



## QUICK FACTS

- Extension in Cook County provides programming to more than a half million people each year through hands-on programming, telenets, interactive workshops, videoconferences, electronic clinics, and one-on-one supports.
- Additional funds have been provided to help Extension to help 'level the playing field' in low-resource communities throughout the county.
- The funds were directed to Extension because of its rich history of unbiased, research-based programming that helps people put knowledge to work.
- Extension programs include Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM), Urban Environment & Natural Resources, Civic Engagement & Economic Development, Community Education for Adults & Youth, and Urban Community Health.
- Without the work of Extension, Cook County would not have the University's resources and its expertise at the county's immediate disposal.
- **Conflict Resolution and Personality Inventories are Extension's most requested programs** for youth. In a year when another 21 students have been killed in Chicago, these programs help young people learn how to communicate without violence.
- More than 11,000 volunteer hours were committed this year to public parks, community gardens and schools through Extension's renowned Master Gardener Certification and Volunteer Program
- Cook County's 4-H program began almost 50 years ago in a public housing project when **an educator wanted to prove that 4-H could thrive in urban environments**. The program was a quick success, and today thousands of children participate in 4-H programming in Cook County each year.
- Over the past 6 months, more than 1,500 young people in the county have had hands-on, small-group access to science and technology education via Extension's traveling **Science on the Go** Mobile Science Laboratory.
- Extension provides experts who are needed for such programs as After School Matters, Communities in Schools, and No Child Left Indoors. Our staff provides the portion of programming that requires an expert in the particular field.
- Extension has an umbrella approach to programming that allows us to assess needs in different areas and provide each of the programs needed. Whereas an organization would have to go to several non-profit training institutions to train in grant writing, media outreach, volunteer management, economic development/social entrepreneurship, and Train-the-Trainer classes to work better with their participants, Extension can provide all of that from our single organizational base. This allows us to get to know the client organization, and provide comprehensive long-term support.



## A SAMPLE OF EXTENSION'S IMPACT IN COOK COUNTY

### **FROM COMMUNITY HEALTH: HOWARD AREA COMMUNITY CENTER OBESITY PROJECT**

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"UI Extension has provided Howard Area Community Center with much needed guidance in terms of community pediatric nutrition and parent, teacher, and staff nutrition education. The Rogers Park community has been identified as an "at risk" community for children who are overweight, and is [also] a food desert. Both of these factors leave our children and families vulnerable for long term chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension, but also can severely impair normal growth and development of children."

– *Monica Dillon, Public Health Nurse, HACC*

In 2002, HACC partnered with University of Illinois Extension nutrition programs to come up with solutions for the growing number of overweight children that were enrolled in the family center. Studies show that more children in Chicago are overweight, or at risk for being overweight than in the U.S. or Illinois. Low income neighborhoods are more likely to have more children who are overweight. Over the course of five years, University of Illinois Extension provided nutrition and cooking classes for parents, annual training for teachers, training for cooking staff, and worked collaboratively to develop menus for the child center that included more healthful foods.

**Since UI Extension has been providing professional assistance to the program, 80% of the children who have been identified to be overweight, or at risk for overweight have either maintained their admission weight or have decreased in weight.**

HACC, with the help of Extension, now has a comprehensive Childhood Obesity Plan in place for all programs serving children birth through 5 years old (350 children). Specifically, they serve only fresh fruits and vegetables, cook using healthy methods approved by Extension's registered dietitian, serve no juice and only fat-free milk to children under 2 years old and have incorporated culturally sensitive, low fat options at parent meetings.

### **FROM NUTRITION: Expanded Food & Nutrition Program and Food Stamp Nutrition Education**

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"My experiences have been great cooking in this class. I have learned a lot more than I knew when I started. I found out kids are supposed to get a lot in their daily diet such as fiber and protein. I learned how to chop vegetables. Most important I learned a variety of foods to cook." – *Asia Davis, participant*

"There is no program like Extension. Most programs tell people what to do. Extension explains why it is important, and empowers people to make healthier choices. I have helped people understand their chronic diseases. One man thought if he took his diabetes medication, it would go away. He was treating diabetes like the flu. I've had other [job] offers for more money, but I've stayed here because I have seen that I can make a difference in people's lives." – *Gladys, Extension employee since 1969*

"I've been using the food groups in my daily meal planning when ever possible. I've also been watching my children's sugar and fat intake, also pushing vegetables and fruits. Now I'm learning more about food safety and proper temperature usage." – *Lorlisa Rodgers, participant*

### **FROM CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: EX-OFFENDER RE-ENTRY**

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University of Illinois Extension is working in collaboration with the US Justice Department, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, and the Institute for Public Safety Partnerships to address the issues of violence prevention and reentry of formerly incarcerated men and women.



Large areas of Chicago and Cook County are underserved by the existing network of reentry service providers due in part to a lack of capacity building within (board development, grant application support, achieving 501(c)3 status). The programs offered by Extension improve the capacity of existing providers, support service delivery to this underserved population, and improve collaborative efforts with community-based services. More than 75 re-entry and prevention service organizations are expected to receive programming through Extension this year.

