



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

## Cornell Cooperative Extension | Tioga County

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**CCE Tioga**  
**Farm Office Hours:**  
Monday – Thursday  
9am – 2pm

**CCE Tioga Hilltop Farm**  
343 Cass Hill Road  
Candor, NY 13743

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# CCE TIOGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## Board of Directors

**President** - Paul Barber  
**Vice-President** - Bill Morse  
**Treasurer** - Danielle Singer  
**Secretary** - Dana Ouellette  
**Legislative Representative** - Jake Brown  
**Cornell Representative** - Paul O'Connor (non-voting)  
**Assistant to the Treasurer** – JoAnn Coates (non-voting)

KC Mandeville  
 Dr. Eric Knolles  
 Mark Griep  
 Robert Murray  
 Melissa Cavataio-Boland  
 Rebecca Maffei  
 Kelly Whittemore  
 Dan Kosztyo  
 Debbie Lawton

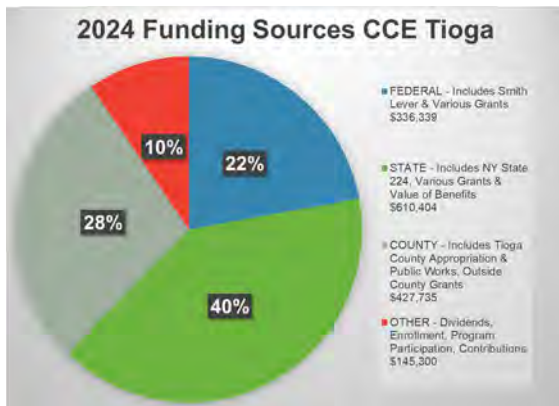
## Board Member Service Recognition

Paul Barber and Bill Morse have each served 2-three year terms on the CCE Tioga Board of Directors, and we thank them for their dedicated efforts. Also departing the board are Debbie Lawton, Dana Ouellette, Dan Kosztyo, and Dr. Eric Knolles, with gratitude for their service and contributions. Welcoming to the 2025 Board of Directors: Liz Myers, Elaine Kassapian, Marty Borko, Brent Suddaby and Sarah Shaw.



## Financial Status of the Association

CCE Tioga strategically allocated funds to maximize its impact in order to meet the needs of its participants in the following priority program areas: agriculture, youth development, workforce development, family development, nutrition and energy education.



**The Association has significantly leveraged the County Appropriation 5:1** with State, Federal and foundation funding, thereby enhancing the benefit of Extension services to Tioga County Residents.

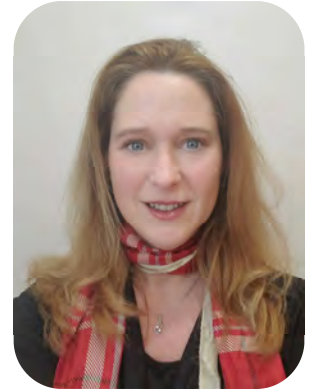
Acknowledging the need for financial stability and sustainability, the Board of Directors has made these strategic allocations exemplifying its commitment to a balanced budget approach, low administrative costs, staff retention/talent recruitment and targeted program funding.

## Cornell Cooperative Extension Tioga County

2024 EXPENSES	1,428,956
Program Services	810,486
Management & General Operations	604,789
Fundraising	13,681
Increase in Unrestricted Net Assets	112,578

# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Joining Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tioga County has been an exciting, unexpected shift in my career. As a Tioga County native, 4-H'er and co-owner of Raish Hill Farm in Candor, NY, I have engaged with CCE in many ways over the years. Prior to CCE Tioga, I wore many "hats" in my professional and volunteer activities as small businesses (CPSI Bitoech), farming and non-profits often require, providing perspectives that I lean on daily. Serving as your Executive Director, I bring my passion, experience and enthusiasm to support our talented team of educators and administrative staff for the continued growth and evolution of CCE Tioga.



