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**Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County Receives  
2022 Organizational Leadership Quality Award  
Youth Services Quality Council Presents at Annual Meeting**

Each year at its December Annual Meeting, the regional Youth Services Quality Council of Rochester and Monroe County (YSQC) bestows an Organizational Leadership Quality Award to recognize outstanding community leaders that contribute to the betterment of youth in Monroe County. This award recognizes a YSQC member organization that has demonstrated commitment to the YSQC mission and vision, has actively participated in YSQC policy meetings and events, and has shown initiative and involvement through work team(s) or committees(s). Cornell Cooperative Extension Monroe County (CCE-Monroe) received this award at the recent December YSQC Annual Meeting held at Nazareth College.

Several program areas at CCE-Monroe offer youth programming. They include robust nutrition programming, horticultural workforce development, and 4-H. All educators complete Positive Youth Development 101 training through Cornell University and are familiar with the 4-H Thriving Model.

The Nutrition program (supported by Monroe County and the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP) provides nutrition education and obesity prevention workshops to youth and families throughout the community. The program offers hands-on workshops that empower participants to shop, cook, and eat healthier, all while staying within their budgets. Topics covered include increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, decreasing consumption of sweetened drinks, and increasing physical activity as well as mindfulness.

4-H Youth Development in Monroe County reaches 10,000 direct contacts per year, focusing on youth ages 5 to 19 in a variety of settings. During the pandemic, the 4-H team transitioned to using virtual formats while continuing to offer hands-on learning with the use of kits. Online platforms such as YouTube and FlipGrid were used to offer asynchronous learning opportunities. 4-H has largely returned to in-person programming but still offers virtual tools to serve youth and families who prefer learning during a cozy evening at home.

*Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities*

Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities.

A new 4-H youth workforce development program was created in collaboration with the City of Rochester during the summer of 2022. The Cultivating Community teens worked hard to support community gardens in each quadrant of the city and explored life skills ranging from cooking to interview and resume development. The cohort is meeting through the school year to further explore horticulture and community action projects.

4-H UNITY (Urban Neighborhoods Improved Through Youth) has two cohorts-one in collaboration with Agape Haven of Abundance on Driving Park Ave and the second in collaboration with Ibero-American Action League's Aspira Mentoring program at Eugenio Maria de Hostos Charter School. In addition to developing college and career readiness skills, these teens work together to assess their community and create projects of support. Projects have included creating an anti-violence video, pulling invasive species, supporting the Ibero Coat Giveaway, and exploring college life at Cornell University and SUNY Cobleskill.

The CCE-Monroe Horticulture Program leads the Growing Relevant and Outstanding Work Skills (GROWS) Program, supports young adults who are unemployed and live in the City of Rochester. The South Lawn Project involves the development of an educational growing space on a half-acre at the Cornell CCE-MC office, just north of the City of Rochester. Utilizing work in the garden through a transitional jobs program and horticulture education, GROWS teaches young adults how to grow vegetables, helps them understand the power of fresh produce as they deliver harvests to local food cupboards and builds structure in their daily lives to develop the soft skills they need to be successful employees. By working with CCE-Monroe staff, the participants receive mentoring. The end goal is to help them secure employment in the horticulture and agriculture industries.

CCE-Monroe has been a leader in the YSQC organization. The team has presented both virtually and in-person. The two groups worked together to offer Youth Mental Health First Aid training as we worked our way out of the pandemic.

4-H Program Leader, Susan Coyle, shared, "It is an honor to receive this special recognition from the Youth Services Quality Council of Rochester and Monroe County. Being recognized by peers for positive additions to youth experiences is an honor. CCE-Monroe and 4-H appreciate the professional development and networking opportunities offered by involvement in YSQC and look forward to being active participants for many years to come."

YSQC is based in Monroe County and is made up of various community organizations that work together to see youth thrive. The organization's goal is to find innovative ways to collaborate with one another, join forces to advance the organizational mission and create opportunities to learn new skills as professionals who work with youth.

The Monroe County 4-H Program is offered through Cornell Cooperative Extension to the youth of Monroe County. 4-H is a worldwide youth development program open to all youth aged 5 to 19, who want to have fun, learn new skills, and explore the world. In return, youth who participate in 4-H find a supportive environment and opportunities for hands-on or "experiential" learning about topics that spark their interest.



*CCE-Monroe Executive Director Andrea Lista, 4-H Program Leader Susan Coyle, and Natural Resources Educator Antonius Chess, Jr. accept the Youth Services Quality Council Organizational Leadership Quality Award at the December 2022 YSQC Annual Meeting.*

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