

Cornell Cooperative Extension Rockland County

2023 Annual Report

2023 CCE Rockland Team

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About CCE Rockland

Mission

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

Vision

Cornell Cooperative Extension is a national leader in creating positive change on behalf of families and communities through rigorously-tested extension programs. We create measurable change by aligning local needs with the resources and priorities of the land grant system and its state and federal partners.

A Letter from the President of the Board & the Executive Director

Dear Friends of Extension,

The year 2023 was full of excitement as we had great enrollment in our programs. Below are just a few of the highlights!

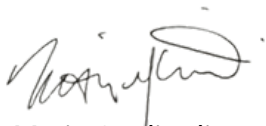
Teen Leadership Rockland had a thriving class with 29 high school sophomores learning to develop leadership skills and connecting with peers and community leaders. One of the most memorable sessions included sitting in the legislative chamber and debating issues just as our legislative leaders do each day. New sessions included the History of Rockland County, led by the Historical Society of Rockland County, and Social Media Marketing, led by AVF Solutions.

Our SNAP-Ed program continues to flourish with nutritionists providing educational health programs to children and adults in Rockland County. During the 22-23 program year the SNAP-Ed NY regional team offered 900 direct educational programs to the Hudson Valley reaching 8,392 individuals.

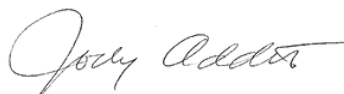
CCE Rockland leads environmental education by managing the Rockland County Stormwater consortium. This consortium assists municipalities to meet their stormwater permit requirements mandated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and educates the public on stormwater pollution.

CCE Rockland's Master Gardeners bring a lot of excitement and expertise to our campus. One place you will always find their volunteer dedication is in our CCE Rockland horticulture diagnostic lab. This lab is open to the community, and they receive hundreds of inquiries about pest diagnosis, soil sample evaluation and general gardening questions relating to ornamental plantings, vegetable gardens and agricultural crops. Individuals of all ages benefit from the Master Gardeners through their creative speaker's bureau programs held in locations such as schools, libraries, and community centers. Their passion and commitment is outstanding!

We hope you enjoy these highlights of 2023 and please check out our website to see what we have planned for 2024!



Maria Gagliardi
CCE Rockland President
Board of Directors



Jody Addeo
CCE Rockland
Executive Director

4-H Development

4-H Youth for Climate Action - Eighteen high school students joined this intensive 16-session program to learn about climate change and address local climate issues. From February through June, the members visited various sites including the Marine Lab in Long Island (sponsored by Veolia) and worked with peers and professionals to design, create, and implement service projects centered on climate change.

Teen Leadership Rockland

In this 13-session program, sponsored by Leadership Rockland and CCE Rockland, 29 high school sophomores learned to develop leadership skills and connect with peers and community leaders. New sessions this year included the History of Rockland County, led by the Historical Society of Rockland County, and Social Media Marketing, led by AVF Solutions.

Cornell Youth Investigators - Created by the Program for Research on Youth Development and Engagement (PRYDE) at Cornell University, this program helped seventeen high school freshman at North Rockland High School practice social science research. Led by 4-H Educator, Kristin Ruggiero, the members completed 8 sessions from March – May, and attended a Youth Summit at Cornell University during the annual 4-H Career Explorations Conference.

4-H Public Presentations

On March 3-4, eleven 4-H members ages 9-15 joined the Rockland County 4-H Public Presentations Event where they presented on a topic of their choice and received feedback from experienced evaluator, Ann Marie Palefsky. Five of the youth qualified to advance to the District 4-H Public Presentations Event on April 29, where they all received blue or purple ribbons.

NY Agriculture in the Classroom: Agricultural Literacy Week

Agricultural Literacy Week is an annual statewide program where volunteers read a book with an agricultural theme to elementary school classes and lead hands-on activities. This year, Master Gardener Volunteer, Sue Ridge, coordinated the event for Rockland County, where volunteers read *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table*, written by Jacqueline Briggs Martin and illustrated by Eric-Shabazz Larkin, and led an experiment planting with worm casings. Each classroom received a copy of the book, a growth chart, and digital resources to support their learning. From March – June, 16 volunteers (including three 4-H members) read to 58 classes in 11 schools, reaching a total of 1,125 students throughout the county.



