

ANNUAL REPORT | 2022



**Thank you to our
Volunteers!**

**We couldn't do all of
the wonderful things
we do without you.**



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John Whitney • *Agriculture Educator*

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TASTE NY

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Madison Ross • *Taste NY Clerk*

CONSUMER HORTICULTURE

Sharon Bachman • *Ag & Natural Resources Educator*

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Sara Jablonski • *4-H Team Leader*

Vacant • *4-H Educator - General*

Tammi Kron • *4-H Educator - Livestock*

Bryana James • *4-H HCSI Healthy Food Youth Leader*

Lynn Riley • *Administrative Assistant*

NUTRITION & COMMUNITY HEALTH

SNAP-Ed

Xyricka Ferry • *SNAP-Ed Program Manager*

Melissa Kimbrell • *SNAP-Ed Regional Coordinator*

Brittany Denz • *SNAP Ed Senior Nutrition Educator*

Trisha Shea • *SNAP-Ed Environmental & Marketing Nutritionist*

Sarah Martin • *SNAP-Ed Nutritionist for Orleans, Genesee, and Wyoming*

Christina Ezak • *SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator*

Unique Brown • *SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator*

Ibn Khalif • *SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator*

Olivia Johnson • *SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator*

Rebekah Leith • *SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator*

EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM (EFNEP)

Victoria Buscaglia • *EFNEP Nutrition Educator*

HEALTHY COMMUNITY STORE INITIATIVE (HCSI)

Sheila Bass • *Healthy Community Store Coordinator*

CREATING HEALTHY SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES (CHSC)

Laura Corrin • *CHSC Educator*

CORNELL VEGETABLE PROGRAM

Julie Kikkert, Robert Hadad, Christy Hoepting,

Judson Reid, Elizabeth Buck

LAKE ERIE REGIONAL GRAPE PROGRAM

Jennifer Phillips Russo, Kevin Martin, Andy Muza

SWNY DAIRY, LIVESTOCK & FIELD CROPS

Katelyn Walley- Stoll, Amy Barkley, Camila Lage, Katelyn Miller

HARVEST NEW YORK - WNY

Cheryl Bilinski • *Local Food Systems Specialist, Farm to School Lead*

Becky O'Connor • *WNY Farm to Institution Coordinator*

Mallory Hohl • *Urban Garden Specialist*

Board President & Executive Director's Message

Thank you to our volunteers!

We couldn't do what we do without our dedicated volunteers. The reach of our staff in the community is multiplied by more than 300 4-H, Master Gardener, Master Naturalist, Master Forest Owner, and Master Food Preserver volunteers, plus Agriculture and 4-H Program Committee, and Board of Directors members. The 4-H and Master Gardener volunteers together contributed 10,018 hours of volunteer time in the 2021-22 program year.

What do CCE Erie volunteers do?

- 4-H volunteers are Club Leaders, chaperone youth at events, support Fair activities, serve as positive role models, and assist youth with community service.
- Trained Master Gardeners host a consumer horticulture hotline, offer educational classes to the public, and collaborate on community projects.
- Master Naturalists are involved in hands-on activities that make a difference in the conservation of our natural resources.
- Master Forest Owners are trained to provide information to private forest owners, helping them understand how to best steward and manage their woodlots.
- CCE certified Master Food Preservers go through intensive instruction to learn and teach methods for safely preserving foods.
- Agriculture and 4-H Program Advisory Committee members convey their knowledge and understanding of our local community to assist staff in planning educational programs that respond to community needs.
- And, the Board of Directors guides organization direction, provides finance and program oversight, and hires the association Executive Director.

We appreciate the commitment of our volunteers in helping CCE Erie staff to put knowledge to work to build a stronger Erie County community!

The potential created by our staff and volunteer efforts continues to build toward CCE Erie's next major evolution. The many ideas and suggestions for our Capital Project, shared to date, have been incorporated in project plans. We purchased 15 acres at the corner of Powers and Burton Roads in Orchard Park last year. Town site plan approval and architectural plans for the educational building are nearing completion. Enhancing CCE Erie's readiness to embark on the capital campaign will be the next phase. So stay tuned – we will need the support of our committed team of volunteers.

