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**Holiday Hours:** Our offices will be closed from December 24, 2025- January 1, 2026 for Christmas and New Year's Holiday Break

## Discover the 8 Dimensions of Wellness: A series to help you thrive in every area of your life.

Kristin Bogdonas, Illinois Extension food and nutrition educator

When most people think about “health,” they focus on eating well and staying active. But true wellness is so much more than physical fitness. According to the Global Wellness Institute, wellness is “the active pursuit of activities, choices, and lifestyles that lead to a state of holistic health.”

Wellness is believed to have eight dimensions—physical, financial, emotional, social, spiritual, environmental, vocational, and intellectual. Each plays an important role in our overall well-being, and when they work together, they help us feel more balanced, energized, and fulfilled. Focusing on just one dimension can help, but understanding how they connect is what truly brings life into harmony.

Now more than ever, as individuals and communities continue to navigate stress, change, and uncertainty, investing in wellness is essential. By paying attention to multiple areas of well-being, you can boost your quality of life, improve health outcomes, and feel more grounded in your daily routines.

**This January, Illinois Extension is offering an opportunity for you to explore these 8 Dimensions in a weekly series.** It will take place on Wednesdays January 7, 14, 21, and 28 from 1 - 3 pm in Moline IL. In this series, we'll explore each dimension and how small, practical steps can create big changes. You'll gain tools to reduce stress, strengthen relationships, build resilience, and increase your sense of purpose. Get all the details on page 2 of this newsletter.



# 8 Dimensions of Wellness: Healthy Living Series

Wednesdays, January 7, 14, 21, 28 | Time: 1:00–3:00 PM

Butterworth Center | Deere-Wiman Carriage House | Moline, IL

## Kick off the new year with intention and insight!

Join Illinois Extension educators and local experts to explore the 8 Dimensions of Wellness—key areas that contribute to a balanced, fulfilling life. Each week we'll dive into two dimensions through interactive sessions, hands-on activities, and thoughtful discussion.

## What Are the 8 Dimensions of Wellness?

**Physical, Spiritual, Environmental, Emotional, Intellectual, Vocational, Social, Financial.**

These interconnected aspects of our lives influence overall well-being. By nurturing each dimension, we can create a more resilient, vibrant, and purpose-driven life. This series invites you to reflect on your current wellness, explore new strategies, and set meaningful goals for the year ahead.



## Weekly Topics & Presenters

### January 7 – Physical & Spiritual

#### • Physical Wellness



Tai Chi is effective for improving muscular strength and overall wellbeing. Learn about the health benefits and engage in a Tai Chi demonstration including a warm-up and cool down. *Presenter: Kristin Bogdonas, Illinois Extension Food and Nutrition Educator.*

#### • Spiritual Wellness



Explore indigenous spirituality and how it can guide personal growth, decision-making, and resilience through experiential practices. *Presenter: Kathleen Collins, Mental Health Specialist.*

### January 14 – Environmental & Emotional

#### • Environmental Wellness



Our environment can have a profound impact on our health and wellbeing. Discover how a nature-inspired design in our homes, landscapes, and community can enhance our wellbeing, the environment, and lead to deeper connections. *Presenter: Emily Swihart, Illinois Extension Horticulture Educator.*

#### • Emotional Wellness



Explore simple, arts-based stress-reduction practices that support emotional balance for busy lives. No art experience needed; activities are designed to be low-pressure, calming, and restorative. *Presenter: Elaine Kaple, 4-H Metro Youth Educator.*

### January 21 – Intellectual & Vocational

#### • Intellectual Wellness



Researchers agree that intellectual challenge is beneficial throughout life. Learn about lifestyle factors that contribute to brain health, and strategies to enhance thinking. *Presenter: Kara Schweitzer, Illinois Extension Family Life Educator.*

#### • Vocational Wellness –



Learn how to adapt to vocational changes, build new skills, and explore continuing education opportunities. *Presenters: Kole Shuda & Olivia Gonzalez, Black Hawk College PaCE Department.*

### January 28 – Social & Financial

#### • Social Wellness



Discover how social engagement supports brain health and emotional well-being. Learn about the aging brain and what you can do to keep your brain engaged. *Presenter: Tessa Hobbs-Curley, Illinois Extension Family Life Educator.*

#### • Financial Wellness



Learn about the rising threat of fraud and what it means for both individuals and financial institutions. Hear real cases, methods scammers use, and how they target customers. *Presenters: Amy Hood, and Jennifer Kline, Black Hawk Bank.*

## Pre-registration required.

**Cost:** \$10 per session or all 4 for \$35.

**Includes:** Light refreshments, a take-home self-assessment tool, and a wellness-related item each week.

**Sign up at:** [go.illinois.edu/8Dimensions2026](https://go.illinois.edu/8Dimensions2026)

or call Illinois Extension in Milan, IL at (309) 756-9978.



