Annual Report
Cornell Cooperative Extension Schenectady County
October 2019

Dear Friends of Extension,

We are pleased to present Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schenectady County’s 2019 Annual Report. This report highlights many different educational programs and the positive impacts we have had on Schenectady County residents of all ages.

2019 marked our 101st year of providing research-based education in the areas of nutrition and health, youth development and parenting, agriculture, horticulture and environmental sciences.

The Association Board of Directors and staff would like to thank the many volunteers who give back countless hours of service every year.

We invite you to take a few moments to read the 2019 Annual Report and learn more about the educational programs offered through Cornell Cooperative Extension, Schenectady County.

Sincerely,

Michael Welch            Sarah Pechar
Board President           Association Executive Director
Educating Youth

Ten children between the ages of 3-5 participated in Little Diggers, a gardening program that brings together a diverse group of preschoolers for hands-on learning in an urban garden. The program aims to instill healthier lifestyle choices through garden and nutrition-based learning; raising awareness about connections between healthy eating and physical activity and building an understanding of where our food comes from.

Over 600 elementary school students took part in the Schenectady County 4-H Ag Literacy program which focused on farmers markets this year. 340 4th and 5th graders participated in Environmental Field Days learning about STEM as it relates to the environment. The 4-H educator from Schenectady County coordinated a field trip for over 50 Capital Region 4-Hers and volunteer chaperones to set sail on the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater where they learned about New York State history, river ecology and issues facing the Hudson River. Two 4-H teens took statewide leadership roles as a STARR Roundtable Leader and a Cornell Career Explorations Focus Assistant where they led and taught other 4-H teens from around New York State. In the summer, 4-H also worked with Roots and Wisdom youth on resume writing and public speaking skills. Eight Roots and Wisdom youth completed 4-H projects that were entered into the Altamont Fair. Overall, over 1700 youth were directly impacted by 4-H programming this year.
Roots and Wisdom engaged 22 urban youth through the Summer Youth Employment Program offered through Schenectady Job Training Agency. Roots and Wisdom crew members gained skills in sustainable urban agriculture and job preparedness through growing over 1100 pounds of vegetables for Harvest Share (a CSA), a youth run farm stand and donation to local pantries.

"Roots and Wisdom helped me grow as a person because before I started working here my attitude was really bad. I wouldn’t listen. I would do what I want(ed). I wouldn’t care how I talked to people. Now that I’ve been working here, I’ve learned to control my attitude and how I talk to people and gained a lot more respect for people I don’t know...because before I didn’t care how I talked to anyone. I would talk to anyone however I wanted."

Camil, Roots and Wisdom crew member 2019

The Recycling and Composting Educator reached almost 1,000 youth through programming at local elementary schools, 4-H Environmental Field Days, the Science Festival of the Capital Region at MiSci, Niska-Day and the Kids’ Arts Festival. Youth learned about vermicomposting, recycling, composting and household hazardous waste and New York State’s upcoming plastic bag ban.
Nutrition educators from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-ed) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Programs (EFNEP) provided 226 nutrition education classes, reaching over 1500 students in grades K-6 throughout the Schenectady City School District. Additionally, 75 youth gained nutrition and cooking skills by taking part in the 21st Century Afterschool program and Roots and Wisdom. Overall participation in summer youth nutrition education programming increased 30% from 2018.

Master Gardener Volunteers worked with five local schools and scouting groups and provided horticulture education to approximately 450 students. Topics such as pollinators, vegetable gardening and the benefits of growing our own food were highlighted. Students gained a greater understanding of the benefits of pollinators and how they help pollinate important food crops. Fifteen youth participated in a class at the Sustainable Living Center and learned how to create a living terrarium using miniature plants, moss and lichen, pinecones, berries other natural materials.
Educating Adults

Through United Way’s United Against Hunger Food Partnership grant, Schenectady ARC Staff and over 650 individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) received interactive nutrition education in a variety of settings including: residential homes, day programs, and staff development opportunities. As a result, healthier meals, including fruits, vegetables and whole grains, are being provided on a regular basis at residential homes and day programs. Residents reported a willingness to try new foods and requested lower fat options at meals.

Registered dietitians, through a partnership with the Alternative Living Group (ALG) conducted 34 visits to 19 residential homes for individuals with I/DD. Fourteen participants received individualized nutrition education on special dietary needs. Six ALG staff trainings were provided to improve food safety practices and increase knowledge in providing a healthy diet for residents.

