

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Chautauqua County



**2023
Annual
Report**



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Directors Statement

We cordially invite you to take a look through our window to the wonderful programs and events that took place in 2023 with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chautauqua County. We continue to grow and redefine programming to meet the needs of our county residents. Through great partnerships with volunteers, local organizations and regional Cornell teams, we are able to offer a diversity of opportunities.

Each year, this is a great opportunity for me to reflect on the fabulous growth, innovation and achievements of staff, volunteers and community partners. Nothing we accomplish in CCE Chautauqua is done without collaboration and support from the community and its what motivates me everyday to be a better leader. Chautauqua County is rich in community members that are compassionate, talented and

committed to improving the lives of all our residents. As you read through some of our 2023 accomplishments you may just find one you helped make a success.

Enjoy our favorite photos and programming memories from 2023!



Staff

Nutrition

Mary Ryder
Molly Harvey
Wendy Alexander
Ko Svetanics

Agriculture

Lisa Kempisty
Shannon Rinow
Rose Clarke

4-H Youth Development

Lisette Cabrera
Lindsey Crisanti- Meeder
Josephine Allen

Administrative

Emily Reynolds
Darcy Cramer
Lucia Conti

Lake Erie Regional Grape Program

Jennifer Phillips- Russo
Megan Luke

Regional Ag Team (SWNYDLFC)

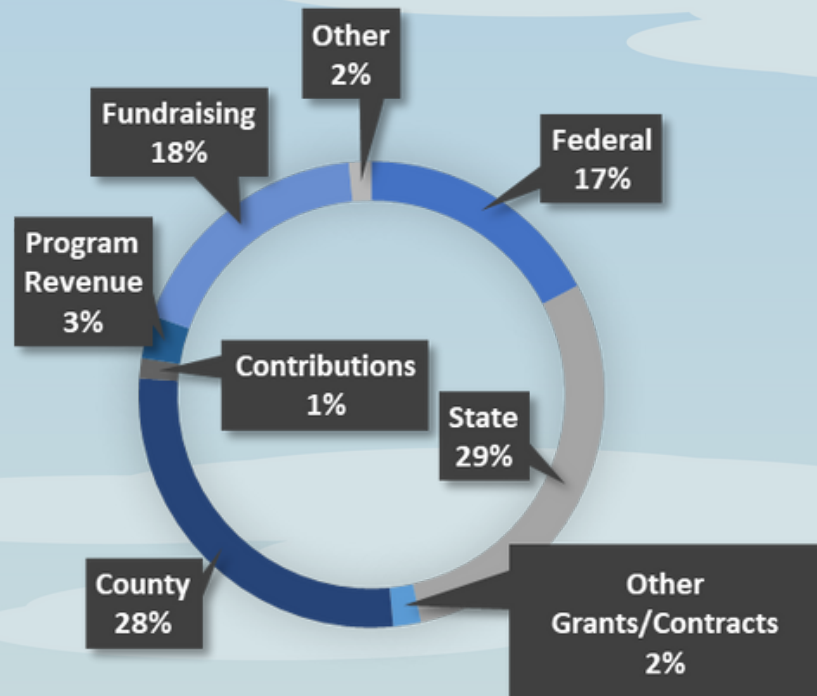
Katelyn Walley-Stoll
Amy Barkley
Camilla Lange
Katelyn Miller

Regional Vegetable Team

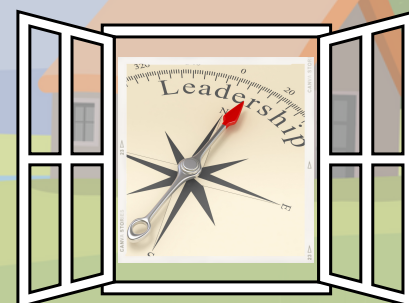
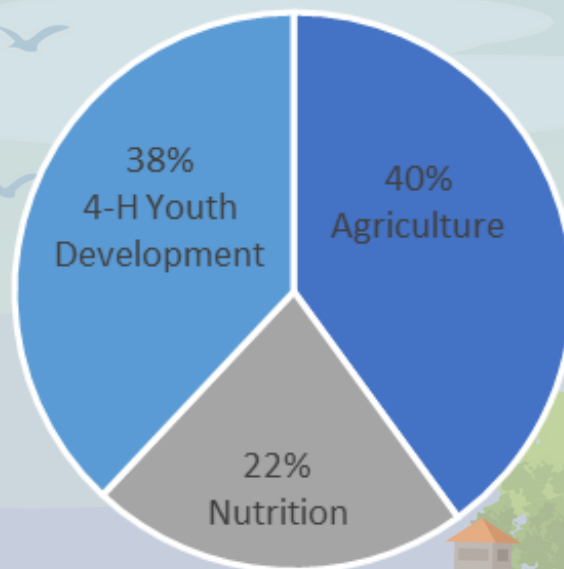
Elizabeth Buck
Robert Hadad
Christy Hoepting
Julie Kikkert
Margie Lund
Judson Reid

