS 4-H at the National 4-H True Leaders in Equity Institute
- 4-H food donations
  - 40 pounds of produce grown by 4-H Erie County Teen Ambassadors and donated to two local food pantries
  - 314 pounds of food collected through 4-H Food Drive donated to FeedMoreWNY
  - \$1000 raised and donated to Buffalo urban farms for purchase and distribution of locally grown produce





## SNAP-Ed

SNAP-Education conducted 808 classes during fiscal year 2019-20. The SNAP-Ed team:

- Engaged over 9,881 participants in classes in the Northwestern NY region
- Reached an estimated over 8,100 individuals through indirect activities, such as health and resource fairs, parent/teacher activities, and tabling at food pantries, libraries, mother support groups, among others
- Created over 60 recordings for educational use, including food demonstrations and evidence-based lessons based on healthy living and nutrition



## EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM (EFNEP)

- Total number of adult participants: 150
- Adults educated through remote education: 44
- Number of adults graduating from series of classes: 91
- Classes in a series: 6-8

## HEALTHY CORNER STORE INITIATIVE (HCSI)

- 13 stores in Buffalo
- Started in 2014 as a collaborative partnership that grew out of a community report from the John R. Oishei Foundation's Mobile Safety Net Team
- 20 partner organizations including private, non-profit, and local government
- 51 direct community events
- 380 Health Bucks (HCSI coupons to purchase fresh produce) distributed to HCSI patrons
- Over 2,330 HCSI customers received resources to encourage healthy choice and food access

## MASTER GARDENERS Training and Engaging

The CCE Master Gardener Program builds on community members' passion for gardening by providing them with environmentally sound, garden-based educational opportunities. These 83 trained volunteers then share their knowledge with fellow community members.

- For a 4th year, participated in the Cornell Vegetable Variety Trial Garden, an opportunity a number of counties across the state participate in, growing the same vegetable varieties and reporting into an on-line system about how the plants performed in local growing conditions. Due to the pandemic only 4 volunteers were able to work in the garden, serving hour shifts on Tuesdays and Saturdays for 20 weeks from mid-June to mid-October.
- Hosted 69 virtual 'Garden Fence Chats', approximately 130 hours of contact time with over 1,170 people attending sessions from April-June.
- 83 Active Master Gardener Volunteers provided 2,038 service hours to our local communities, and spent 1,257 hours completing training to improve themselves as Master Gardeners. The value of this service effort to our community is estimated at almost \$52,000. Volunteers added another 113 hours fundraising to support the Program's educational and outreach efforts.
- Master Gardener Volunteers organized and hosted 5 public gardening workshops, just under 30 people attended the Program's two Communities in Bloom workshops in February, while average attendance across three virtual workshops held in September was 32 per class.
- Staffed a garden question hotline, answering 770 questions, conducting 99 soil pH tests and processing 55 diagnostic samples. Program volunteers responded to garden questions via their garden hotline which operated remotely from mid-March through July before opening under a tent on the Roycroft campus lawn for August through September.



Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Erie County



9am - 12pm  
Monday  
Wednesday  
Friday  
Aug 3 - Sept 30



Master Gardeners will be

### UNDER THE TENT

Roycroft Campus - 21 South Grove Street - East Aurora

**CASH OR CHECK ONLY**

Gardening Questions . Insect IDs \$5 . Plant Diagnostics \$5  
Soil pH Tests \$2 per sample or \$5 for three samples







## WHAT DOES CCE ERIE MEAN TO YOU?



*Participants of CCE Erie Annual Meeting were asked the question: "What does CCE Erie mean to you?" This word cloud was the result of combined answers, with the larger words reflecting those most mentioned.*



*CCE Erie Staff attended a virtual Holiday Party this year via Zoom!*



# Cornell Cooperative Extension Erie County

21 South Grove Street  
East Aurora, NY 14052

-Return Service Requested-



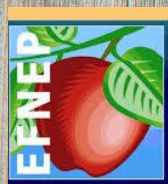
## *Building* strong & vibrant New York Communities



**Cornell Cooperative Extension**  
Southwest NY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Program

**Cornell Cooperative Extension**  
Cornell Vegetable Program

**Cornell Cooperative Extension**  
Harvest New York



**Expanded Food  
and Nutrition  
Education  
Program**



**Supplemental  
Nutrition  
Assistance  
Program**



**HEALTHY  
CORNER STORE  
INITIATIVE  
BUFFALO, N.Y.**



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