

# ANNUAL REPORT

# 20

A YEAR OF  
TRANSFORMATION AND  
NEW BEGINNINGS

# 25



CCE CHEMUNG

# Our 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.



# Board of Directors

Amos Mainville, **President**, Industry



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nutritionist

## County Representation (appointed)

Rodney Strange, Chemung County Legislative



## Extension Representation

Tim Davis, State Extension Specialist

## About CCE Chemung

Since 1912, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chemung County has responded to the needs of residents with unbiased, research-based information, tools, and education that people have come to depend on and trust. Our programs are developed in direct response to community input and are based on the most current information available from Cornell and other Land Grant universities nationwide.



## Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As we close out another inspiring year at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chemung County, I want to express my gratitude for your support and commitment to our shared mission. Together, we have faced challenges and celebrated achievements that enhance the lives of our community members.

This year, we have made significant strides, and I'm thrilled to showcase the incredible program stories included in this report:

1. Agricultural Progress: We've empowered local farmers with workshops focused on sustainable practices, ensuring they thrive amidst changing market conditions.
2. Youth Development: Our 4-H programs have flourished, fostering leadership and creativity among our youth, highlighted by a successful county fair that showcased their talents.
3. Health and Nutrition: Our nutrition initiatives have reached families with essential resources, promoting healthy lifestyles and extending our outreach to underserved communities.
4. Community Engagement: Our diverse workshops have sparked enthusiasm and collaboration among residents eager to learn about various topics, from gardening to financial literacy.

Looking ahead, we remain dedicated to addressing the evolving needs of our community. Your insights are vital, and I encourage you to share your thoughts on how we can better serve you.

Thank you to our incredible staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters. Your passion is the driving force behind our mission and the positive impact we create together.

Here's to a fruitful year ahead, filled with promise and collaboration!

**Warm regards,**

Michelle Podolec, Executive Director  
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chemung County

# We are CCE Chemung



**Admin**



**4-H &  
21<sup>st</sup> Century**



**Ag &  
Local Foods**

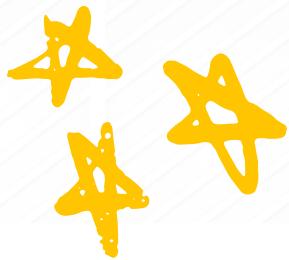
**Natural  
Resources**



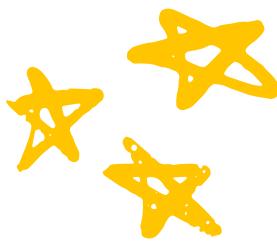
**CEV &  
NYSERDA**



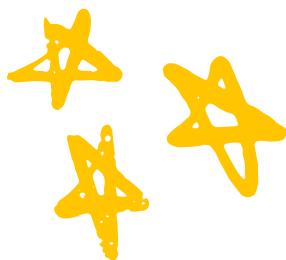
**SCNYDFC**



# Our Partners and Sponsors



Chemung County  
Chemung County Youth Bureau  
Chemung County Soil & Water Conservation District  
C & B Mechanical LLC  
Chemung Canal Trust Company  
Chemung County Office of the Aging  
Community Foundation of Elmira- Corning and the Finger Lakes  
Chemung County Ag Promotions  
Corning Incorporated Foundation  
Dog is Good  
Elm Chevrolet Company, Inc  
Elmira City School District  
Feehan Family Foundation  
Francis Smith & Sons, Inc  
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Incubatorworks  
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Rick Curren Feed LLC  
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Simmons Rockwell  
Southern Tier Building and Construction Trades Council  
SUNY Corning  
TH Foods, Inc  
Tioga Downs Regional Community Foundation  
Tompkins County Office for the Aging  
United Way  
WENY-TV  
YWCA of Elmira and the Twin Tiers





# POSTIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



# 4-H "MAKE THE BEST BETTER"



## 254 ENROLLED YOUTH

2025 saw an increase in membership of 50 new members. Membership has more than doubled since 2021.

More families are looking for opportunities to engage their youth in the development of life skills, leadership and collaborative safe environments.