Financial Update

Estimate of Support



Program Area Budgets



Volunteer Leadership

Board of Directors

Ron Almeter, President

Randy Henderson, Vice President

Suzanne Fassett- Wright, Secretary

George Haffenden, Treasurer

Renee Mooneyhan, Extension Specialist

John Hemmer, Legislative Representative

Tom Nelson, Legislative Representative

Dianne Hovey, Master Gardener Representative

Jeff Miller, Agriculture Representative

Louis Smith, 4-H Representative

Jan Schauman, 4-H Representative

Chad Buck, at large member

Alyssa Porter, at large member

Pat Walker, at large member

Dan Heitzenrater, at large member

Camille Martir-Rosado, at large member

Patty Benton, at large member

Program Committees

4-H Youth Development

Louis Smith, Board Representative

Jan Schauman, Board Representative

Brittany Begier

Betty Catanese

Mary Jantzi

Laura LeBarron

Emily 'Beth' Southworth

Kimberly Witherow

Agriculture

Ron Almeter, Board Representative

Jeff Miller, Board Representative

Virginia Carlberg

Jessica Brehm

Rosemary Joy

Ben Nickerson

Michael Wilson

Derek Yerico

OUR MISSION

Cornell Cooperative Extension puts knowledge to work in pursuit of economic vitality, ecological sustainability and social well-being. We bring local experience and research-based solutions together, helping New York State families and communities thrive in our rapidly changing world.

“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”



Nutrition



The Supplemental Nutrition Education Program (SNAP-Ed) strives to empower participants to develop their own sustainable goals based on what is realistic for them in their home and their day-to-day activities. Our Program Educators provide support and resources for participants as they make healthy, manageable changes to their lifestyle.



One SNAP-Ed program that had an impressive impact was held at the Ripley Library. This programming has grown so much over the last year! Molly's nutrition class started with a small number of library goers but has grown over the past few months to have an average of 12 participants. Molly incorporates a fun and nutritious food demonstration into every class. She then provides the participants with samples of that nutritious food. The class that really stands out for her would be when she discussed whole grains and made a quinoa salad. More than half the class had never tried quinoa before and were so excited to try something new. After teaching the class how to make this delicious whole grain the participants tried the salad, and with no surprise the quinoa salad was a hit. So many participants were so excited to incorporate this new whole grain into their everyday food choices. As Molly always says at the end of each session, "small changes can make a big difference!"



Nutrition

Molly's favorite new activity of 2023 was the collaboration with the JCC Workforce Development Program through the Jamestown Goodskills Career Builder. Molly presents at a new class every month.