With gratitude,

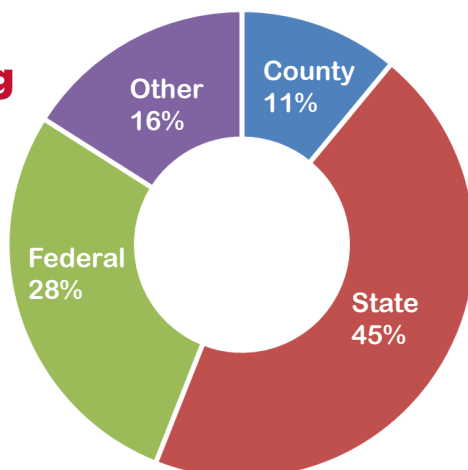
Matt Agle, Board President



Diane Held, Executive Director



2022 Funding



Estimate of 2022 Operations Funding

COUNTY

Appropriation	\$ 365,360	
Grants & Contracts	\$ 10,000	
Total County	\$ \$375,360	11%

STATE

County Law 224	\$ 60,000	
Grants	\$ 633,844	
Fringe Benefits	\$ 863,268	
Total State	\$ 1,557,112	45%

FEDERAL

Smith-Lever	\$ 85,000	
Smith-Lever EFNEP	\$ 61,500	
SNAP Education	\$ 796,276	
Grants & Contracts	\$ 20,722	
Total Federal	\$ 963,498	28%

OTHER SOURCES

Grants & Contracts	\$ 179,125	
Specialist Contract Support	\$ 10,980	
Enrollment & Program Fees	\$ 23,700	
Contributions	\$ 20,456	
Fundraising (incl. 4-H Market Sale)	\$ 284,000	
Interest & Miscellaneous	\$ 23,116	
Total Other Sources	\$ 541,377	16%

TOTAL OPERATIONS FUNDING \$3,437,347

Agriculture and Natural Resources

"I appreciate the opportunity to make connections and explore potential forestry-related career paths."

- Tree Workshop Student



Photo: Sharon Bachman

New Resource Developed for Online Learning About Juvenile Tree Care

As communities seek to explore all avenues for climate benefits, establishing new trees to maintain tree canopy cover is part of the equation. To assist in training new community members interested in helping care for community trees, our Natural Resources Educator worked last year to create an online version of our print tree care/tree steward curriculum. This regional effort (Wyoming and Allegany Counties as well) is funded by a grant from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Urban Forestry initiative.

The online curriculum provides direct links to great tree resources that already exist on the web including those from the Arbor Day Foundation, Professor Ed Gilman at the University of Florida, and UMass's Urban Forestry Today webcasts. The new resource includes a section on environmental justice and tree care, and food forests. The curriculum was officially rolled out as part of an in-person workshop in early August with twenty participants.

Along with the curriculum development, CCE Erie partnered with the Buffalo Green Fund, Re-Tree, and others to offer tree workshops in celebration of the Erie County bi-centennial in April and October. In April, 50 people joined the team to learn about tree care and plant a bare-root tree at the West Seneca municipal complex. This tree is planted in their veteran memorial garden. The inter-generational activity encouraged some in the audience to consider careers in forestry. As these 200 (and more) trees are established across the county, we aim to train and inspire stewards who will commit to ensuring they have a long life on our landscape.

CCE Erie Ag CDL Training

CCE Erie initiated an Ag Commercial Drivers License (CDL) Training program similar to the ones held in recent years by CCE Wyoming and Genesee. Planning for this pilot initiative began in the spring and included discussions with many potential partners. A training contractor was secured, and participants were invited to apply for inclusion in the first class to be held in mid-October of 2022. This first class is expected to take 10-12 drivers through their Class A or Class B road tests, at a significantly lower cost than commercial driving school rates. Costs for many farmers are further reduced through tuition reimbursements through the regional Workforce Development Institute.



CDL Training Class. Photo: John Whitney



Photo: John Whitney

"I'm glad that I am doing this, as I am learning about the process. For instance, for me getting the permit this morning was much quicker and simpler than I expected."

