



Annual report

Cornell Cooperative Extension | Schuyler County

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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We are Resilient: As individuals, and as an organization, we are agile and able to adapt; we embrace challenges as an opportunity to learn and to continually improve.

We are Innovative: We are committed to unearthing untapped potential by exploring alternatives and constantly seeking and offering new solutions.

We Practice Sustainability: Our 100+ year commitment to sustainability is in our DNA. We believe in using what history has taught us while thinking strategically about our future.

We Educate: CCE's foundation: It is what we do. We are committed to providing conventional and alternative ways of educating a cross-generational community of people interested in and committed to learning and putting knowledge to work to enrich their lives.

CCE Schuyler accomplishes so much because of the support of our community. Together, we can make it through challenges and find innovative solutions. Together we will accomplish even more.

Together we R.I.S.E!

Message From Our Board President



It is with a genuine sense of purpose that I reflect back on another productive year at Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Schuyler. The integrity, diversity, and commitment of our Board of Directors, together with the dedication of our CCE Schuyler staff, remain the foundation of our continued success. As Schuyler County, like many across Upstate New York, faces increasing budget pressures from shifting state and federal funding, the role of CCE has never been more vital. Our ability to remain responsive, efficient, and innovative allows us to continue delivering meaningful programs and services that directly support the people of our county.

Schuyler County's diverse agricultural landscape remains one of our greatest assets and responsibilities. From family farms and viticulture to emerging food systems and environmental stewardship, agriculture is both an economic engine and a cultural cornerstone of our community. At the same time, we are living in a period of rapid technological change that is reshaping how we learn, work, and connect. CCE Schuyler stands at an important intersection, where tradition meets innovation. We are committed to helping our residents adapt to new tools and technologies while preserving the values and practices that define our unique rural community.

Also, I cannot stress enough the enduring importance of Hidden Valley 4-H Camp as a cornerstone of youth development in our region. Through experiential, outdoor learning, and leadership programming, Hidden Valley provides young people with opportunities to build confidence, resilience, and a strong sense of community. These outcomes extend well beyond the camp experience and into lifelong personal growth.

My sincere gratitude is extended to the exceptional staff of CCE Schuyler, to our Executive Director for their steady, unwavering leadership, and to Schuyler County's legislative leadership for their continued partnership and support. These collective efforts allow CCE to remain a trusted, forward-looking institution in a complex and evolving landscape. Together we are building resilience, fostering growth, and ensuring that CCE Schuyler continues to serve as a vital resource for every resident of our county in the years ahead.

Thank you all,

- Paul Bartow, CCE Schuyler Board President

Message From Our Executive Director



As we reflect back on our year I am filled with gratitude for all that we have been able to accomplish together at Cornell Cooperative Extension Schuyler County. This past year has been a true testament to the commitment, innovation, strength, and resilience of our staff, volunteers, program supporters and community collaborators.

I want to extend my heartfelt recognition to our Board of Directors for their unwavering and steady guidance, and to each staff member who brings passion to their work daily that drives our mission and vision in our community forward. Your work continues to strengthen our communities through the delivery of high impact educational opportunities, meaningful outreach and one on one experiences.

This past year was also marked by steadfast support from our county partners. We extend our sincere gratitude to the Schuyler County Legislature. Their commitment to our mission strengthens our ability to serve individuals and communities throughout the county.

