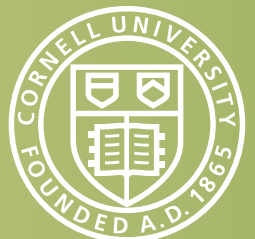
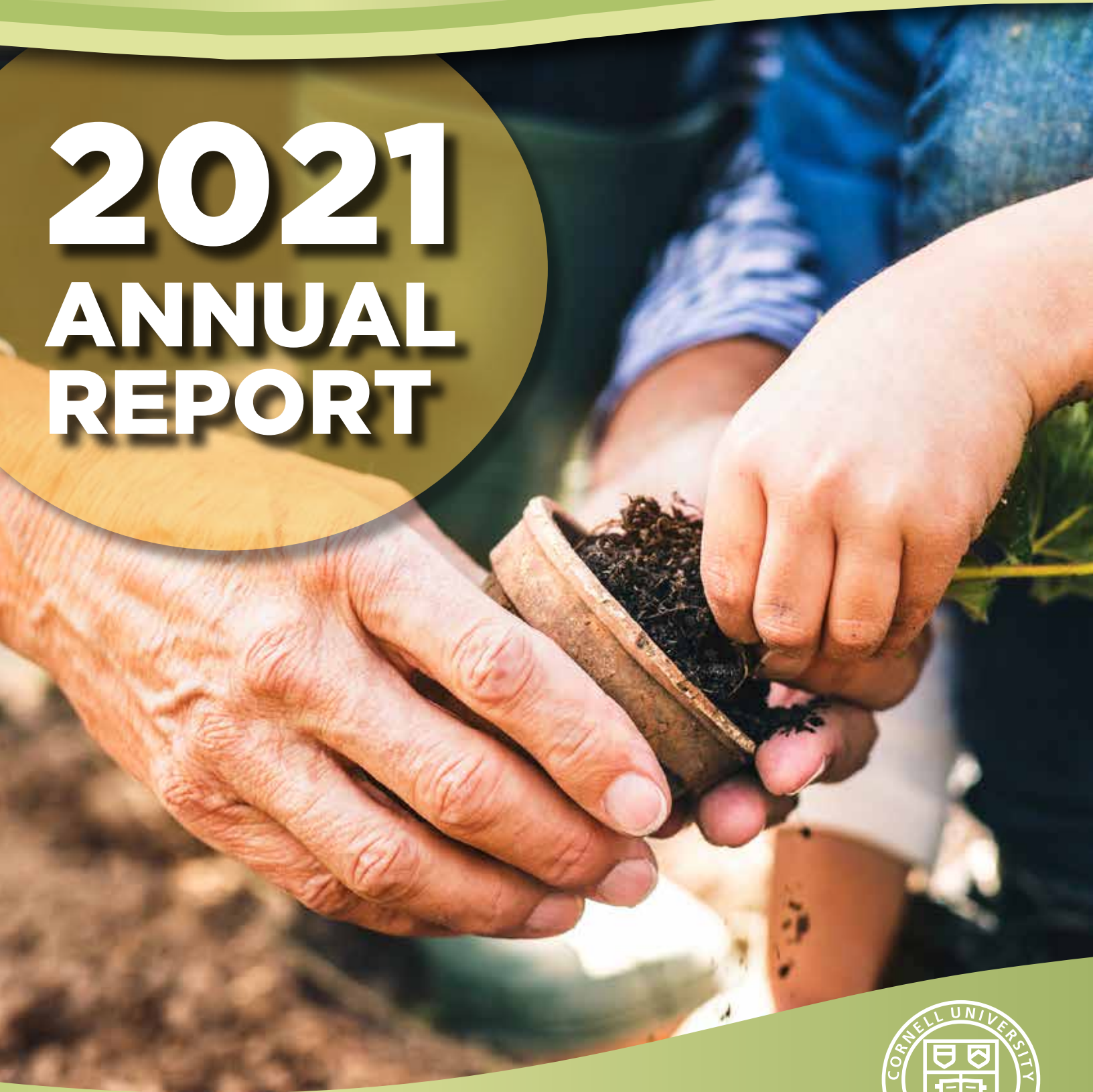


Cornell Cooperative Extension Erie County

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



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4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Sara Jablonski • *4-H Educator - Urban*
Tammi Kron • *4-H Educator - Livestock*
Valerie Weisbeck • *4-H Educator - Clubs*
Lynn Riley • *Administrative Assistant*

COMMUNITY HEALTH & NUTRITION

SNAP Ed

Nicole Maline • *Project Manager*
Melissa Kimbrell • *Assessment & Evaluation*
Xyricka Ferry • *Senior Nutrition Educator*
Unique Brown • *Nutrition Educator*
Brittany Denz • *Nutrition Educator*
Christina Ezak • *Nutrition Educator*
Mallory Hohl • *Nutrition Educator*
Sarah Martin • *Nutrition Educator*

