

# Our Response





*Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County uses Cornell University's cutting-edge research and Cooperative Extension's statewide network of agriculture, environment, 4-H youth development and nutrition teams to ensure our innovative programs serve all of Broome County.*



# *Our Response*

**Agriculture and Agribusiness • Horticulture • Environment • 4-H Youth Development  
Nutrition • Workforce and Community Development**

## Director's Message



Throughout 2020, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County's entire team worked to address the most critical issues facing our community and begin the process of recovery from the pandemic. Although our main offices needed to close, the Broome County Regional Farmers Market and Taste NY store on our Front Street campus were designated as essential services and never closed. Throughout the year, the Farmers Market and Taste store adhered strictly to all NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets and CDC guidelines to ensure a safe food supply.

Unquestionably, all the challenges of the pandemic exerted extraordinary pressures on all of us. But, as has been said, tremendous pressure forges diamonds. Our community is full of diamonds, different shapes, different sizes, different colors. Our Annual Report highlights how our own diamonds—our dedicated team—responded to the pandemic in innovative, creative and caring ways. Our team is honored to have partnered with our community's "diamonds" and all its dedicated volunteers, organizations, schools, businesses and government leaders during these challenging times.

Throughout 2020, supporting Broome County agriculture community remained at the forefront of what we do. Working with Cornell University's South Central New York Dairy & Field Crops team and industry leaders, CCE Broome's Agriculture team helped Broome County farmers ensure food safety. Through our ongoing partnership with NYS Dept. of Ag and Markets, CCE Broome County provided local farms with hand sanitizer and masks to support Broome's agricultural workforce. We worked with the Food Bank of the Southern Tier, CHOW and Binghamton Food Rescue to distribute food at NoMa (North of Main) Community Center and the Lee Barta Community Center in Binghamton. We partnered with Binghamton City School District to provide innovative, virtual STEM programming to high need, underserved youth through 4-H RootED. Through Ag in the Classroom, we reached 7,302 elementary and 342 middle school students in 15 school districts in Broome, Chenango and Tioga counties. We worked with the Town of Union, the United Way of Broome County and Broome County Dept. of Social Services to assist parents suffering from unemployment and other issues associated with COVID-19. When schools were forced to close, we partnered with Broome County Parks, Recreation & Youth Services to provide parents and their children with engaging, hands-on classes at each of the Broome County Parks through Weeks Without Walls: An Outdoor Learning Adventure.

When many businesses and services were forced to close or drastically limit their services, CCE Broome County, we never stopped working. Yet, due to the pandemic, almost all of our fundraisers had to be cancelled. Like many other non-profits, our operating budget is stressed. We are therefore that much more grateful to Broome County Government for their continuing support of our programs. We are grateful to NYS Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo and State Senator Fred Akshar for their commitment to our programs. We are honored by the support CCE Broome receives through our partnerships with NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets, New York Farm Bureau, Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce, United Way of Broome County, Visions Federal Credit Union, Lourdes Auxiliary and NBT Bank. And we grateful to our Board of Directors for their dedicated service. We could not thrive without them!

If you have not visited our Front Street campus, we encourage you to shop at the Regional Farmers Market and Taste NY, spend time in our magnificent Cutler Botanical Garden or participate in one of our community events or classes that highlight the diversity of CCE Broome's programming. We hope you will explore our website, connect with us through Facebook and Instagram, or give us a call. Please let us know how we can help you as we navigate a path to post-COVID recovery.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth Roberts".

Beth Roberts  
Executive Director

# 2020 Board of Directors

## Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County

Cornell Cooperative Extension believes in shared leadership through locally elected Boards of Directors and active program development committees. Cornell Cooperative Extension applies research from Cornell University to strategically develop and implement programs to meet county priorities and critical community issues.

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**JAMES WARD**

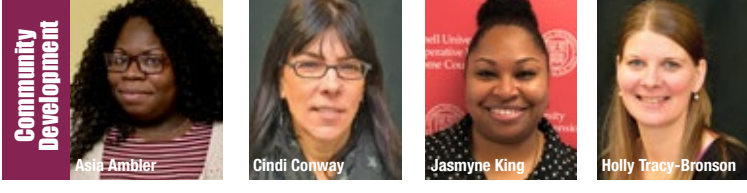
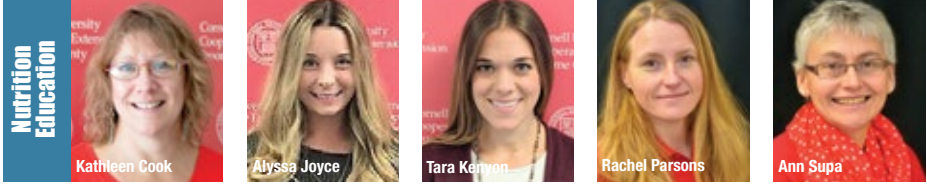
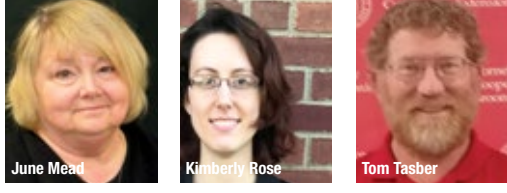
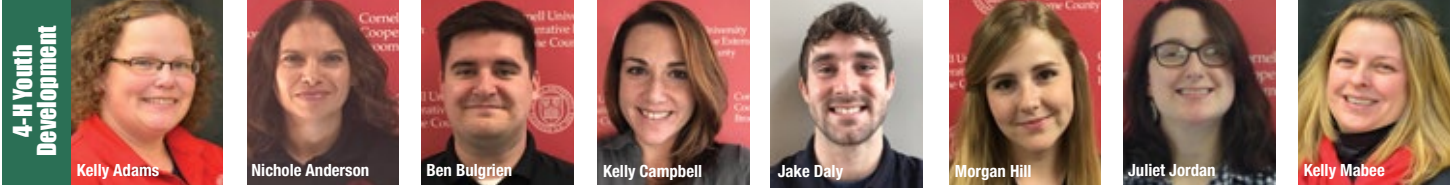
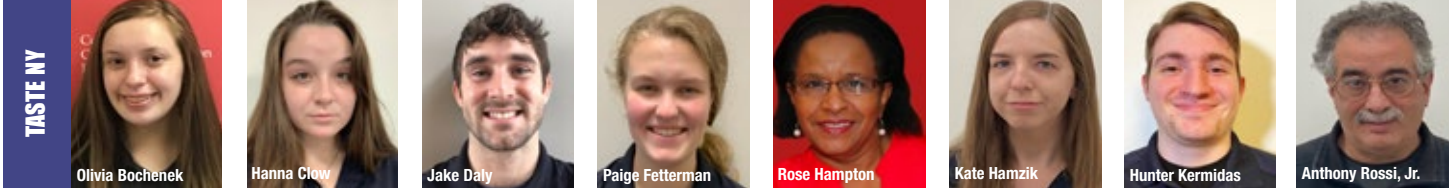
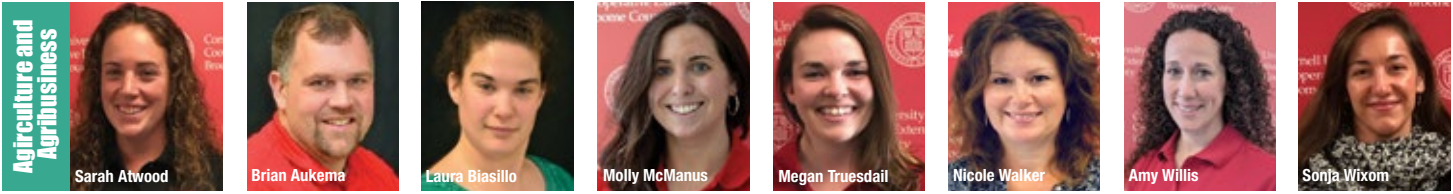
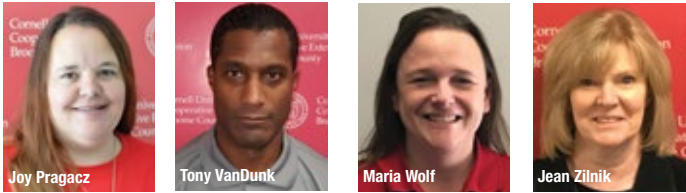
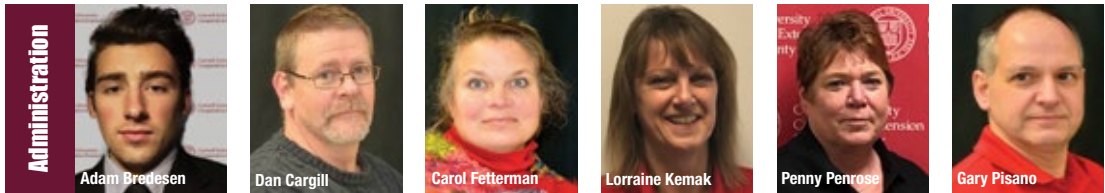
*Attorney, Law Offices of James D. Ward  
Vestal*