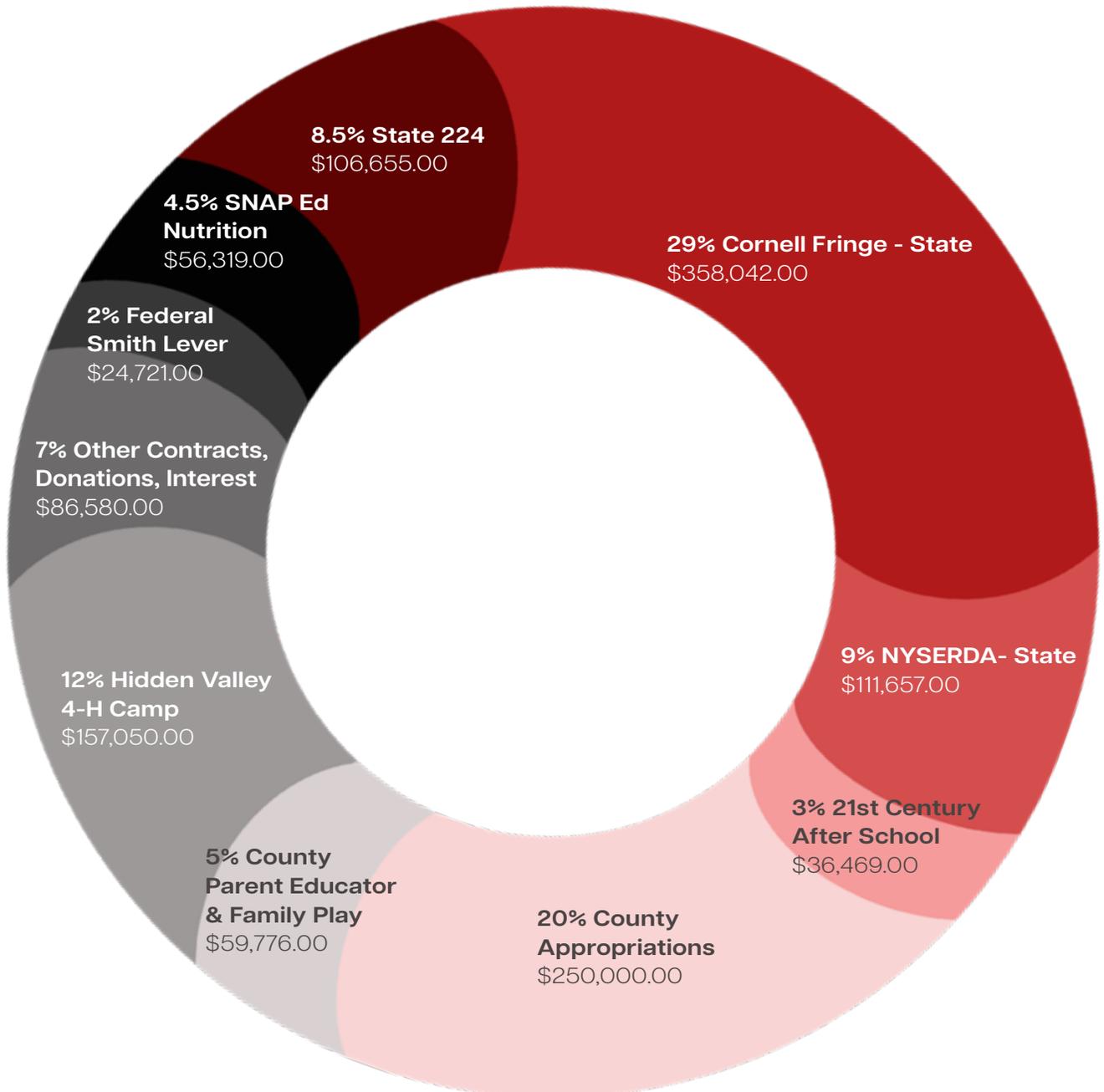
As you look through our Annual Report you will see the short stories of impact and the pictures that showcase our work in agriculture, horticulture, families, Hidden Valley 4-H Camp, energy, and 4-H. Collectively we would not be able to do the work without the people that attend what we offer – thank you for your trust, continued support and for your help in making 2025 a great year to showcase growth.

As we look ahead to 2026 I remain excited for the opportunities – we have new programs on the horizon and strengthened partnerships in our community. We are looking forward to a strong year, with even greater impact.

With warmest gratitude,

- Melissa Schroeder, CCE Schuyler Executive Director

2024 Revenue Sources



Meet the CCESC Board



Paul Bartow

CCE Schuyler
Board President

Jill Kasprzyk

CCE Schuyler
Board Vice President

Michael Lausell

CCE Schuyler Board Secretary
& Legislative Representative

William Hayes

CCE Schuyler
Board Treasurer

Larry Jaynes

CCE Schuyler Board Member
& Legislative Representative

Adam Hughes

State Extension Specialist
Cornell University
Ex-Officio Member
(Through 10/2025)

Nigar Hale

CCE Schuyler
Board Member

Jim Nolan

CCE Schuyler
Board Member

Riqui Hess

CCE Schuyler
Board Member

Melissa Schroeder

CCE Schuyler
Executive Director
Ex-Officio Member

Mark McCullouch

CCE Schuyler
Board Member

Virginia Montopoli

CCE Schuyler
Recording Secretary

Workshop Snapshot

At CCE Schuyler, our programs offer numerous workshops, trainings, activities, and programs to the community. Below are a few highlighted events from 2025:



AG AND NATURAL RESOURCES

- Master Forest Owner Volunteer Training
- Garden Talk Series: Plan Your Garden
- Garden Talk Series: Get Your Seeds Started
- Garden Talk Series: Help Your Garden Thrive
- Seed to Supper Program
- Healthy Forests: Forest Pests/Slashwalls/Silviculture
- 2025 Fruit Tree and Berry Growing Workshop
- 2025 Hector Plant Sale
- 2025 Master Gardener Training
- Growin' Around the Glen: Schuyler County Farm Tour
- Ag Literacy Day at BC Cate Elementary School
- Medicine From the Garden
- Calling All Garlic Lovers
- Food As Medicine

CLEAN ENERGY

- Solar Ag in Schuyler County
- Housing Health & Safety Event

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

- Little Sparks Club: Winter and Birds!
- 4-H Sparks Club Esports
- 4-H Open House
- Little Sparks Club: Insects
- Caregivers Gathering
- Hidden Valley 4-H Camp 80th Celebration
- Very Berry Bear Day @ Family Play & Resource Center
- 2025 4-H Sparks Club Esports
- Little Sparks Club: Autumn STEAM Activities
- 4-H Sparks Club: Forensics
- Little Sparks Club: STEAM For Your Littles
- 4-H Sparks Club: Fiber Arts
- Hidden Valley 4-H Camp
- Reach 21st Century - Odessa Montour & Watkins Glen

ENVIRONMENT

- How To Recycle Right: Navigating the Recycling Industry
- Shiitake Mushroom Log Inoculation Workshop
- Bird Flu Updates: Impacts on Poultry & Wildlife

Meet the CCESC Staff



ROW 1

Brett Chedzoy

Sr. Resource Educator in Agriculture and Natural Resources

Ryan Staychock

Environmental/Natural Resources Educator Schuyler, Seneca, & Cayuga (Through 1/30/2026)

Shawn Tubridy

Garden & Horticulture Coordinator

Alec Moore

Commercial Agriculture Educator

Hans Walter-Peterson

Viticulture Extension Specialist, Finger Lakes Grape Program

ROW 2

Daniela Silva

SNAP-Ed Coordinator (through 9/2025)
School & Community Wellness Coordinator

Ceridwen Dickerson-Stermer

Odessa Montour REACH After School & Program Coordinator

Paula Goodrich

Parenting Educator

Kim Seaman

4-H Program Coordinator
Watkins Glen REACH After School

Bruce Condie

Hidden Valley 4-H
Camp Manager

ROW 3

Dayna Karius

Program Assistant and
4-H Camp Registrar

Carrienne Tribe-Filhart

Smart Energy Choices
Community Energy Advisor

Virginia Montopoli

Administrative Assistant

Susan Neal

Finance Manager

Danielle Cook

Communications Coordinator

Melissa Schroeder

Executive Director &
Association Issue Lead



4-H Youth Development

At the heart of our 4-H program is a passion for empowering youth to explore, learn, and grow.

One strong example is Anna, who recently discovered a love for foraging through the 4-H Wild Edibles program at Hidden Valley 4-H Camp. Her eyes lit up as she learned to identify safe plants in the wild, and she couldn't wait to share her newfound knowledge with others. Anna's enthusiasm inspired her to teach her friends and family about foraging responsibly, boosting her confidence and sense of accomplishment.

Another inspiring story is Matt's journey to the NY State Fair for a 4-H Esports competition. Despite his fears and anxiety, Matt showed resilience by participating and placing 6th overall. His willingness to work through his fears and compete highlights how 4-H helps youth build confidence, competence, personal thriving, and gives youth the skills to

overcome challenges.

We also provided engaging programming for 94 students in after-school programs in Watkins Glen and Odessa, along with 88 more youth through our camp activities. Our 4-H program is about more than just skills; it's about fostering self-esteem, resilience, and community, helping young people grow into confident leaders ready to make a positive impact.

Camp by the Numbers:

- 221 Residential Campers
- 75 Day Campers
- 41 Cloverbud Campers
- 129 Campers
- 15 Volleyball Camp Attendees

Special thanks to camp alumni, Randy Day, who helped us debut our first sports camp week by donating his time and expertise as coach for girls' volleyball.