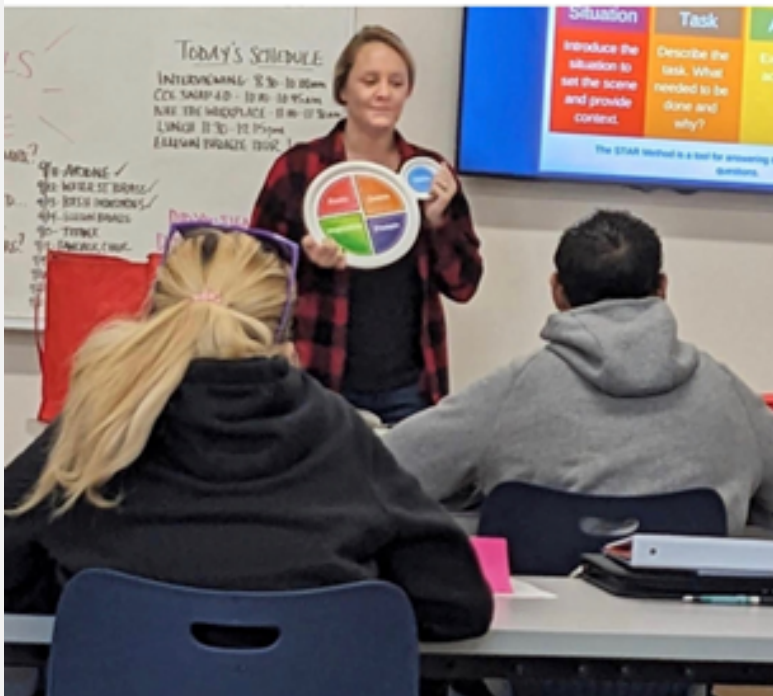


Goodwill of Western New York

Sep 15 · 🌐

Thank you to Molly from [Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chautauqua County](#) who presented a nutrition workshop for our Jamestown Goodskills Career Builder participants. They learned how to stretch their food budget and prepare healthy meals for their families - like the yummy corn salsa dish Molly made for the group to sample!

1,995
adults participated in
SNAP programming



1,147
youth participated in
SNAP programming



Nutrition



99%
Improved Diet Quality

89%
Improved Food Resource Management

89%
Are more physically active

89%
Improved Food Safety

63%
Are more Physically Active

52%
Increased Vegetable Consumption

50%
Improved Safe Food Practices

44%
Increased Fruit Consumption

44%
Are more Food Secure

35%
Reduced sugary beverage consumption

12%
Decreased Screen Time

ADULTS and **YOUTH** who participated in CCE's EFNEP programming in 2023 showed great improvements.

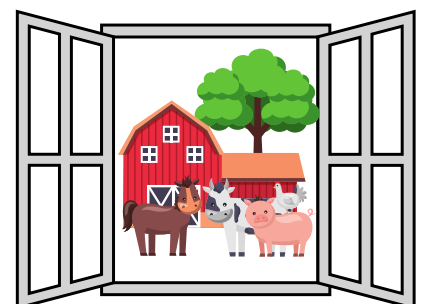
EFNEP (Expanded Food Nutrition Education Programming) worked with The Relief Zone (TRZ) in Frewsburg, NY. TRZ is a summer youth program. There were 2 separate youth groups held once a week for an hour each for a total of 8 weeks this summer. The CHFFF (Choose Health, Food, Fun, and Fitness) curriculum was used which allowed for a lot of hands-on participation. Approximately 35 youth participated. The staff at TRZ are amazing to work with and the youth were always so excited and easy to work with. Upon completion of the series, the youth participants stated how much fun it was and that they learned so much about sugar and healthy eating. They also shared that they made some of the recipes with their families. The relationship with TRZ will continue and CCE Nutrition Educator Wendy Alexander is already looking forward to next year.

EFNEP reaches participants with research based curriculum for youth and adults including: Family and Nutrition Education Curriculum, Healthy Cents, Finding a Balance (Diabetes), Teen Cuisine, and Choose Health, Food, Fun and Fitness. It is easy to participate in EFNEP, our educators reach out through:

Home visits – meeting families/individual family members in their homes to teach nutrition, food safety, smarter shopping strategies, and increase physical activities.

Groups – partnering with agencies to improve the nutrition, fitness, and food management resources of their clients.

Youth – Working with classrooms to teach nutrition and basic cooking skills to youth.



Agriculture

One New Agricultural Program at CCE in 2023 was educational programming for a USDA Farm to School Grant in partnership with E2CCBoces. The grant provided Cornell Cooperative Extension educators and guest presenters the opportunity to share educational activities focusing on agriculture. The grant provided funds for supplies to help teach the students about our agricultural industry and food that is produced by our farm families. Students also had the opportunity to visit agricultural businesses to experience agriculture production and business first-hand, led by experts in our agricultural industry. As a result of this successful programming CCE has secured funding through continued partnership with BOCES and has hired a new educator to work with any Chautauqua county school, continuing to offer Agriculture in the Classroom lessons.



266
adults and
179
children
participated in the Chautauqua Grown
Open Barn Doors Day

230
people attended
the Farmer
Neighbor
Dinner

382
residents
participated in
LEAF programs

32 farms were awarded
\$206,609.55
in American Rescue Plan funds
to invest
\$1,753,984.78
into farm projects.



Agriculture



Nine Chautauqua Grown producers participated in the first ever Chautauqua Grown Open Barn Doors Day. This program was designed to promote local agriculture and encourage consumers to support local producers throughout Chautauqua County. A variety of farms in each of the four agricultural districts in Chautauqua County welcomed visitors with 'Open Doors' to learn more about Agriculture. A special thank you to Green Heron Growers, Munsee Farm, Big Tree Maple, Peterson Farm, Moon Meadow Farm LLC, Millers Dairy Farm, Walkers Creekside Alpaca Farm, H&R Rustic acres, and The Cornell Lake Erie Research and Education Laboratory for their interactive participation in our first Chautauqua Grown Open Barn Doors Day.

