

April 16, 2026

Dear Wabaunsee County Commissioners,

Spring has arrived, bringing a season of renewal, growth, and opportunity, and an energizing time for K-State Extension in Wabaunsee County.

Our guiding philosophy is to help people help themselves by delivering university-based knowledge where people live, work, and play. We remain responsive to local needs by focusing our resources on high-quality, research-based education, information, and problem-solving programs that support individuals, families, and communities.

We are sincerely grateful for the continued support from Kansas State University and the Wabaunsee County Commission. Your investment enables Extension to leverage university expertise, grant funding, and community partnerships to provide cost-effective programming that strengthens individuals, families, businesses, and communities across the county.

As we look ahead, our team remains committed to responsible stewardship of public funds by identifying emerging needs, evaluating program outcomes, and delivering meaningful, research-based programs that help individuals, families, and businesses thrive. We are proud to serve Wabaunsee County and remain dedicated to providing trusted education and resources that make a lasting difference.

The enclosed *First Quarter 2026 Making a Difference Report* highlights the outcomes and impacts made possible through your continued support. We appreciate the opportunity to demonstrate the value of this investment and look forward to continuing our partnership on behalf of the people of Wabaunsee County.

Sincerely,



Bernadette Trieb  
Local Unit Director

# Making a Difference

2026 Quarter One

## Stay Strong, Stay Healthy

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy focuses on sustaining independent living and gives the tools and exercises to help folks age in place longer. This class is 8 weeks long, with classes twice a week. Participants are evaluated with pre and post-test measuring their overall agility, balance, and strength. We had 12 participants in the Harveyville Level Two class and 9 participants in the McFarland Level One class, all improving in mobility and flexibility.



**The post course survey had the following comments: “I can get down and up off the floor easier”; “The guidance & leadership of Bernadette & Stephanie have helped me to complete my recovery”; “I enjoyed meeting new community members”; “This is a program I will participate in each time it is offered”; “My legs definitely feel stronger and I’m more limber than before” and “I learned how to stretch and lift weights correctly”**

## Senior Life Services



Partnered with the Health Department to help get services to an underserved resident. Housing, financial, food, and health assistance has been provided and we have connected the resident with ongoing support. Once a connection to a new payee had been made, and the individual was able to receive their SSA benefits again, they were overjoyed with emotions and appreciation for the continued perseverance and assistance through various hurdles to ensure all benefits and services were restored.

Senior Centers across the county are always looking for ways to get our aging population more involved. The McFarland Senior Center requested facilitation and strategic planning for the future.

**A member stated “they appreciated Bernadette coming and caring for their center and the growth of their town.”**



## 4-H Youth Development - Wabaunsee County 4-H Ambassadors



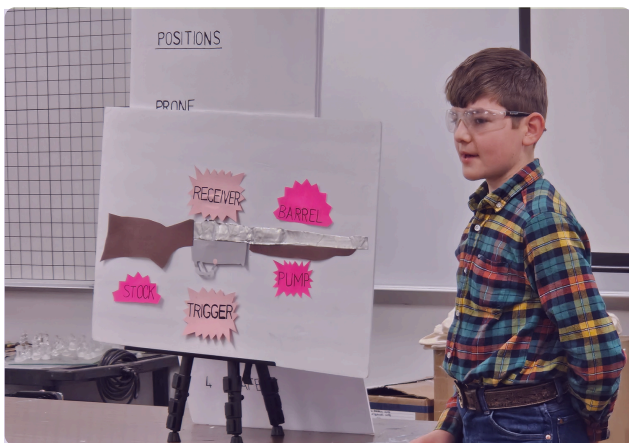
The Wabaunsee County 4-H Ambassadors host an annual Project Workshop and Chili Feed Fundraiser. Each Ambassador presents a project-specific talk, showing members the possibilities that they can explore.

The Chili Feed is a time for the community to come eat and support the leadership efforts of our local 4-H Ambassadors.