10,001 Individuals Reached via Social Media, Newsletter & More



1758 Individuals Attended Youth Events



11,759 Total Number of People Reached

“Hidden Valley 4-H Camp has been a part of our family for our child’s whole life. (Camp) has boosted their self-esteem and their faith in themselves and others. They have grown enormously through their time there.”

- Hidden Valley 4-H Camp Parent





Parenting Education

Our Parenting Educator Home Visitor (PEHV) program prepares families with life-long learning skills helping them navigate through the challenging journey of raising children. The program also has a key emphasis on helping families make decisions prioritizing the needs of their child. Helping guide parents with resources that support parenting education can be difficult, often times it takes months that can span years in the work that takes place between families and our parenting educator home visitor. In some families despite all support strategies and education the reunification plan is not possible.

Over the past year, several families working with Paula faced the complex decision in regards to the termination of their parental rights. During this time Paula was able to witness a family's resiliency as they worked through all the emotional ups and downs, continually falling back on lessons learned through the PEHV program.

One mother reached out directly during this time after a long and difficult journey. She participated in parenting sessions, worked on behavioral health, and attended visits scheduled with her child. The supportive information and resources learned through parenting education helped her come to the decision to give permission for her child to be adopted by the family providing foster care.

Relationships are at the heart of this work and they take time to grow. The relationship piece is as important as the educational information provided to parents; the back and forth work on getting to know their unique family and what their story is can help contribute to their success. This mother stays connected with Paula and shares updates because of the collaborative relationship component of their work together. The connection and a wish to stay in touch is a clear demonstration of our impact in their family's story.



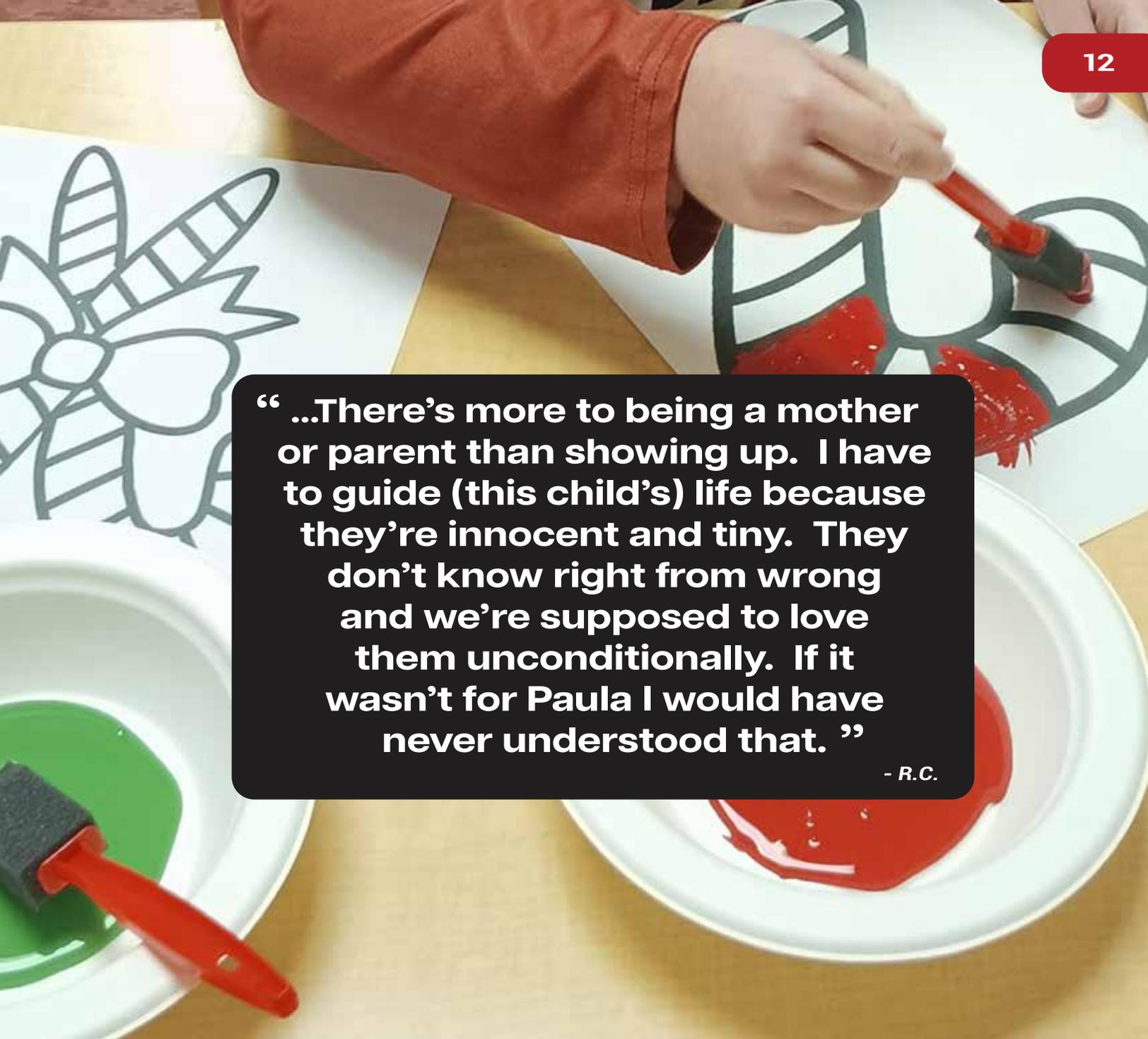
158 Individuals Attended Parenting Events