**Illinois Extension**

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# Nursery School: Lessons in Gardening

Sat. Feb 21, 2026, 8 am - 3 pm  
Vibrant Arena, Moline, IL

Join University of Illinois Extension staff and Master Gardeners for a full day of inspiration, practical workshops, and community connection. Horticulture experts will lead workshops and share tips, pointers, ideas, and information everyone can use - from the novice to the most experienced gardener. Here's a look at the featured speakers and sessions:

## **Opening Keynote | 8:30–9:45 a.m.**

**Rebuilding Our Forests Amid Climate Challenges** *Justin Vozzo, Forestry Specialist & ISA Certified Arborist* Justin will explore how Midwest urban forests are adapting to climate change and share innovative tools and strategies to strengthen resilience.

## **Chapter 1 Sessions | 10–11 a.m. (Choose one):**

- **Soak it Up: Rain Gardens in the Home Landscape** *Emily Swihart, Horticulture Educator*  
Learn how rain gardens can manage stormwater while adding beauty to your yard.
- **Harvesting Happiness: Growing Fruit Trees at Home** *Dr. Elizabeth Wahle, Agriculture & Agribusiness Specialist* – Discover cultivar selection and pest management tips for apples, pears, and cherries.
- **Planting Herbs to Attract Pollinators** *Jennifer Fishburn, Horticulture Educator*  
Explore how culinary herbs can bring fragrance and pollinator activity to your garden.

## **Chapter 2 Sessions | 11:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m. (Choose one):**

- **Reclaiming Runaway Landscape** *Chris Enroth, Horticulture Educator*  
Practical strategies for restoring overgrown, chaotic garden spaces.
- **Explore the Foods, Flavors, and Health Benefits of the Mediterranean Diet** *Kristen Bogdonas, Food and Nutrition Educator* – Taste samples and learn how to incorporate this celebrated eating style into daily life.
- **Support Biodiversity by Landscaping with Native Midwestern Shrubs** *Rob Liva, Ecological Land Management Consultant* – Discover how native shrubs enhance seasonal interest and provide habitat for pollinators and birds.

**Lunch Buffet | 12:15–1:15 p.m.** Enjoy a buffet featuring pulled pork or black bean burgers with warm sides — plus time to visit the vendor area and enter the giveaway drawing.

## **Closing Keynote | 1:15–2:30 p.m. Plants of Concern: 25 Years of Rare Plant Monitoring**

*Grant Fessler, Coordinator, Plants of Concern Program* – Grant will highlight the impact of this unique community science program, its partnerships, and how volunteers help protect Illinois' rare plants.

## **Registration Details – Save with early bird!**

**Early Bird Rate: \$60 — available through January 31, 2026**

**Standard Rate: \$70 — from February 1 to February 15, 2026**

**[go.illinois.edu/NurserySchool2026](https://go.illinois.edu/NurserySchool2026)**





### **Bats: Why we need to conserve them and how you can help! Dec 12, Noon**

Discover the fascinating world of bats with special guest Dr. Joy O'Keefe during this engaging virtual presentation. Dr. O'Keefe, a leading researcher in bat ecology, focuses on promoting coexistence between bats and humans in changing landscapes. In this session, she'll introduce participants to the bats of Illinois, explore their ecological roles and the vital services they provide, and share practical tips for supporting bat conservation efforts in your own community.



Register at [go.illinois.edu/batwebinar](https://go.illinois.edu/batwebinar) or call IL Extension at (309) 756-9978.

### **Hearts, Hands, Houses, and Hot Cocoa Gingerbread House Making Workshop Sun. December 14 | 2:30 PM | Moline, IL**

Join the Rock Island 4-H Teen Federation for a fun and festive gingerbread-making workshop for youth ages 5 to 18. All materials are provided, including gingerbread house kits, candies, and decorating tools. Just bring your imagination and holiday spirit!

**Cost is \$5 person.** Fee waivers available upon request.

Register at [go.illinois.edu/Gingerbread](https://go.illinois.edu/Gingerbread) or call IL Extension at (309) 756-9978.



### **4-H Family Winter Break Building Bricks Virtual Contest Dec 20-Jan 4, 2026**

Does your family love building together? This is the opportunity for you! Create a build as a family over winter break! One entry per family. All participating families must have at least one currently enrolled Illinois 4-H member on them. All other rules from general monthly contest apply. Build must be original and follow copyright guidelines.

#### **Theme: Winter Wonderland**

- Build something inspired by the winter season!
- Size: Build should fit on a standard 32x32 stud LEGO (or similar) baseplate (i.e. no larger than 10" wide and long). There is no height maximum.
- Entries due by 11 pm on January 4, 2026.

**Family Build entry submission link:** Get all the details and link to upload your entry at [go.illinois.edu/4-HDecLego](https://go.illinois.edu/4-HDecLego) Will go live in late December.