**EXAMPLES INCLUDE:**

Organization Development for reentry providers, Entrepreneurship and workforce preparation for ex-offenders, new immigrant education to collaborate with public safety officials in building safe communities, Youth programs in conflict resolution, goal setting, character education, health, civic engagement, nonviolence and risk prevention.

**FROM STEM: LIFE IN SPACE**

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"Thank you so much. The children always looked forward to you coming. Every day they would ask, "Are the scientists coming today?" I hope you enjoyed coming here just as much as we enjoyed having you. I can't wait to see what you have in store for us next year!" – *Lindsay Annunzio, Science Teacher AT Courtenay School*

The "Life in Space" course reached nearly 500 students at Longwood Elementary, almost 100% of who have become more interested in science after the course. More than 60% are more interested in a scientific career after the course.

**FROM 4-H: ADDING SOUTH SUBURBAN 4-H CLUBS**

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Five newly established clubs in South Suburban Cook County include 54 young people from the traditionally underserved communities of Markham, Ford Heights, Robbins, and Chicago Heights.

**FROM CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: ASIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE**

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At Daniel J. Corkery Elementary School, the students are learning to say "good afternoon" in Japanese, "konnichiwa". This is the first language lesson of many as the children learn about Japanese culture and language. Extension Educator, Magane Koshimura includes the popular puzzling of Sudoku and how-to lessons for using chopsticks to interest the students.

Koshimura received a grant for this "Internationalizing School Curriculum" project. She plans to include a field trip to ethnic communities and foreign-owned companies to this program of cultural competency. Then the classes at Corkery will exclaim, "Arigatou! (Thank you!) for Extension's global citizenship programs!"

**FROM STEM: ASTRONOMY THROUGH 'BEEP'**

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"I have a better idea of how big the solar system really is." – *BEEP Participant*

"I would like to learn the other types of radiations." – *BEEP Participant*

Extension in Cook County was asked by NASA to help pilot an after school or summer program which addresses the lack of Astronomy education in elementary school. The program titled BEEP (Beyond Einstein Explorers Program) is a series of twelve one-hour sessions which look at everything from detection of "invisible" light and how astronomers use it, to how a supernova makes a black hole.

Students had hands on experiences in many different areas including making and using spectrosopes, creating their own "black hole" and constructing a model of the Milky Way.



### **FROM STEM: MATH TO GO TEACHER DEVELOPMENT**

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“Many good ideas on how expanding math activities and knowledge can help with classroom management.”  
– *Math to Go Participant*

Extension provides training by a mathematician to new and seasoned elementary school teachers to enhance their ability to transfer math concepts to their students. Research shows that three out of four fourth-grade math and science teachers in the U.S. have no specialization in those subjects. And students from low-income communities are far less likely to have teachers certified in the subject they teach.<sup>1</sup>

A 2001 investigative report by the Chicago Sun Times found that the majority of teachers who had failed qualifying exams (certification and recertification both general and in specific areas) were located in schools with high numbers of high-risk students.<sup>2</sup> Additionally the report indicated that teacher expertise in science and mathematics in urban areas is significantly below those in suburban and rural areas. Extension is working to stem the tide of inequity in STEM education.

### **FROM YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: IMPROVING MINDS, HEARTS, & SOULS**

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“I feel more under control when I face a tough situation, especially when it is with someone I don’t particularly like.”  
– *IMHS Participant*

“I liked the conflict resolution lectures, because when we talked about bullying and how I should respond to it, I felt more empowered.” – *IMHS Participant*

“I particularly enjoyed learning how to react when a conflict arises.” – *Alexander Graham School Student*

Using proven curriculum, this lecture series helped more than 200 South Chicago youth understand anger triggers and cues and to control their negative responses to situations.

### **FROM YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: EARLY COLLEGE OUTREACH**

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“U of I Extension plays an integral role in the programming that Communities In Schools of Chicago provides throughout the Chicago Public School system. We need to maintain this access to the expertise they offer in Horticulture; Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM); and Health, among other subject areas. We believe that Chicago public school students will suffer a great loss without access to these Educators and their high-quality curriculum, willingness to deliver programs in schools, and their up-to-date knowledge base.”  
– *Jane Mentzinger, Executive Director, Communities In Schools of Chicago*

Lee Y Seras (Learn and You Will Be) is a six-week literacy program for Latino parents and their newborn to 5 year old children. This program provides education for children at a critical age of literacy development to prepare them for elementary school. Currently, only 14% of Latino 4<sup>th</sup> graders, and 9% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders can read at or above basic or advanced skill levels. This program, which is facilitated by Extension, attempts to reverse this trend within Latino communities, given that Latinos will eventually make up more than 25% of Cook County’s population.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Secretary, *Answering the Challenge of a Changing World: Strengthening Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Washington, D.C., 2006

<sup>2</sup> “Failing teachers” *Chicago Sun Times*, September 6, 2001