**JUDI WHITTAKER**

*Co-owner, Whittaker Dairy Farm  
Whitney Point*



# CCE Broome County Team



# Finance Overview

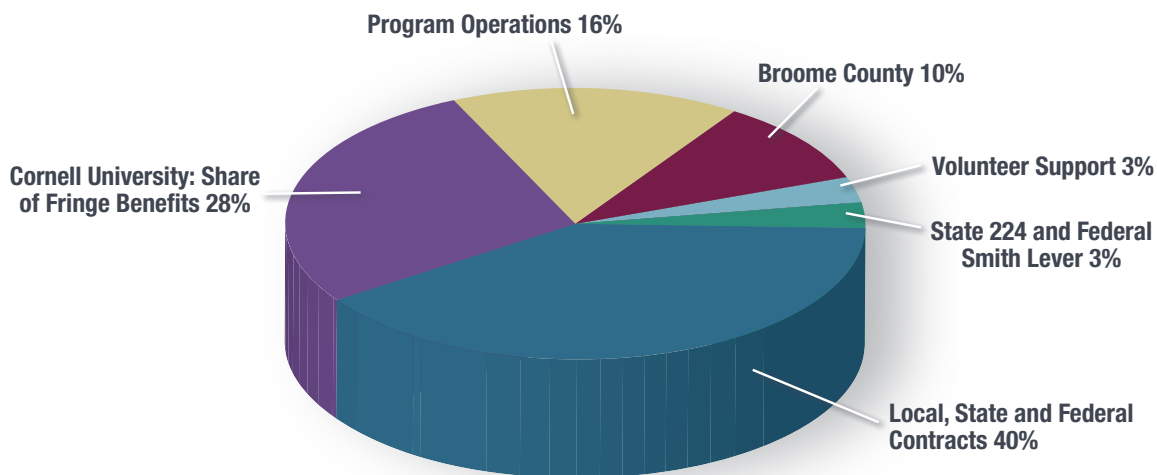
## 2020 Financial Support/Funding Sources

### Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County leverages Broome County tax dollars to benefit the county's economic vitality and invest in the well-being of its residents

In 2020, it is estimated that each dollar of county funding to Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County will be matched by \$8.86 in additional financial, volunteer and Cornell University fringe benefit cost share resources. CCE Broome County's fiscal year ends December 31. Because this report is prepared prior to the fiscal year end, this graph does not represent the actual revenue for 2020. It is based on the estimated 2020 budget.

#### 2020 FUNDING SOURCES

- 40% Local, State and Federal Contracts**—Direct program delivery
- 28% Cornell University: Share of Fringe Benefits**—Direct program delivery (includes donations, user fees, interest earnings and transfers)
- 16% Program Operations**—Direct program delivery (includes donations, user fees, interest earnings and transfers)
- 10% Broome County**—Operations and direct program delivery
- 3% Volunteer Support**—160 volunteers donate over 4,769 hours of time and expertise valued at \$117,734
- 3% State 224 and Federal Smith Lever Funds**—Direct program delivery



Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County is a subordinate governmental agency with an educational mission that operates under a form of organization and administration approved by Cornell University as agent for the State of New York. It is tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The association is part of the national Cooperative Extension System, an educational partnership between County, State and Federal governments. As New York's land grant university, Cornell administers the system in this state. Each Cornell Cooperative Extension association is an independent employer, governed by an elected Board of Directors with general oversight from Cornell. All associations work to meet the needs of the counties in which they are located, as well as state and national goals.

*Cornell Cooperative Extension actively supports equal educational and employment opportunities. No person shall be denied admission to any educational program or activity or be denied employment on the basis of any legally prohibited discrimination involving, but not limited to, such factors as race, color, religion, political beliefs, national or ethnic origin, sex, gender/gender identity, transgender status, sexual orientation, age, marital or family status, protected veterans and individuals with disabilities. Cornell Cooperative Extension is committed to the maintenance of affirmative action programs that will assure the continuation of such equality of opportunity.*



## Agriculture and Agribusiness

### Broome County Regional Farmers Market and Commercial Kitchen

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted every aspect of our lives in 2020. It caused interruptions in food supplies, business “pauses” and closures. But Broome County’s farms never closed. Farmers never stopped working to feed and nourish our community. Designated as an essential business, the Broome County Regional Farmers Market remained open throughout 2020. Throughout the pandemic, the Regional Farmers Market adhered to all of the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets guidelines to ensure a safe, locally sourced food supply. The Farmers Market operates under strict guidelines for social distancing. Customers say they are grateful to have a trusted, safe way to shop for farm-fresh, local products.

The Broome County Regional Farmers Market and Commercial Kitchen team recognized the need to pivot and get creative in transforming its in-person cooking classes into online, Zoom cooking classes. To meet the needs of the Farmers Market customers, many of the vendors created new, online stores in order to offer both pre-order and delivery service options. The Market’s Facebook followers grew to over 11,000 in 2020. Instagram followers grew to over 500.

Throughout the pandemic, the Farmers Market’s generous farmers and vendors donated hundreds of pounds of fresh food to Binghamton Food Rescue. Binghamton Food Rescue provides food at no cost to organizations, such as the Lee Barta Community Center, where access to farm-fresh fruits and vegetables is limited.

In addition, the Farmers Market and Commercial Kitchen team helped food entrepreneurs turn coveted family recipes into production. The team started classes in creating new products and/or new businesses. They helped new catering businesses, such as Boricua Soul Catering & Sweets and Smoke Out Family BBQ & Catering, create business plans and obtain needed licenses. In August 2020 alone, ten new businesses contacted the CCE Broome team to learn how to build successful food-based businesses—and the number continued to grow throughout the year.









## Taste NY

Following designation of Taste NY as an essential part of the state's local food systems, Taste NY markets throughout New York remained open throughout 2020 to support local farms and small agribusinesses.

In Broome County, both Taste NY stores—at 840 Upper Front Street, Binghamton and at the Southern Tier Welcome Center, I-81 Northbound—helped promote agribusinesses and small farms locally and throughout the state. What began back in March as a small decrease in travelers at the Southern Tier Welcome Center in Kirkwood, quickly turned into a complete halt of tour buses and cancelled travel plans.