*“Providing tours of our CCE Tioga Hilltop Farm to visitors, program participants and other agency partners is an amazing opportunity to connect and put the 2-way learning model of Cooperative Extension into action here in the Heart of Tioga County.”*

**Contact CCE Tioga (607) 659-5694 to schedule a Tour of our Hilltop Farm in Candor!**

2024 was a year of transition for CCE Tioga County with many new staff members in key roles. Staff and board members began the strategic planning process, encompassing our facilities at CCE Tioga Hilltop Farm, 4-H Youth Building, Partner Sites and the new Extension Meeting Spaces in Owego. Guided by local input, we are building relationships within and outside Tioga to grow our programs, expanding connections with Cornell researchers and bringing cutting-edge research information to our local community while supporting the needs of our youth, individuals and families today and looking forward into the future.

***Our Mission*** *CCE Tioga provides experience and research-based knowledge to help residents improve the quality of life in their communities*

## Extension of Extension at the Neighborhood Depot in Owego

CCE Tioga has expanded our meeting spaces, leasing space at the newly constructed Dan and Rose McNeil Neighborhood Depot at 146 Central Ave. Owego, NY. Along with partner agencies Tioga County Rural Ministry, Tioga United Way and Racker, this enables CCE Tioga educators to host drop-by Owego Office Hours in addition to our Hilltop Farm Candor Office location. Once we get settled in, program office hour schedules will be announced in 2025 on our website at: [tioga.cce.cornell.edu](http://tioga.cce.cornell.edu)

## Independent Accountant's Report

The 2023 financials for Cornell Cooperative Extension Association of Tioga County were reviewed by Dermody, Burke and Brown CPAs, LLC. Their report states “Based on our review, we are not aware of any material modifications that should be made to the accompanying financial statements in order for them to be in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.”

*Kristi Snyder*  
Kristi K. Snyder, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

# CCE TIOGA IS AG-CELLENT

## Our Program Areas at CCE Tioga

- **Agriculture**
  - Farmer / Producer Support
  - Incubator Farm Program at CCE Tioga Hilltop Farm
  - Community Horticulture & Master Gardener Volunteer Program
- **Youth & Families**
  - 4-H Youth Programs
  - Family Development / Family Resource Centers
- **Community Health & Wellness**
  - Youth Employment Program (WIOA)
  - Nutrition Programs – Regional SNAP-Ed programming
- **Natural Resources**
  - Smart Energy Choices

**Tioga County Agricultural Resource Group (ARG)** is a group of farmers, agencies, educators, businesses and community members working together to contribute to a thriving rural community by creating and promoting agricultural vitality in Tioga County. CCE Tioga Executive Director, Ag Team and 4-H Educators are all actively involved, staying connected with our partner agencies. Join us at the ARG open to the public meetings the last Wednesday of the month 10am – 11:30am at the Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District office (183 Corporate Dr. Owego, NY).

## Event Highlight: 1st Annual Pumpkin Smash



This event was a collaboration with Tioga County EDP Sustainability, Experience Tioga and Tioga Farm Bureau. CCE Tioga, Sustainability, Tioga Co. Soil and Water Conservation District, the Waterman Conservation Center, and Tioga Co. Farm Bureau all tabled at the event bringing agriculture and sustainability topics to the public. Keeping decorative pumpkins out of landfills can be Smashing Fun!

There were ~50 attendees and pumpkins that were smashed by the



public were donated to a local farm to be fed to livestock or composted at CCE Tioga Hilltop Farm. CCE Tioga also has a demonstration Earth Machine backyard composter like those available from Tioga County Sustainability.