CREATING HEALTHY SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

Samantha Hidalgo • *Educator*

HEALTHY CORNER STORE INITIATIVE

Sheila Bass • *Healthy Corner Store Coordinator*

CORNELL VEGETABLE PROGRAM

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

LAKE ERIE REGIONAL GRAPE PROGRAM

Jennifer Phillips Russo, Kevin Martin, Andy Muza

SWNY DAIRY, LIVESTOCK & FIELD CROPS

Katelyn Walley- Stoll, Amy Barkley, Camila Lage

HARVEST NEW YORK - WNY

Cheryl Bilinski • *Local Food Systems Specialist, Farm to School Lead*
Becky O'Connor • *WNY Farm to Institution Coordinator*
Anya Osatuke • *WNY Berry Specialist*

Cornell Cooperative Extension | Erie County
erie.cce.cornell.edu

Board President & Executive Director's Message

"Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known," this is one of many quotes by Carl Sagan, Cornell's renowned astronomer/scientist. In the 1980s, he hosted the most watched public television series, Cosmos, a documentary that made science understandable to a broad audience. For those of you too young to know of Carl Sagan and Cosmos, do an internet search and learn a bit about him. Learn about his sense of wonder, and belief in the scientific method to help us answer questions about our world and beyond. While the day to day of Cooperative Extension work may not be as high profile or far reaching as Carl Sagan's scientific inquiry, it is very much an extension of the research and quest for knowledge that he and other scientists share. Youth explore STEM topics at a community center in Buffalo; farmers adopt climate change mitigation best practices; home gardeners learn how to use environmentally-friendly growing techniques; families embrace healthy lifestyle behavior changes; municipal officials are armed with knowledge to manage invasive pests; 4-Hers raise calves to maturity; consumers learn how to decipher food labels; homeowners pledge to reduce or eliminate the use of chemicals on lawns. Come with CCE Erie on a quest for knowledge, to find what is waiting to be known!



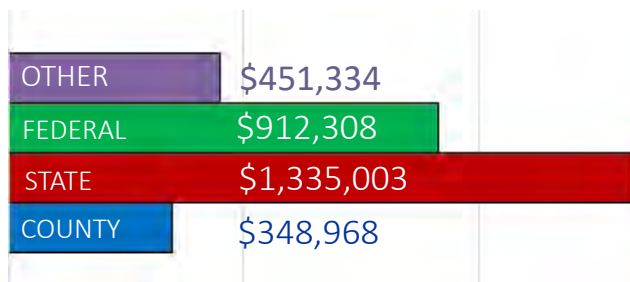
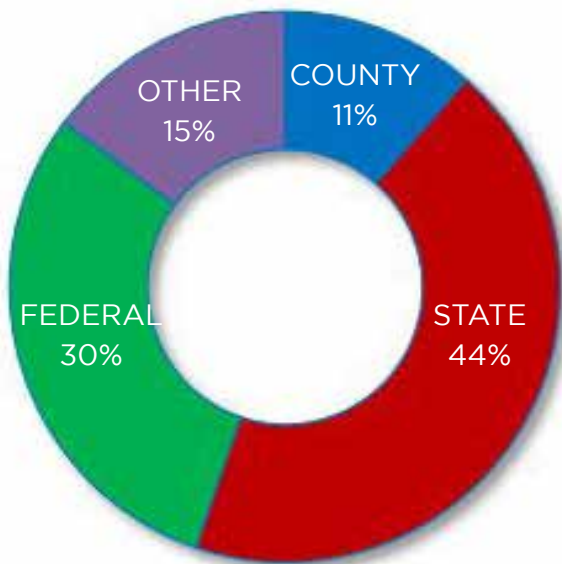
President, Board of Directors

Joel Mc Somers

Executive Director

Diane B. Held

Estimate of 2021 Operations Funding



COUNTY

Appropriation	\$ 338,968	
Grants & Contracts	\$ 10,000	
Total County	\$ \$348,968	11%

STATE

County Law 224	\$ 50,018	
Grants	\$ 539,018	
Fringe Benefits	\$ 745,967	
Total State	\$ 1,335,003	44%

FEDERAL

Smith-Lever	\$ 51,532	
Smith-Lever EFNEP	\$ 61,500	
SNAP Education	\$ 796,276	
Grants & Contracts	\$ 3,000	
Total Federal	\$ 912,308	30%

OTHER SOURCES

Grants & Contracts	\$ 154,936	
Specialist Contract Support	\$ 10,980	
Enrollment & Program Fees	\$ 19,141	
Contributions	\$ 10,249	
Fundraising (incl. 4-H Market Sale)	\$ 232,524	
Interest & Miscellaneous	\$ 23,504	
Total Other Sources	\$ 451,334	15%

TOTAL OPERATIONS FUNDING \$3,047,613

CCE ERIE PROGRAM AREAS

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

CCE Erie agricultural educators and specialists work with established and beginning farmers, rural and urban, providing research supported training and technical assistance to farms of all types, sizes, and production practices, as well as helping to link them to consumers. The association also contributes to three regional agriculture teams: the Cornell Vegetable Program, Lake Erie Regional Grape Program, and the Southwest NY Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops Program. Enrollment in those teams gives Erie County farmers access to a dozen specialists in specific commodity areas.

Our urban-edge county has a large variety of locally grown agricultural products to offer consumers. According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, Erie County ranks in the top 10 NYS counties for nursery, greenhouse, floriculture and sod (3rd); hogs and pigs (7); poultry and eggs (7); and vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes (10). 940 farms operated 143,081 acres of land (21% of the land area of the county) and sold over \$130 million of agricultural products in 2017.