445 visitors were able to learn about a diverse amount of agriculture in Chautauqua County.

Discover Agriculture. Shop Local. Eat Local.

The Sheriff Department, Farm Bureau and CCE partnered at a variety of public events this year as part of the Slow-Moving Vehicle campaign. This campaign was to bring awareness to drivers

about how to respond to slow moving vehicles, buggies, tractors, cars on the side of the roads, and other farm machinery.



Master Gardener Volunteers



In 2023 the Master Gardener Volunteers held the first ever Annual Gardening Symposium. This community event was worthwhile and exciting because it offered a full day of horticulture education to the public. The two morning workshops discussed native plants and trees. The afternoon consisted of breakout workshops led by Master Gardener Volunteers, followed by a panel question and answer forum. Of the 32 participants that attended, many were Master Gardener volunteers, both locally and from Maine and Pennsylvania. This provided educational and networking opportunities to learn from each other. Plans are in place to offer this annually, which will allow for an increase in attendance and collaboration across organizations. It is sure to become a CCE Event that people will look forward to attending each year.



2023 Impacts

- 186 questions answered through the Help desk
- 80 people attended Evening in the Garden programming
- \$1,579 raised at the plant sale fundraiser
- 539 youth and 45 adults participated in Farm to School gardening programs.
- 825 children and adults participated in the Chautauqua Institution school gardens
- 242 participants reached at Farmers Markets
- 31 people participated in the Garden Symposium
- 36 adults and children participated in local library Trowel Talks
- 534 people reached at community and local gardens
- 705 hours dedicated to teaching horticulture-related topics in the community
- 214 hours dedicated to sharing research-based gardening advice with residents
- 193 hours devoted to continuing education



SWNYDLFC Regional Team

Cornell Cooperative Extension

Southwest NY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Program

June Is Dairy Month!

Cornell Cooperative Extension's Canada Lage shares information about Dairy Month in Southwest NY

PHOTO BY PAUL BOB



Canada Lage, from Cornell Cooperative Extension's SWNY Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops Program shares her appreciation for dairy farmers. (Courtesy Photo)

In February, our Dairy Management Specialist, Camila Lage, in conjunction with the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Program, connected with a farmer in Chautauqua County who is also a mentor for the program. They visited a local participating advisor to learn more about his grazing system, the challenges with the apprenticeship program, and brainstorm programs that could be helpful to dairy farmers.



2023 By the Numbers

1,809

Farm Consultations on topics related to Farm Business Management, Field Crops, Dairy Management, and Livestock Production.

5,887

Event and program direct participants attended one of our 123 events/collaborations or have received our direct email/mail updates.

376

Website submissions, press releases, interviews, and Facebook posts providing timely information to a large audience.

In June 2023, SWNYDLFC shared information about June as Dairy Month as a press release, which was widely shared in local newspapers, Morning Agriclips, and social media, including a reshare from the NE Agribusiness and Feed Alliance. A resident from Chautauqua County reached out to learn more about information on dairy farm tours open to the community and was directed to the fantastic events CCE Chautauqua put together yearly, such as the 2023 Open Barns Doors Days.

In conjunction with American Farmland Trust's Farmland for a New Generation initiative, SWNYDLFC, as a Regional Navigator, connected a non-operating landowner with a beginning farmer who was interested in starting their farm with a lease to own set up. This involved facilitating several meetings, reviewing strategies and plans, and checking in with each party to meet programming goals and ensure the land remained in production agriculture.

"Hogs, Hops, and Honey - Oh My!". This was a presentation led by SWNYDLFC for Chautauqua County's Ag Forum that explored and offered risk management education for farms interested in diversifying to improve farm profitability. Farms are continually looking for options to reduce product risk by increasing revenue streams in a sustainable way.

SWNYDLFC is working with 2 grass-fed beef farmers in Chautauqua County who are part of a larger state-wide NY Farm Viability study that will determine the efficiencies of producing grass-fed beef in NYS. Together, they are testing forage, taking cattle weights, and determining the efficiencies of their cattle, while following the growth of two sets of farm-born calves over 3 years.

In February, our Dairy Management Specialist, in conjunction with the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Program, Camila Lage connected with a farmer in Chautauqua County who is also a mentor for the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship program visited a local participating advisor to learn more about his grazing system the challenges with the apprenticeship program, and brainstorm programs that could be helpful to dairy farmers.