6669 Individuals Reached via Social Media, Newsletter & More



6827 Total Number of People Reached



“ ...There’s more to being a mother or parent than showing up. I have to guide (this child’s) life because they’re innocent and tiny. They don’t know right from wrong and we’re supposed to love them unconditionally. If it wasn’t for Paula I would have never understood that. ”

- R.C.





Agriculture

One of CCEC's missions is to foster an educated community that may ensure the long-term future of agriculture in Schuyler County. This is done through workshops, outreach to local schools, expert consultations with landowners, and more. These actions can inspire the next generation of horticulturalists.

In 2025, CCEC offered workshops like the Cornell Small Farms Program's "Bilingual Farm Field Day." This workshop took 20 aspiring farm owners on a tour of local farms with educators Brett Chedzoy and Alec Moore. Such tours can offer novice farmers an outline of where to begin and inspire them by seeing how it can be done.

Other workshops appeal to more than just potential farmers. This year CCEC educators, Ryan Staychock and Alec Moore, teamed up with experts from Cornell, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, and the NYS Department of Health to offer a "Avian Influenza Updates: Impacts

on Poultry and Wildlife" Webinar. 60 participants from a variety of backgrounds attended via webinar or at in-person locations. The workshop provided needed updates on HPAI and answered questions from the public.

Similarly, the 2025 "Shiitake Mushroom Log Inoculation Workshop" saw participants with varying reasons for starting their own mushrooms come together for a hands-on workshop with Conner Youngerman, an Agroforestry and Mushroom Specialist from the Cornell Small Farms Program. And the Annual Fruit Growing Workshop brought in 74 participants from the community. Its popularity led to Alec scheduling a one-day tour of an Amish community to answer their fruit-growing questions.

This work would not be possible without the support of the greater community and attendees. Thanks to their interest, 2026 looks to be another year full of educational opportunities.



3048 Individuals
Attended Ag &
Natural Resources
Workshops & Events



41,966 Individuals
Reached via
Social media,
Newsletter & More



45,014 Total Number
of People Reached

“ You feel inspired by what you see here...you can start small with the resources you have and grow over time.”

- Ismael, Bilingual Farm Field Day Participant





Natural Resources

Schuyler County is home to a revolutionary innovation in sustainable forestry known as “slash walls” that uses logging residues (slash) to protect young trees from deer browsing (slashwall.info).

Nine years of Schuyler CCE supported slash wall research and extension at Cornell’s Arnot Forest has shown remarkable differences between areas protected by slash walls versus those exposed to deer. Slash walls are a highly effective and cost-effective approach to establishing young forests that will be twice as diverse and productive as those subject to deer browsing in early stages of development.

The same forests provide much higher quality habitat for wildlife, are more resilient to pests and other disturbances, and will sequester approximately 50% more carbon over their century-plus lifecycle. They are the backbone of a 24 billion-dollar forest industry in New York, a good portion of which is

concentrated in Schuyler County and the surrounding area.