The Wabaunsee County 4-H Ambassadors hosted an Etiquette Dinner for 4-H Ambassadors and partnered with Pottawatomie & Riley counties. Donita Whitney-Bammerlin led the youth through a three-course meal, describing the best way to eat spaghetti using a fork and spoon! In addition, she covered etiquette for meals during interviews, meetings, and formal gatherings. She concluded with proper tipping and showing appreciation to the waitstaff.



## 4-H Youth Development - 4-H Day



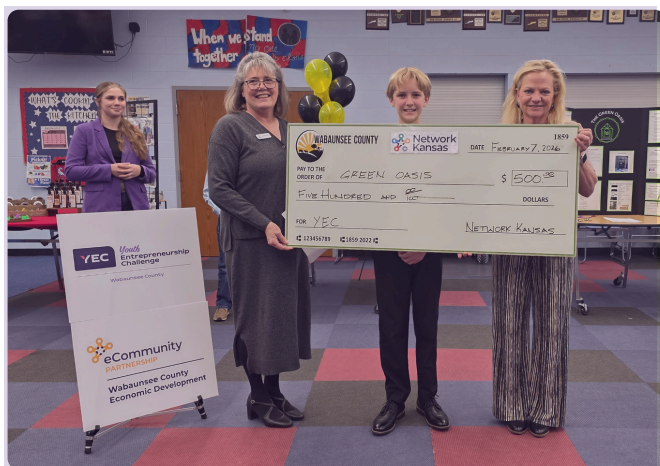
Pottawatomie & Wabaunsee County 4-H members enjoyed sharing their talents at the Pottawatomie/Wabaunsee County 4-H Day, held February 7, at Wabaunsee High School. 4-H members spent part of their day in a variety of individual activities including talks, drama, music, and dance performances.

Wabaunsee County had 32 members participate in numerous events.

## 4-H Youth Development - Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge (YEC)

The Wabaunsee County Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge (YEC) was hosted concurrently with 4-H Day. Four local youth entrepreneurs competed to advance to the State YEC, April 28-29, in Manhattan. Austin Cassell, The Green Oasis, was selected to advance. Each business finished top tier, earning at least \$500. Katie's Car Freshies and Royal Ice qualified for State YEC with their wildcard submissions!

This event is made possible through the partnership with Wabaunsee County Economic Development, Kansas 4-H, and NetWork Kansas.



# School Enrichment Programs across Wabaunsee County

School Enrichment programs provide additional, hands-on learning to supplement the classroom curriculum. Teachers have the opportunity to select the program(s) they wish to have throughout the school year. We are committed to providing these educational opportunities throughout Wabaunsee County.

## School Enrichment: Bread in a Bucket



Bernadette taught 29 third-grade students from USD 329 about yeast activation and grain science, and they baked mini loaves of honey whole-wheat bread. Students were encouraged to enjoy one loaf and share their second loaf with an adult in their life as a token of appreciation.

**“Our 3rd graders had such a fun and engaging experience making bread in a bucket with Ms. Bernadette! It was a hands-on activity that brought learning to life, and the students loved being part of the entire process. From mixing ingredients to seeing the final product, it was a memorable and exciting way to build teamwork and**

**real-world learning skills.” -Mrs. Cara Miller**

## School Enrichment: Butterfly Lifecycle

Stephanie read *‘Cat in the Hat’s Learning Library My, Oh My--A Butterfly! All about Butterflies’* to the Mission Valley Kindergarteners. They covered the basic lifecycle and what to expect from their Painted Lady caterpillars over the next few weeks.

Students learned that butterflies make chrysalises and moths create cocoons. Stephanie will return with a small token for each student to place in their flower beds at home to attract pollinators like butterflies!