- CDL Training Participant

Connections that Count

It was a joy to get back to in-person events this year. The CCE Erie Regional Navigator partnered with Buffalo Go Green to organize a workshop on collaborative farming. The workshop was well attended, mostly by people who were relatively new to farming.

The discussion was lively and continued long after the workshop was scheduled to end. Staff finally had to start sweeping the floor to get everyone out the door. Discussions at the workshop helped some producers expand their markets and others started exploring ways to stay connected.

The in-person workshop was a reminder of how valuable being part of a producer network is, especially to those who are new to farming or to the region. Being part of the network means having someone to call when you're looking for land, your tractor breaks down, you want to borrow a post-hole digger, or you need hay in a hurry. The work we do at CCE Erie helps weave the network together. The yarn we use is our research-based knowledge and the relationships we've built serving Erie County since our founding.



Collaborative Farming workshop. Greg Putney (left) and Michael Parkot (right).
Photo by Kathleen McCormick

"Please continue to offer workshops like this. It was extremely beneficial to get a lot of the information I was looking for ALL in one place at one time from people who have been there and done that. ."

- Collaborative Farming Participant

AG OVERALL

274

Direct contacts

57,305

Indirect contacts*

**Indirect contacts refers to media and outreach.*

Master Gardener Program

"I have never worked so hard for a name tag."

- MG Volunteer Trainee



MG Volunteers from class of 2022 lead a project planting flowers at Gerard Place

Master Gardner Program Trains 21 New Volunteers

From January through April, current Master Gardener Program volunteers assisted Sharon Bachman in offering a 12-week series of Saturday classes to train 21 new recruits. The courses were offered as a mix of in-person and virtual, with in-person classes offered hybrid to accommodate a class member who was not able to travel in the winter. One of the highlights of the class was the presentation on composting by a person who trained to be a volunteer in 2014 and went on to start her own horticulture business in Buffalo and who continues to advocate for healthy soil practices.

The 2022 class offered training via a new online learning platform from Cornell Garden-Based Learning and encouraged volunteers to complete action projects instead of a final exam. It was exciting to see the new volunteers' passions for horticulture emerge as they completed this aspect of the course. Our local volunteer efforts have already benefited from these action projects from a seed library developed for the Orchard Park Library to factsheets designed on pollinator gardens and hydrangeas which were shared at the Erie County Fair to a food scrap demonstration that can benefit our future outreach efforts.

Our new program interns jumped in with outreach across the county – at urban farms, the FeedMore garden, Elmwood-Bidwell Farmers Market, Erie County Fair, Open Gardens, environmental events in Grand Island and Town of Boston, and Reinstein Woods Fall Festival. The new volunteers are participating in our leadership committee and education committee. They have gotten their hands dirty with WNY PRISM invasive species education. They are shadowing current volunteers in our speaker's bureau and have begun to share their own project presentations as part of the Fall Gardening Class series. Welcome aboard class of 2022! We are excited to grow with you.

MG OVERALL

97

Volunteers

5740

Volunteer Hours

742

Direct Contacts

Taste NY at the WNY Welcome Center

“We’re so excited to have our produce for sale seven days a week at the Taste NY store inside the Western NY Welcome Center. We’re truly honored to have our products featured next to some of New York state’s finest local eats!”

– Ari Sobel, Owner Herb’N Garden Farms



Photo: Molly Vigrass

Taste NY Local Vendor Provides Fresh Produce

Taste NY has continued to work with a very well-known Grand Island farm that frequents all the local farmer’s markets, has built great relationships with other farmers/restaurants, and has a large following of loyal customers.

Herb’N Garden Farms is a fully sustainable, pesticide-free, hydroponic greenhouse business located in Grand Island, NY. From specialty lettuces and greens to a wide variety of vine-ripened tomatoes, they produce a nutrient-dense product with superior taste.

We have worked together before in a different lens at our past outdoor Farmers Markets as they hand-made artisan pizzas for customers. Since then, we have struggled to get vendors to participate and have looked to a different farmer’s market model. Herb’n Garden Farms was up for the challenge-working hard on their hydroponic greenhouse instead of artisan pizzas. This year, we moved the farm stand indoors, which enabled us to “show and tell” the products and Herb’N Garden Farms’ vendor story with consumers a bit more. We also have some indoor pop-up markets coming up that will benefit travelers and locals visiting the Welcome Center.

