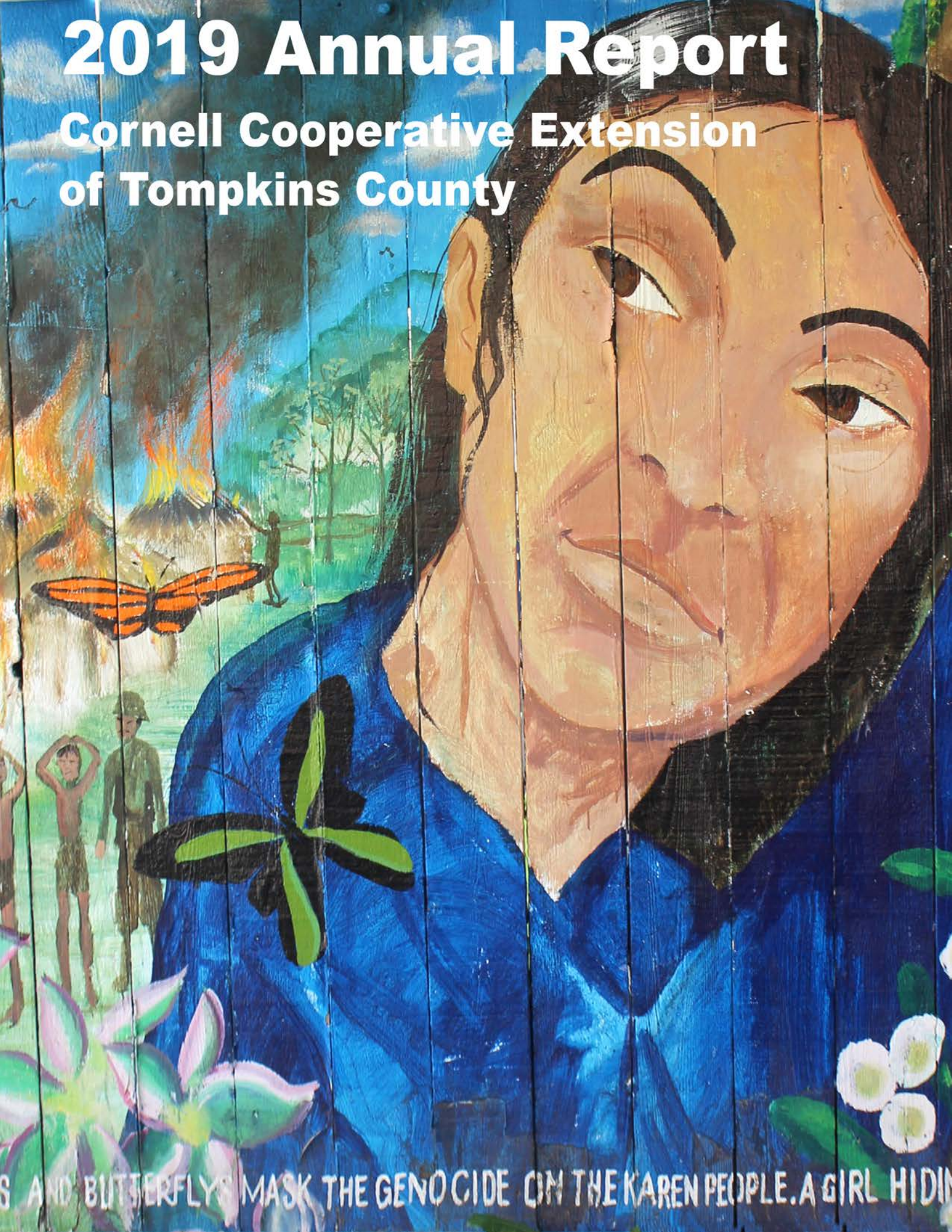


# 2019 Annual Report

Cornell Cooperative Extension  
of Tompkins County



S AND BUTTERFLYS MASK THE GENOCIDE ON THE KAREN PEOPLE. A GIRL HIDING



*Cover photo: The first panel of a mural documenting the journey of the Karen people from their homes in Burma/Myanmar to Ithaca, created by Karen teens in the 4-H Urban Outreach Program (see article on p. 4), photo by Sandy Repp.*

# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

*Our Mission: To strengthen youth, adults, families and communities through learning partnerships that put knowledge to work.*



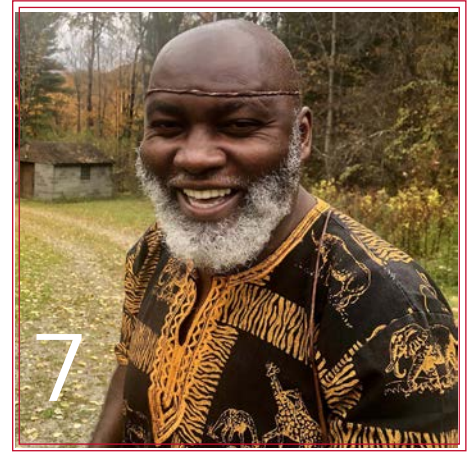
## Urban 4-H Mural

Northside teens create a mural showing the journey of their families from refugee camps in Burma to new homes in Ithaca.



## New Buy Local Guide

Consumers can find more than 400 farms in our 5-county region in this new online directory.



## Cultural Exchange

Gichuki Francis from Kenya spent a month working with youth and youth workers in Ithaca, NY.

## FEATURES

### 3 Director's Message

A 2019 program update and a look ahead from Ken Schlather, Executive Director

### 9 Compost Education

Our Compost Resources webpage gets a makeover just in time for the 30th anniversary of the program.

### 12 Parenting Education

For more than 30 years, parenting skills workshops have helped families and professionals communicate more effectively.

### 6 Open Farm Days

A new selection of 17 farms were open to visitors in the 3rd year of this popular two-day event.

### 10 Climate Smart Gardens

A community partnership creates a new annual fair to help gardeners mitigate climate change.

### 13 Energy Navigators

Volunteers coach others to make energy efficiency upgrades in this unique community program.

### 8 Kids in the Kitchen

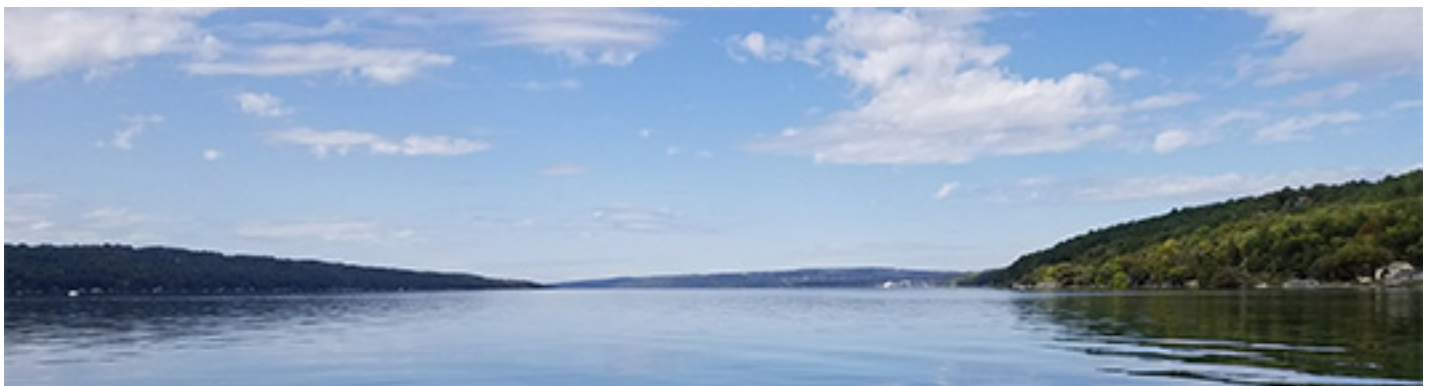
Popular hands-on cooking series for youth aged 8-to-15 features local and international foods.