2017
Census of Agriculture:

940 farms

143,081 acres of land

> \$130,000,000
agriculture
products sold



Agriculture and Natural Resources

Hungry caterpillars are a good thing when they are defoliating invasive plants!

The caterpillars – larva of *Hypena opulenta*. Long-term mission to bring under control black and pale swallow-worts, also known as dog-strangling vine. An apt name as these plants form dense monocultures negatively impacting agriculture and natural lands. One of the issues is that monarch butterflies lay eggs on the plants but the larva that hatch will be unable to reach adulthood and reproduce. Swallow-wort populations have proven extremely difficult to control using both mechanical and chemical methods leading NY landowners and natural area managers to advocate for a bio-control program to help manage these species. Thanks to a partnership with Principle Investigator, Carrie Brown-Lima, with the New York Invasive Research Institute and other collaborators, Sharon Bachman has released these bio-control insects the past two summers at two sites in the WNY Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) area.

The carefully researched bio-control agent *Hypena opulenta* is a leaf-feeding moth from Ukraine, swallow-worts native range. Both years' the bio-control agents successfully progressed through their life cycle, completely or almost completely defoliating plants within the release cages. As pandemic restrictions eased somewhat this summer, Bachman was able to share what was happening at the cage with a small group of stakeholders in late July. Life stage progression is difficult to predict in a biological system but the *Hypena* did not disappoint for the field session. Attendees observed both adult moths and newly emerged larva. Stakeholders checked the area for native plants remaining on this site, noted mite damage to swallow-wort plants

outside the cage and discussed potential sources of funding for bio-control release and monitoring in future years.

The current three-year project ends this year. Bio-control projects require long-term commitments; research has shown that it can take up to 5 years to see establishment of a bio-control release in an area.

“If possible, I'd still love to come see the cages/moths in person. I haven't noticed anything suspicious on the swallowwort at our site. I'll be interested to hear what was causing the damage.”

- State Parks Staff

13 Volunteers
25 Events
831 Direct contacts
253,700
*Indirect contacts



Photo: Sharon Bachman

**Indirect contacts refers to media and outreach.*

Agriculture and Natural Resources

New Farmer on an Old Farm Raising Kids of Two Kinds

Emma is a mother of four, CEO of a credit union, a meat goat farmer. She started her journey into farming working alongside an experienced meat goat farmer with plans to buy into the business. Tragically, Emma's mentor passed away, but not before he gave her the know-how she needed to start her own operation. Emma bought 40 Boer and Boer/Kiko cross goats, and rented pasture and barn space from her mentor's best friend. It was a good situation, but not ideal because there was no on-farm housing for Emma and her family. Last spring, Emma found her ideal situation. She bought her "forever farm". It's a historic 176-acre farm with a beautiful old house, big barn, and plenty of room to raise children and to expand her herd. Throughout her farm search, Emma worked closely with staff at CCE Erie and American Farmland Trust. Emma says that "finding a farm where I can raise my family and goat herd on the same land is the manifestation of my dream."

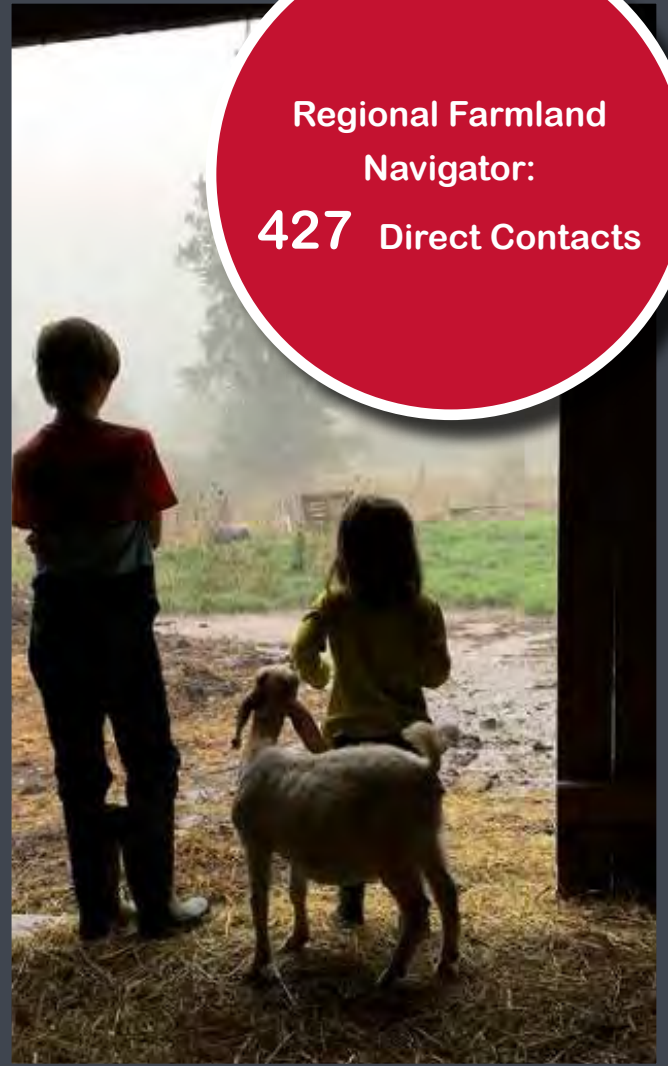


Photo: Emma. Rainy day on an old farm



Photo: American Farmland Trust. Emma, New Goat Farmer

Regional Farmland
Navigator:
427 Direct Contacts

“ I have benefited so much from your guidance and the (Regional Navigator) program. It was so useful to have you as a sounding board and ally.”