This new and improved relationship helps us achieve our program goals by strengthening our ties to local farmers and building a solid connection between consumers & those farmers. We are so excited to be able to offer fresh, local produce all year round, for the first time ever!

**TASTE NY
OVERALL**

19,495
Direct contacts

9.2K
Indirect contacts*

Taste NY Vendor Spotlights Continue in 2022

The ongoing production of Western New York Welcome Center Taste NY Market vendor spotlights continued with the creation and release of four additional vendor spotlights in 2022: Arbor Hill Grapery & Winery; Toonie Moonie Organics; It's Nola; and The Ardent Homesteader. Spotlights are posted and maintained in a Facebook playlist. They have also become features on CCE-Erie's YouTube channel.



Photo: John Whitney

"Your preparation/correspondence beforehand, guidance during our prep that day, and gentle manner during the actual interview let me to feeling completely at ease. For all those things I will be eternally grateful to you."

- Kristen Nelson, Owner/Operator of The Ardent Homesteader

TASTENY
SPOTLIGHTS
OVERALL

20
Direct contacts

200
Indirect contacts*

**Indirect contacts refers to media and outreach.*

4-H Youth Development

“Great opportunity for my child who is quiet, she needs to build her self-confidence”

- Livestock Parent



Photo: Tammi Kron

Preparing Youth for Future Job Interviews

4-H allows youth to learn in a safe and fun environment, and they don't realize the life skills they are acquiring while participating. Livestock participants keep detailed records about their projects, tracking expenses, health, and maintenance of an animal along with growth and community service.

To freshen up the livestock program, Livestock Interviews were incorporated in 2022. Participants were able to use their records as a resource or portfolio to assist with their interview. Business owners and volunteer judges worked with members assessing their knowledge of their projects, self-confidence, and accomplishment of goals the youth set for themselves.



Photo: Tammi Kron

4-H OVERALL

417 Enrolled Members

174 Enrolled Volunteers

4,278 Volunteer Hours

**Indirect contacts refers to media and outreach.*

4-H Art Nights

We held a series of 4-H art nights that created a way for 4-H families from across the county to participate. We had three in-person locations where families came and worked on art pieces, including East Aurora, Amherst, and Buffalo. Over 100 youth participated over a series of three evenings. On the first night, they learned about painting with acrylic. The second night was focused on watercolor. On the final night, they showcased their art and had the chance to hear from real artists who talked about their field of work.

Activities were led by teen leaders and 4-H alumni volunteers, in addition to 4-H Educators.

The series was made possible through a grant from ALDI!



Youth presenting her artwork to guest artist Elle Vee during the final night of our art night series

“We loved that you provided all the materials needed & parents didn’t have to worry about bringing anything with them. The kids certainly had a blast! Thank you for organizing these events in the evenings so full-time working parents can also bring their kids to these.”

- Parent of participant

**4-H ART NIGHT
OVERALL**

6 Volunteers

190 Direct contacts

150 Indirect contacts*

**Indirect contacts refers to media and outreach.*

4-H Healthy Community Store Initiative (HCSI) Youth Program



Erie County 4-H and the Healthy Community Store Initiative (HCSI) joined together to showcase and build upon the work we've been able to accomplish together through support of the National 4-H Council's Well Connected Communities initiatives. 4-H and HCSI have worked collaboratively for many years, including internships and youth-created videos promoting HCSI. This year, we launched the HCSI Healthy Food Youth Advocates, a teen leadership program focused on engaging teens in community action projects to address: food media messaging, health inequalities, food systems, and social determinants of health. This cross-program partnerships serves as a model for youth and community engagement.