*Come check it out and learn more about backyard composting with us!*

## CCE Tioga Staff

- ^Dr. Kristi Snyder, *Executive Director*
- ^JoAnn Coates, *Finance Manager*
- ^Teri Whitmore, *Administrative Assistant*  
Miranda Sundquist, *Administrative Assistant* – transferred to CCE Tompkins June 2024
- ^Kelly Jackson, *Agriculture Development Specialist*  
Jean Koski, *Horticulturist, Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator & Facilities Coordinator*  
Jared Gulliford, *Incubator Farm Manager*  
Joan Shultz, *Family Resource Center Program Coordinator*  
Donna Vergason-Gibson, *FRC / Family Development Program Coordinator*
- ^Benjamin O'Connor, *4-H Educator*  
Kristin Parry, *4-H Program Coordinator*  
Lisa Weston-Bialy, *Community Youth Employment Educator*  
Erin Evans, *Community Youth Employment Program Coordinator*  
Eileen Hanrahan, *Smart Energy Choices Community Energy Adviser*
- ^Robert Talkiewicz, *Smart Energy Choices Community Energy Adviser*  
Caitlin Mizerak, *Nutritionist* – transferred to CCE Broome March 2024

^ New Staff Member to  
CCE Tioga in 2024

## Management Transition

CCE Tioga wishes to thank Interim Executive Director **Kevin Jordan** and CCE Administration State Extension Specialist **Paul O'Connor** for their leadership and efforts during the transition period filing several key staffing vacancies and assisting the Executive Director Search Committee.

Staffing changes are a part of the employment cycle, today more than ever. At CCE Tioga, we celebrate new opportunities for our co-workers,

recognizing their contributions and accepting their presence will be greatly missed by us and those they served in the community. Transitions are also a time to recruit new talent and welcome new members to our team and planning future succession.



CCE Tioga Staff  
Holiday Gathering

## Welcoming a new Finance and Administration Team to CCE Tioga

**JoAnn Coates, Finance Manager** joins CCE Tioga with 17yrs experience in the CCE system. **Teri Whitmore, Administrative Assistant**, works at the CCE Tioga Farm Office assisting with day-to-day operations alongside **Dr. Kristi Snyder, Executive Director**.

Recognizing our CCE Shared Business Network (SBN) Team for all their efforts assisting CCE Tioga throughout 2024. Gretchen Uhler (Finance), Tracy Sanford and Jerilynn Cross (HR), Eric Peck and Adam Bredesen (IT). *The SBN provides expertise in Finance, IT and Human Resources to the member CCE Associations and connects expertise across the CCE system.*

# AGRICULTURE

## Agriculture Outreach

In 2024, **Agriculture Development Specialist Kelly Jackson** joined the CCE Tioga staff. With new faces in the office, our goal for 2024 was connecting with farmers and other service providers in the county to strengthen community connections. Our Ag Outreach program was present at Daffodil Festival, Strawberry Festival, Tioga Center Schools Planting Tiger Fest, Sundaes at the Farm, and the Tioga County Fair.

*Looking ahead to 2025, program goals include maintaining a continuing presence at outreach events in the county and adding new educational opportunities for our Tioga farmers.*

### CCE Tioga Ag Program Highlights:

- Spotted Wing Drosophila monitoring at two farms in the county – **research in action!**
- Weed Management Trials demonstrating bio-mulches and mechanical controls funded by the Toward Sustainability Foundation (TSF).
- Joining the county **Farm Bureau** as an organization with monthly representation at the board meetings
- Presenting to Tioga County Council of Government on the State of Agriculture in Tioga
- Farmer Education – **Raising Sheep on Pasture** with Ulf Kintzel of White Clover Sheep Farm
- Completed Cornell Climate Stewards Train-the-Trainer Program
- **Regional Navigator** for American Farmland Trust's Farmland for a New Generation
- Supporting Candor Ag Classes at Hilltop Farm with hands-on field experiences
- Creating the **All Things Agriculture** weekly e-Newsletter - *sign up today!*
- Weekly support for county farmers via phone, email, and farm visits – [contact us to arrange an appointment at your Farm or at our offices in Candor or Owego.](#)



### Collaborative Research Programs

2024 marks the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the New York Rice Project at CCE Tioga Hilltop Farm where the suitability of temperate rice varieties for farming in New York's climate and growing period, alongside an alternative method of growing rice in NY (dry-land /irrigated) was investigated led by Dr. Jenny Kao-Kniffin at CALS, Cornell University. Cornell University's first annual Rice Field Day concluded with tours and demonstrations of rice processing equipment at CCE Tioga.