Lake Erie Regional Grape



New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Small Grape Commodities Survey

Our team deployed pheromone traps at two nurseries and ten vineyards in Chautauqua County, NY, and monitored for three invasive species every two weeks throughout the growing season through September. We are happy to report that no target species were found.



NYS DOT Regulations for Farm Trucks & Equipment

Co-sponsored by Cornell's Lake Erie Regional Grape Program and Chautauqua County Farm Bureau, this program was held on Wednesday, August 2, 2023 from 10:00AM - 12:00 noon, presented by Trooper Matt Luft, NYSP Commercial Vehicle Unit located at the Cornell Lake Erie Research and

Extension Laboratory in Portland, NY. All farm owners and employees who manage or operate farm trucks and equipment were encouraged to participate in this informational presentation on the current regulations for operating farm trucks and equipment on our local roads. This was a free program. Topics discussed included: Defining a "Commercial Motor Vehicle", Licensing and Registrations, Rules of the Road, Size and Weights (permits), and Equipment. The information presented helped keep agricultural businesses in compliance and ensure truck and equipment safety. This highly successful meeting had approximately 50 attendees.

NEWA- Kim Knappenberg, Viticulture Assistant

Thanks to a grant from the New York Wine and Grape Foundation 7 new KestrelMet 6000 weather stations were purchased to increase the range of coverage for both the Lake Erie and Finger Lakes grape regions. Three cellular stations have been installed in the Lake Erie region – Lake City, PA, Newfane, NY, and East Ripley, NY. Two of the four Wi-Fi stations marked for the Finger Lakes Region have been installed – Ovid, NY and Williamson, NY. Two remain to be installed in the next quarter. All of the installed stations are available on the NEWA network. The Brant station received a new datalogger in July and has been very reliable since then. Hiccups are still occurring with the KestrelMet Wi-Fi station at CLEREL in Portland and troubleshooting continues.

Cornell Vegetable Program



RIT graduate student Yvan Hernandez with two bins of watermelons harvested from the field trial. These watermelons were donated to the local food pantry.

Photo: Harshal Kansara



This undersized watermelon fruit couldn't be donated, but that didn't stop it from being put to good use. A chicken farmer made some cuts in the shape of a smile and the birds carved the rest! A tasty treat

for sure! Photo: Kim Knappenberger

Unexpected Benefits

Our watermelon field trial in Portland, NY produced more melons than we knew what to do with. We were able to donate several bins of watermelons to local food pantries. With an average weight of 15 pounds, that adds up to about 2,000 pounds of food! Some of the fruit that were too small to be donated were taken home by staff and used as animal feed. We made sure to use as much of the trial's bounty as possible.

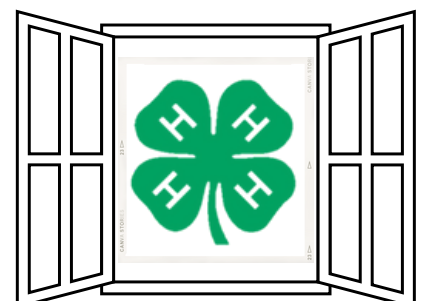
Biodegradable Mulch Project Yields Data and Donations

Plastic mulch is a very thin sheet of black plastic that gets stretched tight over crop beds before planting. It is a very useful tool in vegetable production because it warms the soil. Growers can plant sooner by poking holes through the plastic and placing seedlings into the warm soil. After planting, the black plastic mulch keeps the soil surface dark and prevents weeds from germinating near the crop. That can cut the need for chemical weed killers by as much as half and lead to drastic savings by eliminating hand-weeding! The downside to plastic mulch is that it needs to be removed from the field each fall. While there are a few biodegradable options on the market, they break down very slowly in our cold winter soils and can leave unsightly, incompletely degraded plastic shreds the following spring and summer.

The Cornell Vegetable Program, CCE Monroe, and Rochester Institute of Technology have been working together to develop and field test new biodegradable mulch technologies. The goal of this multiyear project is to solve the problem of slow biodegradable mulch breakdown in colder climates.

This year, one trial was held at Cornell Lake Erie Research and Education Laboratory in Portland, NY (Chautauqua County).

While the data isn't summarized yet, we do have some observations and early indications that we can share! Soil temperatures do differ between the three mulch types. The surface of the RIT film was quicker to warm up in the sun than the commercially available plastic mulches. We also saw that the RIT film had a noticeably different breakdown pattern than the biodegradable mulch comparison. All three films did a good job suppressing annual weeds. Observations suggest that there could be some differences in crop growth and yield between the treatments. We'll have to wait for the data to be fully analyzed before making any conclusions.