During these challenging times, Taste NY provided a vital link to introducing both Broome County residents and visitors to the region to New York products. Visitors to Broome County could sample locally sourced food and beverages, such as the Southern Tier's famous spiedies and menu items featuring local businesses such as Binghamton's Di Rienzo Brothers Bakery and Java Joe's Roasting Company.

As Eric Cole from Java Joe's explained, "It's a given that the COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc worldwide. It has been a tough business climate for sure but there has been a beacon of light shining through the murkiness. That light is the Taste NY program. The staff of the Broome County Taste NY markets have been a consistent source of up-to-date information and a resource for our business in serving customers in a safe and effective manner during these uncertain times. The advocacy that has been shown to our small business is second to none. Taste NY is an integral part of our local food supply and we at Java Joe's Roasting Company are grateful to be a



part of such an innovative effective program, serving the community!”

Throughout the year, Taste NY remained focused on helping small businesses survive the economic impacts of the pandemic and providing a safe place to shop for farm-fresh, locally grown products. With decreased travelers and visitors to the region, the Taste NY team pivoted and began sharing stories of Taste NY vendors in order to educate the public about the unique quality of NYS products. At the Front Street location, the Taste NY team created a curbside pick-up option that allowed shoppers to “shop” from the safety of their cars for essentials such as fresh produce, eggs, meats and dairy products. Many shoppers expressed their gratitude for the curbside service.





## Supporting New and Beginning Farmers

Today the average age of farm owners and operators is increasing. New farmers are needed to ensure the future of Broome County agriculture and food systems.

Supporting the next generation of farmers is central to CCE Broome's mission of using research-based knowledge to work toward economic vitality, ecological sustainability and social well-being—while Broome County's economic recovery efforts during and following the pandemic.

The challenges of 2020 left some people questioning job security, some wanting to explore ways to support the “buying local” movement and others wanting to learn more about starting their own farm-based businesses. CCE Broome's programs support young people dreaming of owning their own farms, as well as farmers interested in retiring and starting second careers.

CCE Broome's Ag Team conducts Exploring the Small Farm Dream, a four-week program based on a curriculum from the New England Small Farm Institute. In response to COVID, Exploring the Small Farm Dream, was conducted virtually via Zoom for the very first time. The flexibility of virtual program made it possible for 19 families to learn what it means to

start a farm, learn about labor and financial considerations, market and revenue potential, and what it takes to start a farm or a small agribusiness. The diverse perspectives of the program participants enlivened the discussion, and ultimately helped everyone complete the program feeling prepared to move ahead with their farming dreams.

Take for example the story of Wild Daisy Acres in Whitney Point. Elyssa Ellerson-Jones and Andrew Jones completed the Exploring the Small Farm Dream program in 2020. Through it, the new goat farm owners realized how much they could benefit from CCE Broome's technical assistance. With the support of the Ag Team, the Elyssa and Andrew were able to complete a business plan, apply for a FarmStart new farmer loan from Farm Credit East and get their goat milk products business off to a great start.



## Farm Food Safety

COVID-19 meant new safety rules and regulations for farms, farmers markets, farm stands and agritourism throughout Broome County. The goal of the NY Forward Business Safety Plan is to protect farm workers, employees and customers while ensuring no interruption to farm-related sales during the pandemic.

During 2020, CCE Broome's Agriculture Team focused on supporting Broome County farmers and ensuring food safety by working in partnership with Cornell University's College of Agriculture & Life Sciences, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, NY Farm Bureau and the NY Extension Disaster Education Network (NY EDEN). The Ag Team worked with over 250 farms and farmers markets across the state to develop and implement their NY Forward Farm Safety Plans. CCE Broome's strong partnership with the Farmers Market Federation of NY facilitated the creation of webinars and templates to help farmers market managers develop their plans.

CCE Broome's Ag Team was part of a Cornell University Task Force convened to develop materials to support farms in implementing their safety plans. The Ag Team co-led webinars to walk retail farms through the process of completing safety plans. Over 75 farms attended these webinars.

All vendors at the Broome County Regional Farmers Market completed safety plans and submitted them for approval to CCE Broome's Market Manager. CCE Broome's strong relationships with the local agricultural community meant both the farmers and vendors could trust the Ag Team to create safety plans that met their own health and safety concerns, as well as those of the public.

Through CCE Broome's partnership with NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, the Ag Team distributed one-gallon pump containers of hand sanitizer and face coverings, free of charge, to all the farmers and vendors in Regional Farmers Market, as well as farmers throughout Broome County to support safe workplace practices and keep the agriculture workforce healthy during the pandemic. NYS Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo, Chair of the Committee on Agriculture, assisted the Ag Team in distributing the sanitizer and masks.

As Judi Whittaker, Whittaker Farms, Whitney Point explained, "We have 15 employees on our dairy farm who will be utilizing these items. We really appreciate having the hand sanitizers and face coverings, especially because they have been in such short supply."

ALERT:  
**WEBINAR SERIES-**



**NYS Business**

**Safety Plan Resources-**

**ALL BUSINESSES**

**MUST COMPLETE!**

See industry specific resources & tips for completing your farms plan NOW!



Click the Link to Register TODAY.



## Community Garden Program

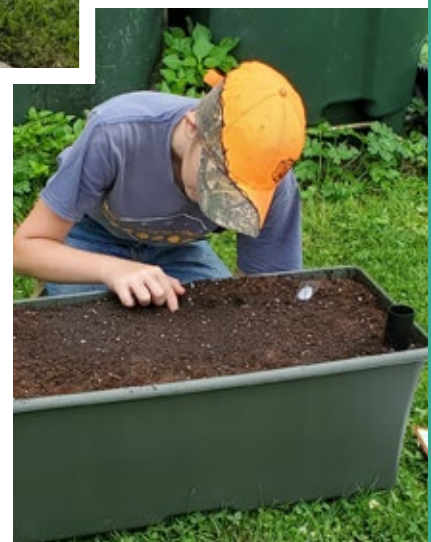
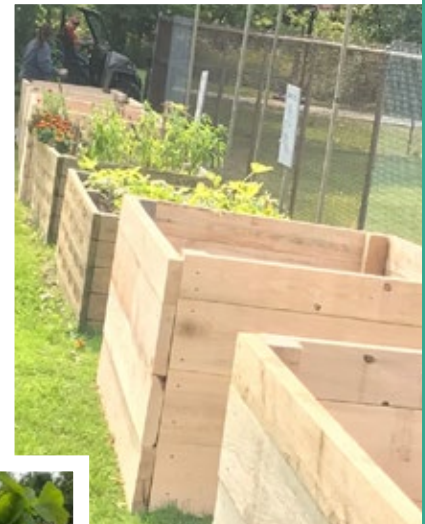
Responding to concerns about the spread of COVID-19, CCE Broome County's Ag in the Classroom (AITC) educators, Nutrition educators and Master Gardener Volunteers joined forces to educate families about food safety, thanks to the Community Garden Grant for Rural Communities and a collaboration with NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. The purpose of the grant was to help rural families and seniors learn where food comes from and how to grow their own fruits and vegetables.

Working in partnership with the school districts in Susquehanna Valley, Harpursville, Windsor and Whitney Point, Whitney Point Senior Center and Harpursville Senior Center, the CCE Broome team assembled and distributed 350 EarthBox® grow box kits.

Through the partnership, CCE Broome's AITC educators organized and assembled EarthBox® kits with everything needed to successfully establish home gardens. Due to COVID safety guidelines and school closures, community members were notified about the grow box kit giveaways through the summer lunch distribution sites, Facebook announcements and email blasts. Families could reserve the EarthBox® kits online and then schedule contact-free deliveries. Once the kits were delivered, families were invited to participate in the CCE Broome team's virtual classes and learn how to successfully grow cool weather crops such as lettuce, spinach, radishes and kale. As families began harvesting their crops, CCE Broome's Nutrition educators invited them to participate in Zoom "cook along" webinars and learn how to prepare healthy and nutritious recipes.