During a recent webinar moderated by Schuyler CCE to highlight the adoption and implementation of slash walls by forestry professionals across the Northeast, one of the interviewed foresters remarked that slash walls demonstrate foresters’ commitment to growing forests instead of just harvesting them, while additionally helping the public to understand the complex challenges facing our forests. Slash walls were also featured during field tours at the recent Society of American Foresters national conference held in Connecticut.

Schuyler CCE’s involvement in slash wall and related forestry research and extension has been made possible with funding through the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and New York State’s support of the Climate and Applied Forest Research Institute (CAFRI).



3048 Individuals
Attended Ag &
Natural Resources
Workshops & Events



41,966 Individuals
Reached via
Social Media,
Newsletter & More



45,014 Total Number
of People Reached

“Slash walls show our commitment as foresters to growing forests, not just harvesting them.”

-Tim F. From: “Voices From the Forest – A Discussion with Foresters Who Built Slash Walls” Forest Connect webinar on October 15, 2025





Horticulture and Master Gardeners

Each year the CCE Schuyler Master Gardeners work collaboratively to improve the CCE Schuyler Teaching Garden. While they have different priorities, they share the same goal of making the garden an enjoyable experience for the community.

This work thrives on the generosity of our community. Some of the work needed is beyond the scope of the Master Gardener Volunteers and CCE in general, resulting in collaborative work with small local business owners who provide extra expertise. Donations of landscaping materials, seeds, soil, gardening supplies, and time have all added to the success of the garden. By developing connections with employees and owners, the Master Gardeners have created a network of supporters who are the first to reach out when there are supplies that can be donated.

In 2025 these connections resulted in over 10,000 seed packets being donated to the program. The Master Gardener Volunteers sorted, divided, and shared the packets with other county CCEs, local schools, libraries, and food banks. This year the Finger Lakes National Forest Staff donated native plants that enhanced our newly developed Native Plant Trail.

Thank you to everyone in the community who has helped with the beautification of the CCESC Garden. It has been a pleasure to watch the community and the garden grow!

Photo Credits: Top Left: The CCE Schuyler Teaching Garden in bloom - photo by Danielle Cook Top Right: Master Gardeners lead CCE Seneca on a tour of the updated Teaching Garden - photo by Shawn Tubridy; Bottom (r-l): A caterpillar looks for a snack - photo by Shawn Tubridy; Master Gardeners collect seeds from the garden - photo by Shawn Tubridy; Community members help out in the teaching garden - photo by Danielle Cook



690 Individuals
Attended Horticulture &
Gardening Workshops



51,165 Individuals
Reached via
Social Media,
Newsletter & More

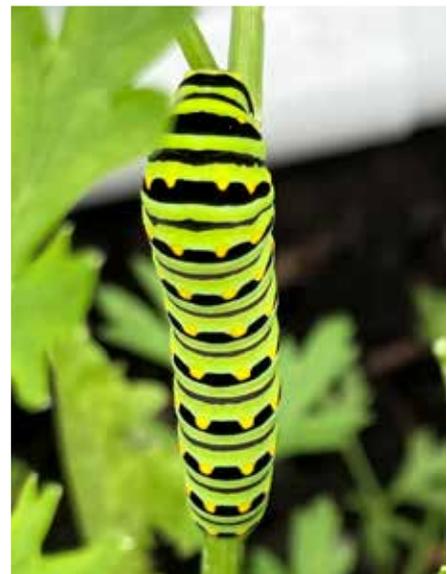


51,855 Total Number
of People Reached

A woman wearing a blue patterned shirt, a brown belt, and a cap is speaking to a group of people in a garden. She is gesturing with her hands. The background shows green plants and a wooden trellis structure.

“ I was drawn to the Master Gardener Program because gardening has always been in my life. From house plants to starting my own vegetable garden, my love for plants turned into a love for our environment. I was able to learn more and be able to help those in our community that want to do the same. ”

-Master Gardener Volunteer





Energy

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schuyler County's Smart Energy Program provided Energy Efficiency and Weatherization education to 35 residents and reached a total of 1473 over the last year. This education helps to improve the energy efficiency of their homes through income-based grants from the New York State Energy and Research Authorities Empower+ Program.

Community Energy Advisor, Carrienne Tribe-Filhart conducted outreach through the local library system, Office for the Aging, the Schuyler County Department of Social Services, various community events, and Energy Literacy Workshops.