- New farmer

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Project SOW Partners Build Community Garden in Buffalo

Young men ages 5 to early 20's meet Wednesday evenings at Cold Spring Bible Church in the City of Buffalo as part of the Knight of Pythagoras, a youth mentoring organization whose vision is to engage, train, and empower the next generation of leaders.

From late April to mid-June, this group met with Sara Jablonski and Sharon Bachman to pilot Cornell Garden Based Learning's youth curriculum project S.O.W (Seeds of Wisdom). Project S.O.W. engages young people who are looking for an experience that introduces them to food gardening, with additional foundations in justice and leadership. Through Project S.O.W, Cold Spring youth had an opportunity to learn, lead, and collaborate with others and to explore the power of their own voice and sense of agency as a part of what it means to grow food, and to experience the sense of empowerment that comes with these efforts.

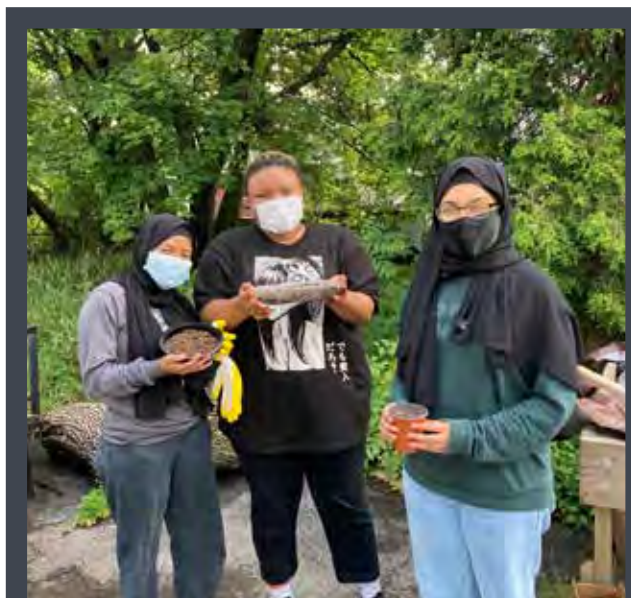
Youth working through the curriculum were able to realize Cold Spring Pastor Kenny Simmons' vision of establishing a garden at the church. In mid-June, a group gathered to plant peppers, tomatoes, corn, melons and potatoes. Community members lent their support to make sure the garden building effort was a success. Pastor Kenny connected with the Buffalo Police Athletic League who provided the funding for wood and soil for the garden.

Another group of young people participated in project S.O.W. through the summer, helping to

tend the garden as they learned about the local food system. Every year Pastor Kenney travels to farms outside the community to provide his neighborhood with a taste of the bounty that grows in western NY fields. One of the favorites is melons. While the melon crop was not a success this year, peppers and tomatoes were – and hopefully seeds have been planted with these young people to successfully grow melons and other crops in the future.



Photos: Project SOW Participants



Taste NY

Gift Baskets and Bags

Taste NY has been giving “the gift of local”, not just during the holiday season, but throughout the year.

Taste NY baskets and bags are perfect for all occasions, and they support local businesses. These baskets and bags are filled with a variety of hand selected items from family farms and producers throughout the State. People can choose from 11 different baskets ranging in price, and 6 different gift bags that are all under \$15. Customers have also let us create a custom basket or bag tailored to their gift giving!

We pair similar products together to create themed baskets that you can't turn down. With a price point that won't break the bank, we have been able to increase our vendors exposure, educate people about our food and farm vendors, and get people excited about gifting and receiving local products that help our small businesses.



“ Gift baskets are so convenient and it makes the gift-giving so much more meaningful if they are helping support local, small businesses, especially during COVID.”

- Taste NY customer



41 Gift Baskets Sold
22 Gift Bags Sold

Taste NY

Products and Vendors

All products that are carried in the store have signage listing the NYS city or town that the product is from and the mileage from our location. Customers really like this detail and comment almost daily on the uniqueness. Questions from customers open the door for store staff to educate them about our local farms. Top selling items during this year included cups of McCullagh coffee, our famously cheesy grilled cheese sandwich made with NY State cheeses, DiCamillo donuts, Coop Bakery cookies, and Charlie the Butcher beef on weck sandwich.

We set up a separate display of all the products that are featured on the Monthly Promotional board and use the “promotional item” sticker to highlight any other products that cannot be displayed. We also try to incorporate recipes with the products so it gives the customer another reason to buy and try.

The Community Room has offered additional opportunity as well. We were able to create a menu to offer with room use. Many groups in the community have booked the room, and we even had reservations that include some aspect of catering, which gives us a chance to highlight local products and vendors even more. The community room was shut down for a while, and was then at 50% capacity due to COVID. Bookings really picked up starting in February. It’s a really great space that many organizations and businesses are extremely grateful for!

All photos pg 7 & 8 by Molly Vigrass, Taste NY at the Western NY Welcome Center.