### Incubator Farmer Program



National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The CCE Tioga Incubator Farmer Program continued its success with the USDA NIFA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) grant at Hilltop Farm, hosting beginning farmers and helping them learn to build their farm businesses. **Jared Gulliford, Incubator Farm Manager** provided support and 1:1 mentoring to our participants. In 2024, we had one livestock farmer and five horticultural crop farmers producing: *lamb, culinary & medicinal herbs, cut flowers, and mixed vegetable crops.*

Incubator Farmers' utilization of the **CCE Tioga Greenhouse** for seed starting increased growing efficiency and facilitated earlier product sales at local Farmer's Markets. All of the farmers expanded their operations and/or markets from the previous year. The experience gained at CCE Tioga Hilltop Farm has enabled our livestock farmer to obtain leased land for his growing flock of sheep. Two of our farmers participated in the 2024 **Farming for Freedom Trail Freedom Weekend** - an agritourism network that links farmers of color to one another and to the community at large.



*In 2025, we are continuing to support our current farmers' development and are looking forward to furthering our commitment to utilizing the farm to fit the needs of the county.*



Janice Degni, *CCE Field Crop Specialist*  
 Betsy Hicks, *Area Dairy Management Specialist*  
 Donette Griffith, *Administrative Assistant*

**Visit Online:** <https://scnydfc.cce.cornell.edu/> | Offices at CCE Cortland | 607.391.2660 | Access the quarterly Dairy & Field Crops Digest, check out the News & Register for Events!

### **Individual Consultations with our Farmers and Regional Educational Events**

*"Helping our farmers attain optimum forage quality is a priority of our outreach. We focus on the timing of the first cutting hay crop and corn silage harvest at the end of season."*

Corn Silage Dry-Down Clinic held at Ward and Van Scoy in Newark Valley *"The clinic invites connection with neighbors, a chance to compare notes on the growing season, guidelines for crop preservation and a dry matter result for developing a targeted harvest plan."* ~Janice Degni

*"At Lawton's Jersey Farm, 30 Newark Valley Junior FFA students were able to learn more about tiestalls, calf care and heifers. Teaming up with farmers and the local extension office to put on these open-farm tours are one of the best ways to share about dairy farming and answer questions directly."* ~ Betsy Hicks



Diving into the 2022 Agriculture Census Data, Janice and Betsy shared the changing demographics of farm activity in our region. Dairy Feeder School was offered at 6 locations in nearby counties in both English and Spanish and Janice provided an interactive demonstration on cover crops/soil dynamics at the Tioga Co. Soil Health meeting. At the Tioga County Fair and Sundaes at the Farm, Janice and Betsy helped visitors make cheese by hand or experience milking a cow.

***Working together regionally & with our local Extension office***

## Horticulture & Backyard Gardening

### Horticulture, Bug or Gardening Questions?

Contact the Tioga County GROW Line! E-mail us [Tioga@cornell.edu](mailto:Tioga@cornell.edu) or call (607) 659-5694

Our team of specialists and Master Gardener Volunteers are here to help!

**Jean Koski** – Horticulture & Local Foods, Master Gardener Program Coordinator

**Kelly Jackson** – Entomology & Agriculture

### Seed Sharing Event

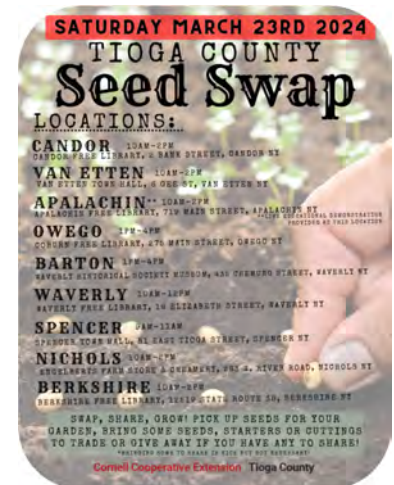
With the help of dedicated Master Gardeners, volunteers and a generous donation of seed from local businesses, CCE Tioga coordinated a county wide day of education and sharing.