### 11 Stream Buffer Training

CCE-Tompkins partners to instruct 60 municipal officials on the value of riparian stream buffers.

### 14 Electric Vehicles

CCE-Tompkins' outreach efforts help EV Tompkins meet electric vehicle new registration goal.



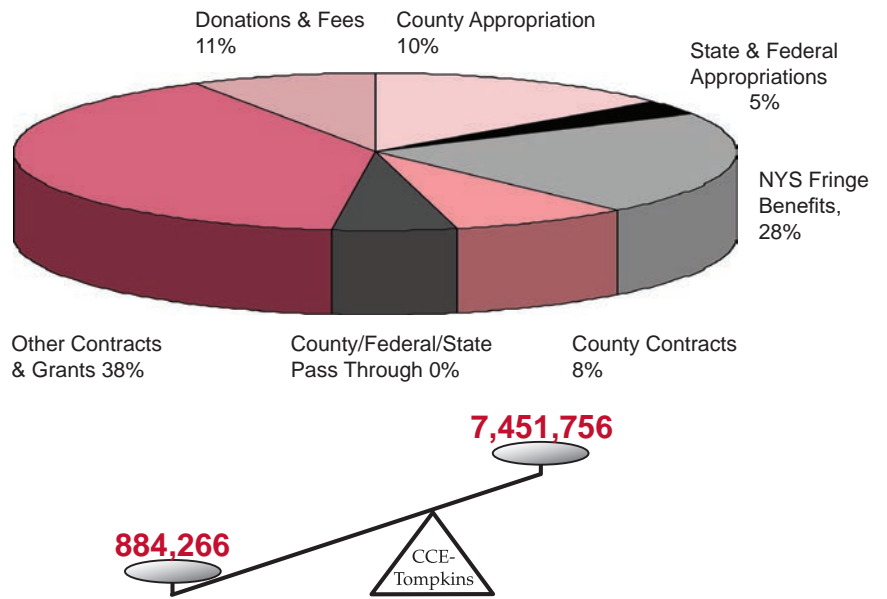
Cayuga Lake, photo by Lee Yoke Lee.

# Tompkins County Appropriation Leveraged the Following Support in 2019\*

Cooperative Extension uses its unique partnership with federal, state, and local governments, adding volunteer involvement, fund raising and in-kind contributions to bring an 11-fold return in educational resources for each Tompkins County tax dollar received.

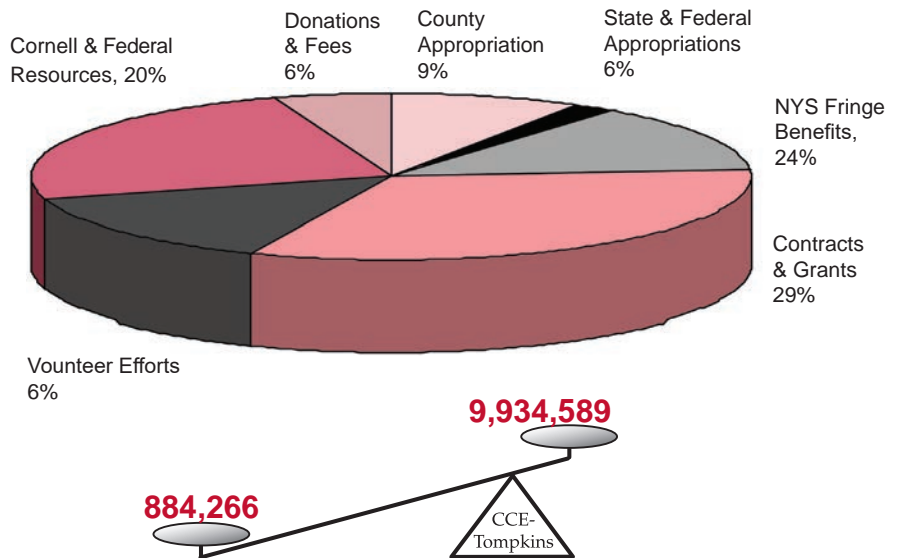
## Direct Support Ratio 1 : 7.4

|                                  |                    |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>County Appropriation</b>      | <b>\$884,266</b>   |
| State and Federal Appropriations | 620,415            |
| Fringe Benefits, NYS             | 2,373,604          |
| County Contracts                 | 633,874            |
| County Fed./State Pass Through   | 0                  |
| Other Contracts/Grants           | 2,300,222          |
| Donations & Fees                 | 639,375            |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>\$7,451,756</b> |

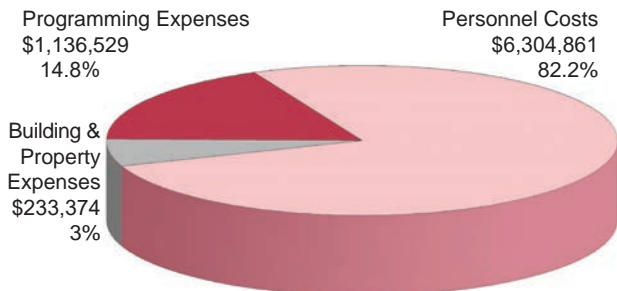


## In-Kind & Direct Support Ratio 1 : 10.2

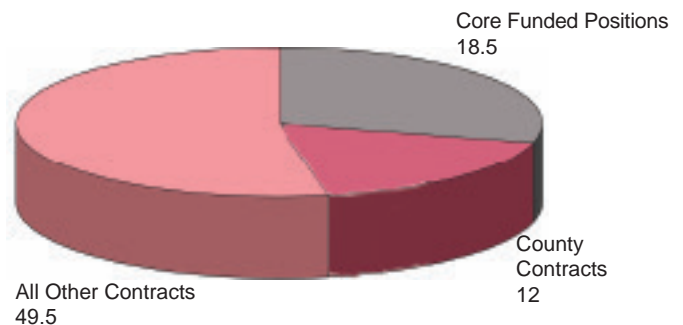
|                                  |                     |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>County Appropriation</b>      | <b>\$884,266</b>    |
| State and Federal Appropriations | 620,415             |
| Fringe Benefits, NYS             | 2,373,604           |
| Contracts/Grants                 | 2,882,929           |
| Volunteer Efforts                | 550,000             |
| Cornell & Federal Resources      | 1,984,000           |
| Donations & Fees                 | 639,375             |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>\$ 9,934,589</b> |



## 2019 Expenses by Type



## 2019 Employees (FTEs) by Funding Source



\* Projected figures as of November 30, 2019



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS & PROGRAM COMMITTEES, 2019

## Association Officers

Patrick Woods, *President*  
Kate Supron, *Vice President*  
Jon Bosak, *Secretary*  
Edd Farmer, *Treasurer*