## School Enrichment: Chick Embryology



*‘Shhh, Chicks are hatching!’* in the K-1 and 2-3 classrooms at St. John Lutheran School, as well as the 3<sup>RD</sup> grade classrooms at Wabaunsee Elementary School. Over four weeks, Stephanie goes into the classrooms doing the hands-on activities with the students. Week One focuses on expectations and setting the incubator. Week Two, each student has an opportunity to see if “their” embryo is growing through candling. Week Three students prep the arrival of their hatchlings by making a ‘classroom coop’. Week Four, unhatched eggs are broke open and students make educated predictions at what point the embryo

stopped growing. Chicks are sold and the proceeds help offset program expenses and keep future classroom expenses down.

## School Enrichment: County Tour - Mission Valley 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

With coordination through Bernadette, Mission Valley 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade took a field trip to the Courthouse to learn about the operations of several county departments. We're grateful for the partnerships that make these county tours so successful, time and time again.

Stephanie presented the swine lungs and discussed tobacco use with the students. Each student had the chance to 'inhale' the lungs to see the difference in capacity between the healthy lung and the smoker's lung.



## School Enrichment: Frog Embryology



Wabaunsee Elementary 5<sup>th</sup> graders have been watching their tadpoles grow. While natural selection is part of the process, they saw firsthand how survival of the fittest leaves the strongest of them all. 'Rolls-Royce' remains in the classroom and continues getting bigger!

Students will have the opportunity to dissect frogs, not Rolls-Royce, with the high school anatomy students in May. When teachers have ideas, we look to find avenues to fulfill hands-on opportunities any chance we get!

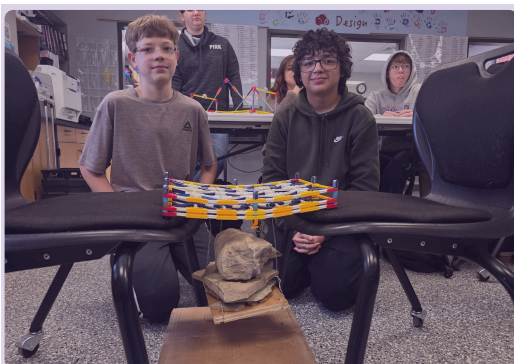
## School Enrichment: Handwashing

Hooray for Handwashing helps the students learn the proper way to wash their hands and reduce their chances of spreading germs. They learned how soap and warm water is the key to killing the most pesky germs that roam about! Don't forget to dry your hands before leaving the handwashing sink!

Bernadette taught handwashing in St. John's K-1 classroom this quarter, reaching 21 students!



## School Enrichment: Junk Drawer Robotics



Junk Drawer Robotics is just one of the many STEM opportunities available to teachers. Stephanie lead four class periods in the Applied Tech class at Wabaunsee High School. Students worked together to construct a bridge out of K'NEX that could withstand up to 10 pounds of rocks and built a pyramid with marshmallows and dry spaghetti. Through both activities, students learned how design and structure can matter more than the actual height itself.

## School Enrichment: Reading Makes Cents

Reading Makes Cents is a financial literacy and reading curriculum. Students have learned the history of money and how currency has evolved through the years and differs based on where in the world you are. We're currently diving into saving, spending, and investing our money for the future. As a capstone, the students will work with Stephanie to develop a menu for their final class, based on the budget they are given.



**“We absolutely love being able to incorporate the enrichment programs offered through the extension office into our curriculum. The students are always completely engaged with the programs, and we get 100% participation. It's a great way to bring in real-world application to the skills we are working on.” -Mrs. Jennifer Mumpower**

## School Enrichment: Nutrition Education

Nutrition education is a time for students to try new foods, learn how to read labels, and create a well-balanced meal over four class sessions. Students are encouraged to take a “No Thank You” bite for each snack Bernadette brings to class. Each time, the students find something new that they like!

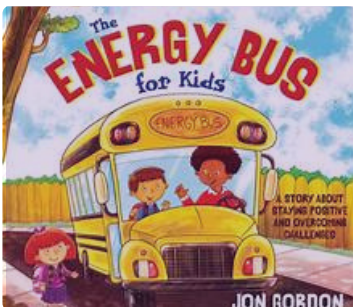
This year, we were lucky enough to get the Blender Bike for the Wellness without Walls event. Before returning it, Bernadette visited 9 classrooms, making smoothies with students to share! The Blender Bike is a fun, alternative way to learn about healthy eating and exercise.