We launched this new phase of our collaboration with support from the National 4-H Council and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. We worked with 7 teen leaders over the summer who were paid through the Erie County Summer Youth Employment Program and two 4-H alumni paid through the City of Buffalo Mayor's Summer Youth Internship Program. During the summer, the teens engaged in several activities to familiarize them with the work of HCSI as they learned leadership skills. With the support of HCSI Coalition members, teens worked on several community projects, including extensive work in a community garden and food pantry, led by Rita Hubbard-Robinson, CEO of NeuWater & Associates, and the Buffalo Center for Health Equity. Youth also developed their own project to educate their community about what eating healthy for a day looks like by creating a menu. They shared their menu project at a tabling presentation and display during an end of summer event at the Johnnie B. Wiley Stadium, a local athletic sports pavilion.

The teens were led by a longstanding volunteer turned Temporary 4-H Educator, who is currently working with HCSI as a NYS Public Health Corp Fellow.

Two 4-H alumni from the Youth Community Action Network (Youth CAN) also served in youth leadership roles to support the group's project throughout the summer.



4H HCSI Youth Advocates prepared a display table to share resources and engage their peers at the end of summer youth program event.

Nutrition and Community Health

"We need more stuff like this in the community - let me know what I can do to get the word out!"

- HCSI customer



D'Youville University Nutrition and Dietetics Program provide support to increase awareness about the HCSI resources including the Higi station at HCSI store Mandella's Market

Healthy Community Store Initiative (HCSI)

The Healthy Community Store Initiative (HCSI - funded by Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York Blue Fund)) continues to incorporate innovative and collaborative methods that offer much-needed resources in the community. The Healthy Community Store was pleased with the launch of the Caring Hearts Initiative, which is a partnership made possible through the American College of Cardiology (ACC). Through this partnership (American College of Cardiology, Healthy Community Store Initiative, Foodsmart, and Higi), HCSI select stores were provided with the installation of Higi Health Stations. These stations offer another layer of resources and support that promote cardiovascular health, a primary objective.

With the installation of the Higi Health Stations, community members have access to a level of resources that can undoubtedly contribute to their overall health and wellness. The stations include a blood pressure monitor, diabetes risk factors, nutritional counseling, and much more! Our collaborative approach also builds awareness of the importance of providing not only education but also empowerment with access to the needed tools.

During the introduction of the project the Healthy Community Store Initiative creatively engaged store patrons and distributed slow-cookers (made possible through the Buffalo Bills Foundation), and a slow-cooker recipe book provided by Foodsmart. One person put it nicely when she stated, "Everything that y'all are doing is great! I just left the doctor's office, and I didn't know what my numbers [were] going to be." She smiled and said, "Now, when I come in here, I can grab some fruit and check on my blood pressure."