## Board Members

|                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Sarah Barden       | Austin Fay        |
| Tisa Fontaine Hill | Cassandre Joseph  |
| Sheldon Kinar      | Tracy McLellan    |
| Janice Pfaff       | Randi Quackenbush |
| Carol West         |                   |

## Agriculture & Horticulture

|                                   |                                     |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Jonathan Bates                    | Jenny Caldwell                      |
| Erica Frenay                      | Jean Gerow                          |
| Todd McLane                       | Tracy McLellan ( <i>Board Rep</i> ) |
| Janice Pfaff ( <i>Board Rep</i> ) | Becca Rimmel                        |
| Nancy Taber                       | Ariana Taylor-Stanley               |
| Bob Tuori                         |                                     |

## Consumer & Financial Education

|                 |                                    |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| Joe Cummins     | Sheldon Kinar ( <i>Board Rep</i> ) |
| Marian Van Loan |                                    |

## Environmental Issues

Diane Cohen

## Family & Community Development

|                                 |              |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Peter Ahart                     | Hallie Chase |
| Mandy Caughey                   | Susie Hatch  |
| Kathy Lind                      | Katy Pearce  |
| Carol West ( <i>Board Rep</i> ) |              |

## Nutrition, Health & Safety

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| Tisa Fontaine Hill ( <i>Board Rep</i> ) | Samantha Hillson |
| Beth Krause                             | Lauren Marino    |
| Carolina Osorio Gil                     |                  |

## 4-H Youth Development

|                    |                                   |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Chris Ashdown      | Sarah Barden ( <i>Board Rep</i> ) |
| Joann Gruttadauria | Mike Tenkate                      |
| Lincoln Young      |                                   |

## Legislative Liaisons

Amanda Champion, *Tompkins County Legislator*  
Dave McKenna, *Tompkins County Legislator*

## Extension Rep

Paul O'Connor



## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

As we approach the end of 2019, I'm pleased to report to you on a few of the projects that your Cooperative Extension association has accomplished this year. While we can't cover all our work in these few pages, I hope the stories we've shared will give you a sense of pride and confidence in our efforts to continue to meet the needs of Tompkins County residents.

Several of the following profiles describe work begun decades ago at CCE-Tompkins that has proven its worth many times over in our county and beyond. Our Compost Education program, now in its 30th year, has taught residents to transform many tons of food waste destined for our landfill into rich compost for their backyard gardens, and the programming we offer in Tompkins serves as a model for several neighboring counties. The *PS: It Works!* (PSWS) curriculum is the basis of our parenting workshops that for more than three decades have taught adults to use strength-based communication skills that can dramatically change the dynamics of their family interactions. Our parenting educators also have trained hundreds of human service professionals and others to facilitate these workshops locally and across New York State, reaching new audiences in need including incarcerated and returning parents, and residential and outpatient recovery clients.

Other recent projects described here respond to locally identified needs related to our changing environment. In 2019, CCE-Tompkins staff partnered with other local groups to coordinate a new grassroots led Climate Smart Gardening Fair; to provide consumers with research-based information on buying or leasing electric vehicles; and to educate municipal officials on the use of stream barriers to mitigate the impacts of climate related weather events. Energy Navigator volunteers from Get Your Green Back Tompkins (a community collaboration housed and staffed by CCE-Tompkins) reached over 2,000 people and helped several hundred of them learn ways to reduce their energy use and carbon footprint, save money, and be more comfortable in their homes.

While the results of this work can be measured or projected, still other programs – particularly those we offer youth – may have long term impacts that we cannot wholly measure or foresee. Whether it is enabling Southeast Asian immigrant youth to share their history through art, introducing youngsters to the music and culture of Africa, hosting a youth cooking series on international cuisine, or engaging youth in 4-H clubs and other activities, the work that we do broadens their horizons and is an investment both in their futures and that of our community.

Thank you for supporting our association to do the important work described here and more. And as always it's worth mentioning that many, many of the programs described in these pages and on our website, ccetompkins.org resulted from suggestions, ideas and initiatives proposed by Tompkins County residents who saw a community need and came to us to see whether and how it might be addressed. If you know of something that should receive some attention, please let us know. We may be able to help, and together we can continue to make Tompkins County a place where we ALL belong.

Ken Schlather  
Executive Director

# 4-H URBAN OUTREACH

## NEW MURAL DEPICTS KAREN FAMILIES' JOURNEY TO ITHACA

**In spring of 2019, teen participants in the 4-H Urban Northside neighborhood program created a new community mural that depicts the very personal journey of their ethnic Karen refugee families from Burma (now Myanmar) and Thailand to new homes in Ithaca, New York. Thanks to a supportive local business owner**

The mural was conceived by the youth as a creative way to share their story and express their connection to the Ithaca community while creating a visual record of where they came from and why they are here for their relatives and younger siblings. The initial design was drawn by one of the teens on 3 panels of cardboard and

was revised with input from Caleb Thomas from Ithaca Murals. Local businessman Chuck Dong, owner of Shortstop Deli on Seneca and Geneva Streets in Ithaca, gave the teens permission to paint the mural on a fence on his property.

With community support, the teens raised funds and in January 2019 launched a search for a local artist to assist them with their project. Six artists responded to their public announcement and the teens hired local muralist Dan Burgevin to help them choose paint and to work with them on scale and incorporating symbolism into their work. Although much of the planning took place over the previous year, the mural was painted in five weekly sessions during May and June 2019.

Upon completion, the mural project was the subject of front page articles in the Ithaca Voice and Cornell Daily Sun newspapers. The teens were

very proud of the recognition their community mural received and now are working with the History Center to create a permanent repository for the oral stories project they that preceded the community mural project. They plan to use these 4-H experiences as material for college entrance essays and have built relationships with caring 4-H mentors who can provide references for college and job applications.

For 40 years, the 4-H Urban Outreach program has offered free afterschool programs for youth who live in the Northside and West Village affordable housing complexes in Ithaca, providing a safe place to gather and positive 4-H adult mentors who help them with homework or lead enrichment activities. Community partners report that 4-H Urban Outreach is one of the most diverse and well attended programs in the county. This year, 90% of program participants were minority youth and 100% qualified for free or reduced price lunches at their schools.

In addition to serving many Karen-Burmese families since 1979, the program welcomed recent immigrant youth from the Middle East and Russia this year. Young people often arrive with no English language skills and the program provides a safe and inviting space for them to receive the *continued on page 15*



*The final panel of the mural shows a Karen family in Ithaca, near familiar local landmarks.*

who provided the mural site, and funding from the community, the teens have created both a visual record of their experience and a digital story project that explores and documents their identity as Asian-American immigrants.

The Karen people are native to southeastern Burma and western Thailand. Political violence, instability and persecution by Burmese authorities drove many Karen people into huge refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border where they lived for a decade or more. Beginning in 2006, ethnic Karen families were resettled in Ithaca and other parts of Upstate New York.

Many of the teens who created this mural were elementary-aged students when they first joined the 4-H Urban Outreach Northside Program, and their mural depicts the long journey their families made as refugees. Three panels create a narrative of their experience, with the first panel showing children hiding in the forest in Burma as their villages burn. A second panel depicts the Karen villagers fleeing to safety in the refugee camps in Thailand where planes await that later will bring them to America. The third and final panel shows them as young people in Ithaca, surrounded by familiar local landmarks, and wearing western clothing including shirts that display the 4-H logo.