Through these efforts, 35 residents received assistance with electrical retrofits, including the installation of smart controls, improved insulation and air sealing, energy-efficient HVAC systems, and water-saving fixtures. These measures have helped residents reduce their monthly utility costs

while also gaining skills to implement basic do-it-yourself energy improvements.

Many residents, including both homeowners and renters, experience significant challenges related to high utility costs along with difficulty identifying assistance within their geographic area. These issues are often compounded by aging homes, existing health and safety concerns, along with limited financial resources; all of which hinder their ability to make the necessary improvements to address the underlying causes of their energy burden.

Photo Credits: Top: Health, Home, Safety Event - photo by Carol English; Top Right: Carrienne Tribe-Filhart explains cost-saving measures using the Smart Energy Choices "tinier home" visual aid at Energy Literacy Workshop - photo by Carol English; Bottom (r-l): Emma Malnoske, Sustainability Education Coordinator for the Village of Montour Falls, joins Carrienne tabling at the Montour Falls Farmers Market - photo courtesy of Clean Energy Choices; The Powerhouse at the Girls on the Run Event - photo by Carol English; Carrienne demonstrates do-it-yourself energy efficiency measures during an Energy Literacy Workshop at Dormann Library - photo by Carol English.



2093 Individuals
Attended Clean Energy
Events & Workshops



1974 Individuals
Reached via
Social Media,
Newsletter & More



4067 Total Number
of People Reached



“ Having the opportunity to become eligible for this service, as I am low-income, not only saved me money on my utilities, but Carrienne’s education on DIY measures significantly increased (my) savings as well.”

- R.H. of Watkins Glen





SNAP-Ed

This year, SNAP-Ed's programming objectives continued to focus on preventing the onset of diet related chronic disease among the SNAP eligible population by providing prevention and promotion of health education programs. The team provided workshops, food demonstrations, cooking classes, grocery store tours, and community events for individuals who qualify for SNAP, based on the target objective designed to improve health, food insecurity, and hunger among the SNAP population.

SNAP-Ed programming was implemented at Watkins Glen High School to provide students with science-based knowledge and skills needed to make healthier choices. Lessons emphasized the importance of consuming nutrient-dense foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins, while also addressing the benefits of regular physical activity. Students were able to actively engage with the material, applying classroom concepts to

real-life scenarios that fostered both personal accountability and healthier family habits. The impact of this work is significant, as it supports the development of healthier generations by instilling positive behaviors early on, helping to reduce the risk of diet-related chronic disease and reinforcing a culture of wellness within the community.

SNAP-Ed's Target Objectives:

- Increase consumption of nutrient dense fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and low-fat dairy products
- Decrease consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages
- Reduce consumption of low nutrients, high energy dense foods containing large amounts of added sugars, salt, and saturated fats
- Increase physical activity and reduce sedentary behavior
- Improve food resource management skills
- Improve food preparation skills
- Increase access to affordable and nutritious foods



200 Youth Participants



6 Program Sites

CCE Schuyler - Schuyler 4-H group
Watkins Glen High school
Odessa Montour School
Montour Falls Library
and Farmers Markets



4530 Total Indirect Reach

Achieved through Static Displays, Handouts/Calendars for partner agencies, Social Media posts, and APE tabling at numerous locations throughout Schuyler County.



“ I didn’t think I was going to have this much fun here, I’m glad I came! ”
- 13 year-old SNAP-Ed Participant



CONTACT US

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glengrown.com
hiddenvalley4hcamp.org



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FRONT PAGE: (clockwise l-r) TOP LEFT - Goat greets Farm Tour visitors to Crosswinds Farm Creamery in Rock Stream, NY - Photo courtesy of Danielle Cook; CENTER: CCE Staff visit the Arnot Forest Slash Wall during a staff outing. - Photo Courtesy of Danielle Cook; TOP RIGHT: CCE Educator, Dani Silva Penagos speaks to campers at Hidden Valley 4-H Camp. - Photo courtesy of Dayna Karius; BOTTOM LEFT - Campers at Hidden Valley 4-H Camp enjoy learning about fire safety during a visit with the Burdett Volunteer Fire Department - Photo courtesy of Dayna Karius. BACK COVER PHOTO: Tamworth Pigs at Wixom Farms enjoy cooling off in the mud during the 2025 Growin' Around the Glen Farm Tour. - Photo courtesy of Danielle Cook.