HCSI OVERALL

30 Events

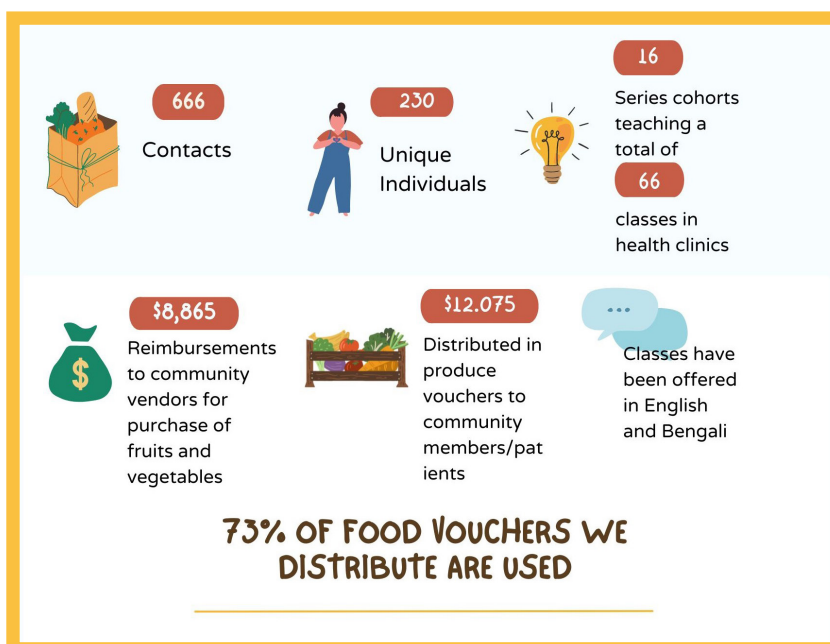
450 Direct contacts

> 1,000
Indirect contacts*

SNAP-Ed

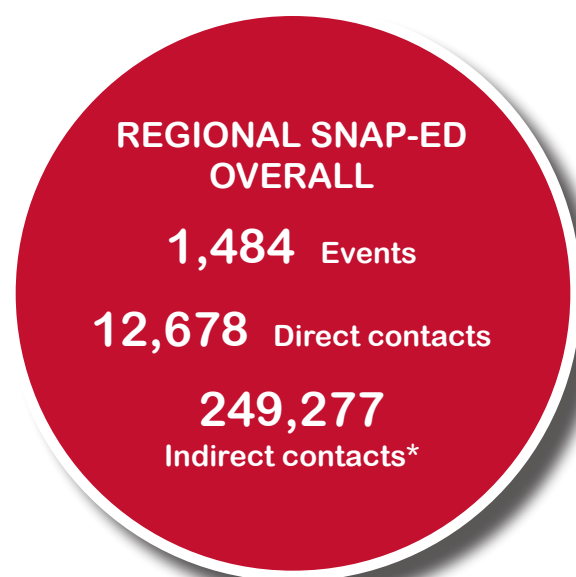
In the past year, the SNAP-Education regional team's work has rebounded from COVID accommodations. Our reach has increased profoundly, and we have provided interactive, hands-on classes- often in the form of a series where we can offer meaningful engagement over the course of a few weeks or months to reinforce skills, knowledge, and attitudes about nutrition, physical movement, cooking, and food shopping strategies.

Over the past year, we launched efforts around school wellness, offered fruitful train-the-trainer events with community champions, and we continued our work with healthcare centers to offer Fruit and Vegetable Prescription programs (FVRx). Our FVRx programs have grown to include work with three clinic partners across our region (Erie, Niagara, Genesee, and Wyoming). Our goal is to help clinics talk about food access with patients and link them to our program for support. Our programs provide information on local nutrition incentives to help grow food budgets, nutrition, and food budgeting education, and offer \$20 vouchers for free produce, spices and herbs for those who participate.



Our team feels as if we really touched the community with these programs. The vouchers help us increase food access for patients, and we can invest in some local businesses and producers by partnering with them to accept the vouchers from patients.

We have also grown meaningful partner relationships with federally qualified health centers and other clinics through this work. "SNAP-Ed has been so responsive to the needs of the community. Creating materials, changing things last minute, being there in a timely manner, and being welcoming to our patients. When I think about what it means to be successful for our population – you guys exhibit it." – Emelie Obrachta, Jericho Road Community Health Center Director of East Side Programs. We hope to continue this work into next fiscal year, bring on new health clinic and vendor partners, and find some sustainable funding sources to encourage food access in the long term as a part of patient care.



*Indirect contacts refers to media and outreach.



SNAP-Ed nutritionists Sarah and Any attended a seedling giveaway event for the community around Groundwork Garden Market, an Urban farm in Buffalo

"I enjoyed the classes. They have given me valuable information to improve my health. The presenters are excellent. Thank you very much."

- FVRx Cohort 5 Participant

"I learned how to cut down on unhealthy stuff while also eating my favorite foods."

- FVRx Cohort 12 Participant



A participant in a train-the-trainer opportunity is chopping broccoli as a part of a hands-on food demonstration with a partnered community organization.

Creating Healthy Schools and Communities



This NYS Department of Health funded grant aims to establish and support sustainable healthy communities by improving policies, practices, and environments for physical activity and nutrition making it easier to practice healthy behaviors. Working as a subcontractor of Erie 1 BOCES, CCE Erie focuses on worksites and early childhood education centers in Cheektowaga and Lackawanna (high-need areas prioritized in the grant). In the past year, we have been able to support the Cheektowaga Youth and Recreational Services with an upgrade to refrigeration to allow for better and more storage of healthy food and beverage vending choices. In the Maryvale School District, we have been able to provide foundational pieces of equipment for their new fresh market, FeedMore WNY school-based food pantry for 6th-12th grade students and their families.