# LOCAL FOODS WITHIN YOUR REACH

NEW DIRECTORY COVERS 5-COUNTY REGION IN SCNY

**More than 400 farms and local food producers** in Tompkins, Tioga, Schuyler, Chemung and Cortland Counties now can be found in a new, searchable online directory at <https://buylocalfoodny.org/> thanks to the efforts of Cornell University's South Central NY Ag Team members, with support from CCE's Innovation Grant program and The Park Foundation.

The SCNY Ag Team for many years produced a printed "Guide to Local Foods" for this 5-county region but high production costs kept the run at just 5,000 copies and distribution was limited. And, as with any printed directory, the listings would go out of date soon after publication, reducing the guide's long term usefulness. Launched earlier in 2019, the new online directory addresses these two problems.

The project differs from other online farm directories in that the CCE educators who will maintain the site work closely with local producers, and are well-positioned to know about changes in their products and marketing, so they can ensure that the directory stays up-to-date. In addition to the searchable farm listings, the site includes a list of farmers' markets in each of the 5 counties represented, and a "Shopping Tips" tab that offers guidance for shopping at pick-your-own farms, farmers' markets, CSAs, farm stands and farm stores. A "Save Money" tab offers buying strategies that can help consumers save money while still supporting local producers.

The slogan chosen for this project, "Buy Local: Foods within your Reach", reflects the intent of the website to inform consumers of ways that local foods can be both geographically and financially "within their reach". When surveyed, consumers often respond that they don't know where to find local foods, are unfamiliar with what products are available, and are concerned that local foods are too expensive for them to buy regularly.

"Local foods can offer significant savings," says Monika Roth of CCE-Tompkins. "Buying in bulk, buying in season, picking your own produce or joining a CSA can increase the quality and freshness of the farm products you buy while also lowering their cost. Our team believes this website will help consumers find farms and foods nearby and save money by buying strategically."

Matt LeRoux, Roth's colleague on the SCNY Ag Team, tracked prices of local farm products and compared them with retail store prices for several seasons and his data show where many bargains



*New logo for the website and outreach materials, designed by Sharp Notions.*

can be found. For example, local blueberries and greens were consistently cheaper when purchased directly from the grower than at supermarkets, as was organic produce bought at farmers' markets. "We want to dispel the exclusivity myth," says Roth, "and promote buying local as something that the average consumer can afford to do."

Choice of the web address <https://buylocalfoodny.org/> was intentional, Roth says. She and the SCNY Ag Team hope that other Cornell Cooperative Extension associations will sign on and eventually make the directory a statewide resource for New York farm products. Other NYS county extension offices may contact Roth at (607) 272-2290 or [mr55@cornell.edu](mailto:mr55@cornell.edu) for more information.

The new directory website and logo were developed by Sharp Notions of Pittsford, NY. Collaborators on the project are members of the SCNY Ag Team in Tompkins, Tioga, Schuyler, Chemung and Cortland Counties. ☀



# 2019 OPEN FARM DAYS

## VISITORS INCREASE IN EVENT'S 3RD YEAR

A total of 1,342 visitors toured 17 farms in Tompkins County during our free Open Farm Days on Saturday and Sunday, August 10 and 11. Participating producers included: Bet the Farm Winery, Black Diamond Farm, Cabin View Alpaca, Glenhaven Farm, Grisamore Cider, Hawk Meadow, Hollenbeck Cider, Just a Few Acres, Laughing Goat Farm, Lively Run Goat Farm, Main Street Farms, Magic Garden, Persoon Dairy, Silver Queen Farm, TC3 Farm, Underhill Farm and Walnut Ridge Dairy. The event was organized by CCE-Tompkins and the Tompkins County Ag & Farmland Protection Board and funded in part by grants from the Tompkins County Tourism Program and Tompkins County Farm Bureau. ☀



Photos clockwise from top left: Black Diamond Farm in Trumansburg; Cabin View Alpacas in Trumansburg; Steve Paladino of Walnut Ridge Dairy in Lansing explains the rotating milking parlor to visitors; Tasting room at Glenhaven Winery & U-Pick Blueberry Farm in Trumansburg; Mainstreet Farms (hemp & CSA) in Freeville (provided); Visitors view young chicks at Just A Few Acres Farm in Lansing. Photos by Sandy Repp unless otherwise noted.



# NATURE IMMERSION FOR YOUTH & ADULTS

## VISITOR FROM KENYA WORKS WITH LOCAL GROUPS

**For four weeks in October and November of 2019, a unique cultural exchange took place that provided staff from a variety of youth-serving nonprofit organizations in Ithaca with new perspectives on how to include encounters with nature in their work, through the lens of visiting youth mentor Gichuki Francis.**

Gichuki is founder and CEO of Tabasamu Afrika Hub in Kitale, Kenya, an organization that trains, mentors and coaches young people to reach their full potential through activities in nature and sports. He has worked extensively in Africa, Europe, South America and Asia organizing and leading many successful outdoor immersion programs.

Gichuki's stay in Ithaca began with a collaborative two-day training, "Increasing Access to Nature: Helping Youth find their Path" at Cornell's Arnot Forest in Van Etten, New York. A workshop for adults on Friday afternoon kicked off the weekend, and covered ways to use nature to support youth in accessing their strengths. That theme continued into the evening, when families and children joined the group for dinner, a bonfire and story-telling before spending the night in the Arnot Forest cabins. Additional workshops were held after breakfast on Saturday. More than 20 people participated, including staff from Ithaca Youth Bureau, My Brother's Keeper, TST BOCES, Finger Lakes Residential and also 4-H Urban Outreach and Primitive Pursuits programs at CCE-Tompkins.

At Ithaca's West Village apartment complex, youth residents in our 4-H Urban Outreach program there were treated to four weeks of "cultural confidence" lessons with Gichuki and Aloja Airewele, an educator at CCE-Tompkins who is from Nigeria. The elementary school aged youth learned about the natural history of Kenya and Nigeria, African culture and music (specifically drumming), and some language. The two men also led the group on weekly nature hikes to woods and parks in the West Village neighborhood.

At the Finger Lakes Residential Center in Lansing, Gichuki worked each week during his visit with a very diverse group of adjudicated boys. Due to their confined status, the boys were unable to leave the facility to take part in nature activities, but Gichuki facilitated group "rites of passage" sessions, in which they discussed personal and social responsibility, self-confidence,

healthy masculinity and relationships, and self-esteem.

As the featured speaker at the CCE-Tompkins' 2019 Annual Meeting & Breakfast in November, Gichuki shared highlights of his work with youth in Kenya with over 100 guests in attendance. During his stay, Gichuki also led a team-building session for staff at the Ithaca Youth Bureau, and a TST-BOCES sponsored-training for staff from many school districts on the topic of peace building



*Children in the 4-H Urban Outreach program at Ithaca's West Village Apartments pick out African animals on Gichuki Francis' shirt during an afterschool "cultural confidence" session. Photo by RJ Anderson, CCE.*

through sports. During a brownbag lunch at CCE-Tompkins, Gichuki shared his process for community development in Kenya, while in turn learning from our staff about work we have done here. He joined in activities with iJump, a local group that works to empower youth through jump-rope, chiming in during group fitness, communication, teamwork, and skill building exercises. This also provided him with an opportunity to see how things are done here.

