

Sedgwick County EXTENSION NEWSLETTER

Knowledge for Life

April 2026



Stronger Together

April is National Volunteer Appreciation Month, a time to pause and recognize the people and partnerships that make our work possible.

At K-State Extension in Sedgwick County, our impact is not created alone. It is built through collaboration with community partners who open doors for education and with volunteers who give their time, talents, and heart to serve others. Together, these relationships extend our reach and deepen our impact in ways we simply could not achieve on our own.

To our partners and volunteers—thank you. Your commitment creates opportunities, builds connections, and improves lives across Sedgwick County. We are grateful to work alongside you.

Explore our [website](#) and [Facebook page](#), and [reach out to us](#) if you are looking for information and resources on any of our topic areas.

Kelli Anderson, Extension Director



thank you!

To the volunteers and partners who power our mission.

Powered by Partnerships

Kitchen Restore is a community-focused initiative led by K-State Extension Sedgwick County that helps individuals and families build healthier homes by providing essential kitchen starter kits. Through the support of our community partners, the program supplies new, basic cookware and utensils—such as knives, measuring tools, pots, and pans—to individuals who have completed a series of nutrition education classes.

By equipping households with practical tools, Kitchen Restore supports home cooking, food safety, and overall wellness. The program is made possible through monetary donations, grants, and

dedicated community volunteers who help assemble kits. Kitchen Restore empowers participants to prepare nutritious meals for themselves and their families.



KITCHEN
restore

We extend our **sincere thanks** to our generous sponsors: **Junior League of Wichita, Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of Kansas,** and the **Northwest Wichita Lions Club.** Your support makes a meaningful difference in our community!



The **Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP)**, federally funded since 1969, delivers interactive nutrition education for limited-resource youth and families. Participants gain practical skills to prepare more meals at home, increase fruit and vegetable intake, stay physically active, and make healthier beverage choices, building habits that support long-term well-being.

This month, we're highlighting the partnerships that make this work possible.

EFNEP recently partnered with Project SEARCH, an alternative program through USD 260 serving students with disabilities after they have completed academic requirements. The program focuses on developing workplace skills that support independent living. Through this collaboration, Nutrition Educator Lacey Grunden delivers Teen Cuisine curriculum that goes beyond nutrition, teaching safe food handling, knife skills, measuring, and recipe reading. These hands-on experiences translate directly into marketable job skills.

Another key partner is Haysville S.P.A.R.K. (Supporting Participation in Academics and Recreation for Kids), an after-school program for middle school students in USD 261 funded through a 21st CCLC grant. S.P.A.R.K. offers a wide range of enrichment opportunities, including STEAM activities, academic support, recreation, and the arts. Over the past year, Nutrition Educator Alicia Bruster has partnered with the program to deliver lessons on healthy eating, physical activity, and food safety, reinforcing S.P.A.R.K.'s mission to help students learn, grow, and thrive. **Thank you, Project SEARCH and Haysville S.P.A.R.K.!**

To learn more about EFNEP in Sedgwick County, visit sedgwick.k-state.edu/efnep.

People With Purpose: Extension Volunteers



The Secret Benefit No One Talks About: Volunteering Changes You More Than Your Community

Volunteering changes more than the community, it changes you.

Volunteering is often seen as something we do to help others, but the truth is far more powerful. Adults who volunteer don't just give back—they gain purpose, connection, and measurable improvements in their own well-being. In many cases,

volunteering is one of the most impactful choices an adult can make.

Volunteering strengthens mental health.

Research consistently shows that adults who serve others report lower stress, reduced depression, and a stronger sense of purpose. In a time when many feel isolated or overwhelmed, volunteering creates meaningful human connection. It replaces isolation with belonging and transforms free time into something deeply fulfilling.

Read more about the personal benefits of volunteering. >>>



Behind every confident, capable young person is a volunteer who believed in them first.

As we reflect on the 2026 4-H year, our Sedgwick County Extension 4-H staff extend our deepest gratitude to the dedicated volunteers who give their time, energy, and heart to support youth in Sedgwick County.

Your tireless commitment, whether leading meetings, mentoring projects, or simply showing up, has made a lasting impact. Because of you, our 4-H youth are not just prepared for the future, they are **Beyond Ready**. Your investment in their growth, leadership, and confidence is shaping stronger individuals and a stronger community, and for that, we are truly thankful.