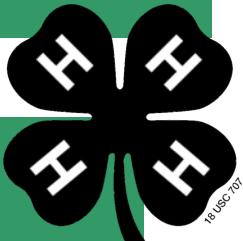
## 30+ VOLUNTEERS

4-H is only as successful as the volunteers we have involved. Volunteers lead clubs, teaching project workshops, judge 4-H projects or hosting 4-H youth at their businesses or farms



## 14 4-H CLUBS

Chemung County 4-H boasts 14 clubs in a variety of topics, including STEM Lego Challenges, Homeschool Sciences, Equine, Livestock, community-based project groups and a highly successful Teen Ambassador Group.



## LEADERSHIP

The youth of Chemung County 4-H had an impressive leadership year! Youth attended trainings and events where they were able to represent Chemung County and New York State.

A few of these events are:

- National 4-H Ignite conference, where they taught workshops to teens across the country and the world!
- NYS Youth Agriculture Leadership Conference.
- National 4-H Wildlife Habitat Education Contest.
- National 4-H Hippology Contest.

## COMMUNITY

Community service is a primary pillar included in the life skills and leadership development of 4-H youth. Some of the 2025 activities included the 4-H Fun Barn service event, reading to youth for Ag Literacy week and assisting at Wreaths Across America, one group even starting an event in their community.



## LIFE SKILLS

In addition to club project activities, 4-H County workshops included culinary and knife skills, public speaking, marketing, animal husbandry, career development and citizenship.

The success of skill development was seen at 4-H Contests and the events the youth attended.



# 4-H CAMP EXPLORE

**"Bee Yourself at 4-H Camp Explore"**



## 60 CAMPERS

2025 was the largest year for 4-H Camp Explore. Over 50% of the youth who attend camp are not regularly enrolled in 4-H, allowing for new families to engage in 4-H. This year was one of the first years camp had returning campers become Counselors in Training, a milestone youth look forward to!

## 15 TEEN COUNSELORS

4-H Camp runs on the ideas and volunteer hours of Teen Counselors. Counselors meet throughout the year to plan for the theme, activities and games. Teens complete training in best practices for camps.



## 4 DAYS OF FUN

4-H Camp Explore includes activities that encourage youth to challenge themselves, to try new things, and engage with peers around the county. They build positive relationships with the teen counselors who become friends and role models.



# EDUCATION



The goals for 4-H Camp Explore, in addition to fun, are to provide opportunities for youth 5-12 to experience a variety of educational topics.

The 4 Groups Learning Focuses for 2025:

- Outdoor Science
  - Watershed education, invertabrates, and Archery.
- Animal Adventure
  - Interaction and education about horses, cows, small animals and vet science.
- Explorers
  - Gardening, Nature and cooking.
- Cloverbuds
  - Exploring 4-H projects of all topics.

## FEES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

4-H day camp is kept reasonable with community partnerships, including Finn Academy for meal support, county appropriations for staff costs, and use of the fairgrounds. A cap per family and a "pay what you can" scholarship are available thanks to funds raised by Tractor Supply and Joann's Paper Clover events.

The availability of financial support in 2026 is in question due to the loss of Joann's Fabrics.

4-H is turning to the FLX Gives Campaign to help fill the camp for 4-H Camper Scholarships.



## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Educational partnerships with the Chemung Valley Farmers Museum, Chemung Valley Fiber Arts Guild, Cornell and CCE Programs.

This year youth met the Cornell Raptors and experienced the Cornell Space Imaging Lab!

**In 2025, 10 full and 25 partial scholarships were provided to families thanks to the support of our community.**



# 4-H EXHIBITION

*at the Chemung County Fair*



## YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Over **160** 4-H Exhibitors and their families attended the 2025 Chemung County Fair. Families took part in daily activities, showing animals and volunteering to provide interactive opportunities for fair goers.

## 500+ PROJECTS

4-H Members displayed over **500** member-made projects such as 3D printing, sewing, woodworking, art, gardening, photography, baked goods, and more at booths hosted by 14 clubs.