Gichuki's visit was facilitated by Davi Mozie, CCE-Tompkins' Equity and Inclusion Coordinator, who has known Gichuki for several years through her own work with his organization in Kenya, and sponsored by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, 4-H Urban Outreach, i-JUMP, My Brother's Keeper Ithaca, Primitive Pursuits, Ithaca Youth Bureau and TST-BOCES.

For more information about Gichuki Francis and his work in Africa, visit: <http://gichuki.mystrikingly.com/> and <http://bit.ly/tasamu>. ☀

# KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

## COOKING SERIES FEATURES INTERNATIONAL FOODS

On Sunday afternoons in November and December, as many as 20 youth aged 8-to-15 filled the Cargill Teaching Kitchen at CCE-Tompkins to learn to prepare a variety of international menus in the popular “Kids in the Kitchen” hands-on cooking classes

participants broke into groups to make lamb kebabs, vegetable tagine, tabbouleh, and hummus with pita bread.<sup>1</sup>

When all the dishes were cooked, the youth and adults came together to share the meal they had prepared. A final class on

December 15 ended with a “family dinner” at which youth participants were joined by adult parents or guardians to enjoy together the meal they’ve learned to prepare in class.

“The kitchen can sometimes feel like the realm of adults where kids feel like they are just in the way,” says Josh Dolan, Kitchen Manager and Food Gardening Outreach Educator at CCE-Tompkins. “Learning to cook is a great way for teens and ‘tweens to boost their self-confidence and self-reliance, be more helpful to busy parents and have more fun at home,” he continued.

Teaching young people to garden and prepare food is a passion for both Dolan and class co-instructor Kaela Klapan, a Nutrition Educator with CCE’s SNAP Education Program. A former cook at Ithaca’s noted ABC Café, Dolan offered a similar “Seed to Table” gardening and cooking series for youth in 2014, and in 2011 coordinated an “Iron Chef” competition for youth in Northside Ithaca as part of the Gardens for Humanity

Project, both offered through CCE-Tompkins. Klapan, who studied Public Health at Ithaca College and managed the campus organic garden, has worked on several local farms and is an enthusiastic home cook. In 2020, Klapan also will teach a series of free Harvest of the Month cooking classes for youth from SNAP-eligible families. Both bring strong backgrounds in gardening and agriculture awareness to their nutrition and cooking lessons.

Kids in the Kitchen participants could choose to enroll in one or more classes or attend the entire series, and each class was filled to capacity. Tuition covered all foods and materials used; cost for the class was \$20-\$50/person on a self-determined sliding scale, or \$120-\$240/person for the entire 6-class series, with families choosing an amount they could afford to pay. This series was free for ICSD Farm-to-Table 4th grade participants at Belle Sherman, Beverly J. Martin, Cayuga Heights and Enfield Elementary Schools.

An additional class series will be *continued on page 15*



Adult volunteers guide youth participants making kebabs and other Middle Eastern dishes during a “Kids in the Kitchen” class in CCE-Tompkins’ Cargill Teaching Kitchen.

led by Josh Dolan and Kaela Klapan of CCE-Tompkins Nutrition Education Program.

With guidance from experienced volunteer cooks and trained nutrition educators, the youth worked in small groups for a “total-immersion” cooking experience. They learned knife skills, kitchen safety skills, how to follow and adapt recipes, what it’s like to cook for a crowd, and along the way also got a survey of global cuisine. The classes also covered common food allergens and how to avoid them, as well as dietary restrictions - both religious and ethical. Each class included a shared dinner with new friends, and a packed lunch for school the next day.

Class sessions featured international menus and introduced many of the participants to a diverse selection of new foods. In addition to sessions on “Pasta & Pizza” and “Breakfast for Dinner,” the group made “Latkes & Pierogis”, and learned to make Curry, Pad Thai and Spring Rolls in a session on “Thai Cuisine”. For the class on December 8, Mediterranean food was on the menu, and

1. Ithaca College student Sierra Guardiola visited the December 8th class, wrote an article and posted a video to YouTube. Hear what our participants and instructors had to say about “Kids in the Kitchen” at: <https://www.ithacaweek-ic.com/kids-in-the-kitchen/>.



# 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF COMPOST PROGRAM

## NEW WEBPAGE SHARES RESOURCES ACROSS STATE

Since 1990, literally thousands of local residents have become successful home composters, learning to turn food scraps and yard waste into rich “black gold” for their gardens through classes, workshops and demonstrations offered by the Compost Education Program of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County.

Established and funded by a contract with the Tompkins County Department of Recycling and Materials Management, the program diverts several tons of plant-based materials from the waste stream each year by teaching local residents the composting process. Free or low-cost classes include traditional composting methods, vermicomposting (indoor composting with a worm bin) and most recently Bokashi composting, a Japanese method that includes an initial fermentation stage in the process.

Since 2001, Compost Education Manager Adam Michaelides has overseen the program, leading workshops, scheduling events, developing resources and -- perhaps most importantly--training and supporting community volunteers who educate and excite the public about the benefits and methods of composting.

Master Composters are a corps of devoted volunteers whose efforts greatly multiply the impacts the program is able to achieve. As of late 2019, 444 trained Master Composter volunteers had completed the program. In exchange for 20 hours of “hands-on” classroom training and 20 hours of practical internship time, volunteers “give back” 20 or more hours of volunteer time, in activities such as giving slide presentations and talks for schools and community groups, teaching adult compost workshops, providing information and answering questions in the Compost booth at community events, and even volunteering to collect food scraps at large scale events such as Grassroots or the Ithaca Festival. These combined efforts have had a major impact. Michaelides estimates that 48% of households in Tompkins County take part in some form of home food scrap composting, diverting many tons of waste from our local landfills each year.

People also can learn about home composting independently by studying the fact sheets and resources that are compiled on our website, at <http://cctompkins.org/compost-resources>. Fact sheets can be viewed online or printed for easy reference, and cover a wide range of compost topics, including: general information on how to get started on your own, choosing an appropriate bin, layering techniques, troubleshooting compost problems, composting leaves,

winter composting, composting indoor with worms, how to test and use your compost, and composting as a group.

Prior to the program’s 30th anniversary, many of these resources were updated, receiving a “facelift” of sorts with a redesign and new illustrations by Mila Fournier, Horticulture Program Assistant.



*In the online video, “Choose Your Compost Bin,” our Compost Program Manager Adam Michaelides discusses the pros and cons of the various styles of compost bins on display in the Compost Demonstration site behind the CCE-Tompkins Education Center.*

Since people have a variety of learning styles, the Compost Resources web page now includes videos, created with the help of Environmental Educator Lee Yoke Lee, in which Michaelides covers the choices of compost bins that are available, and demonstrates compost basics, the “lasagna layering” compost technique, how to manage composting on a large property, and other topics. The webpage enables CCE-Tompkins to share resources developed here with people across our county and far beyond. In 2019, just short of 6000 individuals visited the page, which also has been reproduced on websites of 42 other county Cooperative Extension websites across New York State, vastly multiplying the impact of our program across the state.