We invite you to view the list of 2026 registered volunteers that help power our 4-H youth development programs. >>>

SHICK Volunteers Making a Difference

The **SHICK** (Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas) program at K-State Extension Sedgwick County is proud to have a dedicated team of 30 volunteer counselors serving our community. Some have been part of this group for more than 20 years, continuing to give their time to help peers navigate Medicare with care and compassion.



Medicare is constantly evolving, and our counselors work hard to stay current through ongoing training coordinated by the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services. Their dedication shows in every interaction, and it's a privilege to learn from and work alongside them.

Becoming a SHICK counselor is a meaningful way to give back. Training includes both online and in-person components and requires commitment, but the impact is real.

For more information on becoming a SHICK volunteer, contact **Tat Hidano**, K-State Extension Sedgwick County Adult Development and Aging Agent.

Seasonal Solutions

2026 Spring Garden Fair

LETTUCE Help You Grow
Vegetables, Fruits, Flowers, & More!

Saturday
May 2nd, 2026
7 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Free

Inside the Sedgwick County Extension Education Center
7001 W. 21st Street N.
Wichita, KS 67205

Interactive Booths
Seed Starting Basics
Drip Irrigation
Principles of Soil Health
Water Smart, Wallet Smart
10 Plants for Pollinators
Great Fruits for Kansas
Right Plant, Right Place, Right Time

Activities
Plant Sale
Seed Giveaway
Make & Take Youth Activity
Practical Raised Bed Gardening
Area Garden Clubs | Food Sales
Compost Demos @ 9 a.m. & 11 a.m.

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Sedgwick County Extension Master Gardeners to host Spring Garden Fair on May 2

The Sedgwick County Extension Master Gardeners invite the community to the 2026 Spring Garden Fair on Saturday, May 2, from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at 4-H Hall, Sedgwick County Extension Education Center (7001 W. 21st St. N., Wichita). Admission is free, and attendees can receive free vegetable seeds while supplies last.

This year's theme, "Lettuce Help You Grow: Vegetables, Fruits, Flowers & More!", focuses on practical, research-based gardening tips for all skill levels. Visitors can explore educational booths and hands-on activities covering topics such as seed starting, soil health, irrigation, planting timing, raised beds, and pollinator-friendly plants.

Additional activities include plant and food sales, composting demonstrations, a youth microgreens activity, and access to the Master Gardener Hotline for gardening questions. Local garden clubs will also be on-site to share ways to get involved.

The event is designed to help residents build confidence and skills to grow healthy, productive gardens at home.

[Visit our website to learn more!](#)

Sedgwick County Extension to host Tractor Safety Course on May 28

Teens in Cowley, Sedgwick, and Sumner Counties will have the opportunity to complete required tractor safety certification on Thursday, May 28, 2026.

Youth ages 14 and 15 who plan to work on farms for employers other than a parent or guardian must complete this training, as mandated by the U.S. Department of Labor. The certification process includes independent coursework, an employer-administered driving test, and an in-person class focused on safe tractor and machinery operation.

The course is open to youth ages 13 and older; however, certification is not issued until age 14 and all driving requirements are met.

The program is offered through a partnership between Cowley, Sedgwick, and Sumner County Extension offices and is designed to prepare young workers for safe and responsible agricultural employment.

Registration is required by May 26, and spots are filling up fast.

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY Extension
Cowley County
Sumner County
Sedgwick County

TRACTOR SAFETY

To receive certification, students will be required to complete independent coursework and a driving test administered by their employer, along with the in-person class. The course will cover safe tractor and machine operation.



2026 Master Gardener Basic Training

The Sedgwick County Extension Master Gardener Program will pause Basic Training and the candidate application process for 2026. This means we will not be conducting interviews this year, and the annual July Information Meeting will not take place.

This was not an easy decision. Over the past year, a combination of staff transitions and overall workload has made it clear that we need to take a step back. Rather than move forward when we aren't at full capacity, we felt it was more responsible to pause, regroup, and focus on strengthening the program.

During this time, staff will be reviewing and updating the Basic Training curriculum and evaluating other program areas to ensure we are providing a high-quality experience for future volunteers and continue to serve our community well.

This is a temporary pause, and we fully plan to resume Basic Training in 2027. We truly appreciate the interest and support for the Master Gardener Program and look forward to welcoming a new class in 2027.