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

In May of 2022, I began my role as a Nutrition educator in the EFNEP program here in Erie County. This program taught me the importance of food safety and key nutrition basics to aid in my role as a nutrition educator. Every day I learn something new and exciting that I will carry with me for the rest of my life! In my [new] job and through my out-of-work conversations, I can shed light on nutrition topics. My number one goal and priority as a nutrition educator is to meet the needs of those who want to make positive life changes for themselves. I believe that we all have the opportunity and deserve to create the best versions of ourselves, we just need to find the right cheerleader to help us through these impactful changes.

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program helps consumers make the best use of their food budget, and safely serve and store the foods they have.

EFNEP is a nutrition education program for limited-resource youth and families delivered through the Cooperative Extension Service in every state and U.S. territory.

During the current pandemic, nutrition security took center stage. Families continue to struggle to put healthy food on the table. It's important for communities to have the resources they need to help feed and nurture families.

People need the skills to prepare food and know what food they can store in limited space. EFNEP offers nutrition education to help low-income families and youth gain knowledge and skills for increased food security, provides participants with reliable information about food resource management for food shopping and preparation, and teaches about food safety practices.

As a result of EFNEP education, graduates of the program shared that they have:

- Improved their diets
- Improved their nutritional practices
- Stretched their food dollars further
- Handled food more safely
- Increased their physical activity level

“When I eat good food, I feel good.
When I eat junk food, I feel tired.”

- EFNEP Participant



Victoria Buscaglia, EFNEP Educator and EFNEP Participants

Agriculture Regional Teams



CVP Specialist Julie Kikkert gives a demonstration of the laser scarecrow at Agle Farm in Erie County. Photo: Nina Gropp

Cornell Vegetable Program (CVP)

The Cornell Vegetable 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.

In Erie County: Laser scarecrows use a rapidly moving green laser beam to scare birds from fields. The CVP continues in partnership to field test the laser scarecrow device designed by the University of Rhode Island (URI). Feedback from our team and other project cooperators and farms in 2021 led to a significantly improved design for 2022. We received seven of the new URI laser scarecrow kits in early June and assembled and pre-tested them. CC Farms in Wayne Co. ran an early trial to determine if the lasers would keep birds from pulling seedling sweet corn out of the ground. The farmer observed that the birds stayed out of the field when the laser was turned on in this preliminary trial.

In late June, our team began deploying the laser scarecrows in commercial sweet corn fields that were about 10 to 14 days prior to harvest. In western, NY there were seven cooperating farms this year. CVP Specialist Julie Kikkert gave a demonstration of the laser scarecrow at the Vegetable Growers Twilight Meeting at the Agle Farm in Eden, one of the cooperating farms. Data was collected on the number of ears with bird damage at different distances from the laser. Bird peck makes sweet corn ears unmarketable if detected at harvest and can also lead to mold growing on ears during shipping and marketing. In a previous survey by the Cornell Vegetable Program, 84% of western NY growers reported bird damage and the estimated revenue lost ranged from \$102 to \$1,300 lost per acre. This project is supported by grants from the New York Farm Viability Institute and the USDA NIFA Multistate Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. Other cooperators on this project are Marion Zuefle, NYS Integrated Pest Management Program and Chuck Bornt, CCE Eastern NY Commercial Horticulture Program.

Lake Erie Regional Grape Program (LERGP)

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.

In Erie County:

The Lake Erie Regional Grape Program shared a Public Service Announcement and answered media inquiries about the first WNY find of the invasive Spotted Lanternfly in a Buffalo rail yard in September. “The spotted lanternfly is a destructive invasive insect spreading throughout New York State. Spotted lanternflies feed on grape vines, apple trees, and dozens of other crops and native plants. They’re a major threat to agriculture in New York. A single tree can host over 10,000 spotted lanternflies. They don’t bite humans or animals, but they excrete a sticky-sweet substance that leads to mold growth on plants and other surfaces, and attracts ants and wasps. Spotted Lanternflies can’t fly well, but they’re extremely good at hitchhiking on vehicles and cargo. It’s important to inspect your vehicle and belongings to avoid transporting spotted lanternflies or their eggs masses, which are laid September through November and look like a splotch of mud. Egg masses can contain up to 60 eggs. If you find a spotted lanternfly in Upstate New York, please take a photo, then squish it, collect it for inspectors, and report it on ReportSLF.com. Together we can help New York’s farmers and communities thrive in our rapidly changing world.”