4-H Beginner Dog Training - In May and October, Fran Hellman of Four Paws Guidance Dog Training led two classes of the four-session program, where twelve youth ages 8-17 learned how to read canine body language and communicate clearly with their dogs using a reward marker.

New York State 4-H Career Explorations

From June 27 - 29, twenty-one 4-H members from Rockland County traveled to Cornell University in Ithaca, NY, for the annual NYS 4-H Career Explorations Conference. During this event, members joined nearly 250 youth throughout the state to explore career pathways and experience college life.

Rockland County 4-H Project Showcase - The Annual Rockland County 4-H Showcase is an opportunity for 4-H members to exhibit their unique talents and skills and receive feedback for improvement. On August 17, four 4-H members entered projects, which were evaluated by Nancy Quinn, Barbara and Dennis Dillon using the Danish System of Judging. The projects included a hobby horse performance, creative writing pieces, and handcrafted items. Five projects were then selected to advance to the New York State Fair in Syracuse, NY, where four received blue ribbons.

Spring Valley Youth-Engaged Environmental Assessment Toolkit Summer Program - From August 14 – 18, nine youth ages 12-17 participated in this program led by the Cornell University DECA Lab (Designing Environments with/for Children and Adolescents). Over the five days, the youth assessed their local parks, imagined their ideal outdoor space through art, and pitched messages to improve outdoor spaces. Their participation in this program will eventually help create a toolkit to help other youth assess and improve their outdoor community spaces.

Horses-R-Us 4-H Club

The 23 members in this community club participated in a variety of local, regional, state, and national programs including (but not limited to) Heritage of West Nyack Fall Festival, Equine Affaire, community service with 13 Hands Equine Rescue, 4-H Public Presentations, YouthFest, 4-H Project Evaluation and Showcase Event, and a number of educational programs.



Panthers 4-H Club at Willow Grove Elementary School

Led by Home and Careers teacher, Ms. Rutigliano-Koval, and 4-H member, Isabella Matias, this new afterschool 4-H club consisted of eight enrolled members in grades 4-6. During their weekly meetings from November-May, the youth participated in leadership development, STEM experiments, holiday crafts, and other skill-building activities.

4-H Junior Animal Science

During this four-session program in September and October, seven youth ages 11-13 explored animal science careers with visits to the Threefold Community Farm, Rockland County Sheriff's Mounted Police Unit, Trailside Museums & Zoo, and Papaw's Dog House.

National 4-H Equitable Development Academy

From August - October, two Rockland County 4-H members joined this 5-part virtual program with youth and adults from New York, Washington, Tennessee, and Brazil. The program was designed to build a community of practice and a supportive network of youth and adult changemakers, and incorporated a variety of fun activities and thoughtful questions.

4-H Veterinary Science Career Exploration Program

Over the course of nine sessions from October – December, fifteen high school students explored veterinary science careers, skills, and concepts with local professionals. This year featured visits to Pine Bush Equine, Mercy University, Rockland BOCES, and Oradell Animal Hospital, along with dissections of rats and owl pellets.

4-H Awards and Recognition Event - On Saturday, October 21, twelve 4-H members, along with volunteers and families, were recognized for their participation in the Rockland County 4-H Program and their dedication to service and learning.



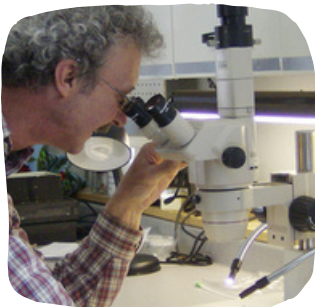
Horticulture Diagnostics Laboratory

Lab Inquiries - The Horticultural Lab handles inquiries for both pest and disease problems in conjunction with general gardening questions for both ornamental plantings and vegetable gardens (agricultural crops). From November 2022 through October 2023 there were a total of 1,355 inquiries. This resulted in an increase from the previous year by 166 inquiries. These calls are handled via in-house visitation, e-mail and by telephone. Many of the telephone callers with disease problems are advised to bring the sample in for diagnostic identification. The number of phone calls was 856. In-house visitation was 356 and there were 143 email inquiries. During this period a total of 530 fact sheets were distributed by the horticultural lab.