4-H Youth Development

In 2023, as a result of past feedback, the CCE 4-H Youth Development team adjusted the public presentation day event. This year included an option for youth that are uncomfortable with public speaking, for various reasons, to have the opportunity to participate. Youth that were not

interested in advancing in the public speaking competition but were willing to go out of their comfort zone were given the opportunity to present to a very limited audience of two evaluators.

If necessary, they were also given the opportunity to receive prompts during their presentation. This new option proved to be worthwhile as we had youth that would not have normally participated step up to work at developing their public speaking skills. Some youth in this category have expressed that they are feeling better about participating in future Presentation Day events at the competitive level. In all, 65 youth ages 5-18 stepped up to the challenge and gave presentations on a wide range of topics. Teams of volunteer evaluators provide feedback to the youth. After each presentation, youth meet with their evaluators to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their presentation. The presentation contest is designed to challenge 4-H'ers skills and knowledge of giving a public presentation while also recognizing their abilities. It provides an opportunity for 4-H'ers to develop and practice communication skills, build self-confidence, enhance knowledge in a selected subject matter area, share information with others and promote the development of skills that will be used for a lifetime. Youth that excel in presenting at the county level contest have can be selected to present at the Western District level and may become

eligible to move onto further experiences and competitions with other 4-H'ers from the state who have also excelled in public speaking.



4-H Youth Development

4-H Youth Development is successful largely because of the community and volunteers that support the program financially and provide endless hours of support. One of our most impactful programs in 2023 was the Green Tie Affair. Aside from this dinner being the biggest fundraiser of the year, it is also a great deal of fun. In 2023, our educator, Lindsey Crisanti felt the kids got more comfortable around her and she enjoyed the exciting atmosphere our community brought with them. She said, "it was really unmatched, between people dressing up, the donations, ALL the volunteer help and the pie auction, we are a really blessed program to have such great support from our community. I think it was the best way to tell everyone, this is who we are, and what we do for these kids."



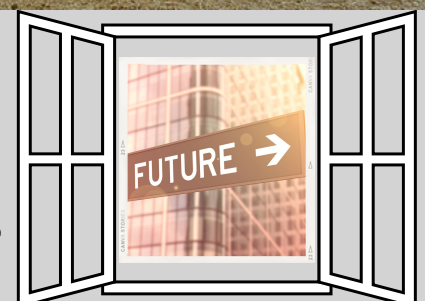
2023 Impacts

- 2437** youth reached through Ag in the Classroom's Ag Literacy Program
- 249** youth enrolled in yearly 4-H programming
- 146** enrolled volunteers
- 7** youth completed Tractor Safety
- 581** youth participated in Conservation Field Days
- 387** youth owned animals were on display at the County Fair
- 767** works of art created by youth were on display at the County Fair
- 65** youth participated in County-Level Public Presentations



"My favorite activity of 2023 was Conservation Field Days. This was the first time that I participated, and it was so fun. The day was beautiful along the shores of Chautauqua Lake. The teachers and students were so grateful for the opportunity and a lot of learning took place."

- Wendy Alexander, Nutrition Educator





In 2024, CCE staff is looking forward to expanding programming.

The agricultural program has plans to work more closely with our regional teams, visiting local farms and assessing community needs. Watch for on farm focus groups, including topics such as robot milking technologies, farm and equipment safety, animal management and more.

The Master Gardener Program is slated to develop a brand-new larger demonstration garden near the JCC Science Center. In the design phase now, the garden hopes to have raised beds, accessible options for everyone and lots of learning space.

4-H Youth can look forward to more options in 2024 as staff are planning more county wide programs for sewing, crocheting and maybe even welding, horticulture and health and safety classes. Teens in 4-H will also have expanded leadership opportunities through our teen ambassador program including college visits and more.

Our nutrition program is expanding. CCE received the NY Food for NY Families grant which includes distribution of local foods to residents in 2024 and 2025. This new program will help us reach new audiences and collaborate more efficiently with local organizations. Our current educators also have plans to increase collaborations and expand programming with new sites in Dunkirk, Jamestown, Gowanda, Ashville, Ripley, and Frewsburg. Additionally, educators are working with participants in goal setting which increases confidence and self-efficacy.





Stay Connected



CCE Chautauqua



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