For more information about home composting, please visit <http://cctompkins.org/compost-resources>. Individuals with an interest in becoming a Master Composter Volunteer apply in January for the annual training, which takes place in weekly evening sessions from February through April at CCE-Tompkins. To have your name placed on a list to be informed of the next training, or with any other questions about home composting, please contact Adam Michaelides at (607) 272-2292 ext. 124 or [acm1@cornell.edu](mailto:acm1@cornell.edu). ☀

# CLIMATE SMART GARDENING FAIR

## GRASSROOTS COMMUNITY EFFORT TO REPEAT IN 2020

“Anyone with a garden or yard can be ‘climate wise’ by adopting practices that protect the earth and support wildlife” was the

“Gardeners want to be part of the climate solution but they sometimes lack the experience and knowledge about

appropriate practices,” said Roth who, for 40 years led CCE-Tompkins’ Agriculture and Horticulture programs. “This event connected them with resources – at CCE and elsewhere – that will enable them to respond in a meaningful way.”

A broad network of community connections enabled the event planning group to line up 5 speakers for the event as well as more than 30 non-profit and business exhibitors.

Live 30-minute talks in the Boynton Auditorium were well attended, attracting from 40-70 people each. Topics included “Making Soil Healthy” with Joseph Amsili of the Cornell Soil Health Program; “Rain & Water Management” with permaculturist Sean Dembrowsky of Edible Acres Nursery; “No Mow Lawns & Meadows” and “Best Native Plant Choices” with Krissy Boys from Cornell Botanic Gardens; and “Intensive Planting on Small Lots” with Jonathan Bates of Food Forest Farm.



*Jonathan Bates of Food Forest Farm prepares to speak on “Intensive Planting on Small Lots” at the first Climate Smart Gardening Fair at Bounton Middle School in April 2019.*

takeaway message at the first Tompkins County Climate Smart Gardening Fair on Saturday, April 27th in the Boynton Middle School cafeteria. A total of 366 people plus exhibitors and volunteers attended the new event to learn from speakers, exhibits and videos some new ways to help mitigate climate change in their own yards and gardens.

The Fair was a true “grassroots” effort that started in Fall 2018 when a group of environmental activists and other local residents began meeting to brainstorm actions individuals might take to address climate change. The group invited Monika Roth from CCE-Tompkins to help plan a public event focused on climate wise gardening, and she worked with them to identify the themes to be addressed by the event...from soil health and composting, to plant choices including meadows and pollinator plants, no mow lawns and permaculture, and water management.

Environmental films were showing throughout the day in a separate classroom, while the cafeteria was filled with hands-on activities and displays that demonstrated how the ecosystem works and how soil, microorganisms, and plants capture carbon. Several vendors sold local fruit and berry plants, and nut trees, while Fossil Free Tompkins gave away a total of 550 trees or shrubs to attendees to encourage planting as a way to increase carbon sequestration.

Survey responses from 112 attendees were uniformly positive, with people indicating they had learned more about climate change, building healthy soil and testing soil, composting and biochar, ways to manage water, native plants and appropriate plant choices, bees,

permaculture practices and growing in hoop houses. People also learned about invasive plants and pests, jumping worms, and Lyme disease. The learning reflects *continued on page 15*

“Anyone with a garden or yard can be ‘climate wise’ by adopting practices that protect the earth and support wildlife.”



# STREAM BUFFER TRAINING

## AN APPROACH TO MITIGATING CLIMATE CHANGE

**One action local communities can take to help reduce the impact** of climate change is to create stream buffers that lessen the damage caused by flooding events. A well-designed swath of trees and shrubs planted adjacent to a stream, wetland or lakeshore – also known as a riparian buffer -- can reduce flooding and property loss, while simultaneously improving water quality and preserving habitat.

In November 2019, more than 60 municipal officials, land use planners, conservationists and other interested members of the public gathered at The History Center in Tompkins County for a 3-hour training that equipped them to plan, fund and implement stream buffer restoration in their communities.

“This type of specific training on riparian buffers can greatly enhance our approach to stormwater management at the local level,” says Sharon Anderson, Environmental Issues Leader at CCE-Tompkins, and a member of the Tompkins County Water Resources Council that coordinated the event. “It’s one tool yet it has so many benefits such as improving fish and wildlife habitat, reducing erosion and slowing flood waters,” she added.

The training covered a broad range of topics with presentations on: “Riparian Buffers 101: Why are buffers important and how are they vulnerable?” and “Project Implementation: How to implement a stream/buffer restoration projects and funding options available” with Lydia Brinkley of the Upper Susquehanna Coalition; “Ordinances/Site Review: Tips and tools to protect buffers at the municipal level” with Scott Doyle of Tompkins County Planning and Sustainability Department; and “Watershed Planning: Ways to identify and prioritize stream buffers in need of improvement and protection,” with Kristen Hychka with New York State Water Resources Institute. A final panel presentation, “Case Studies: Lessons learned from stream restoration projects in Tompkins County” featuring Angel Hinickle of Tompkins County Soil & Water Conservation District, and presenters Scott Doyle and Lydia Brinkley was followed by a question-and-answer period. Links to video recordings of the presentations and associated slides and a list of relevant resources can be found online at: <http://ccetompkins.org/buffers>

Kristen Hychka, chair of the Tompkins County Water Resources committee that organized the event, was pleased with

the results of the training. “Feedback shows that participants or their municipalities plan to undertake new actions based on the workshop including: incorporating buffers into the comprehensive plan, applying for stream buffer grants, using the spatial data presented, and organizing a similar workshop in



*Stream with riparian buffers (photo by Annie Bastoni, Tompkins County Water Resources Council).*

another county. We are looking into possible follow up support to the municipalities,” Hychka reported.

Sharon Anderson of CCE-Tompkins was also enthusiastic: “The Water Resources Council brings together organizations from throughout the county that work on water quality issues, so there’s a real depth of experience and viewpoints represented in its collaborations. CCE-Tompkins is pleased to contribute to this important work by helping to organize trainings like this one.”

The training was coordinated by the presenters’ organizations and the Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center and Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County. The History Center in Tompkins County donated the use of their space for the training.

For more on stream/riparian buffers as a climate resiliency action, please visit: New York State Climate Smart Communities online at <https://climatesmart.ny.gov/> and <https://climatesmart.ny.gov/actions-certification/actions/#open/action/96> .☀

# PARENTING EDUCATION

## PARENTING SKILLS WORKSHOP SERIES

**Effective communication can completely change the dynamics** of a family discussion, turning a heated conflict into a positive and productive conversation. For more than 30 years, parenting educators at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County (CCE-Tompkins) have offered a free

role-playing and feedback, participants become comfortable with each skill, learn to recognize the family interactions where it may be useful, and are empowered to put what they've learned in the classroom into practice in their daily lives.

This hands-on teaching method and emphasis on skill building are central to the *PS: It Works!* (formerly *Parenting Skills Workshop Series*® or PSWS) curriculum on which the workshops are based. Developed in Tompkins County and published by Cornell Cooperative Extension in 1988, *PS: It Works! / PSWS* has been rigorously evaluated since 2005 and has been shown to improve parenting behaviors in a sample of more than 500 parents and caregivers. Participants report statistically significant improvements in their ability to use the five foundational parenting skills, in their confidence in parenting, and in their satisfaction with their families. They also report increased ability to try different approaches to deal with challenging situations.<sup>1</sup>

To share the successful *PS: It Works!* curriculum as widely as possible, CCE-Tompkins parenting educators regularly offer a professional development training that covers the skills, teaching techniques and empowerment philosophy used to facilitate these workshops.