## 460 ANIMALS

The months leading up to fair, 4-H members are breeding and/or raising quality animals to show at fair. Rabbits were this year's largest species with the help of a rapidly growing rabbit club. Also seeing growth were sheep, swine and market poultry projects.



# NEW IN 2025



With the help of the 4-H Advisory Committee, 4-H Clubs, and Teen Ambassadors, new events were added to the fair schedule.

- STEM Egg Drop- youth created vessels to drop an egg from the Skyworks-sponsored lift. Over 40 youth participated!
- Cooking Challenge- 30 youth worked in teams to put their culinary skills to the test.
- Four Species Showmanship- 16 Showmen from all species, and some who do not show tested their skills showing sheep, swine, goats, and poultry.
- Club Run Activities: Clubs hosted interactive activity nights for all youth exhibitors.

## 4-H BENEFIT SALE

The 4-H Youth Livestock and Benefit Sale is an annual highlight of the exhibition and fair. A collaborative experience of youths' ability to raise and market their animals and clubs' ability to make community connections.

The 2025 sale has been the most successful since the return of in-person auctions in 2023.

57 lots, including animals, baked goods, and baskets, were sold for a total value of over \$15,000.

Funds from the livestock and benefit auction go directly to the youth who raised the animal and the clubs that supported their education.



## ON TO STATE FAIR

After showing at the county fair, youth go on to represent Chemung County at the NYS State Fair.

This year the largest group of youth competed at the state fair in the last 5 years.

More than **20** Youth competed with **75** projects, showing animals and in 8 knowledge events.

One of the 75 projects was selected as **Best at State Fair**, Chemung County youth placed top 5 in most competitions and 3 youth qualified for national contests.

# 2025 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CONNECT



## 21ST CENTURY AFTERSCHOOL- ELMIRA, WAVERLY AND SPENCER

Federally funded grant program. The program serves approximately 650 students (1+ hours) each year, averaging nearly 350 students per day, and consistently surpasses the annual student participation target of 572 students, achieving 15+ hours.

CCE Chemung offers family and program enrichment to all sites and supervises 2 sites- Spencer and Waverly.

## PANTHER PAK

10000 youth were served in Spencer's after - school program

## WAVERLY WARP

10000 youth were served in Waverly's after- school program

## PARENT & FAMILY

14 participants took advantage of the virtual opportunities presented

## WAVERLY WARP



The WARP program teaches kids life skills that they will need to be successful later in life. Students were taught skills such as sewing and crocheting, sign language, making a podcast, how to swim, how to communicate and problem solve with other people, how to do laundry, and more!



## S-VE PANTHER PAK

The Panther PAK youth participated in a number of activities to enhance their learning experiences. Some of their favorite activities were learning how to fish, an Around-the-World cultural fair, designing and playing board games, lego challenges, and a Cooking Matters series with SNAP-Ed. They also visited the Spencer Food Pantry to pack Grab and Go bags.



# DAIRY IN THE CLASSROOM



## LESSONS

- Beef & Dairy
- Pollinators & Dairy
- Biosecurity
- Pumpkin Pie in a bag
- Ice cream in a Bag

## SCHOOLS

- Visits to 13 Schools
- 14 Summer Program Visits
- 3 Field Trip Visits by DITC staff & Interns
- 1 Special Event “Ag in the Infield”



## STUDENTS



- 102 Classroom Visits
- Over 3,100 Students served by DITC
- programming in Chemung County



New York  
Agriculture  
in the Classroom

DAIRY IN THE CLASSROOM



# WILDLIFE HABITAT EDUCATION PROGRAM

*at Nationals*



3 Talented Youth  
2 Passionate  
Instructors  
1 Amazing  
Experience

At the end of July, three New York State 4-H youth had the exciting opportunity to travel to Tennessee to showcase their skills in Wildlife Habitat Education Programming, or WHEP. This marks New York State's first ever participation in nationals.

The national WHEP event was held at the Clyde York 4-H Center in Crossville, Tennessee. While there, the youth were welcomed by staff from the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and Extension, who hosted engaging activities, team-building exercises, and delicious meals. The competition itself was a highlight, but the learning didn't stop there.