In addition, the CCE Broome team constructed 17 handicap accessible raised garden beds at two community sites, one at the Lisle Community Garden and one at the Castle Creek United Methodist Church. The team also constructed compost bins and helped community members learn about the life cycle of plants and how to re-establish nutrients in the soil through composting.

Thanks to the Community Garden Grant for Rural Communities, 350 EarthBox® grow boxes were distributed, 17 handicap accessible, raised beds were built and planted in four community locations, and a series of live, interactive webinars were conducted by CCE Broome's Nutrition educators and Master Gardener Volunteers.





## Ag in the Classroom

CCE Broome County's Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) is designed to help students gain a greater appreciation for agriculture's impact on communities and highlight the benefits of pursuing careers in this growing multi-billion-dollar food systems industry. AITC is a partnership between area participating school districts and CCE Broome. All AITC lessons are aligned with the NYS P-12 Common Core Learning Standards. AITC is supported through the offices of NYS Senator Fred Akshar and Broome-Tioga BOCES.

During the 2019-2020 school year, AITC reached 7,302 elementary and 342 middle school students in 15 school districts in Broome, Chenango and Tioga Counties. Each participating elementary school received 70 hours of programming or a total of 140 30-minute lessons. The AITC middle school program in Windsor received 179 days of 45-minute lessons.



When COVID-19 caused the abrupt closure of schools, CCE Broome's AITC educators pivoted, got creative and provided innovative virtual programming—without interruption—to students and teachers across Broome, Tioga and Chenango Counties in 15 school districts: Bainbridge-Guilford, Chenango Forks, Chenango Valley, Deposit, Harpursville, Johnson City, Maine-Endwell, Newark Valley, Owego-Apalachin, Susquehanna Valley, Tioga, Union-Endicott, Vestal, Whitney Point and Windsor.

The AITC team transformed classroom lessons into a series of lively online classes using Zoom. The AITC virtual programming included the launch of an AITC YouTube channel, virtual field trips, development of an AITC Facebook and CCE Broome AITC website, as innovative online resources for teachers, parents and students. The AITC educators conducted 46 virtual field trips to farms and agribusinesses throughout the region. Through the AITC website, students across the region were able to witness farm animals being born, learn about the modern technologies being used on today's farms and careers in the food systems industry.





### *Weeks Without Walls: An Outdoor Learning Adventure*

With the start of school in the fall and need to transition to virtual, at-home instruction, CCE Broome’s educators teamed with Broome County Parks, Recreation & Youth Services to conduct *Weeks Without Walls: An Outdoor Learning Adventure*. These free, hands-on, interactive classes provided parents and their children with activities to supplement their at-home learning. The classes were conducted at each of the Broome County Parks, Nathaniel Cole, Dorchester, Greenwood and Otsiningo, and conducted by CCE Broome’s 4-H Youth Development, AITC and Nutrition educators. COVID-19 safety guidelines were strictly followed.

The educators conducted lessons in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), agriculture, nutrition and the environment designed to give parents project ideas and supply kits they could use at home to enhance their children’s virtual learning.

The AITC educators presented a series of lessons on goats, chickens, lamb, grapes, apples, cranberries and pumpkins. All of the AITC Weeks Without Walls classes filled quickly to capacity.





## South Central New York Dairy & Field Crops responds to COVID-19

The South Central NY Dairy and Field Crops (SCNYD&FC) Team responds quickly to emerging issues and develops programming to meet evolving industry needs. COVID-19 brought unprecedented challenges and uncertainty to dairy producers. The SCNYD&FC team's coordinated response and programming demonstrate its adaptability and responsiveness to the needs of Broome County farmers.

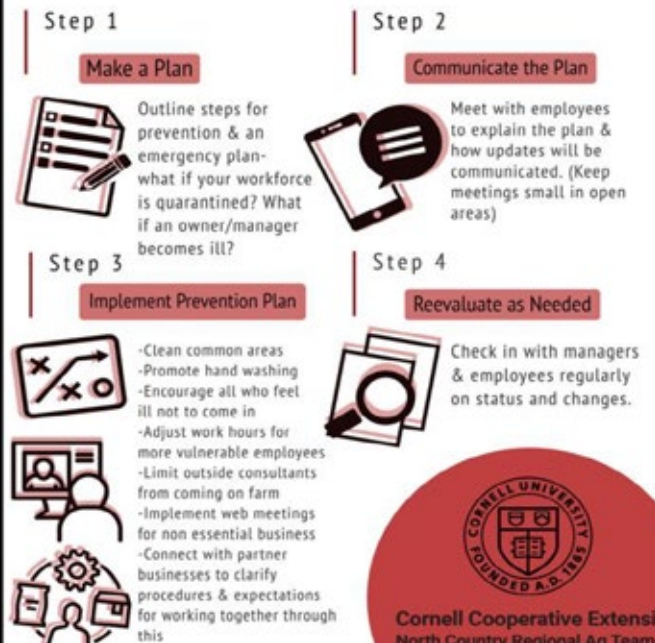
With the arrival of the pandemic, farmers needed reliable information about the disease and how to reduce the risk of outbreaks on their farms. The SCNYD&FC team provided information from trusted sources, including Cornell Ag Workforce Development and the CDC, along with the information needed most by dairy farmers. The SCNYD&FC team's blog post, *Biosecurity for People: 7 Steps to Protect Farm Workers from COVID-19*, was viewed by 700 people. The New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health featured it on their website. To reach Hispanic farm workers with this information, the SCNYD&FC team shared information and tools in Spanish.

The impact of COVID-19 on restaurant sales and dairy exports hit the dairy industry hard, with the price of milk falling 20% in one month, from \$18.00 per cow in March to \$14.40 in April. In response to unprecedented reports of milk dumping, the SCNYD&FC team worked with Dairy Farmers of America on a new program through which dairy farmers would be paid for 85% of the volume of milk produced in March.

The SCNYD&FC team worked with a statewide network of farm business management specialists. They set up a system to streamline communications and shared regular updates on COVID safety, dairy markets and government policy. The team worked with PRO-DAIRY specialists to share information about managing cash flows during low price cycles to feeding milk to cows and provided these resources, including some in Spanish, to the region's dairy industry.

In addition, the SCNYD&FC team shared resources developed by CCE educators and Cornell University faculty on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) and Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, while continuing to provide individual assistance on topics related to PPP, EIDL, employee management, price risk management, value added processing and other COVID-19 related issues.

## HOW TO MANAGE COVID 19 RISK ON DAIRY FARMS



### SCNYD&FC Team

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## Horticulture

CCE Broome Horticulture and the Master Gardener Volunteers committed themselves to keeping the Cutler Botanic Garden open throughout the year, as a safe place for Broome County residents to connect with nature and be a refuge from the pressures of the pandemic. A dedicated core group of Master Gardener Volunteers came regularly to plan, plant and maintain the garden. Work sessions were divided up into different days to reduce group size, masks were worn and social distancing was practiced.

The Cutler Botanic Garden is a center for teaching horticulture and environmental issues. The garden encourages an appreciation of the environment and helps teach the value of natural resources through educational activities. Cutler Botanic Garden includes a large daylily collection, composting demonstration site, rainwater collection demonstration, plants native to the northeast, herb garden and hundreds of annual flowers throughout the grounds. The garden serves as a 4.5-acre demonstration site for tourism, relaxation and as an event venue for special events such as weddings, prom pictures, yoga clubs, painting and photography club classes. The vegetable garden features demonstrations on season extension, raised bed gardening, handicapped accessible gardening and vegetables suitable for the region.