The weather conditions last year were out of the average range during the summer. The season started with moderate temperatures and average rainfall. It was a cool spring that produced few diseases. However, there was a late spring frost with record-low temperatures on May 17th and it caused damage to many plants. For example, Hydrangea buds were damaged and most did not bloom this year. In addition, there was crop damage to vegetables and many had to replant due to the damage. The cool weather continued during the summer with no heat waves. In the late summer and fall seasons the amount and frequency of rainfall increased with September had a record amount of rain with 14.25 inches and this was above average by 9.94 inches. As fall concludes the rainfall has stabilized and is headed into a dry period

The most prevalent inquiry in the early spring was related to winter damage of plants. Thuja sp. (Arborvitae) was the most common ornamental plant brought into the lab for evaluation. Leaf miner, spider mite and winter damage were the prevalent conditions affecting the samples. Buxus (Boxwood) was another common plant submitted for disease issues with very little exhibiting Boxwood Blight, but most did have fungal issues. During late summer and early fall there were a high submission of Acer palmatum (Japanese Maple) and Syringa sp. (Lilac) with environmental issues related to excessive rainfall. Beech Leaf Disease is becoming more prevalent with several calls to the lab reporting damage. Spotted Lantern Fly inquiries were heaviest in early fall with as many as 20 calls on some days. Late spring had a high number of ants come into the lab for identification with most clients having a concern about termites. There were record low numbers of ticks during 2023. This could be attributed to the cool weather affecting the population and people using the plant and insect identification apps on their phones

The Horticultural Lab continues to present the Stormwater Radio Show with various topics that includes the management of invasive species along with ecological landscape practices. The Conservation Corps Interns were guests on the radio show and reported their progress on projects. In addition, the Horticultural Lab teaches the Fertilizer Law class once a month to landscapers and contractors in Rockland Cou



Horticulture Education & Master Gardener Volunteers

Master Gardener Volunteer Training – The biannual in-depth Master Gardener Volunteer training concluded in February with 18 trainees graduating to become Master Gardener Interns. The MGV training is an extensive 20-week program that covers various horticulture topics such as botany, entomology, composting, small fruit for the home garden, soil health, native plants, and others. Classes are taught by instructors from Cornell University, other CCE associations as well as our horticulture educator and Master Gardener Volunteers. The program provides essential training for Master Gardener Volunteers to learn and become well-versed in horticulture topics that they will then share with the Rockland community.

Master Gardener Volunteer Native Plant Sale - The CCER Master Gardener held their first Native Plant sale, which they hope to make an annual event. Over 500 native plants were sold. They carefully selected 38 North American native plants that should thrive in Rockland landscapes and positively contribute to the local ecosystem.

Children's Library Program- This year the Master Gardener Volunteers put great effort into developing excellent horticulture-based programming for children to bring to the local libraries. In fall the MGVs presented Leaves are not Litter to 13 libraries throughout Rockland County.

Speakers' Bureau-CCER Master Gardeners and Horticulture Educator Kristen Ossmann presented 39 varied garden and horticulture presentations to the Rockland community at libraries and community centers. Subjects ranged in topic from Starting a Garden from Scratch to Native Trees of the Northeast.

Garden Based Learning Programs- In the winter the CCER Master Gardener Volunteers provided hands on Garden Based Learning programs to the K-2 grade classes at RP Connor Elementary School in Suffern, reaching over 200 students. Each grade focused on a different subject- Seed Exploration, Roots and Shoots and Pollinators.