Participants gained valuable insight into local wildlife management strategies used by Tennessee biologists to enhance habitat and promote public recreation.

In the competition, the New York team placed **11th in their division**, with individual rankings ranging from **17<sup>th</sup> to 33<sup>rd</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup>** in the wildlife challenge. This was a fantastic first showing for the NYS WHEP program, and we're incredibly proud of their efforts.



A photograph of several cows in a grassy field. In the foreground, a brown and white cow is facing left. Behind it, a dark brown cow is partially visible. On the right side of the frame, a white cow with a dark brown patch on its side is looking towards the camera. The background shows a fence and more of the field. A solid red diagonal bar runs from the top-left corner to the bottom-right corner of the image.

# AGRICULTURE

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## ENHANCING CHEMUNG COUNTY AGRICULTURE

This year, data from the latest Ag Census and the development of a new Chemung County Ag and Farmlands Protection plan have shown that diversified and small farms are growing while our commercial farms remain few, but strong. Supporting transition plans, new farmers, and looking to the future of the sustainable agriculture industry in Chemung County is at the forefront.



### EMERGING ISSUES IN AGRICULTURE

Land management planning, transition planning, grant writing, small business planning, farm best practices.

*Supporting local agriculture and small farm enterprises, Advocating for Agriculture and Brining high quality resources to agriculturalists in Chemung County.*



750+

### NEW AND BEGINNING FARMERS

*Reached out to CCE Chemung or attended workshops to increase their knowledge, grow their confidence and improve their agricultural practices.*

### EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS

2025 has been an exciting invigorating year for the Agriculture Program Year, several new programs started and others returned.

#### Homesteading Workshop

- February Event
- Farm, self-sustainability, forest management and gardening workshops.
- 5 Community Partners
- 55 Attendees

Other notable events:  
Pasture Walk  
Sheep and Fiber Workshop  
Small Farm and Homesteading Series

### CCE SOUTH CENTRAL DAIRY AND FIELD CROPS TEAM

South Central Dairy and Field Crops Educators Janice Degni and Betsy Hicks were on hand this year teaching workshops for calf handling skills to 4-H camp participants, collaborating on our Fall Pasture Walk and teaching Hay Quality. Additionally, Betsy and Janice work across the region to support Dairy and Field Crop farms in best practices, research and innovation.



# Cornell Cooperative Extension

South Central NY Dairy and Field Crops Program

Broome | Cayuga | Chemung | Cortland | Tioga | Tompkins

## DAIRY & FIELD CROPS IN CHEMUNG COUNTY — AN IMPORTANT ECONOMIC ENGINE

DAIRY FACTS: **12 DAIRY FARM BUSINESSES EARNING**

**\$5.3 MILLION DOLLARS** OF FARM GATE INCOME FOR MILK

CARING FOR NEARLY **3000 DAIRY COWS**, PRODUCING **2.6 MILLION GALLONS**

**OF MILK PER YEAR**, GROWING FORAGES: HAY CROP AND CORN SILAGE FOR

THEIR FEED ON **16,706 ACRES** WITH A VALUE OF **\$7.2. MILLION** AND

**\$2.1 MILLION** INCOME FOR CATTLE AND CALVES SOLD.

MARKET VALUE OF AG PRODUCTS SOLD IN CHEMUNG COUNTY IN 2022



## HANDS-ON LEARNING LABS

- **Feeder School:** Understand equipment maintenance, proper feed mix, cow behavior and communication with farm team
  - Optimize feed bunk management, silage storage, best practices and SAFETY.
- **Transition Calf Workshop:** Identifying bottle necks for raising calves through weaning & transition
- **Sprayer & Planting Clinics:** Prepare machinery to optimize performance



## FOCUS ON FORAGE QUALITY

**Alert for Hay Crop First Harvest** - Measuring alfalfa height is a reliable indicator of forage quality for both alfalfa and grass hay. By tracking alfalfa heights weekly in the early spring, we can predict first cutting harvest dates to help farms achieve optimal forage quality. Alfalfa heights are easy to measure, and they are more accurate than other methods used to determine harvest timing. A report is sent weekly reporting crop status and anticipated harvest dates.