CCE Broome's Horticulture Department adapted in-person classes to virtual classes. Eleven classes were conducted via Zoom. Growing Culinary Herbs and Creating a Butterfly Garden were the most popular classes—with many classes repeated due to popular demand. In total, 568 individuals participated in classes.

CCE Broome's Master Gardeners Volunteers serve a unique role. Throughout the year, CCE Broome's dedicated core of Master Gardeners Volunteers came regularly to the Cutler Botanic Garden—despite the pandemic—to plan, plant and maintain the gardens. Under the supervision of Horticulture Educator, Linda Svoboda, the Master Gardeners serve as caretakers of Cutler Botanic Garden, planning the garden in the winter, planting and caring for the garden and harvesting fruits and vegetables in the spring and summer.

In 2020, Christine Davies, John Greene, Edie Johnson and Rita Maddi successfully completed the comprehensive, year-long Master Gardener Volunteer training. The training consists of training in plant science, entomology, soil and fertilizers, ornamentals and horticultural topics.



Fruits and vegetables harvested by the Master Gardeners from the Cutler Botanic Garden were donated weekly to CHOW and Binghamton Food Rescue. During 2020, over 800 pounds of fresh produce were donated to area food banks and pantries throughout the growing season.

As food safety concerns associated with the pandemic grew, there was increased interest in home vegetable gardening. CCE Broome Horticulture responded to over 420 calls, visits, emails and Facebook posted questions. Assistance was provided on a range of topics including free diagnostic services, plant identification, insect identification, plant diseases and other home gardening questions.

The Master Gardeners contributed over 4,000 hours of service in 2020 for an estimated value of more than \$108,000. The volunteers gave presentations through the Speakers Bureau to garden clubs, civic groups and other organizations throughout New York, reaching 238 participants through 11 Zoom presentations.



## Environment

As families and individuals spent more time at home this year, residential waste significantly increased across Broome County. Online ordering and food deliveries offered convenient and safe options for residents but generated an increase in packaging waste. News stories of municipalities across the country that suspended recycling collection due to budget constraints led some residents to believe the same might be true in Broome County.

In response, CCE Broome's Environment educator, Josh Enderle focused on developing new programs to empower Broome residents to put the 3 R's—Reduce, Reuse, Recycle—into practice.

CCE Broome Environment visited three VINES Community Gardens to assist with starting and maintaining composting bins. The VINES Community Garden Coordinators at the Abbott Street, Corbett Avenue and Park Street locations learned how to manage food waste. Electronic and hard copies of CCE Broome's food composting handouts were shared with the Garden Coordinators and a new series of videos were created to demonstrate the best management practices for composting.

Throughout 2020, CCE Broome Environment partnered with NoMa (North of Main) Community Center in Binghamton to host a series of "Free Swap" events in where community members could 'swap' household items they no longer needed for things for things they could use. Items at the Free Swap events typically included silverware, plates, mugs, glasses, home décor, books, toys, games and sports equipment.

By collaborating with Broome County, CCE Broome Environment's live "Recycling Q+A," hosted on Facebook, allowed people to directly ask the Broome County Recycling Coordinator and CCE Broome's Environment educator the questions that were on their minds. For example, one participant asked, "With the pandemic and wanting to support our local restaurants, are there ways to easily avoid Styrofoam and clamshells?" Each video has been uploaded to the CCE Broome Online Learning YouTube channel for easy access.

In addition, CCE Broome Environment collaborated with Broome County Division of Solid Waste Management Recycling Coordinator to create a series of videos about the county's commitment to recycling. These conversational-style instructional videos are focused on common paper and plastic products from online orders and food delivery.





# 4-H Youth Development

## 4-H Project Showcase

“Visits to Members’ Homes and Projects,” a chapter in a 1952 Cornell University Press publication, A 4-H Handbook, states, “The visit is one of the most effective ways of instructing members and showing the entire family that the leader is interested in them. As the leader shows an interest in the members they become more responsive and sense a feeling of greater obligation to themselves as well as to the club.”

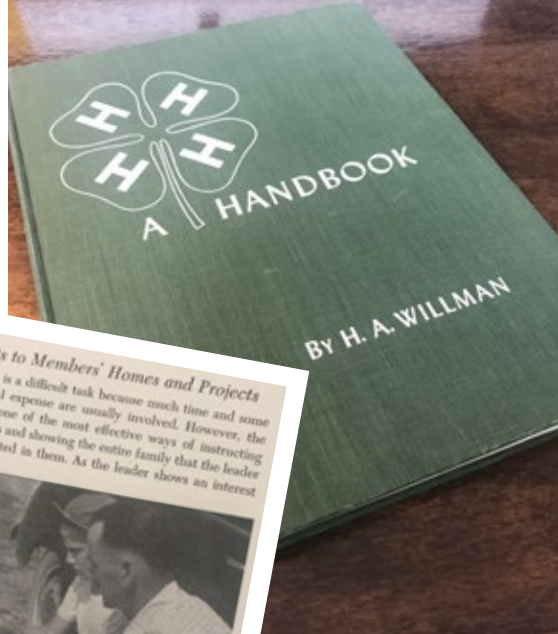
When the pandemic results in the postponement of in-person 4-H club meetings and cancellation of the Broome County Fair, CCE Broome County’s 4-H Educators pivoted and returned to its roots of making visits to members’ homes, focus on the members’ projects to strengthen connections with and support for the 4-H youth and families.

As 4-H meetings and events were put on hold, 4-H Projects and the 4-H Project Showcase took center stage. The CCE Broome 4-H Educators hit the road to visit more than 40 4-H’ers at their homes and on their farms to learn more about their projects. This lost tradition of regular visits by the educators provided these young people with individualized encouragement, support and guidance for achieving their personal goals.

This support, especially during all the upheaval, uncertainty and stress caused by the pandemic, translated into tremendous growth among the 4-H’ers. Their confidence bloomed and their accomplishments took center stage as they shared their latest insights and discoveries about themselves and what it means to be part of 4-H.

As CCE Broome’s 4-H Educators met with members, they discovered far more than what can be showcased typically at the fair. Sparks for gardening, crop work and machinery were evident during these home visits.

The 4-H Youth Development program has continued to evolve since it began in 1902 to reflect the latest advancements in youth development research. By keeping connections at its core and continuing to provide youth with hands-on learning opportunities to help them grow into competent, caring, contributing members of society, CCE Broome County’s 4-H program in 2020 demonstrated that 4-H is strong and continues to grow in Broome County.



## NYS 4-H Geospatial Program

Throughout 2020, Kelly Adams, CCE Broome 4-H Educator worked with the NYS 4-H GIS/GPS Leadership Team and NYS 4-H Geospatial Team to increase 4-H'ers' interest in the geospatial field. The focus of the team is to help 4-H youth learn how to utilize GIS/GPS mapping to tackle issues facing their communities, inspire community improvement and provide the public with the information to address societal issues.

Even before the pandemic, having a strong online community was the norm for the NYS 4-H Geospatial Team and 4-H members. The 4-H Geospatial Program's virtual community allowed a geographically diverse group of youth, from California, Nevada, Tennessee, Louisiana, North Carolina and throughout New York to participate.

The NYS 4-H Geospatial Team held its first meeting, virtually, in March. The group meets monthly, hosting fun, geospatial games and providing training on mapping software. The software is provided at no charge from the NYS 4-H Geospatial Team's industry partner, ESRI. The group participated in an online Moodle course with activities, discussions and information about statewide and national opportunities for youth to use GIS/GPS to address the most critical issues facing their communities. The software the 4-H youth learned to use is the same used to generate COVID-19 dashboards.