Partnering with municipalities and libraries, we offered free seeds and an opportunity to learn from experienced individuals for home gardening. We were able to cover nearly every township in our rural county, reaching over 140 individuals face to face. We connected with seasoned gardeners, young families new to gardening and everyone in between.

### Social Media Gardening Group for Tioga County

Gardening is a powerful way for people to help themselves and others, particularly in areas where access to healthy food is limited. Master Gardeners share fresh and emerging scientifically based information in the Tioga County Gardening Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/tiogacountygardeners>



## Master Gardener Volunteer Program

Master Gardener Volunteers in Tioga County are a group of individuals dedicated to offering their time, effort and knowledge freely, helping to build community in a variety of ways:

- Maintaining demonstration gardens throughout the county,
- Teaching gardening to youth in partnership with the local Boys & Girls Club,
- Interacting with the public leading hands-on horticulture activities at summer festivities,
- Participating in statewide initiatives, such as the Vegetable Variety Trials,
- Dedicating significant effort to community vegetable gardens, keeping harvest share tables stocked with fresh vegetables throughout the growing season and beyond.
- Contributing effort towards the development of the Canna Wanna nature preserve

*“Master Gardeners in Tioga County are a group of individuals dedicated to the betterment of community using the commonality of love of plant and gardens to connect” ~Jean Koski, Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator*

Master Gardeners at the **Annual Plant Sale** supporting the program - 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday in June



## Agriculture Partnerships in Action

**Pasture Walks** – CCE Tioga Ag Program and the CCE South Central NY Dairy and Field Crops team partnered with Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Upper Susquehanna Coalition to coordinate a series of 3 pasture walks throughout the county. Outreach with our partners including Farm Bureau helped promote these events, reaching over 50 farmers and introducing Tioga County to the new NYS Small Ruminant Extension Specialist (Jessica Waltemyer) with the Cornell PRO-Livestock Program.

- ☆ **CCE Tioga Hilltop Farm** (Candor) - Field Management & Rotational Grazing with Troy Bishopp, “The Grass Whisperer”
- ☆ **Twin Brook Farm** (Owego) – Beef Cow Grazing & Watershed Management
- ☆ **Troyer Farm** (Candor) – Livestock Grazing & Parasite Management with Jessica Waltemyer, PRO-Livestock Small Ruminant Specialist

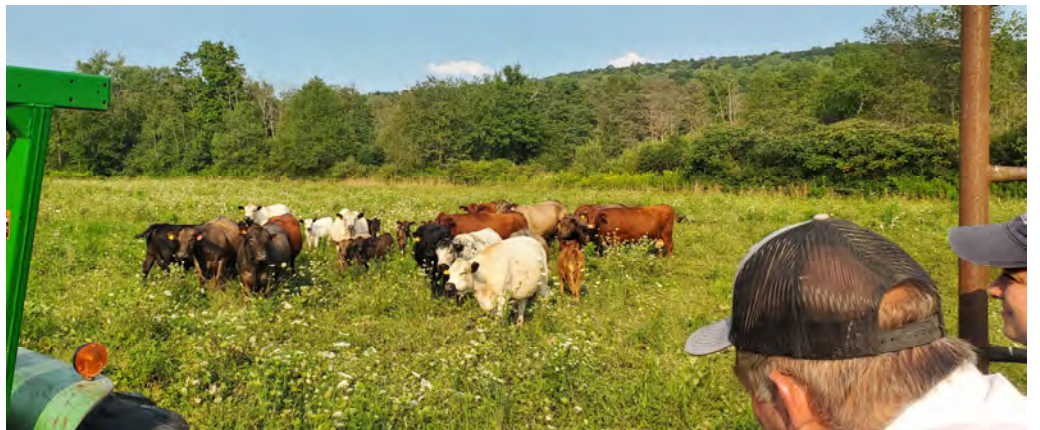
*Measuring grass height in a rotational grazing field at CCE Tioga*



*Farmers Gathered at the Final Pasture Walk*



CCE Tioga  
extends  
**special thanks**  
to our  
Host Farms &  
Partners!