If you'd like to be notified when the 2027 Information Meeting is scheduled and applications open, please complete this short form: [2027 EMG Basic Training Interest Form](#)

Doing Good for Kansas

Small batches, big ambitions

The Kansas Community Food Systems team strengthens the state's next generation of food entrepreneurs

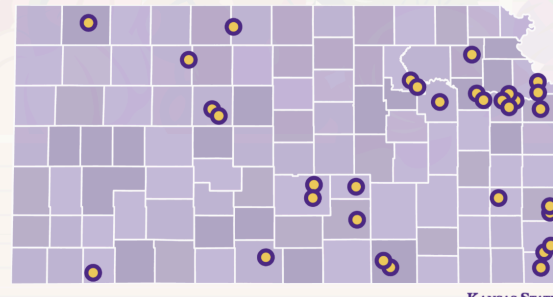
In Kansas, famously a breadbasket of the world, the irony is that robust community food systems can be difficult to develop in the local towns that grow the very grain that feeds the rest of the world.

Kansas State University's Community Food Systems program is a crucial resource for prospective local food businesses — and the **K-State Extension agents** who help bridge local talent with statewide resources — to create systems that provide Kansas residents with healthy, quality, locally grown and produced foods.

Learn how K-State is bringing food business development resources to Kansas communities.

Cultivating collaborative community food systems

This interactive map highlights nearly 40 local food fellow projects across Kansas, showcasing how fellows partnered with community organizations to build capacity, strengthen local food systems, and support farmers markets and food-focused initiatives statewide.



Source: Local Food Fellows Report

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Where You'll Find Us: Extension Events and Opportunities



K-State Garden Hour Webinar: Natives vs. Cultivars--Making Informed Choices for Your Landscape

Wednesday, May 6, Noon to 1 p.m.

Cultivars of native plants may dominate in the garden centers, but how do they compare to their true native counterparts — and does it really matter which you choose? Join Sharon Ashworth, Douglas County Horticulture Agent, as she answers these questions and shares what current research reveals about the differences in ecological value between natives and cultivars of natives.

Register for the webinar at:
www.ksrelearn.com/KStateGardenHour

Growing 7-Growers!

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension
Sedgwick County



Mushroom Log Inoculation Workshop

Guest Speaker
Eric Myers
Myers Mushrooms

**April 22, 2026
6 PM - 8 PM**

Register and learn more at
sedgwick.ksu.edu/events

Sedgwick County Extension
Education Center
7001 W 21st St. N, Wichita, KS 67205

COST: \$10
Registration Required

K-State Extension Sedgwick County to Offer Mushroom Log Inoculation Workshop

Wednesday, April 22, 2026, 6 to 8 p.m.

Discover the art and science of growing your own gourmet mushrooms.

Join Eric Myers of Myers Mushrooms at the Sedgwick County Extension Education Center on **Wednesday, April 22, 2026, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.** for a hands-on introduction to fungal farming. This workshop will walk participants through the process of cultivating mushrooms outdoors using hardwood logs—an approachable and rewarding way to produce fresh, homegrown food.

Cost is \$10. Register today at:
sedgwick.ksu.edu/events



K-State Extension Sedgwick County to Offer Medicare Options Class

Thursday, April 30, 2026 at 11:30 a.m.

Get ready to embark into the world of Medicare with us on Thursday, April 30th, from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. in the Sunflower Room. Each participant will receive a copy of the program materials. It is best to plan to attend several months before you become Medicare eligible.

The class is FREE, but **registration is required**. Class size is limited.



K-State Extension to Offer Cow Camp - A Beef Cattle Management Program for Women

Eastern Cow Camp
May 5-6, 2026
Parsons, KS

Western Cow Camp
September 9-10, 2026
Hays, KS

This hands-on program focuses on building practical skills, confidence, and connections for women looking to strengthen their knowledge of beef cattle management.

Learn more and register today!



Volunteer Opportunities



Room Rental



Support Extension



This monthly e-newsletter is intended to inform citizens of events, activities and research-based information from K-State Extension Sedgwick County.

K-State Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

K-State Extension is a short name for the Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, a program designed to generate and distribute useful knowledge for the well-being of Kansans. Supported by county, state, federal and private funds, the program has county extension offices, experiment fields, area

extension offices and regional research centers statewide. Its headquarters is on the Kansas State University campus in Manhattan.



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