Offered over two full days, the *PS: It Works! / Strength-based Communication Skills* training is designed for parenting educators and other professionals who work with individuals and families across the age spectrum and prepares them to reinforce use of the five communication skills with clients and to use them daily in their own lives.

Since 1988, the training has prepared hundreds of facilitators to teach the five communication skills to families in a variety of settings in our community and *continued on page 16*



Facilitators Judy Burrell (left) and Anna Steinkraus (right) observe participants as they practice communication skills through role playing in a PSWS group training.

parenting workshop series that emphasizes five basic skills adults can use to improve communication with their children from the time they are expecting through the teenage years.

Known locally as “*Parenting: The Hardest Job in the World*”, the 8-week series is offered in locations across Tompkins County at least five times each year and is open to all who want to attend.

In each class, two trained parenting educators support participants as they learn and practice five basic communication skills: *Encouragement, Can Do, Shared Decision Making, Self-Control* and *Respecting Feelings*. Through guided discussion,

The focus on communication skills makes the training relevant to people working in a wide range of professions.

1. See: F&CD Evaluation Report, PS:It Works! Parenting Skills Workshop Series®, 2005-2016 at <http://cctompkins.org/resources/parenting-skills-workshop-series-evaluation-2005-2016>.



# ENERGY NAVIGATOR VOLUNTEERS

## COACHING OTHERS ON MAKING ENERGY SAVING CHANGES

**For both individuals and families with** limited resources, energy costs can consume a disproportionate share of their household income. While many would qualify for free local, state or federal programs that could help them afford energy improvements, they often are unaware of the existence of these resources and how to access them.

A peer-to-peer energy education volunteer program designed by Get Your GreenBack Tompkins (a community collaboration housed at CCE-Tompkins) aims to address this information shortfall. The volunteers – called Energy Navigators – help Tompkins County residents learn ways to reduce (and eliminate) their fossil fuel use, and transition to renewable forms of heating and powering their homes and transportation.

Energy Navigators first take part in a 10-session training that prepares them to share information through public outreach and to help their friends, neighbors and other people in their networks learn how to reduce their energy use. The training focuses on concrete steps volunteers can take to lower their own energy consumption – by improving their home’s energy efficiency or choosing renewable heating, solar, or other fossil fuel alternatives -- and on strategies for effectively sharing that information with others. The trained volunteers then are asked to give back 50 or more hours of their time over the course of a year to related community outreach activities and help at least ten of their contacts with energy-related actions. Since the volunteer program began in 2016, Get Your GreenBack Tompkins has trained 10-15 new Energy Navigators each year with a total of 40 having completed the program by December 2019.

There are dozens of success stories of Energy Navigators helping friends, family, co-workers and other contacts from their networks. One recent Energy Navigator lives in the town of Enfield, a rural community that includes many residents with limited incomes. Over the years she has established relationships throughout the community that led her to support some families living in one of the trailer parks in the town.

Initially she was able to help one family navigate the occasionally daunting forms and processes required to receive free energy improvements worth \$6000. Once this went well, neighboring families requested her support. The manager of the trailer park also got behind the project, seeing it as a way to provide value to the



*Energy Navigator volunteers listen as Erica Herman, Energy Educator for Get Your GreenBack Tompkins (at right) leads them in a training on solar energy (2019).*

residents in the park, to improve the quality of the homes, and to help reduce energy burdens on the residents, most of whom heat with expensive fuels such as kerosene. Soon this Energy Navigator was actively supporting around 10 families and reached out to ask the help of two other Energy Navigators to meet the demand from other Enfield residents.

The Energy Navigator program has had a significant impact in several ways. The Navigators themselves report making changes in their own lives as a result of participating in the program. Some get an energy assessment for first time; others start to make changes in their transportation habits or look into buying or leasing an Electric Vehicle (EV). In 2019, Energy Navigators reached over 2,000 people and helped several hundred of them learn ways to reduce their energy use and carbon footprint, save money, and be more comfortable in their homes.

In 2020, Energy Navigators will begin their 5th year and in spring of 2021 will offer a new round of training. If you'd like to join this growing group of volunteers who are committed to helping Tompkins County go fossil fuel free and 100% renewable Tompkins County by 2030, visit <http://www.getyourgreenbacktompkins.org/navigators/> to learn more or contact Karim Beers, Get Your Green Back Tompkins Campaign Coordinator, at [kwb6@cornell.edu](mailto:kwb6@cornell.edu) or call him at (607) 272-2292 ext. #186. ☀

# ELECTRIC VEHICLES

## OUTREACH INCREASES LOCAL REGISTRATIONS

**Transportation (at 35%) is the largest contributor of greenhouse gas emissions in Tompkins County, however driving remains important for those whose job or lifestyle require it. With a relatively clean electrical grid in Upstate New York powered by nuclear and renewable energy, Electric Vehicles (EVs) are a viable option**

electric vehicles (EVs) in Tompkins County from 310 in 2018 to 620 by the end of 2019.

CCE-Tompkins served as an educational resource and network spanning EV owners (prospective and current), car dealerships, utilities, transportation and energy agencies and organizations.

Outreach methods employed included curating and creating EV content on social media, ride-and-drive events, tabling at community events, and one-to-one guidance.

Several educational videos were created that featured local EV owners whose experiences were intended to help those who are considering plug-in hybrid electric vehicles or battery electric vehicles, new or used.

A video and companion publication were created to highlight the inspirational fleet greening efforts of the Tompkins County Department of Health in collaboration with the Clean Energy Communities Program at CCE-Tompkins. Both products featured the experiences of 3 Health Department staff driving EVs as part of their work. Videos were posted to CCE-Tompkins' YouTube Channel and EV webpage at <http://ccetompkins.org/environment/electric-vehicles>.

Social media posts on the Tompkins Electric Vehicle Network Facebook page covered a wide range of

topics including EV technology, policies, and common misperceptions and reached 26,765 people between December 2018 and September 2019.

Tabling at community events throughout Tompkins County reached 488 people who stopped by to ask questions about EVs and view an actual EV on display.

Of the 13 persons who received one-to-one guidance on EVs, one person replaced her Toyota Sienna with a Toyota Prius (still a fuel-efficient choice) while another bought a Toyota Rav 4 Electric, an all-electric vehicle. These prospective EV buyers were grateful for the neutral and research-based advice that was focused on helping them find an EV that was a good fit for their driving needs. Offering information in a digestible format also helped prospective EV owners from feeling overwhelmed.

As a result of these efforts, 642 EVs were registered by November 2019 – more than doubling the number registered the previous year -- and the EV Tompkins goal was met ahead of schedule.

Collaborators on the project included *continued on page 15*



*Environmental Educator Lee Yoke Lee (left) looks on as CCE-Tompkins staff examine one of several electric vehicles on display to the public at an event at the CCE-Tompkins Education Center.*

for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from driving yet a lack of familiarity with EVs, high upfront cost, range anxiety, and limited charging stations hamper adoption rates among drivers.

In 2019, CCE-Tompkins collaborated with partners in the transportation and energy sectors on an intensive education and outreach campaign, providing neutral, evidence-based information on EVs to help county residents make informed decisions in their next vehicle purchase.

The campaign built upon momentum generated in 2018 by EV Tompkins, a county-wide initiative funded by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). This earlier effort had succeeded at engaging policy and decision makers to create an EV-friendly environment in the county by encouraging organizations to host charging stations, working with municipalities to draft EV-friendly policies, and through community education and outreach.