**Corn Silage Clinics** - Our burndown clinics are designed to help producers develop a harvest plan based on field maturity. Corn silage is a cornerstone crop for dairy farms because it provides a high-energy, digestible forage that supports milk production and herd health. Its ability to deliver consistent nutrition—especially in the form of fermentable carbohydrates and fiber—makes it a reliable feed source throughout the year.

Forage quality directly impacts milk yield, and corn silage offers a balance of starch and fiber that complements other feed components.

## YOUTH WORKSHOPS PROVIDE HANDS-ON LIVESTOCK SKILLS TRAINING



Betsy Hicks of CCE SCNY Dairy Team helps a Chemung County youth learn how to correctly place an ear tag in the ear of a calf model. (photo credit Serenity Conklin)

In Chemung County, youth as part of the Animal Crackers Adventures were taught about the anatomy of the ear, and learned where the proper placement of the tag should be.

They were then given a tagger and a real tag, and applied the tag to the model calf's ear.

Youth were also learned about giving injections – first learning about needle safety and proper handling, and then were able to practice giving two types of injections to the calf model.

Using the model is ideal, as kids can practice as many times as they want without the fear of the animal reacting to the injection, or hurting the animal if they do it incorrectly. Through the many trainings Betsy has done, she has watched kids who were too afraid to even look at, let alone pick up a syringe, find the courage to properly give injections to the calf model.

## SUPPORTING NON-DAIRY LIVESTOCK

On-farm pasture walks offer more than just a scenic stroll—they're immersive, hands-on learning experiences that bring pasture management principles to life.

Managed pastures check all the boxes: they support environmental health, foster community goodwill, and make economic sense.

With year-round vegetation, biodiversity, and erosion control, pastures are a powerhouse of sustainability.

And let's face it—there's something heartwarming about seeing livestock grazing peacefully. It evokes a sense of connection to local agriculture and appreciation for the farmers behind it.

From a production standpoint, pastures are the most cost-effective forage system. Pasture requires more management than feeding stored feeds because the quantity and quality change daily.

Animals harvest their own feed, reducing the need for expensive equipment. Each host farm opens its gates to share their unique management strategies—from fencing and watering systems to paddock layout—creating a rich setting for peer-to-peer learning.



## BY THE NUMBERS 2025 MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS



- 30 Meetings / Workshops with 687 participants
- 203 Personalized Consultations & Responses to phone inquiries
- 11 Events to Increase Public Awareness of Agriculture
- Podcasts with 201 listeners
- Virtual Seminars totaling 350 contact hours