During 2020, Broome's 4-H Geospatial Team worked with Cornell University faculty on a ditch mapping project, designed to assist local Department of Transportation offices in developing best practices for ditch management and identifying strategies communities can use to avoid the negative effects of ditch run-offs into rivers and streams.

The National GIS/GPS Leadership Team is comprised of 4-H youth, staff and industry partners. The team meets virtually each month to work on national level projects, get updates on state level projects and participate in ongoing professional development.

Typically, the National GIS/GPS Leadership Team and NYS 4-H Geospatial Team meet in San Diego, CA for the International ESRI Educator and User's Conference to present a variety of workshops. Conference attendance normally exceeds 17,000. With the pandemic, the ESRI conference moved to a virtual platform. The NYS 4-H Geospatial Team met nightly to recap what they had learned and share new information they felt could enhance the team's projects.

After the ESRI Educator and User's Conference, the NYS 4-H Geospatial Team committed itself to working on projects to address the spike in food insecurity caused by the pandemic. One outcome? The Geospatial Team has developed "Where's the Food?" an app people can use to find out the location of food distribution sites.



## Empire State Afterschool Program (RootED)

RootED's programming is "rooted" in education, in inspiring Science, Technology, Engineering, Art/ Agriculture and Math (STEAM) careers and in community improvement. The goal of RootED is to inspire high-need, at-risk youth to succeed in school, life and future careers.

At the beginning of 2020, CCE Broome's team of RootED 4-H educators from worked closely with Binghamton City School District (BCSD) to conduct RootED at all seven elementary schools and two middle schools, serving over 225 students. When the pandemic struck in March, RootED had to change in order to continue providing an individualized, hands-on program for high-need youth virtually?

Initially, RootED focused on providing electronic STEM/ STEAM resources for RootED parents and youth along with STEAM lessons/activities that families could use at home. The RootED educators produced a series of YouTube videos for the RootED youth so that the youth and their families could see how to carry out the activities and then follow along.

Next RootED on Tour got underway. Packets with paper cut-outs of each of the RootED educators' avatars on popsicle sticks were mailed to all the RootED youth/ families. The educators challenged the youth to document their adventures with their educators' avatars by posting photos of their adventures on RootED's Facebook page. The result was a series of terrific photos of RootED youth blowing bubbles, taking their dogs for walks and building spaghetti and marshmallow towers—with their RootED educators' avatars.

To celebrate the end of a challenging school year, the RootED educators put together Rube Goldberg Challenge Kits, filled with an assortment of materials, dominos and ping pong balls. The kits were mailed to all the RootED youth, along with a challenge to create a Rube Goldberg machine and then submit a video or photos through RootED's Facebook to win prizes. To model the challenge for the youth, the RootED team created a YouTube video of Miss Morgan building a Rube Goldberg. There were four outstanding Rube Goldberg Challenge winners.

The summer brought the challenge of how to conduct virtual summer camps for BCSD's Imagination Adventure. Once the BCSD teachers determined the academic portion of the camps, the RootED educators developed STEAM activities, appropriate for grades K-4 and uploaded videos to the Imagination Adventure website, using Google Classroom and Flipgrid. For example, working with the Kindergarten students, Mr. Ben created an engaging video called, Gummy Bears and the Scientific Method with Mr. Ben.





## 4-H UNITY

When the pandemic struck, CCE Broome County's 4-H Urban Neighborhoods Improved Through Youth (4-H UNITY) team realized they needed to find innovative ways to continue programming, conduct community improvement projects, build family connections and conduct a summer work experience. 4-H UNITY found a way.

During COVID-19 NY Pause and orders to “shelter in place,” the UNITY Endicott Teen Leaders got concerned, seeing other young people not social distancing, not wearing masks, not staying home—they created a PSA on YouTube, #IStayHomeFor to help their community.

Partnering with Visions Federal Credit Union for a financial literacy workshop, Kelly Mabee, UNITY project coordinator and Cindi Conway, UNITY parent coordinator, delivered lunch along with information from Visions to the Teen Leaders' homes. Asia Ambler, UNITY co-project coordinator, assisted Colleen Barton, Visions Financial Wellness Officer, in conducting the Zoom training.

In July, UNITY was selected by Dr. Bonita Williams, National Program Leader, NIFA/USDA, to represent CYFAR in the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine's

Forum for Children Well-Being. Teen Leader Bri Attey spoke about the role racism has in how youth of color experience the pandemic. Nearly 2,000 leaders in the youth development field participated in the forum.

In the summer, UNITY served on the planning committee for Today's Leaders: A Virtual Civic Engagement Conference Ensuring the Visibility of Youth for a Better Tomorrow, sponsored by Cornell University's Civic Engagement Program Work Team, and presented a workshop on race and antiracism.

In September, the Mental Health Association in NYS hosted *Reflecting, Rethinking, Responding to Support Student Mental Health Needs*. UNITY Teen Leader Bri was invited to serve as a panelist. Coincidentally, NYS Senator Fred Akshar presented Bri with an “Akshar's All-Stars” award, to recognize students who have distinguished themselves through leadership and community service.

In the fall, the UNITY Teen Leaders conducted, “Race and Reconciliation Conversations,” for Cornell Cooperative Extension's *Remaining Whole, Human, and Hopeful in a Time of Social Distancing Series*, coordinated by Sara Jablonski, CCE Erie County Urban 4-H and Eduardo González, Jr., State Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Specialist. Post-workshop comments were extremely positive. One educator said, “What an incredible group of young people in UNITY. I am so impressed by their vulnerability in sharing their experiences, and for taking this topic by the reigns and presenting it to CCE. I am so inspired!” In fact, UNITY Endicott's focus on race and racism spearheaded 4-H programs in CCE Ulster and CCE Orange to create similar anti-racism action groups for teens.

In December, CCE Broome Nutrition educators, Ann Supa and Rachel Parsons, led a virtual family engagement “cook along” focusing on food safety and budgeting. To celebrate the holidays, UNITY held a gingerbread house decorating contest.

4-H UNITY is a CYFAR Program Sustainable Community Project, conducted by CCE Broome and CCE Monroe in partnership with NYS 4-H, Cornell University. The project is supported by Smith Lever funds, NIFA/USDA.







## 4-H Education Center at Finch Hollow

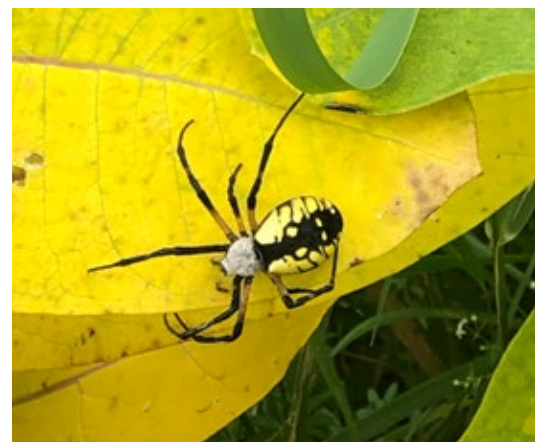
When the in-school CCE Broome County 4-H Education Center at Finch Hollow program had to be halted, the 4-H team began developing new opportunities for youth to disconnect from technology and connect with nature. The isolation of remote at-home learning increased requests from families for new ways to connect with nature and created the perfect opportunity for collaboration with Broome County Parks, Recreation & Youth Services.