**Sundaes at the Farm** – another beautiful bluebird sky day in Tioga County brought over 900 folks to the Frisbie Bros. Dairy Farm in Spencer on National Ice Cream Day. CCE Tioga Ag Team, 4-H staff and Ranch Riders club, Family Resource Center Educators, Master Gardeners, and Energy Advisers were all on hand with activities and information, connecting with our neighbors and agency partners. CCE Tioga Board members helped dish up free Ice Cream, perfectly topped with local blueberry and strawberry sauces picked and prepared by CCE Tioga staff Donna, Kelly, Ben & Kristin with help from our 4-H’ers! The kids Scavenger Hunt ended at the CCE Tioga tent to find a prize and share the fun adventures of the day. ***We can’t wait for next year’s Sundaes at the Farm!***



*Master Gardeners offered a Make & Take pressed wildflower clay ornament activity  
Ranch Riders Mini horses delighted visitors and shared their 4-H Experiences*



## NUTRITION

CCE Tioga will be partnering with CCE Chemung through the Regional Finger Lakes SNAP-Ed program to bring regular nutrition and SNAP-Ed programming to Tioga County for the 5-year grant period 2024-2029, working with other CCE Tioga programs, food pantries and local school districts/youth programs.

# YOUTH PROGRAMMING

## Family Development (Family Resource Centers)

**Joan Shultz, FRC Program Coordinator**

**Donna Vergason-Gibson, Family Development Program Coordinator**

*Supporting families and caregivers of children aged 0-5 through Parenting Education, socializing playgroups and integrated activities with other CCE Tioga programs.*

- FRC is in Your Community! Playgroups are held at various locations in Owego, Spencer, Nichols, Candor, Berkshire, Owego and Waverly.
- A multi-year program grant from NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is the funding source for Family Development /FRC at CCE Tioga
- Collaborated with the Tioga County Youth Bureau and secured funds to offer families outdoor activities, including attending the Tioga County Fair
- Provided approximately 50 families with Basic Needs gift cards to offset the cost of living
- Candor and Spencer sites enjoyed outdoor play in the summer months, seeing an increase in numbers.
- 8 Play Visits at CCE Tioga Hilltop Farm, with families enjoying outdoor time together.
- Parent Leaders coordinated Farm Field trips to local agribusinesses
- Community collaborations were continued with Candor EMS
- Strengthening Families Parenting Education Program held in Fall 2024



## 4-H: Positive Youth Development

- Leadership & Civics
- Regional & Statewide Activities
- Public Presentations
- Animal Science
- Building Projects
- Special Interest Programs
  - Tractor Safety Program
  - Giant Pumpkin Project
  - 4-H Teen Council



**2024 Ben O'Connor, 4-H Educator**

**4-H Staff: Kristin Parry, Program Coordinator**



**Wyatt Zorn** Tioga County 4-H  
2024 Giant Pumpkin Club  
Champion! **465lbs**

## 4-H Clubs and Independent Participants

Tioga County 4-H program provides learn-by-doing experiential learning for youth ages 5-19. 4-H offers opportunities to grow skills such as public speaking and animal husbandry that youth utilize through a wide variety of opportunities. These opportunities begin in their local clubs, moving through county, district, state and often national levels including Livestock skill-a-thon, Animal Judging contests, Tractor driving, vegetable growing and more!



**2024: Tioga County 4-H 107 youth participating in 7 clubs or as Independent members.**

In 2024, a youth who began 4-H as five year old Cloverbud completed their Tractor Safety course, while another competed at the National Livestock Judging contest in Louisville, Kentucky. Tioga County 4-H youth attended Capital Days, participated in NYS Horse Communications and the STARR Leadership Conference.

***Hours of educational programming and personal connections between youth, trusted adults and our volunteer 4-H leaders, lay behind all that is showcased on the table, stages and in the show rings.***

## Tioga County Fair

Many youth create projects to bring to the annual Tioga County Fair that show their love of painting, knitting photography, gardening, woodworking, baking, and more.