Through funding provided by Schenectady County Senior and Long Term Care Services, seniors received information on relevant health and nutrition topics at senior meal sites and Friendship cafes located throughout Schenectady County. A monthly nutrition newsletter was provided for over 450 Meals on Wheels participants. At the end of the program year, 98% of participants reported improving their ability to make healthy nutrition choices to improve or maintain their health and well-being.
The Rubin Grant is a nutrition program aimed at supporting low-income individuals living with, or at high risk for, diabetes and/or hypertension. The participants in this program receive foods that help to decrease their risk of those chronic conditions progressing further into chronic kidney disease. This program is a collaborative effort between Schenectady County Public Health Services (SCPHS), Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) and four food pantries located in the City of Schenectady. The Public Health Education Coordinator from SCPHS and the CCE, SC Registered Dietitian (RD) work with the food pantries to identify, purchase, promote, and provide the foods that are the best alternatives for individuals with diabetes and/or hypertension. The RD is available at the pantries to answer any nutritional questions community members have, as well as to educate on how to cook and prepare healthier meals. The program also provides tools for participants that will help them manage their diabetes and/or hypertension such as colanders to rinse canned vegetables, measurement conversion charts, water bottles, and MyPlate placemats for diabetics. This year over 500 healthy food packages have been given to families and individuals with diabetes and/or hypertension, over 100 pantry staff members have been trained, and the RD has visited the food pantries 72 times.

Through the Healthy Food Pantry Initiative, SNAP educators completed work with three Schenectady County food pantries including SUNY Schenectady and encouraged healthy food choices with nutrition posters, shelf signs, education and overall pantry layout improvements. SNAP-ed’s Policy, Systems, Environment (PSE) activities reached an estimated 2,200 community members.

Home visiting programs such as Healthy Schenectady Families (HSF) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) change the lives of children and their families. This year, HSF educators worked with 232 families, impacting the lives of 235 children with education on infant/child development and parenting skills. EFNEP nutrition educators reached 37 families and 150 family members.
2019 saw the second group of graduates from the “Introduction to Horticulture” certificate program held in collaboration with SUNY Schenectady and Schenectady ARC. Seven individuals completed this program and are better prepared for employment in the horticulture field.

The Master Gardener volunteers delivered educational programs to over 3,500 people throughout Schenectady County. Volunteers responded to over 4,000 phone, in person or email inquiries on a myriad of issues ranging from household pest management, soils, insect and plant identification to complex horticultural issues in lawn and landscape settings.

Master Gardeners educated community groups regarding the importance of pollinators through a new program called Pollinator Gardens in Public Places. Volunteers helped to coordinate, design and install pollinator gardens at the Schenectady County Composting and Recycling Facility, the solar site at the Niskayuna Town Offices, Glendale Nursing Home, Pinewood Intermediate School, Robert C Parker School, Mabee Farm, boulevard gardens at Parkwood Boulevard and The Plaza, and gardens at the Honorable Karen B. Johnson Schenectady County Public Library. SUNY Cobleskill Plant Science Department and the Master Gardener Program donated the pollinator plants for this project.

Recycling and composting education reached 1107 adults this year covering topics such as becoming a better recycler, zero waste and how to start composting. The Recycling and Composting Educator answered over 350 calls on topics including safe disposal of household hazardous waste, recycling beyond curbside, and composting/yard waste. Master Composter/Recycler volunteers provided 152 hours of their time working with county residents at Repair Cafés, schools and other community events.

CCE, SC regularly works with local higher education institutions including Union College, SUNY Cobleskill, SUNY Oneonta and Russell Sage College to provide internship opportunities in the areas of nutrition, environmental science, agriculture and horticulture.
2018 Program Revenue

- Total County Support: $896,489 (36%)
- Total State Support: $949,097 (38%)
- Total Federal Support: $488,493 (19%)
- Total Other Support: $168,737 (7%)
- Total: $2,502,816 (100%)

2018 Functional Expenses

- Program Services: 94%
- Management & General: 5%
- Fund Raising: 1%
- Total: 100%

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schenectady County
# Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schenectady County

## 2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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<td>Randy Pascarella</td>
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* Indicates board member who left during the year

## 2019 STAFF

### Eastern New York Commercial Horticulture Program

- Mike Basedow
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- Sarah Elone
- Natasha Fields
- Andy Galimberti
- Ethan Grundberg
- Abby Henderson
- Liz Higgins
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- Laura McDermott
- Jim Meyers
- Teresa Rusinek
- Crystal Stewart
- Maire Ulrich

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- Hank Bignell*
- Sandra Buxton
- Lily Calderwood*
- Lindsey Christianson
- Tove Ford
- Aaron Gabriel
- Steve Hadcock

### Greater Capital Shared Business Network

- Michael Bartholomew
- Jim McNaughton
- Michael Ryan
- Erik Yager

* Indicates staff members who left during the year

Arden Lawand, Master Gardener Volunteer - Graphic Design