Addressing Invasive Species Management in Public Parks–Through funding provided by the Lower Hudson PRISM (Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management), CCE worked with Parks Operations Manager Mike DiMola and the parks rangers and staff to address the management of invasive species in three local parks. With the assistance on two Rockland Conservation Service Corps. interns and guidance from Rockland Environmental Management Council CCER was able to address this ongoing issue



SNAP-Ed NY

What is SNAP-ED NY? SNAP-Ed is the educational facet of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as the food stamp program. SNAP-Ed is a federally funded program that works to improve the health of SNAP and SNAP-eligible residents where they live, work, learn, play, and worship. CCE Rockland is a member of the Hudson Valley team made up of six counties. Two nutritionists based in Rockland provide education to children and adults, individuals and families in Rockland and Westchester. During the 22-23 program year the SNAP-Ed NY regional team offered 900 direct educational programs to the Hudson Valley reaching 8,392 unique individuals. Youth accounted for 71%, 20% were adults and 8% were seniors. Overall, 41% identified as Hispanic or Latino(a).

Summer Symposium and Rockland Teacher's Center Partnership –

SNAP-Ed Hudson Valley Team continues to Partner with Rockland Teachers Center in order to offer nutrition and agriculture education focused professional development. Teachers can receive CTLE credits to maintain their credential from attending our PD programs.

This year we hosted our annual Summer Symposium August 8th-10th, where teachers from across NYS attended virtual sessions covering school meals, physical activity in the classroom, youth and family engagement, and more. This year, 9 sessions were offered that focused on three tracks: Classroom Education, Student Wellness, and Staff Wellness. Over 100 unique attendees participated in sessions offered by SNAP-Ed staff and guest speakers. Amanda Cappadona co-facilitated a panel of Classroom Champions featuring discussion on practices that bring the CDC Whole Child Wellness approach to education.

Policy, Systems, and Environmental Efforts – Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program

The SNAP-Ed Fruit and Vegetable Prescription, FVRx, program is an initiative that helps individuals in our local communities manage chronic diseases and live healthier lives by providing prescriptions for fruits and vegetables. SNAP-Ed works with healthcare providers, local grocers, farmers markets, and community members to offer a program that makes fruits and veggies a more accessible option. Medical support, partnered with nutrition education and improved access to healthy food can prevent and, in some cases, reverse risks for chronic disease. SNAP-Ed has been making partnerships with local medical providers in the hopes that we can kickstart an FVRx program in Rockland County. Partners include Sunriver Health and Community Medical and Dental. With funding, we will be able to offer nutrition education sessions to individuals at risk for or already living with chronic diseases. In return, the clients will receive up to \$20 a month over a 6 month period, where they will attend 1 session a month with SNAP-Ed.

Collaboratives:

SNAP Educators in Rockland County participate in a number of collaboratives including Haverstraw Collaborative, Spring Valley Collaborative, Western Ramapo, and Healthy Spring Valley. Amanda Cappadona also sits on the Rockland School Wellness Steering Committee headed by Department of Health's Carrie Steindorf and Rockland Teacher Center Institute's Debbie Studnitzer.



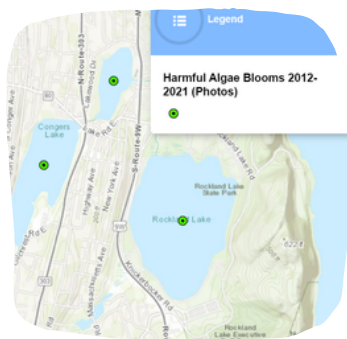
Environmental Education

Stormwater Consortium of Rockland County - The Stormwater Consortium, comprised of all 23 towns and villages in Rockland are managed by environmental educator, Jen Zunino-Smith. The Consortium assists the municipalities to meet their stormwater permit requirements mandated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and to educate the public on stormwater pollution. The Consortium has been working collaboratively to map each municipality's network of stormwater outfalls, catch basins, manholes, and stormwater conveyance pipes to a single, centralized Geographic Information System (GIS) database. Funding from two grant rounds was received from the NYSDEC to enable this work. Combining the Stormwater mapping with existing data on water quality will allow us to understand stormwater impacts and trends on Rockland's surface waters. I didn't change this- it's great as is.

CCE Stormwater and Water Quality Education webpage – CCE Rockland's stormwater education webpage is continually updated and includes volunteer and internship opportunities for a range of audiences. The webpage includes an interactive water quality map for Rockland County with data for watershed boundaries, NYSDEC's Impaired waters, Harmful Algal Blooms throughout Rockland and more. The live hydrologic layer shows flow direction across the nation. The data allows for cross-correlation with multiple agencies and organizations and assists with permitting and grant funding. Stormwater education posts are regularly scheduled on CCE Rockland's social media accounts.

