

# EXTENSION TRENDS: **ADA COUNTY**

University of Idaho Extension, Ada County • [www.uidaho.edu/ada](http://www.uidaho.edu/ada) • 208-287-5900



## 2024 By the Numbers

- **16,268** direct contacts
- **6,186** youth participants
- **366** volunteers
- **8,307** volunteer hours
- **\$266,803** extramural funding

## UI Extension Educators



**Ariel Agenbroad**  
ariel@uidaho.edu  
Community Food Systems  
& Small Farms



**Sindy Martinez**  
smartinez@uidaho.edu  
4-H Youth Development



**Bridget Morrisroe**  
bridgeta@uidaho.edu  
Family & Consumer Sciences



**Gail Silkwood**  
gsilkwood@uidaho.edu  
4-H Youth Development

## 2024 Impact

Area Educator Ariel Agenbroad received a \$74,991 grant from the Western Extension Risk Management Education Center to support outreach to military veterans. The project utilizes peer to peer learning and a regional approach to connect Idaho's farmer veterans with risk management education and each other. Monthly, free webinars are being offered, exploring topics chosen to help veteran and beginning farmers and ranchers identify risks and take action. The Idaho Harvest Heroes podcast was developed to deliver production, marketing, financial, legal and human risk management education through stories directly from experienced veteran producers. Four regional, in-person workshops, tours and networking events will be held around the state. In addition to this project, Agenbroad and Program Assistant Connie May provided seedlings and planted vegetable gardens with low-income veteran residents at Valor Pointe Apartments in Boise for the third year. VA Social Worker Mandy Anderson reported that residents have come to love the garden and eating from it and has increased residents access to fresh food. She also observed physical, social and emotional benefits for the 10+ residents engaged in caring for the garden. "I think the impacts of the garden are huge. It's a large conversation piece at Valor Pointe for the tenants as well as during tours. I have heard residents give each other compliments on how good it looks. Plus, they love to come out solo and look at it which is awesome!"

Agenbroad continued to provide leadership and secure funding for the Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) program. Farm to ECE is an early intervention strategy focused on three core elements: local food sourcing; food and agriculture education; and contact with growing food, such as school gardens or farm visits. Piloted in 2019, Agenbroad has worked in partnership with the State of Idaho Department of Health and Welfare to implement Farm to ECE Harvest of the Month programs at early care sites throughout the South Central Public Health District, trained State Health District personnel and delivered five trainings to IdahoSTARS health consultants working statewide. Health consultants chose Let's Grow, Let's Eat Indoor Gardening programs as the most suitable intervention for piloting and evaluation at five sites in summer 2024. Childcare sites in Idaho Falls, Kamiah, Kimberly, Parma and St. Anthony were supplied with indoor vegetable garden kits, guided instruction on planting, care and harvest, handwashing and a taste test lesson. Over 60 children tended the gardens, all of which grew edible crops. Youth tried new foods through organized taste testing experiences and explored how and where food is grown. Even children who typically did not eat vegetables were willing to try something new. Youth at all five sites interacted with their gardens daily, and participated in physical activities like walking, lifting, carrying, digging and planting. Parents and guardians were invited to see the gardens and received a take home family newsletter that was developed as a companion piece. Thanks to nearly \$80,000 in additional funding, IdahoSTARS health consultants will be expanding the pilot to include at least 75 more sites in 2024-25, potentially reaching thousands of youth in child care.

Educator Sindy Martinez received an Idaho Out of School Network Summer of Innovation grant for \$20,000 which was used to support

a full-time 4-H summer program assistant to help with programming in Ada and Canyon counties. Over 1,900 youth aged 5-18 participated in 4-H STEAM summer programs from both counties. A large majority of these youth participated in at least four programming sessions. This effort was possible through collaboration with over 30 community partners and activities were selected based on the needs and interests of youth and community partners.