# **NATURAL RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY**



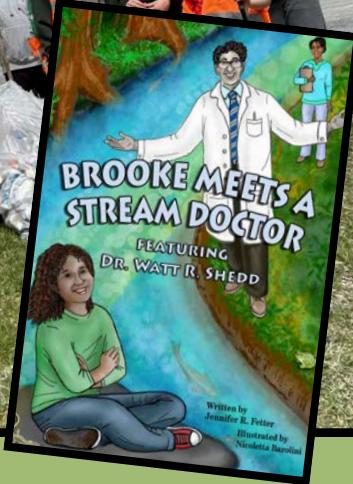
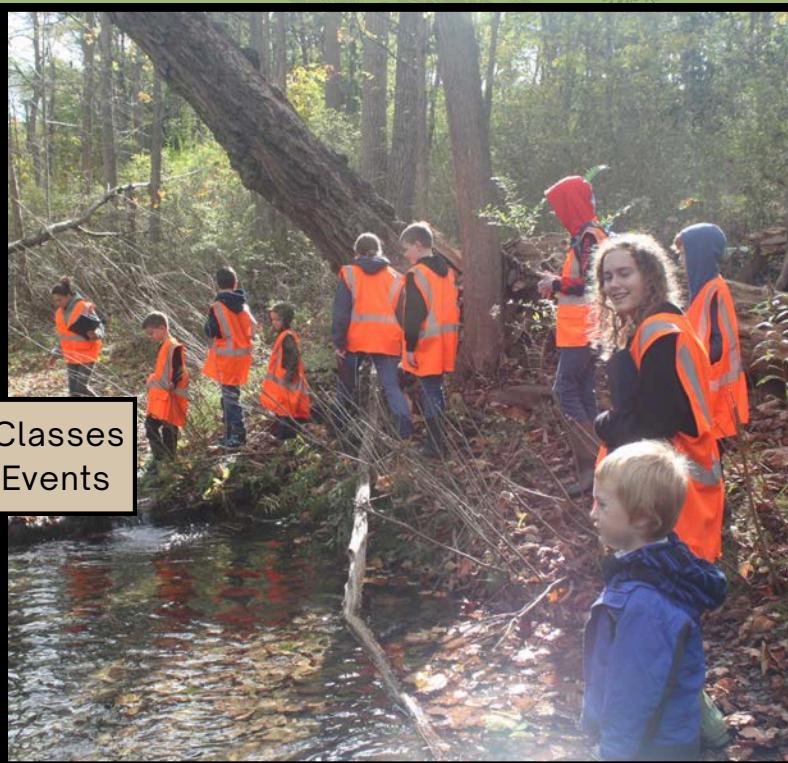
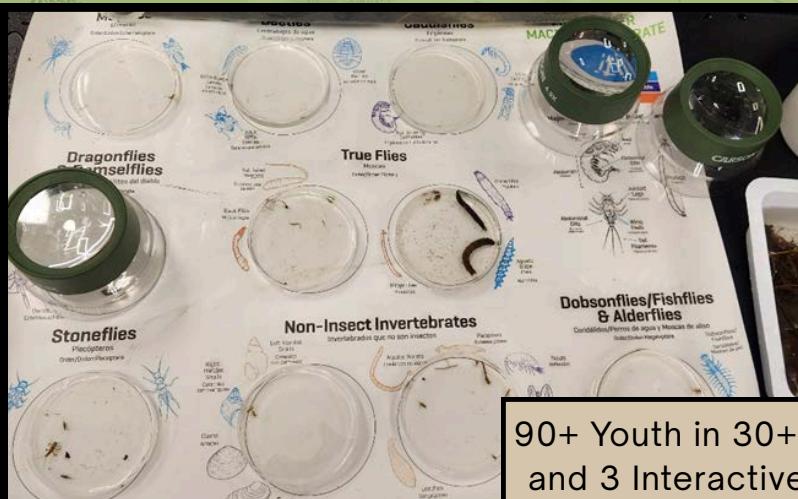
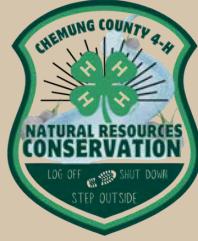
# NATURAL RESOURCES

Over the course of the year, 4H Natural Resources educators reached over 1,200 youth and hosted 47 classes and events.

Our bi-annual Household Hazardous Waste Collection events reached over 800 residents and gathered an estimated 90 lbs per household.



# Education Meets Fun with Junior Master Watershed Stewards





In April, as part of the EUGE planning project, CCE facilitated a “Tree Planting: 101” Workshop.

Participants learned about proper tree planting and maintenance and watched a planting demonstration. More than 70 seedlings, including swamp white oak, blue spruce, black cherry, and lilac, were distributed to participants to take home for planting.

85 tree seedlings were given away, including 11 that were raffled off at the Chemung County Fair.



The EUGE project aims to help increase green spaces and tree canopy in identified neighborhoods in the City of Elmira by providing education and resources to residents on planting trees and other forms of green infrastructure.



Congratulations, Simone! Thank you for your hard work and commitment on working with the Elmira City Council and Chemung County Planning Department to approve an updated street tree ordinance! Fantastic achievement!

# NYSERDA



963 Educated Using Powerhouse



Powering New York's Clean Energy Future



2615 People Served



80 Projects Completed



47 Weatherization Kits Provided



(607) 734-4453  
ext.211

[smartenergychoices.org](http://smartenergychoices.org)

# COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC VITALITY





COMPASSION

Aging in Place is a priority for many older adults in our community. To remain in their homes, they need to maintain mobility and create safe environments. Through Bone Builders, A Matter of Balance, and Clear the Clutter, participants are making meaningful changes that support independent living. Each of these programs empowers participants to take proactive steps toward aging safely and independently.