Stormwater Radio Show - As part of the Consortium's public education work, our Hort Lab Manager, Michael Wilson, hosts the monthly Stormwater Consortium Radio Show on WRCR. Themes for the show include the environmental impact of stormwater for the homeowner, green infrastructure, ecological landscaping, rain gardens, and flooding.

Rain Barrels and Compost Bins – CCE Rockland sells rain barrels and compost bins at cost on behalf of Rockland Green. The drought and a rebate from Veolia may have led to record sales in 2022. CCE Rockland continues to promote the use of rain barrels as a way to conserve water used outdoors. The horticulture educator and Master Gardener Volunteers presented a number of workshops to demonstrate how easy and important it is to compost table scraps and yard waste at home to keep material out of landfills



Our 2023 Community Network

Thank you to our Community Partners!

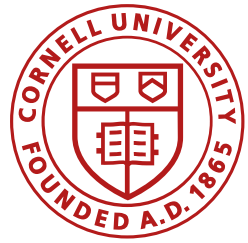
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rockland has partnered with hundreds of nonprofit agencies, organizations and businesses during the past year including:

- AVF Solutions Group
- BRIDGES
- CANDLE
- CCE Dutchess County
- CCE Orange County
- CCE Putnam County
- CCE Suffolk
- CCE Sullivan County
- CCE Ulster County
- CCE Westchester County
- Center for Safety & Change
- Clarkstown Community Learning Center
- Clarkstown Justice Court
- Clarkstown Police
- Dominican University
- Eileen Fisher Waste No More
- Four Paws Guidance Dog Training
- Garden Club of Nyack
- Hackensack Riverkeeper
- Haverstraw African American Connection
- Haverstraw, Nyack Youth, Spring Valley and Western Ramapo Collaboratives
- Headstart of Rockland
- Historical Society of Rockland County
- Jawonio
- Meals on Wheels
- Mercy University
- Keep Rockland Beautiful
- New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Department of Health
- New York New Jersey Trail Conference
- Nyack Farmers Market
- Nyack Pollinator Pathway - Dana Harkrider
- Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory
- Leadership Rockland
- Oradell Animal Hospital
- Orangetown Jewish Center
- Papaw's Dog House
- Pine Bush Equine
- Ramapo Garden Club
- Rockland BOCES
- Rockland Composters
- Rockland Conservation and Service Corps
- Rockland County Division of Environmental Resources
- Rockland County Department of Health
- Rockland County Environmental Educators
- Rockland County Food Pantries: TOUCH, Sloatsburg, People To People, Catholic Charities
- Rockland County Libraries: Blauvelt, Finkelstein, Kings Daughter, Nanuet, New City, Nyack, Orangeburg, Palisades, Pearl River, Piermont, Sloatsburg, Suffern, Rose Memorial, Valley Cottage, West Nyack
- Rockland County School Districts: Clarkstown, Nanuet, North Rockland, Pearl River, South Orangetown, Suffern, Nyack, East Ramapo Central
- Rockland County Sheriffs Mounted Police Unit
- Rockland County Youth Bureau
- Rockland Environmental Management Council
- Rockland Farm Alliance
- Rockland Green
- Rockland County Human Rights Commission
- Rockland Municipal Planning Federation
- Rockland Sierra Club
- Rockland Teachers Center
- Rockland Veterinarians: County Animal Hospital, Valley Cottage Animal Hospital, North Rockland Animal Hospital, Nanuet Animal Hospital, Spring Valley Animal Hospital, Cat Care Clinic of the Nyacks
- Rockland Works
- Sparkill Creek Watershed Alliance
- Stormwater Consortium of Rockland County
- St. Thomas Aquinas College
- The Learning Collaborative
- Threefold Community Farm
- Towns of Clarkstown, Haverstraw, Orangetown, Ramapo, and Stony Point
- Trailside Museums & Zoo at Bear Mountain State Park
- United Way
- Upper Nyack Green Committee
- Villages of Airmont, Chestnut Ridge, Grandview-on-Hudson, Haverstraw, Hillburn, Kaser, Montebello, New Hempstead, New Square, Nyack, Piermont, Pomona, Sloatsburg, Spring Valley, Suffern, Upper Nyack, West Haverstraw and Wesley Hills
- Wickes Arborists
- Wild Woods Restoration Project - Linda Rohleder
- 13 Hands Equine Rescue

2023 Funding

Thank you to our Funders!