168 Vendors
625 Products
222
Community Room
Bookings

“Clean facilities. Friendly staff. Great selection of New York made food and gift items. Will be back for more great gifts.”

- Taste NY customer

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The 4-H Program gives young people ages 5 to 19 hands-on experiences to teach them leadership, citizenship, and life skills by working with volunteers, youth organizations, and school districts to put research-based knowledge to work. The 4-H Program has served Erie County for over 100 years by bringing high quality, experiential learning opportunities to youth related to: agriculture and life sciences, civic engagement, healthy living, and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math).

4-H Youth Development

After not having a presence on the Erie County Fairgrounds for almost two years, the Erie County 4-H program was able to return for the 2021 Erie County Fair. 4-H staff, volunteers, and families spent the Spring of 2021 uncertain that plans should even be made, as a number of county fairs in the state had been cancelled due to COVID-19. Finally, in early June, 4-H got the go-ahead to start preparing for Fair! With only ten weeks to finalize everything, Erie County 4-H was able to showcase the resiliency, creativity, and hard work of our 4-H members between 2020 and 2021.

136 4-H members brought nearly 1,000 projects to the Youth Development Building to receive constructive feedback and put them on display for the duration of the Fair. Approximately 90 projects were given the highest honor of being selected for State Fair, despite 4-H competitions being cancelled at the New York State Fair due to COVID-19. Additionally, 73 4-H members brought about 450 animals to the Fair, improving their skills in animal selection, show ring etiquette, and livestock marketing. Despite this being the smallest

4-H presence at the Fair in recent memory, our 4-Hers demonstrated that they were dedicated to improving Erie County agriculture and bettering themselves for their future.

The goal of the Cloverbud Garden Science Club was to provide 4-H programming to young youth while also introducing youth to the general 4-H program. 2020/2021 has been a challenging year for 4-H programming. This club offered its programming virtually throughout the spring and finally met in person starting in June. The club increased enrollment of ages 5-7 in the 4-H program by 10%. Each month a different topic was discussed. In the month of March, a teen 4-H member led the meeting. The teen's family owns Gabel's Maple farm. Ms. Gabel read a story about maple production and provided a virtual tour of their sugar house. Each 4-H club member had the opportunity to taste maple syrup and do a sugar house activity.

In May, 4-H members created a potted herb garden with plants donated by Henry W. Agle and Sons. In June, the 4-H members learned about edible flowers, and in July we took a tour of Greg's U-Pick Farm in Clarence, continuing to connect our youth to local farms in the area. Lastly, in September, we learned about apples and the science of sugar in apples.



Photo: Valerie Weisbeck, 4-H Cloverbuds

“I firmly believe that participating in 4H livestock has helped shape my kids into the responsible, hard-working, well-spoken adults they have become.”

- 4-H livestock parent



Photo: Valerie Weisbeck,

**Indirect contacts refers to media and outreach.*

57
Volunteers worked
775 Hours

40 Events

1,130 Direct Contacts

200 *Indirect Contacts

4-H Youth Development Urban

4-H Partners with Community Action Organization WNY for In-Person Learning

While most 4-H programming went online during winter 2020/2021, we were able to offer programs at three Buffalo community centers run by Community Action Organization of Western New York (CAO WNY: JFK Community Center, Edward Saunders Community Center, Pratt Willert Community Center). We offered programs in STEM and public speaking weekly at 3 sites from January through April. Young people loved the program!

The 4-H Educator had the opportunity to have positive interactions with 36 youth ages 5 through 14 at three community centers. Youth engaged in hands-on activities to learn more about science, technology, engineering, and math. They also delivered presentations as part of the Erie County 4-H Public Presentation Program.

The program culminated with an event called “Let Your Voice Be Heard” whereby one youth from each of the three sites presented to their peers virtually. The youth who presented were selected by their peers through a vote. It was all really fun! 4-H volunteers, including 4-H graduates from the Youth Community Action Network (Youth CAN) program helped at the sites.



8 Volunteers
worked **400 Hours**

10 Teen Ambassadors
worked **100 Hours**

Photo: Sara Jablonski. Nemo and Noah with the newspaper tower they created during the engineering lesson at CAO.



Photo: Sara Jablonski. Youth from CAO's Pratt Willert Community Center showing off their 4-H Public Presentation certificates.

“ 4-H has allowed me to grow into my identity and explore my passions to my full potential. I've learned how important it is to build meaningful relationships all around you, not just in your personal life. I've learned how to embrace my passion and use that passion to stimulate my ideas and projects and branch out. Most importantly, 4-H has allowed me to step out of my comfort zone and carry different roles, working my way up to leadership roles in various situations in both my personal and academic/professional life.”

- 4-H alumnus and volunteer

**Indirect contacts refers to media and outreach.*

8 Events
113 Direct Contacts
538 *Indirect Contacts

“ Being a part of 4-H with all of my students has been a great pleasure. My students loved Sara and the things that they learned and the excitement she brought to the table for them. They got to be scientists. They got to explore things.”