DEDICATION

Our success would not be possible without the support of our community partners.

We are grateful for the collaboration of:

- Habitat for Humanity
- Corning Museum of Glass
- Catholic Charities
- Chemung County Department of Aging
- Meals on Wheels
- New Beginnings Church
- Transformation Center
- Alzheimer's Association
- EOP Literacy Volunteers
- Tompkins County Ombudsman Program

COLLABORATION



This year Chemung Volunteer Action Corps engaged with **728 community members** through **7 unique events** and workshops.

Our Aging in Place initiatives engaged **over 100 participants** in the Bone Builders program and **10 individuals** completed A Matter of Balance fall prevention series



UNITY



ENGAGEMENT

Beyond the numbers, the qualitative impact of our work has been significant. Through the Volunteer Matters Discussion Series and the Community Volunteer Fair, we facilitated meaningful dialogue among volunteer coordinators. By coming together, we gained deeper insight into our local context and identified a collective need for volunteer development training.



EMPATHY

Together, we're building a stronger, more connected community.

**CVAC**  
CHEMUNG VOLUNTEER ACTION CORPS



The Master Gardener program engages adults and youth in hands-on learning about home gardening, including food production as well as ornamental gardening.

Throughout the year, Master Gardeners reached **1438** people and hosted **22 events**

- 9 Master Gardener volunteers engaged in providing education to the community, representing CCE Chemung and **10 new trainees** from Chemung began the Southern Tier Regional Master Gardener Training this September.

## MASTER FOOD PRESERVERS

4 Master Food Preservers engaged over **176 individuals** across **23 events** to address topics such as the health and economic benefits of increasing the amount of locally sourced foods in their diets, skills for preserving foods safely and identifying credible sources of information about home food preservation.

Master Food Preserver Volunteers and CCE Chemung staff helped participants to embrace safer home food preservation practices while honoring their cherished memories of family recipes and experiences preserving home-grown foods.



**Cornell Garden Based Learning**



# The Veggie Van



- Fresh, local produce
- Free, interactive education
- Supporting local farmers and families

**463** community members served in **3** locations over **12** weeks

Staff processed **\$2,494.00** in EBT transactions at Wisner Market and provided an additional **\$1054** in FreshConnect checks to consumers.



