

FEBRUARY 2025

THE VOICE

Association Newsletter



Engaging and inspiring youth: Making the most of February

February may be the shortest month of the year, but it's packed with opportunities to engage and inspire young learners. Whether recognizing Black History Month, celebrating National Youth Leadership Month, or simply energizing programs during the winter slump, educators can use this time to spark curiosity and growth.

Youth thrive when they feel heard, challenged, and supported. This month is a great time to introduce activities that encourage leadership, problem-solving, and teamwork. Try a hands-on service project, a group storytelling activity, or a challenge that promotes critical thinking. Small changes—like incorporating more movement, discussion-based learning, or student-led projects—can make a big impact.

As we move through February, let's find ways to keep youth engaged, motivated, and excited about learning. The experiences we provide today help shape confident, capable leaders for tomorrow!

**National Youth
Leadership Month**

All of February

**National Random Act
of Kindness Week**

Week of February 17

SEND NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS TO
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Illinois JCEP

Date: April 15, 2025

Location: Decatur, IL

More details coming soon

Illinois Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP) conference

What is JCEP?

The work of Illinois Extension is done by a large team of professionals who are as committed to their professional area of practice as they are to improving the lives of people across the state of Illinois. That is a powerful combination that leads to both innovation and excellence in how our programs are designed and executed.

The Illinois Joint council of Extension Professionals (ILJCEP) consists of the leadership of the five Extension professional associations and is focused on helping University of Illinois Extension staff members meet the educational needs of the citizens and families of Illinois.

Raffle items needed

As part of the upcoming Illinois JCEP conference, raffle baskets are being sought. If you would like to assist with filling a basket for 4-H, either bring your items to JCEP Conference or coordinate with someone who will be attending. Items that are well received are raffle tickets, Illinois products that are local to you, and art piece - bonus if they are made by a 4-Her!

If you have questions, please contact Martha Ebbesmeyer or Katie Duitsman.

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Professional Development Opportunities

Adolescent Social Media Use

Teens use social media on personal devices, forming connections but facing risks. Learn how parents can guide and supervise to ensure online safety.

Supporting Youth Leadership Through Mentoring

By Tanja Hernandez, Suzanna Windon, Ph.D.

This article discusses youth leadership models and components of mentoring youth leaders

Youth Leadership Toward Community Development

By Daniel Robotham, Suzanna Windon, Ph.D., Carolyn Henzi Plaza
Youth represent a significant proportion of the US population, yet are often left out of leadership discussions at the community level. This article will discuss ways in which we can empower and develop youth leaders in our communities.

Tips to Improve Extension Professionals' Essential Competencies

By Suzanna Windon, Ph.D., Mariah Stollar
In this article, we have identified competencies needed for the modern Extension leader from the literature, shared tips and resources to further develop these competencies.