The result of the collaboration was a series of engaging, hands-on outdoor experiences at each of the Broome County Parks called, *Weeks Without Walls: An Outdoor Learning Adventure*. These free, interactive, hands-on lessons at Broome County's four parks, Nathaniel Cole, Dorchester, Greenwood and Otsiningo, were conducted by teams of educators from the 4-H Education Center at Finch Hollow and CCE Broome County.

CCE Broome's naturalist, Tom Tasber, conducted three different programs for *Weeks Without Walls*. *Trees, Birds and Ecosystems* was an introductory guided nature walk exploring the ecosystems of the parks, including the trees, birds, insects and plants. *Fall Trees Nature Walk* provided families with opportunities to enjoy the changing colors of fall, learn about trees and how to identify the different types. *Tracks and Traces Nature Walk* provided opportunities for families to explore and learn more about the animals in the parks, and learn how to interpret animal tracks and the traces they leave behind.

Families thoroughly enjoyed exploring Broome County's four parks through a new lens. Youth gained an insider's view of plants and wildlife throughout the parks while getting to ask the 4-H educators questions. On one of the nature walks, families got a up-close view of an orb weaver Black and Yellow Argiope spider.

CCE Broome 4-H educators at Finch Hollow look forward to continuing to develop creative ways to support the needs of Broome County families and youth, as they connect with nature and learn about the world around them.



# Nutrition

## Community Nutrition

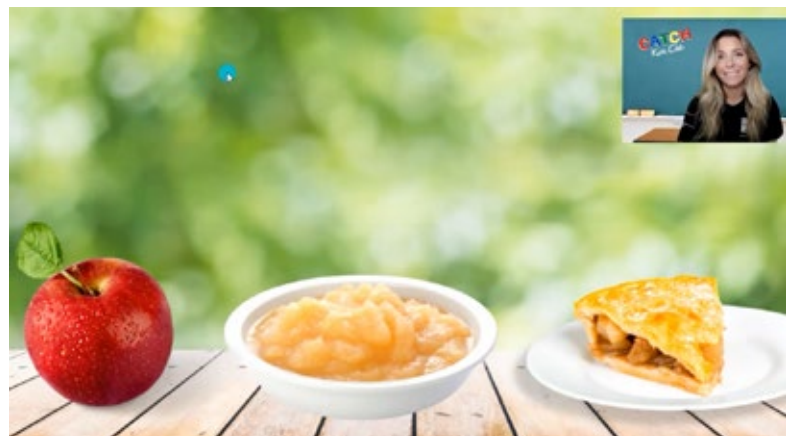
When the pandemic stuck, CCE Broome County's Nutrition team found new ways to serve Broome County's families with their nutritional needs, help them make healthy food choices, get physical activity and stretch their food dollars—and remain focused on meeting the needs of Broome's most vulnerable families.

As schools transitioned to online, virtual learning models, the Nutrition team worked with CCE Broome's Environment and Ag in the Classroom teams to create a public service announcement, highlighting all the free programs from CCE Broome to support virtual learning. In addition, the Nutrition team transformed programming for both the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) into virtual classes for both youth and adults.

CCE Broome Nutrition partnered with WIVT/WBGH NewsChannel 34 and began *Nutrition in the Kitchen*. The television program airs once a month, and highlights farm fresh ingredients available at the Broome County Regional Farmers Market. Each month, one of CCE Broome's Nutrition educators is filmed while preparing the recipe in the Farmers Market's Commercial Kitchen. Brussel sprouts, acorn squash and Jerusalem artichokes were featured in recipes in the first three episodes. The episodes can also be viewed on CCE Broome's website at: [ccebroomecounty.com](http://ccebroomecounty.com).

With escalating number of people in Broome County coping with food insecurity as a result of the pandemic, NYS Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo enlisted the help of CCE Broome Nutrition and CHOW to provide free holiday meals for families in need. Through the generosity of the community, over \$5,000 was raised, 85 Holiday Giving Boxes were filled and over 400 people were fed. Each Holiday Giving Box contained a frozen turkey, stuffing, gravy and canned goods, as well as fresh produce from the Regional Farmers Market including sweet potatoes, white potatoes, winter squash, carrots, onions and homemade pies. Each family also received a holiday cookbook created by CCE Broome's Nutrition team.

Les Aylesworth, CHOW/Broome County Director said, "The Holiday Giving Box initiative has once again shown the character of our community. To see our original goal of 50 boxes surpassed by the generosity in Broome County reminds us that this truly is a season for giving. CHOW is honored to have partnered with Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo and CCE Broome County to help these families."





## Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Broome County has a higher percentage of individuals receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits than the state average, 16.3% versus 15.4% respectively. Over 34% of youth and 54.5% of adults in Broome are classified as overweight and/or obese. Nearly 14% of children 2 to 4 years old are obese. Recognizing the nutritional needs facing Broome County low-income families in 2020, CCE Broome's SNAP educators focused on helping those most in need.

Typically, CCE Broome's SNAP educators deliver hands-on, interactive programming in schools, senior centers, libraries and community centers. The pandemic meant the SNAP educators needed to adapt. Initially, the educators distributed as many nutrition handouts as possible. Recipe cards, food safety, resource management, information about increasing physical activity, drinking water, increasing daily intake of fruits, vegetables, grains and choosing leaner proteins and low-fat dairy were widely shared. CCE Broome's SNAP team collaborated with SNAP educators throughout the state to develop a series of nutrition newsletters geared towards elementary youth, middle school youth and adults. The CCE Broome educators also created a bi-weekly tip sheet tailored to the nutritional needs of seniors.

Throughout the pandemic, CCE Broome's SNAP educators delivered thousands of nutrition handouts to food pantries, farmers market, churches and community centers. Handouts were distributed to over 4,000 families through the Food Bank

of the Southern Tier, to 250 families through the Binghamton Food Rescue, 300 families through the Community Hunger Outreach Warehouse (CHOW), 300 families through Broome County's Department of Social Services and 300 senior citizens. Using social media, resources were shared through CCE Broome's Nutrition Program's Facebook page and CCE Broome website, averaging 7,000 posts every month throughout the pandemic.

During the summer, CCE Broome's SNAP educators were asked to create a series of videos for young people, based on the Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) curriculum. The videos focus on the importance of increasing physical activity, utilizing USDA's MyPlate, increasing fruit, vegetable, whole grains and fiber consumption and decreasing the use of sugar-sweetened beverages. Counties throughout the Southern Tier now use these videos for their virtual programming with school-age youth.

In the fall, CCE Broome partnered with Broome County Parks to conduct *Weeks Without Walls: An Outdoor Learning Adventure*. The Nutrition Team delivered 28 free SNAP-based classes at Broome County's Nathaniel Cole, Dorchester, Greenwood and Otsiningo parks. The classes provided an opportunity for families to supplement or enhance their children's remote, virtual and hybrid school programs. The lessons included "Re-Think Your Drink," "Get Moving," "Fuel Up on Fruits and Vegetables," "Picnic in the Park" and "Lunch and Learn."





## Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program

When the pandemic struck, CCE Broome County's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) educators got creative and adapted quickly to serving high-need, low-income families through a series of virtual Zoom classes on health, wellness and nutrition.

For example, CCE Broome's EFNEP educators collaborated with Hillside Children's Center, an organization that provides care for youth and families wide range of emotional and behavioral challenges, to provide a series of virtual nutrition education lessons. Hillside provided funding to make it possible to offer families incentives that reinforced the lesson concepts. Hillside's funding made it possible to provide recipe ingredients so that families could prepare the meals, shared during the EFNEP classes. The funding also made it possible to give participants container gardens with starter plants and herbs, some small kitchen utensils and prizes for perfect class attendance. CCE Broome's Nutrition educators co-facilitated the Zoom classes, allowing the EFNEP educators to be responsive to questions from the families in the chat box, address any technology issues and keep the lessons running smoothly.