Educator Bridget Morrisroe provides leadership for healthy living programs in Ada County and statewide, delivered online and in-person. She also received funding through the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare for the Diabetes Prevention Program to hire professional support staff and purchase an online platform for enrollment and billing for Medicare and health insurance reimbursement. The outcomes for this program statewide since 2017 include 12 certified Extension employees as healthy lifestyle coaches; 313 participants from 11 counties enrolled in 27 cohorts; development of four series in Spanish and 10 distance learning series; and an estimated health care savings of \$278 per participant per year for three years, an overall savings of \$261,042. Morrisroe also trained and supervised 14 first year Master Food Safety Advisor volunteers and continued to train and support 50 Advanced Master Food Safety Advisors. These volunteers made 599 contacts and volunteered 1,154 volunteer hours, valued at \$38,650 of their personal time.

More participants were certified as Idaho Master Gardeners than the previous year and the number of master gardeners joining the Advanced Master Gardener program has increased. Eight volunteers helped teach and promote easy compost information and maintain the hands-on site display.

## 4-H in Ada County

UI Extension, Ada County engaged over 900 youth aged 5-18 focusing on teaching healthy habits. The team fostered cultural exchange by preparing culturally relevant healthy food options. Summer program assistants developed take-home sheets to help youth implement what they had learned. This strategy enhanced parent/guardian-child interactions, reinforcing skill development



and learning at home. To address physical activity needs, Morrisroe provided statewide leadership to 4-H faculty and staff in 4-H Yoga and Healthy Habits. Morrisroe has worked with Ada and Canyon County 4-H educators to organize and deliver healthy living programs at 26 sites from 2018-24, reaching over 1,400 youth.

## On the Horizon

Agengbroad worked with the City of Boise, Global Gardens and a former Harvest Heroes participant to host a tour and showcase for Idaho Congressman Mike Simpson and 18 staff members at the future Spaulding Ranch site in Boise. The congressman and staff were very interested in plans to offer training opportunities for veterans and their families in urban agriculture at the site when funding and capacity allow.

UI Extension will continue working with the Nampa School District to expand 4-H Juntos with the possibility of branching into three high schools (Skyview and Columbia) with Nampa High School being the primary program host. With the help of Canyon County 4-H Juntos Program Coordinator Elizabeth Albor, 22 in-school 4-H club STEAM activities have been held along with college and career readiness activities. Albor has also hosted success coaching sessions to help youth and/or their parents/guardians navigate the higher education process. Six family engagement nights have been held and an additional night was added at the request of youth and parents/guardians to have more activities they can engage in as a family. These activities ranged from leather craft to pressure cooking, gardening and photography.

Morrisroe worked with the City of Boise Curb It program and three Extension faculty to develop a project focused on minimizing home food waste. She received funding to develop and support professional presentations and provide materials, supplies and tools for the project. The presentation has been delivered to over 100 Extension faculty, staff and volunteers, and two additional presentations have been scheduled with an estimated 80 attendees. Morrisroe was also lead on an Extension publication about the impacts of home food waste. The bulletin includes a tip sheet and food inventory tool for consumers. Toolkits that include a laminated tip sheet and food inventory with magnetic clip, plus a reusable freezer compost bag have been distributed at community events including the Boise Farmers Market, and the new City of Boise Apartment compost sites.

Longtime horticulture Extension Educator Susan Bell retired in 2024 after 40 years in the role. UI Extension will welcome a new horticulture educator this year to fill the vacancy and lead the Idaho Master Gardener volunteers.

## Advisory Board

Special thanks to volunteers who help shape programming and inform the work we do for UI Extension in Ada County: David Anderson, Jessica Harrold, Amber Beierle, Ben Brock, Barbara English, Katrina Woodhead, Nicole Sparano, April Leblanc, Gretchen Anderson, Cathy McDougall, Janice Alexander, Marcia Farrar, Todd Christensen, Sue Olszewski, Kristin Lambson, Catherine Milner and Beth Kimball.