- Apple Bank
- Bleakley, Platt & Schmidt, LLP
- Dominican University
- Gateway Building Services
- Health Research Inc. (HRI)
- Hudson River Estuary Program
- Lower Hudson PRISM
- Manhattan Beer Distributors
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Department of Health
- New York State Water Resources Institute
- New York/New Jersey Trail Conference
- Orange and Rockland Utilities
- Rockland County Division of Environmental Resources
- Rockland County Department of Social Services
- Rockland County Youth Bureau
- Rockland Green
- Stormwater Consortium of Rockland County
- Toward a Sustainable Future
- Tractor Supply Company
- Veolia



County

Honorable Edwin J. Day Rockland
County Executive

Honorable Jay Hood, Jr.
Rockland County Legislative Chair

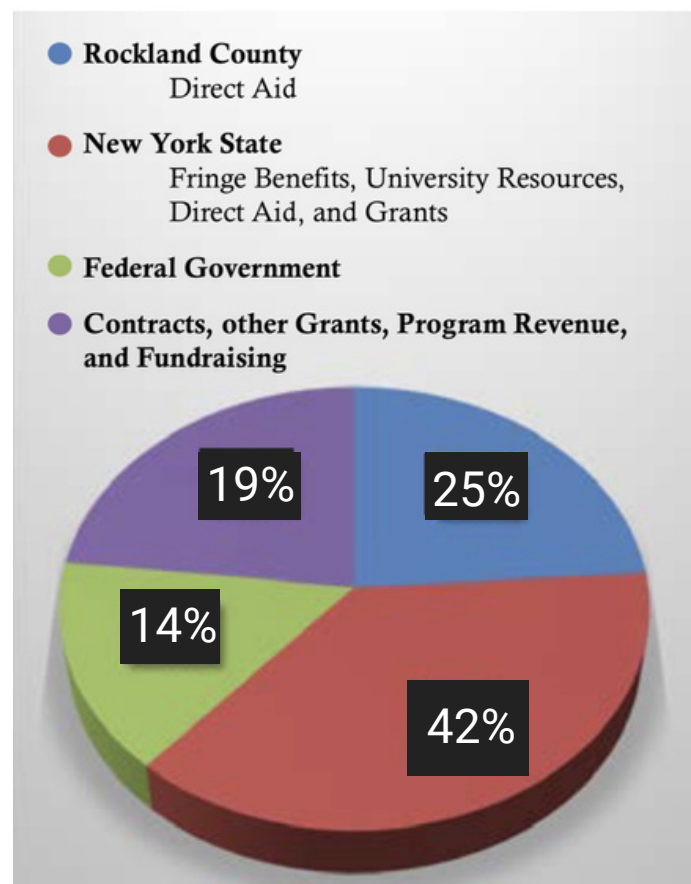
State

State of New York
Cornell University
Dr. Christopher Watkins, Director,
Cornell Cooperative Extension

Federal

United States Department of Agriculture

The County of Rockland, through the Rockland Legislature, provides substantial funding for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rockland's programs and operations which allows us to leverage state and federal funding.



Help CCE Rockland reach 200 years and beyond

- Be a **Speaker**, share your expertise
- Be an **Advocate**, spread the word
- Be an **Advisor**, help shape our programs in advisory committees
- Be an **Intern**, gain experience and help us reach the community
- Be a **4-H Leader**, shape the next generation
- Be a **Master Gardener Volunteer**, keep Rockland growing
- Be an **Environmental Steward**, keep Rockland healthy
- Be a guide for **Youth**, educate & enrich Rockland's youngsters
- Be a **Participant**, attend our programs & utilize our services
- Be a member of the **Board of Directors**, help guide CCE

To find out more about volunteering or to express your interest, please email rockland@cornell.edu or call the office at (845) 429-7085