- Site director of JFK Community Center

4-H Youth Development Livestock

'Kids Growing Food for Kids' Dairy Steer Program

"Kids Growing Food for Kids" the focus of our new Dairy Steer program. There were 6 dairy cattle participants that raised a dairy steer project from the time it was born. This two-year project began in January 2020 and culminated in August 2021 when the youth sold the loin and brisket at the 4-H livestock auction in a "Smoking & Steak Package". The rest of the steer was processed into hamburger and stew meat and sold to schools to serve in lunches. We were able to secure other buyers for the offal's and soup bones allowing all parts to be used.

4-H members are working together to create a video that can be used by schools to educate students about where their food is produced and the daily care that happens. Our members were excited for this opportunity and learned many lessons around money management, decision making record keeping, and marketing.



“4-H teaches our kids not to quit, to learn from their mistakes, to ask for help when needed, and to help others who are experiencing similar challenges.”

- 4-H Livestock parent

**Indirect contacts refers to media and outreach.*

84
Volunteers worked
450 Hours
68 Events
1,914 Direct Contacts
589, 062
*Indirect Contacts



Photo: Joann DePue

“The 4-H lease program has opened up a whole new world for my son. He has always said he wanted to be a farmer. He’s obsessed with farms, tractors, livestock and everything related with farming. This focus might be the norm for a child who lives in a rural community but for one who lives in the city there’s little opportunity to pursue your passion.”

- 4-H lease parent



Photo: Joann DePue

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County is invested in making healthy food and activity choices easier for people living throughout Erie County. SNAP Education (SNAP Ed), Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), Healthy Corner Store Initiative (HCSI), and Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC) are all housed within a growing portfolio of Cornell Cooperative Extension's work. Our programs strive to increase access to fresh, healthy foods, develop confidence in safely planning, shopping for and preparing nourishing meals, understanding the building blocks of a healthy lifestyle, and more. Our work is based in the community, targets traditionally underserved areas and people, and much of it aims to reduce the structural barriers to healthy living and reframe how we attain a healthy Erie County. This section introduces how we work to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC)

CHSC supports sustainable healthy communities as places where it is easier to practice healthy behaviors. CCE Erie is working in Lackawanna and Cheektowaga, identified as high-need communities, to engage worksites to increase the availability of healthy food, and to improve policies, practices, and environments for physical activity and nutrition in early child care education settings.



Photo: Samantha, CHSC Educator and Melissa, SNAP Ed

SNAP Ed

SNAP Ed Virtual Classes a Hit With Mother of Two

Ever since the COVID-19 pandemic hit, SNAP-Ed Educators have turned the once exclusively in-person workshops - including lessons and food demos - into an online, virtual experience.

One of these new virtual series sparked new beginnings for a mother and her two school-aged children. The family engaged in our discussions on shopping on a budget and how to increase physical activity at home, they were part of the conversation. They were able to take what was being shared and apply it to their own lives and circumstances.

The mother spoke about how difficult her life had become since the pandemic struck, trying to teach her children who were working on schoolwork remotely at home, all the while still dealing with her own weight loss goals. The mother tried her best to make it to the Wednesday night class each week. She stated that the class had given her hope and new strategies to try while shopping, as well as new exercises she could try on her own. She mentioned that before being a part of this series, she had recently put her own weight loss goals on the back burner. "I'm learning so many new things to try and my kids really enjoy watching the lesson with me!", she stated.

Not only has the pandemic created great obstacles to overcome, but there have been great opportunities as well. A busy mother of two children may not have had time to find a SNAP Ed led workshop near her home, or would not have been able to attend one. But because of the option to join virtually in the comfort of her own home, this became easily accessible for her and her family.

Photo: Adrienne with Housing Opportunities Made Equal stood by the container gardens she created with the help of the SNAP-Ed team.



192 Events

1035 Direct contacts

1039 *Indirect contats

“ I have enjoyed using the double up food bucks this summer and these classes are very helpful teaching me what to buy and reinforcing healthy food habits for me and my family.”

- SNAP Ed participant

**Indirect contacts refers to media and outreach.*

SNAP Ed

Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program

This year brought a lot of opportunity to launch programs that center food as medicine in patient-provider conversations. While unhealthy diets contribute to many of the leading causes of illness and death, the obstacles to eating well are varied and overwhelming, especially when struggling with limited resources. For many, tight budgets lead to a dual crisis of illness and hunger. We target this in a lot of ways as a SNAP Education team, but one important sector we wanted more collaboration with were healthcare facilities in our communities.

One example of this work is the Fruit and Vegetable prescription program with Jericho Road Community Health Center (JRCHC) on the east side of Buffalo. JRCHC staff are writing fruit and vegetable “prescriptions” for patients. The Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program, commonly referred to as FVRx, is reaching individuals who struggle to purchase nutritious foods for their families.

This program is exciting because the SNAP Education team was able to find supplemental funding to provide fresh fruits and vegetables for free to those who need it, in addition to the free education we offer. We feel this program serves the dual purpose of supporting our providers—who really seek resources they can offer to patients that expand beyond traditional medical care—and our community who are able to use both the produce and the information shared to create more nutrition security for their families. It is beautiful to integrate services like ours into the medical model because there is so much vulnerability in that space. It feels like a natural fit and we can’t wait to see how things continue to unfold with this community-clinical linkage.