CCE-Tompkins' 2019 efforts were intended to sustain this interest and momentum to attain a goal of doubling the number of registered



## 4-H Mural from p. 4

extra enrichment they need to become part of the community. Parents of program participants report that they value having their children be part of such a diverse program and that their youngest children (particularly in grades K-4) would not otherwise have access to literacy and STEM programs and to the varied selection of enrichment programs. In 2019, the 4-H Urban Outreach program held 204 free 4-H after-school and 36 4-H summer programs for 153 under-served and minority young people.

For information on the 4-H Urban Outreach Program or to make a donation, contact Ramona Cornell, 4-H Urban Outreach Educator, at (607) 272-2292 ext. 149 (Voicemail #269) or rlc263@cornell.edu. ☀

## Electric Vehicles from p. 14

Cornell University Transportation and Delivery Services, Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council, Get Your GreenBack Tompkins, NYSEG, Maguire Chevrolet of Ithaca, Ridge Road Imports, and local EV owners.

For more information on Electric Vehicles, please visit <http://cctompkins.org/environment/electric-vehicles> or contact Lee Yoke Lee, Environmental Educator, at YL2365@cornell.edu or call (607) 272-2292 ext. 192 (voicemail 277). ☀

## Kids in the Kitchen from p. 8

offered daily from 10:00am to 4:00pm during Winter Break Week, February 17-21, 2020; full and partial week registration options will be available. For questions about “Kids in the Kitchen” or the Winter Break Week series, contact Josh Dolan at jd285@cornell.edu or call Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County at (607) 272-2292 ext. 190. primary funding source for the Supports for Health project. For more information about Supports for Health, please visit: <https://www.supportsforhealth.org/>. For information about Way2Go and its offerings, visit [way2go.org](http://way2go.org) or contact Dawn Montanye, Way2Go Team Leader, at (607) 272-2292 or dm773@cornell.edu. ☀

## Climate Fair from p. 10

the broad range of topics that were addressed in talks and exhibits. Everyone enthusiastically supported the idea of holding a 2nd Fair in 2020 – the date has been set for April 4th at Boynton Middle School. More activities for kids and food were two missing elements most requested by attendees.

Collaborators included the Carbon Study Group (representing 8 environmental groups); Cornell University’s Soil Health Program and Crop & Soil Science Program; Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County’s Master Composter and Master Gardener volunteers, local businesses, the Finger Lakes Native Plant Society, Cornell University Botanic Garden, the Finger Lakes Beekeepers Club, the Finger Lakes Permaculture Network, Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District/NRCS, Agro-One soils lab, Ithaca Community Gardens, the Ithaca Farmers’ Market, Groundswell, New York Healthy School Food, New Roots Charter School, and local environmental groups including Tompkins County EMC, Citizen’s Climate Lobby, Fossil Free Tompkins, the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network, and the Finger Lakes Land Trust. ☀



Mural designed by and depicting the experiences of Karen youth in 4-H Urban Outreach Program (2019).

## Parenting Skills from p. 12

across New York State. While the fundamental skills that are taught each highlight a key issue in parenting, they also can be applied to communication in any situation. Many participants in both the parent workshop and the professional training find the five basic skills helpful in their relationships with partners, neighbors, co-workers, and other adults and family members.

“The focus on communication skills makes this training extremely relevant to people working in a wide range of professions,” says Anna Steinkraus, CCE-Tompkins’ Family & Community Development Program Coordinator. “Each day, every one of us encounters situations where positive, strength-based communication skills can help us work together more effectively and reach positive outcomes, so we’re now promoting the *PS: It Works!* training to a broader audience and have received a very positive response.”

Between 2001 and 2019, more than 300 people have attended the two-day professional development training including parenting educators, Department of Social Services personnel, social workers, teachers, childcare providers, mental health professionals, alcohol and drug rehabilitation counselors, human service workers, coaches and others who work with children/adults/families in people-facing professions.

The training can carry New York State MSW/LCSW contact hours for a fee, and it also qualifies participants to conduct or make referrals to the *Parenting Skills Workshops Series*© or conduct the *Parenting Skills for Literacy Series*; in this way it has helped create a sustainable pool of trained facilitators who are able to expand the local reach of these successful parenting workshops to new audiences.

One local provider, Cayuga Addiction Recovery Services (CARS) has been using *PS: It Works!* with residential and outpatient clients since 2007 when one of their social workers attended the professional development training. In January 2019, CARS funded CCE-Tompkins parenting educators to lead an in-house training for eight members of their staff, with the aim of expanding the use of the *PSWS program* in their facilities. CARS sent two additional social workers to a subsequent training in July 2019 that was held for the community at large.

Ethann Westmore, Primary Addiction Counselor at CARS sums up his experience with the *PS: It Works!* curriculum as follows: “I can’t overstate the value of this program, both for the benefits it offers clients, and the professional development opportunities it affords clinicians who wish to master group facilitation skills. Among research based, evidence informed curricula, this program is unmatched in its tight, scripted design, and in the way it engages clients in a very dynamic learning process that places most of the emphasis on doing (role-playing) not just talking. After attending this facilitator training in 2008, I was inspired to facilitate 31 workshops at CARS RARC/OP since, and continue to find this a very enlivening, meaningful group [program] that helps ambivalent clients begin to notice the discrepancy between substance use and becoming the parents they would like to be.” (1/3/19)

*PS: It Works! / Strength-based Communication Skills* is a highly interactive training that is facilitated by two experienced parenting educators. The training includes an overview of the empowerment approach and the adult learning methods used in the workshops; an introduction to the *PS: It Works!* curriculum; discussions of parenting styles and discipline, child development, cultural influences and environmental issues; discussion and practice of the five basic parenting skills; active participation and role play within small groups; and an introduction and overview of the *Parenting Skills for Literacy* curriculum.

A registration fee of \$200 covers the two-day training, lunch, snacks and a copy of the *Parenting Skills Workshop Series Manual*.<sup>2</sup> Some scholarship aid may be possible. New York State MSW/LCSW contact hours are available for an additional \$25 fee. Visit the *PS: It Works! / Strength-based Communication Skills* webpage at <http://ccetompkins.org/ps-it-works> for a full course description, and links to the *Parenting Skills Workshop Series Manual*<sup>3</sup> and to Cornell University College of Human Ecology’s *PSWS Evaluation Report, 2005-2016*.

Please contact Anna Steinkraus, CCE-Tompkins’ Family & Community Development Program Coordinator, with additional questions or to find out the date of an upcoming training, at [ams69@cornell.edu](mailto:ams69@cornell.edu) or (607) 272-2292 ext. 145. ☀

---

2. Parenting Skills Workshop Series: A Manual for Parent Educators by John Bailey, Susan Perkins & Sandra Wilkins (1999) Cornell Cooperative Extension, see: <https://www.human.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/PAM/Parenting/ParentingSkillstext.pdf>

3. Training co-sponsor Family & Children’s Service of Ithaca <http://www.fcsith.org/home/> is recognized by the NY State Education Department’s State Board for Social Work as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed social workers #0293.



Cornell Cooperative Extension  
of Tompkins County  
615 Willow Avenue, Ithaca, NY 14850-3555

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 332  
Ithaca, New York

**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