WITH GRATITUDE TO OUR SPONSORS

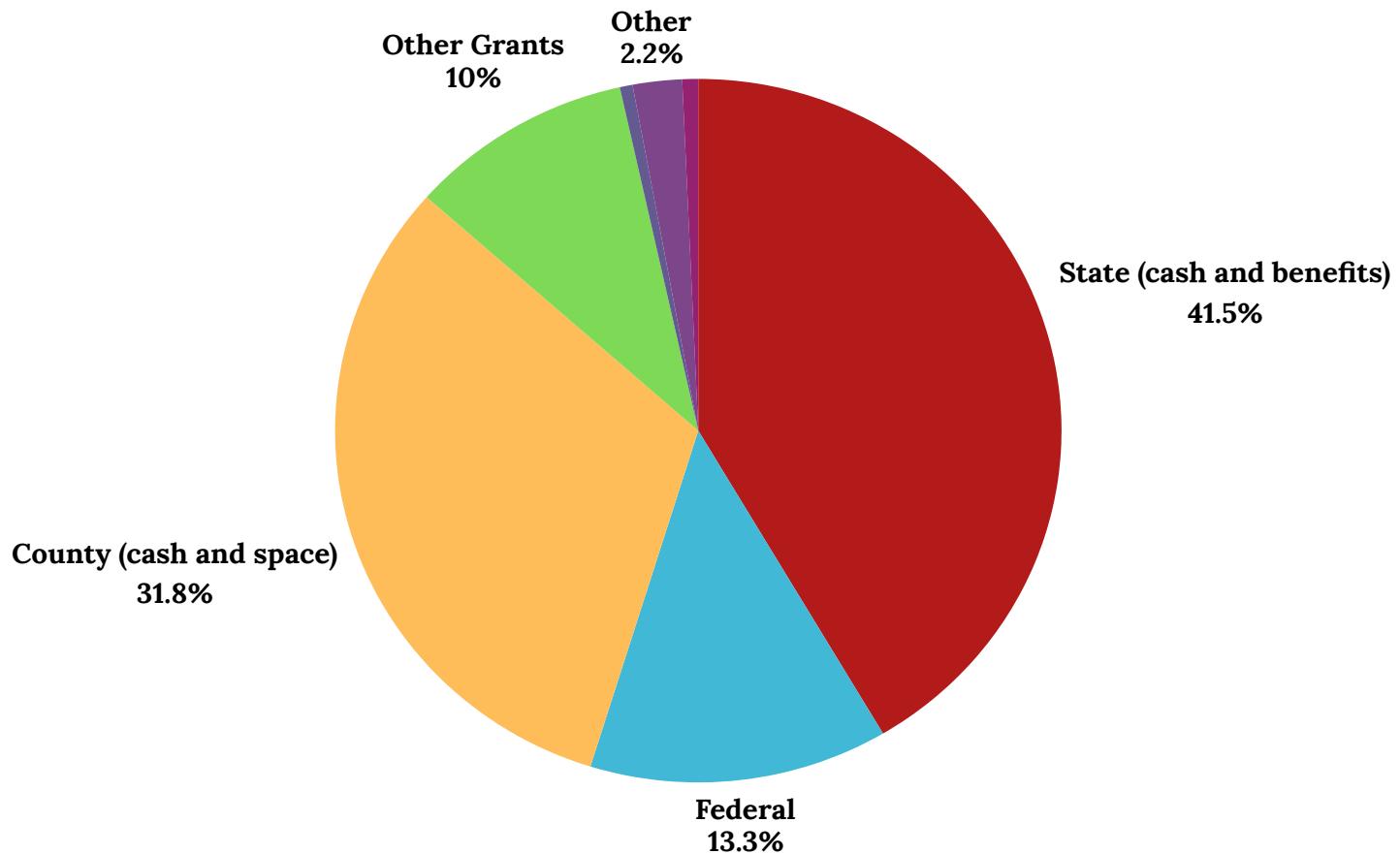




- **318 classes** - partnered with Center of Excellence (COE), Economic Opportunity Program (EOP), AIM Independent Living, Social Connection, GST BOCES, Steele Memorial Library, and many schools across the county
- **1,168 participants** - both adults and youth, across a variety of backgrounds, abilities, and socio-economic classes
- **Widespread appreciation** - many participants partook in multiple sessions, some even across years and expressed gratitude directly
- **Meaningful impact** - over 60–70% of participants report positive changes in key health behaviors, including increased fruit and vegetable consumption, greater physical activity, more diverse food choices, and higher water intake

# Financial Performance

## 2024 CCE Chemung Revenue



2024 CCE Chemung Financial Summary		
Revenues	Amount	%
County (cash and space)	\$382,329.00	32.32%
State (cash and benefits)	\$539,354.52	45.60%
Federal	\$103,458.21	8.75%
Other Grants	\$93,659.60	7.92%
Program Participation	\$8,791.92	0.74%
Contributions	\$12,296.25	1.04%
Fundraising	\$28,758.22	2.43%
Other	\$14,223.15	1.20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,182,870.87</b>	<b>100.00</b>

# Donate Today

CCE Chemung welcomes your donation to our general fund, and we are also happy to direct your donation to a specific program of interest. All programs benefit from your support.

Donations may be made with a credit card online via PayPal or by mail with a check payable to CCE of Chemung County (mail to Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chemung County, 425 Pennsylvania Avenue, Elmira, NY 14904).



PayPal  
General Fund



Kerm's Kids 4-H  
Youth Development  
Fund  
Community  
Foundation



# With Gratitude to





# Our Community





Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for providing equal program and employment opportunities in accordance with applicable laws.