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

EFNEP is a Cooperative Extension Nutrition Program that serves low income families participating in SNAP, WIC, Head Start, Free or Reduced School Lunches. EFNEP serves all of Erie County, working with many agency partners to offer classes that run for 6-8 weeks at adult education sites, supportive living homes, libraries, churches, and community centers. The program helps families eat better for less by sharing tips on keeping food safe, budgeting, eating the “My Plate” way, and limiting sugar and fat in their diet. Annual data confirms graduates: improve their diets, improve their nutrition practices, stretch their food dollars farther, handle food more safely, and increase their physical activity levels.



Photo: SNAP-Ed nutritionist, Christina, leads a class on easy modifications to meals to help limit sugar, fat, and salt while boosting nutrients. Gathering tips, ideas, and knowledge from our participants helps us all learn and grow in our nutrition journey.

Healthy Corner Store Initiative (HCSI)

Staying Power!

There are many success stories that contribute to the impact of the Healthy Corner Store Initiative (HCSI), and a chance meeting at a HCSI community engagement event revealed yet another success!

During a tabling event outside one of the HCSI stores, Niecy, a customer, approached our table and shared how glad she was that we were continuing to attend HCSI stores to share information and resources. Little did I know, we had first met Niecy two years prior when we partnered with D'Youville College (DYC) Dietetic Students to provide food demonstrations in the store. She pulled out her mobile phone and showed me the photo of herself and DYC students that we had taken of her as the winner of the HCSI kitchen gadget giveaway. At this tabling event Niecy was pleased to see the HCSI store, WNY Brothers Enterprise, had a larger cooler dedicated to healthy options and an increased variety of fresh produce. She also received a HCSI Health Buck coupon towards her purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables, which she immediately redeemed. It was great to see the staying power of the neighborhood Healthy Corner Store, as Niecy continued to recognize the store as a source of healthy foods in the community two years later.

During this event, the store owner overheard a teen and several children say they were going to return to the store later to use their Health Buck coupons, so he restocked with a larger variety of produce for their return. It was a great opportunity to share a mini-lesson with the children on how to choose healthier options in the store. And, yes, Niecy again was the winner of an HCSI giveaway - a fruit diffuser water bottle - after accurately answering the HCSI Healthy Choice quiz questions.

WNY Bros Enterprise Niecy wins again



“Store owner: “My man here is staying healthy and getting this, this and this (as he is scanning the salads, fruit snacks, and veggies)”

Customer's response: “You better stay healthy man, this is good eating. Your health is wealth!”

Store owner: “Yeah, health is wealth, health is wealth!”

**Indirect contacts refers to media and outreach.*

MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

The Master Gardener Program prepares peer educators to build relationships with community audiences providing education and outreach on sustainable practices for gardens, lawns, and landscapes with a focus on food security and environmental stewardship. Master Gardener Program volunteers engage with diverse adult and youth populations and serve as partners in their communities to provide horticulture education supporting sustainable communities. Throughout the year Master Gardeners staff a hotline answering garden and pest questions, help community members identify insect pests and test the ph of their soil, offer educational workshops on current gardening topics, and host an annual spring plant sale.

Master Gardeners

Community Members and Volunteers Participate in Seed to Supper Statewide Training, Master Gardener Volunteers Continue to Support FeedMoreWNY Gardens and Make New Connections

The Seed to Supper project provides garden mentoring and training to those seeking to garden on a budget with the aim that some will become future garden facilitators and mentors. In March 2021, an undergraduate course through Cornell Garden Based Learning offered a 5-part virtual workshop to train new Seed to Supper garden facilitators. Twenty-two people from Erie and nearby counties expressed interest in participating including eight current CCE Erie Master Gardener volunteers. A number of those trained or refreshing their skills went on to work in gardens this summer helping to grow food for others and training new gardeners.

Work continued at the FeedMore WNY site where volunteers visited the site on Tuesdays and Saturdays. The volunteers at FeedMore helped support the Community Garden from which produce is distributed through a farmers' market and a free CSA. At this site, volunteers are also participating in a statewide Vegetable Variety Trial testing how suitable new crop varieties are to New York's growing conditions and making sure they pass the taste test: will people enjoying eating these crops? This year the variety trial focused on crops considered super-foods with seeds provided by a regional company.

One of the new connections made was with ARC of Erie County. Arc is a longstanding, local human services agency whose mission is to support children and adults with disabilities, as well as their families. Their plans involved expanding their gardening efforts outdoors. Master Gardener volunteers were able to provide support to that initiative and connect Arc staff with the FeedMore staff person who leads their gardening efforts, so that the new garden site could learn from the experiences of a more established site.



76
Volunteers worked:

863 Education hours

2254 Service hours

352 Fundraising hours



850 calls
received to Hotline

245,350
*Indirect contacts

205 Direct contacts

16 Events

“ We all enjoy being there and growing the vegetables, but our real purpose is to teach the community and get the word of gardening out to others. We enjoy it, and we enjoy the comradery of our team”

- CCE Erie Master Gardener Volunteer on working at the FeedMore WNY site

**Indirect contacts refers to media and outreach.*

REGIONAL TEAMS

Cornell Vegetable Program (CVP)

The Cornell Vegetable Program is one of the premier regional agricultural teams in NYS: a Cornell Cooperative Extension partnership between Cornell University and the CCE Associations in a large multi-county region in the western and central parts of the state. The team's Vegetable Specialists work together with Cornell faculty and Extension Educators statewide to address the issues that impact the commercial vegetable industry.