CCE Broome's EFNEP educators gained new skills as they transitioned to presenting information virtually. Families found the experience was a way for them to get together safely with their friends, amid social distancing and COVID safety concerns. Children involved in the classes thoroughly enjoyed seeing their friends on Zoom. Several families shared that they were giving their children more mealtime chores and that their families were making better food choices. At the conclusion of the classes, Hillside team reported, "Families are telling us how much they enjoyed the program. It's a nice relaxing break in the day, something they can do together as a family and a great way for the children to think about where food comes from and how eating healthy can be fun."



## Healthy Lifestyles Coalition

CCE Broome County partners with the United Way of Broome County's Healthy Lifestyles Coalition (HLC) to serve low-income families on Binghamton's north and east sides, where food insecurity is a major problem. This area also has some of the highest rates of obesity and poverty in Broome County, with 13.8% families reporting food insecurity, as compared with the state average of 12.6%.

Due to the pandemic, HLC programming could not continue at Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School and in-person classes could not be held at the Lee Barta Community Center. Nevertheless, CCE Broome's HLC team remained committed to doing all they could to ensure youth in the area received proper nutrition and their families got the support that they needed.

Each day, throughout the summer, the HLC team helped prepare bagged lunches for 25 young people. The educators developed a program called "Tasty Tuesdays" where the youth were given a simple snack to make at home. When one young person asked for "Taco Tuesday" bags, the HLC team created paper bag kits with all the ingredients and recipes to prepare black bean quesadillas and fruit tacos at home. Thursday's brown bag became known as "Activity Day." Each bag was filled with the supplies for something that the youth could create at home such as homemade slime or bubble blowing kits.

CCE Broome's educators often prepared take-home surprises for families at the Lee Barta Community Center. The educators made grow bags with tomato and basil plants to encourage families become home gardeners and learn to grow their own food. In addition, Nutrition educator Ann Supa made over 100 cloth face masks to protect families in the HLC community during the pandemic.

All families in HLC's summer program received CCE Broome's "Be Healthy Broome" bi-weekly newsletter, containing health and food safety tips, recipes, a list of services available to families in the area, summer meal distribution sites and suggested physical activities.

# Workforce and Community Development

## CareerBound

CareerBound uses a personalized approach to help out-of-school young adults overcome the barriers they face to self-sufficiency by providing the individualized training and guidance needed to realize employment and career goals. CareerBound is a partnership between Broome-Tioga Workforce New York and CCE Broome County.

Following COVID-19 guidelines, the CareerBound educators created a hybrid model of program delivery, combining small, socially distanced in-person classes with a variety of programming strategies using virtual platforms. Each week CCE Broome's CareerBound team posted work readiness, customer service and wellness QuikVid videos on CareerBound's Facebook page. These videos provide tips on how to apply for jobs, interview techniques, tips for interacting with co-workers and customers, as well as how to stay healthy while conducting job searches. In addition, the CareerBound educators conducted weekly Zoom sessions focused on new job postings and how to stay motivated.

Many of the young people who complete CareerBound's classes have found meaningful employment and discovered their paths to college and careers. In 2020, 40 young people found employment with CareerBound's support. Many are now working as essential workers. Here are two of CareerBound's success stories.

Abigail joined CareerBound in early 2020. She was having a difficult time adjusting to a new living situation. She knew she needed training and help finding a job. While Abby was somewhat reserved and shy when she first started, with encouragement from the CareerBound educators, she pushed herself to participate in class discussions and eventually became an asset to others. Abby worked hard and earned her National Customer Service, Workforce Readiness, and Serv Safe certifications. After completing CareerBound, Abby faced a number of serious challenges, balancing all that is involved in becoming a new mother. By September, Abby let the CareerBound team know that she had found a safe place to live and had gotten a full-time position as a Certified Nursing Assistant trainee at Willow Point Rehabilitation and Nursing Center.

When Luis was first referred to CareerBound, it was clear that he was an intelligent and well-spoken young man trying to figure out what was next for him. Luis had previously worked in manufacturing, but wanted a new career. Between raising his children, caring for a family member with serious medical needs and trying to find his way in life, Luis initially struggled to complete CareerBound's training. But with CareerBound's encouragement, Luis earned his National Customer Service and Sales Certification and has begun a new career he thoroughly enjoys in customer service.





## Parent Education

Parent education is one of the essential components for building strong families and strong communities. Research shows that high quality parent education reduces child abuse and neglect and strengthens parent-child relationships. Throughout the pandemic, CCE Broome County's parent education continued to be a resource for vulnerable families struggling with isolation, lack of resources, lack of child care options and the sense of being overwhelmed by parenthood. CCE Broome's parent educator offered strength-based programming designed to keep children and families together, reduce foster care and improve children's health and well-being through referrals, nutrition education and one-on-one mentoring.

During 2020, CCE Broome's parent education team worked with 175 families referred by Broome County Department of Social Services, Broome County Family Court, pediatricians, rehabilitation centers and faith-based organizations. The programming conducted in Endicott was funded through a Town of Union Community Development Block Grant.

When the pandemic presented significant barriers to program delivery, CCE Broome's parent education shifted to a virtual platform and working individually with families. CCE Broome continued to offer free parenting classes through Zoom and FaceTime. Parenting tips were shared through the United Way of Broome County's *Eat Well, Play Hard Binghamton* Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/eatwellplayhardbinghamton/>.

Families were supported on a personalized, individual basis. For example, a mother and grandmother, who believed in different parenting strategies, were mandated by the courts to have joint custody and co-parent. This co-parenting approach resulted in confusion and mixed messages for the children. When they were referred to CCE Broome's parent education program, the mother and grandmother took the Conscious Discipline class together and learned not only strategies for co-parenting, but also how to improve their own relationship. As a result of the class, the mother and grandmother report being able to co-parent effectively.

CCE Broome's parent educator also works with 4-H UNITY (Urban Neighborhoods Improved Through Youth) families. UNITY is a CYFAR Program Sustainable Community Project focused on positive youth development and strengthening families. In October, CCE Broome's parent educator, Nutrition educators and the UNITY team partnered to host a virtual family engagement dinner. Ingredients for the dinner were delivered to each of the families' homes for a "cooked along" and nutrition education lesson via Zoom.





## Looking Ahead

As we all look forward to a post-pandemic life, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County remains poised to assist our community through researched-based education and training. The pandemic has accentuated the relevance of Extension's mission as we helped the community to stabilize and recover in these unprecedented times.

This report outlines how CCE Broome maintained programming in essential services in agriculture through the operation of the Regional Farmers Market and Taste NY stores, worked with farms and associated businesses to develop plans for continuity of operation, assisted NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets in distributing hand sanitizer and face coverings to farms and their employees, reinforced our local food supply by working with partners to distribute desperately needed food to our neighbors and virtually delivered innovative programs to new audiences.

Throughout the pandemic, we never relented. Instead, we pivoted how we deliver programming to meet the needs of our community. While the future remains uncertain, we are confident that our resilient, creative staff will continue to rise to the challenge. As we do so, we will continue to develop and grow in our capacity to reach new and diverse audiences as we design both in-person and virtual programming.

We are confident that 2021 will bring a bustling Farmers Market and Taste NY Stores. Youth will discover their spark in 4-H. The Cutler Botanic Garden will be in bloom, careers will be developed and healthy lifestyles will be encouraged. We are committed to supporting Broome County's recovery. Together, we will use all that we learned in 2020 about resilience, partnership and collaboration as steppingstones, as we build back stronger than ever.

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