**Students were surprised by the ingredients used, one saying, “I don't even like berries!” after drinking his two helpings.**



4th-8th grade students at St. John Lutheran School dove into the sugar content of common drinks. Who knew you're not supposed to drink the whole bottle in one serving!?

## School Enrichment: Character Development - Energy Bus



Wabauunsee Elementary 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade learned the five rules of the character bus, which include:

1. Create a Positive Vision
2. Fuel Your Ride with Positive Energy
3. No Bullies Allowed
4. Love Your Passengers
5. Enjoy the Ride

Stephanie ended each class time with the Energy Bus song, reminding students that just because someone is having a bad day, doesn't make them a bully. Follow the five rules and you will surely enjoy your ride on the Energy Bus of life!

## School Enrichment: Teambuilding at WHS RealityU



Annually, Wabaunsee County Extension partners with Wabaunsee High School to deliver teambuilding during their RealityU activities. Stephanie led the students through mental health activities including Comfort Zones, Poker Face, and The Heavy Bag. The Heavy Bag activity has students write on an index card something that is heavy on their heart and/or mind. They then folded their cards up and dropped them into Stephanie's duffle bag. At the end of the other activities, Stephanie opened what the students had written and shared out loud.

Above is a snippet of the most common responses that the Wabaunsee High School student body gave. As a follow up, a complete list of responses has been shared with the administration.

Bernadette & Makinna volunteered at the RealityU booths, helping students to make decisions on Child Care and Housing.

## Impacts at a Glance

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy: 21  
Senior Life Services: 12  
4-H Youth Development  
• Cloverbuds: 11  
• Youth Members: 164  
• Registered Volunteers: 64

School Enrichment:  
• Bread in a Bucket: 29  
• Butterfly Lifecycle: 25  
• Chick Embryology: 68  
• County Tour: 38  
• Frog Embryology: 29

School Enrichment:  
• Handwashing: 21  
• Junk Drawer Robotics: 6  
• Reading Makes Cents: 29  
• Nutrition Education: 128  
• Character Development: 136

## Upcoming Programs & Events

- April 21** - Floral Design Workshop
- April 22** - Wabaunsee County Conservation Day
- April 25** - 4-H Small Livestock Tagging & Weigh-In
- May 8-9** - 4-H CWF Garage Sales
- May 19** - Medicare Basics
- May 25** - Extension Office Closed, Memorial Day
- June 2** - Tractor Safety Day
- June 5** - FairEntry Opens for Fair Showcase Entries
- June 20** - Future of the Herd Program
- July 1** - FairEntry Closes for Fair Showcase Entries
- July 3** - Extension Office Closed, Fourth of July
- July 24-28** - Wabaunsee County Fair



# K-State Extension Wabaunsee County

Enriching Wabaunsee County residents with research-based educational opportunities to improve their lives, livelihoods and communities. Our programs include Agriculture & Natural Resources, Family & Consumer Sciences, Community Vitality, and 4-H Youth Development. Please contact our office to learn more about the wide variety of affordable services!



**Bernadette Trieb**  
Agent  
Family & Consumer Sciences



**Makinna Peterson**  
Agent  
Ag & Natural Resources



**Stephanie Maike**  
Extension Coordinator



**Tammy Howard**  
Part-Time Office Professional

## Constituent Contacts & Question Topics

- Animal Theft
- Available Grants
- Food Preservation
- Food Safety
- Forage Sample Testing
- Frost Seeding
- Garden Prep
- Housing
- Insurance
- Medicare Counseling
- Private Pesticide Applicator Exam
- Radon Test Kits
- Rental Rates
- Social Security Assistance
- Soil Sample Testing
- Water Test Kits

*For the most current happenings in Extension - Check out The Wabaunsee County Signal Enterprise paper and look for the Art of Ag, BETter Living, and Extension Connection articles!*