The Cornell Vegetable Program provides educational programs and information to growers, processors and agribusiness professionals, arming them with the knowledge to profitably produce and market safe and healthful vegetable crops, contributing to the viability of farms and the economic wellbeing of New York State. Specifically, our program focuses on food safety, variety evaluation, market development, pest management, and cultural practices.

The Cornell Vegetable Program is supported, in part, by fourteen county Cornell Cooperative Extensions: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Monroe, Niagara, Ontario, Orleans, Oswego, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne and Yates Counties.



Photo, Shutterstock

Photo by RJ Anderson, A close up of grape clusters on a vine



Lake Erie Regional Grape Program (LERGP)

There are approximately 30,000 acres of vineyard in the Lake Erie region of New York and Pennsylvania grown on 840 farms, making this the largest grape growing region outside of California. Of this acreage, 98.5% consists of Labrusca (American Grape) varieties such as 'Concord' and 'Niagara' which are used for juice, jam and other fresh or fermented products.

The Lake Erie Regional Grape Program consists of Extension Educators and research faculty/staff from Cornell University and Penn State University devoted to projects aimed at increasing yields, product quality, diversity and improvement of cultivars, efficiency of production, profitability and adoption of environmentally sound cultural and pest management strategies.

The Lake Erie Regional Grape Program is supported, in part, by five county Cornell Cooperative Extensions including: Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie and Niagara Counties in New York and Erie County in Pennsylvania.

Southwest New York Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops (SWNYDLFC)

The SWNY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops program continues to bring high quality, research-based information to agricultural producers, growers, and agribusinesses in the five county region of Southwestern New York. In Erie County, programming included in-person and virtual programming; emailed and paper mailed newsletters; and one-on-one meetings over the phone, via webinars, and in-person. This year, Alycia Drwencke, the team's former Dairy specialist, was able to connect multiple dairy farms in the county with grant funds through the Dairy Acceleration Grant Program. Katelyn Walley-Stoll, Farm Business Management Specialist, put on the Farm Business Foundations webinar series, which provided business planning ideas and resources virtually to Erie County Farms. Amy Barkley, Livestock and Beginning farm Specialist, partnered with the Providence Farm Collective for an 8 class series on beginning livestock topics including broilers, honeybees, goats, pigs, and specialty mushrooms. Attendees are in the process of using the information learned to develop these farm enterprises within their communities.

The Southwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Program is supported, in part, by county Cornell Cooperative Extensions including: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie and Steuben Counties.



Photos by John Whitney, SWNYDLFC Pasture Walk

Harvest NY

Harvest New York is an innovative Cornell Cooperative Extension team that focuses on development projects in the farm and food industries of rural and urban New York. The team began in 2012 in Western New York, expanded into Northern New York in 2016, and now extends into New York City to better serve all of New York.

Five project areas are covered by Harvest New York Specialists:

Local Food Distribution and Marketing

Increases investment and jobs in agricultural and food systems to enhance the viability of farms through expansion, value-added production, diversification, and distribution of locally produced fruits and vegetables.

Urban Agriculture

Promoting sustainable commercial agriculture development and entrepreneurship for urban farms producing in soil, greenhouses, or vertical/enclosed facilities through educational programming in production, harvesting, packaging, marketing, and food safety.

Urban Gardens

Fostering innovative urban farming methods that improve ecological resilience and meet urgent food needs through community education, engagement and empowerment.

Farm-Based Beverages

Identifies the challenges faced by the craft beverage industry suppliers in New York State and works with researchers, production specialists, industry reps, and policy makers to overcome the barriers to growth.

Emerging Crops

Exploring the potential for new crops including industrial hemp, hops and more. Specialists in these areas develop educational programs that

increase agricultural investments, profitability and sustainability by:

- Maximizing connections to research and resources of Cornell University and Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Responding to emerging opportunities
- Assisting with workforce development and business expansion
- Increasing the profitability of this key New York industry

Harvest New York is funded by New York State.

Farm to School

- Find local food and farm partners
- Work with supply chain partners on logistics, including delivery
- Develop local food procurement plans
- Assist with bid development that favors local foods, e.g. geographic preference
- Establish Farm to School promotional campaigns, e.g., NY Thursdays or Harvest of the Month
- Assist with securing grants to expand Farm to School programming
- Support 30% NY Initiative tracking and documentation requirements



Photo by RJ Anderson

BUILDING OUR FUTURE!

Saturday morning, October 30th, 2021, the public gathered to get to know the property and plans for the new home of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County (CCE Erie). As CCE Erie Board president, Jack McGowan said, “Board members, staff, and volunteers have been defining requirements and searching for a suitable site for a few years. We are excited to have accomplished the first step in owning the land, which moves us toward our vision of a home for CCE Erie where we can offer hands-on learning in an interactive setting to all members of our community.”

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County (CCE Erie) uses local experience and research-supported solutions to build stronger communities. CCE Erie provides educational programs to county residents in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Food Systems, 4-H Youth Development, Community Health and Nutrition, and Consumer Horticulture.



Photo by John Whitney



Photo by John Whitney



Photo by John Whitney



Photo by John Whitney



Photo by John Whitney

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-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



**Creating
Healthy Schools
& Communities**

Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities, and provides equal program and employment opportunities.