

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



2022-2023  
*Ag in the Classroom,  
 Sponsored by the Cook County  
 Farm Bureau Foundation.*

**22,389**  
*students reached through  
 school programming*

**989**  
*classrooms reached*

**208**  
*schools recieved  
 Agricultural education*

Our contracted Ag in the Classroom presenters conducted in-person and virtual presentations to students throughout Cook County. Presentation topics included Introduction to Illinois Ag and There's Ag on MyPlate, as well as specialty programs about soil, apples and pumpkins, and keeping warm with agriculture.



## AG LITERACY IN ACTION



## 2023 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Board of Directors of the Cook County Farm Bureau® Foundation selected four individuals as recipients of the 2023-2024 Scholarship Program. A total of \$11,000 in scholarship funds were distributed. Scholarships are available to members, dependents and others seeking a major in agriculture, agribusiness, or an agriculturally related course of study with intent on an agriculturally related career. The CCFB Foundation is intent on supporting future generations to help assure a well-qualified, professional agricultural workforce in the Chicagoland area and Illinois.

CCFB Foundation has provided close to \$300,000 in scholarships since its inception in 1999. Scholarship recipients were selected to receive the scholarships for the 2023-2024 school year based on exceptional academic ability, financial need, demonstrated interest in agriculture, evidence of self-help, focus on an agriculturally related need and overall character.

The Howard Paarlberg Excellence in Agriculture Scholarship carries the highest financial award and is given to the top-rated applicant. The scholarship honors Howard Paarlberg, the first president of the Foundation and president of the Farm Bureau for 16 years.

## 2023 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



**Elijah Floerke\***  
 Orland Park



**Matthew Smits**  
 Sauk Village



**Amelia Niedbalec**  
 Mundelein



**Jennifer Miller**  
 Justice

*\*Howard Paarlberg Excellence in Agriculture Award*



*"I am so honored to be able to receive this generous scholarship and beyond grateful for this financial help. I am very excited to continue to pursue a degree in horticulture and I hope to return to my family's farm in Sauk Village to help spread my knowledge from college to the workers of the farm to improve the farm and its outreach to the community."*

**– Matthew Smits, 2023 Scholarship Recipient**



## NEW SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE AVAILABLE IN 2024

**Vocational Ag Career Training** - These scholarships have been designed for individuals and Cook County Farm Bureau members pursuing training in agriculturally related skills including tractor/truck diesel mechanics, CDL for crop, food and livestock hauling, welding, agricultural technology, etc.

**Adult Scholarships** - Available scholarships include tuition assistance for:

- Master Urban Farmer Training
- Master Gardener Training
- Illinois Ag Leadership Program
- Ag Leaders of Tomorrow (ALOT)

**Stuenkel Family Scholarships** - These scholarships have been designed for individuals and Cook County Farm Bureau members pursuing higher education with a focus on an agriculturally related career in the areas of technology, education, leadership development and/or mental health. Scholarships were created to honor the family Ag Education Legacy of Tim Stuenkel (former board member), Harold Stuenkel (former CCFB President) and the other Stuenkel Family members who have supported and continue to support the Foundation.

## 2023 ILLINOIS AITC TEACHER OF THE YEAR

**Eva Manzke**, a third and fourth grade teacher at Walker Elementary School in Bedford Park, was the recipient of the 2023 Illinois Agriculture In the Classroom Teacher of the Year Award.



*"Teaching agriculture to our District 104 students is important because it helps them develop a fundamental understanding of where their food comes from, fostering a sense of appreciation and connection to the natural world. This knowledge empowers children to make informed choices about their diet, promotes environmental awareness, and instills essential life skills such as teamwork, responsibility, and problem-solving. Additionally, early exposure to agriculture can inspire future generations to pursue careers in sustainable farming, addressing global food security and environmental challenges."*

**– Eva Manzke**



## SPONSORING EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

Programming went beyond our traditional classroom programs with multiple educational events held throughout Cook County. Events held this past year included programs for Cook County Sheriff's Junior

Sheriff's Program booths at Earth Day events, library and preschool programs, participation in a Pollinator Week event at the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago, and a booth at STEM Night at Tonti Elementary School in Chicago.

- **Professional Development** – Our Ag Literacy Program offered multiple workshops for educators with topics that included integrating ag books and activities into classroom curriculum, Christmas tree farms, soil and water conservation in an Earth Day related workshop.
- **Ag Leadership Academy** – 15 students attended CCFB's Ag Leadership Academy in November 2022 and learned about food safety practices and toured Green Era Sustainability in Chicago. The students were able to climb inside the inoperative liquid waste tank at the end of their tour. The anaerobic digester at the facility will divert millions of pounds of food waste from landfills to produce clean energy and nutrient-rich compost.
- **Spring Mini Grant** – The CCFB Foundation offered a Spring Mini Grant of up to \$350. Members of the Ag Lit Team formed a committee to decide upon grant dispersal. Grant recipients included Springfield Elementary School, Saint JFX and Argo High School. These grants were used to help students learn about aquaponics, growing fresh herbs, crops, and general agriculture.

## AG DAYS

Ag Day South was held March 16 at The Children's Farm at The Center in Palos Park. A total of 324 third grade students from six elementary schools attended the event, which featured stations on poultry, cattle, sheep, pigs, horses, corn/soybeans, compost/earthworms, and bees/honey.

Ag Day North was held March 22 at Historic Wagner Farm in Glenview. A total of 235 third grade students from three elementary schools attended the event, which featured stations on poultry, corn, cattle, bees/honey, farm implements, horses, nutrition, and seed germination/insects.



(L to R) Cary Tate, Orland Park Agency Manager representing Platinum sponsor COUNTRY FINANCIAL, Janet McCabe, Foundation President and Eva Manzke, Illinois AITC Teacher of the Year conducted the 2023 Raffle Drawing.

## "RAFFLE FOR AG EDUCATION" FUNDRAISER

The Foundation's Raffle Fundraiser live drawing was held on June 14th at the Cook County Farm Bureau in Countryside. Through the support of generous sponsors and ticket purchasers, we were able to raise \$13,000. Sponsors for our raffle event included: COUNTRY FINANCIAL, IAA Credit Union, Chopp Commercial Properties, Mark Olander – Attorney at Law, Parkway Elevators, Flossmoor Station Restaurant, All Types Elevators, Bob & Jayne Rohrer and the Cook-DuPage Beekeepers Association. **Thank you to all who purchased tickets in support!**

## WE NEED YOUR VALUABLE SUPPORT!

We can only manage with you and supporters like you! We thank the large number of members that consistently remember the Foundation's efforts with a financial gift annually. When you consider year-end, tax-deductible donations, we encourage you to consider the Cook County Farm Bureau® Foundation as a worthy cause! We also receive memorials to mark the passing of a loved one. All donations are greatly appreciated.

### THE CCFB FOUNDATION BOARD

**Janet McCabe** President  
**Gerry Kopping** Vice-President  
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Donations to the CCFB Foundation can be made by:  
 Mailing a check to **6438 Joliet Road, Countryside, IL 60525**  
 Calling **708.354.3276** to donate with a credit card  
 Go to [www.cookefb.org/foundation](http://www.cookefb.org/foundation)