The CCE Tioga 4-H Youth building hosted a taste of our youth's favorite projects. Evaluations are based on the Danish system, prioritizing positive feedback for youth engagement. These displays highlight the efforts put in throughout the 4-H year!



**Clover Café Food & Fun for 4-H:** Milkshakes, Taco Salads and More! This year 4-H'ers learned to use Square Checkout at the Clover Café. CCE Tioga Staff, Board members and volunteers joined our 4-H'ers & families to provide breakfast, lunch & dinner options during Fair Week, with smiles all around! *Proceeds from the Clover Café support 4-H awards, scholarships and 4-H building upkeep.*



### Showmanship

The show arenas at Fair boasted animals that our 4-H youth raised from birth and trained them to show. NYS 4-H competitions at Cornell, rewarded many hours of research and public speaking practice.

**4-H Youth Livestock Shows & Auction:**  
*Celebrating the dedication of our 4-H Youth raising animals*



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

## Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) Youth Employment Program

**Lisa Weston-Bialy, Resource Educator & Erin Evans, Program Coordinator**

Our CCE Tioga WIOA Team offices are located within the Tioga County Career Center. The **WIOA Youth Employment Program** serves youth ages 16 to 24 with barriers to employment. WIOA Youth Employment Educators work with youth to set SMART Goals and plans for success, navigate barriers that arise, refer and coordinate services and provide supportive wrap around services while the program participants work toward their employment, educational and training goals. WIOA Youth Educators teach financial literacy, job search and work readiness skills in a one-on-one setting.



- **Enrolled 46 Participants in 2024**
  - 50 active participants and 30 participants in follow-up
- Assisted **22** participants to **Enroll in Training** including Occupational Training and College.
  - Participants enrolled at TC3, BT BOCES, GST BOCES, Corning Community College, Bellvue, SUNY Broome, Oneonta Job Corp, Glenmont Job Corp, Southern Tier Driving School, National Guard, Marines
- Assisted **7** participants to obtain their **High School Diplomas or GEDs**
- Assisted **58** participants to find and maintain **Employment**
  - Employers include: Best Buy, Guthrie, Longview, Elderwood, Lowes, Family Dollar, Hometown Bookkeeping and Tax Preparation, Parkview, Little Caesars, Mc Donalds, Dandy, Mirabito, Owego Donuts and Beer, Bloodnick Family Farm, SUNY Broome, OPWDD, Stateline Auto, Tioga Downs, CVS Warehouse, Marines, National Guard,
- Coordinated **Work Experiences** for **9** Youth at: Open Door Mission, Thunderbird Atlatl, Bloodnick Family Farm, Spencer Van Etten School, Refabulous Finds, Tioga County



## Smart Energy Choices - Regional Clean Energy Hub of Southern Tier

**Eileen Hanrahan and Bob Talkiewicz, Community Energy Advisers at CCE Tioga,**



engaged folks around Tioga County assisting them in navigating the Empower+ and IRA opportunities from NYSERDA, from home energy efficiency audits to home energy upgrades. These efforts are a critical step toward reducing a community's carbon footprint, enhancing energy efficiency and ensuring the well-being of low-moderate income households within the eight counties of the Southern Tier Clean Energy Hub.

## Recognition of CCE Tioga Funders

Tioga County Appropriation  
 Tioga State Bank Foundation  
 Tioga Downs Foundation  
 Park Foundation  
 Toward Sustainability Foundation  
 Mildred Faulkner Truman Foundation  
 Town of Nichols  
 Waverly Community Chest  
 Y-ReConnects  
 Farm Bureau  
 Individual Donors

U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP)  
 NYSERDA (Southern Tier)  
 NYS Office of Children and Family Services Youth Bureau  
 Broome-Tioga Workforce Innovation Board (WIOA)  
 SNAP-Ed/OTADA (Finger Lakes)  
 Cornell University CALS Rice Project



**Cornell Cooperative Extension**  
**Tioga County**

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