Adult Spotted Lanternfly. Photo: Bugwood

Southwest NY Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops Program (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. 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.

In Erie County: Katelyn Miller and Amy Barkley worked with Elizabeth Buck of the Cornell Vegetable Program to host a Cover Crop Field Day in Orchard Park at CCE Erie's new property in Orchard Park. With the help of the Erie County Soil & Water Conservation District, demonstration plots of sorghum-sudan, buckwheat, and teff were planted with a no-till drill to evaluate their suitability for short-term use in vegetable or vegetable-small ruminant settings. Those in attendance were able to see Erie County Soil and Water's drill and hear about their lending program, learn about resources available from NRCS and various incentives for cover cropping, and had the ability to network with various seed dealers, industry professionals, as well as each other. This demonstration provided insight into each crops' ability to scavenge nutrients, suppress weeds and showcase drought tolerance, as well as create resources from crop samples which provided forage quality insight for livestock operations, and establishment BMPs (best management practices) for each crop, all of which will be a valuable grower resource. Currently, there is limited research surrounding these crops in both the vegetable and small ruminant industry allowing this field day to open the door for future research.



Cover Crop Field Day in Orchard Park at CCE Erie's new property in Orchard Park.

Harvest NY

Harvest New York is an innovative Cornell Cooperative Extension team, funded by NYS, 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
- Urban Agriculture
- Urban Gardens
- Farm-Based Beverages
- Emerging Crops

This summer, three Harvest NY Specialists presented a hands-on, three-week workshop series to more than 25 high school youth in Buffalo, focusing on a range of topics including pest scouting on the farm, composting, and the importance of land gratitude. The Massachusetts Avenue Project (MAP) urban farm on Buffalo's West Side has been employing youth during their summer leadership program for almost two decades. During their eight-week employment, the high school students get paid to learn about their local food system, sustainable urban farming practices, how to run a successful Mobile Market, and environmental policy issues. These valuable skills are in addition to employment-essential soft skills, such as public speaking, journaling, and artistic expression through outlets like poetry and creative writing. Year after year, the youth graduating from this program go on to college at a much higher rate than the Buffalo Public Schools average.



Harvest NY Community Garden Specialist Mallory Hohl with students at MAP urban farm in Buffalo, NY

Harvest NY Community Garden Specialist Mallory Hohl has been involved with MAP since 2014, from Mobile Market intern to community volunteer to Board of Directors chairperson. She was pleased to host her Harvest NY colleagues, Judson Reid and Kwesi Joseph, in Buffalo to present on urban growing topics to enrich the youths' urban farm education experience. The educators' perspectives and hands-on teaching styles brought unique opportunities for the students to experience MAP's urban farm in a new way: scouting for pests and beneficial insects, handling different types of compost, and reflecting on nature in a personal way. After their experiences, the youth expressed their thoughts in their daily journal entry and were invited to share with the group. While exposure to agriculture and growing one's own food may sometimes be limited for urban audiences, this group was able to engage in a rich experience from experts in their field.

Farm to School in Erie County

Despite supply chain challenges and staffing shortages, schools across Erie County continued to purchase and serve more locally grown, raised, and produced foods in their school meal programs.

Buffalo Public Schools stood out, with a new focus on increasing the cultural relevancy of meals served to their diverse student body. CCE Erie, the Harvest NY team, and the Cornell Vegetable Program are working with the district and community partners including Providence Farm Collective, Buffalo Food for the Spirit, and the Buffalo Food Equity Network on a USDA Farm to School grant that seeks to develop and menu culturally appropriate food to the diverse student body, and support BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) farmers.

This school year the district awarded Providence Farm Collective \$4,765 in their produce bid. Using produce from Providence Farm Collective the district has served new menu items including githeri, creamed Swiss chard, eggplant and chickpea wraps with roasted tomatoes and sweet potato leaves, and fried green tomatoes.



Students and administrators at International School 45 shucked corn from Providence Farm Collective





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