

Monthly Highlights

June 2020

Area Extension Director



Catherine Emmanuelle
Area 6 Extension Direction
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We are entering another month of transitional and transformative educational work. In an interesting way, the transformative work reflects what Extension is about - using knowledge to empower and transform people's and communities lives. The educators and staff in Eau Claire County continue to adapt their services to help serve the people they teach and collaborate with, including horticulture, youth, families, farmers, and our community. Our support staff colleague Andy Heren started working from the Extension Department office on June 1. We worked collaboratively to set up the office to facility safety to the public and employees, and following county public health guidance. While we are open, we continue to encourage alternate ways for the public to engage, such as telephone and email.

I mentioned last month that all UW-Madison employees, including the Division of Extension, were going to take furlough (unpaid days off) between mid-May through October. We took our first furlough day in May. The county will receive a reduction in the contract fee to reflect the unpaid furlough days for state employees. This will be reflected on the 2nd invoice for 2020 between the county and the state.

Last and not least, we as staff continue to stay connected, between staff meetings at the county, area, and state level, in additional check-ins with one another. Our colleagues continue to impress me with their dedication to the people we serve, bringing the university and life-changing knowledge to our communities, and doing so during unprecedented times in our country and world.

Please reach out to me on any questions you have. You are always welcome to email me catherine.emmanuelle@wisc.edu or call my cell 715-450-0823.

Community Development

Community Development

The Community Development Educator position is currently vacant. No additional updates at this time. Please contact Catherine Emmanuelle with any questions catherine.emmanuelle@wisc.edu 715-450-0823. For information on Extension's Community Development efforts see [here](#), and how Extension is responding to COVID-related work supported by Community Development Educators, see [here](#).

Agriculture



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May has breezed by us!

Heart of the Farm is a program geared toward women farmers and agri-business / service professionals. Normally this program is a one day program with sessions on communication, farm finance, and other fun farm-related topics. This is a program that I intended to bring to Eau Claire county next year, but with COVID shifting how we deliver our content, I was invited to help facilitate a Northwest regional Heart of the Farm program via zoom. The statewide kickoff was May 8, and 4 Northwest regional sessions have been completed.

Now that farmers are out in the field, we have lost much of their attention, so my focus has been shifted back to preparing content for the future.

I have been involved with the [Chippewa Valley COVID-19 Economic Recovery Taskforce](#) via the Agriculture & Rural subcommittee. We had our first official meeting of the subcommittee at the beginning of June. We have identified some next steps forward, and will be continuing to meet to plan to ensure that the agriculture and rural areas of Eau Claire County remain strong while we get through the COVID pandemic.

I have also fielded some questions recently on helping farmers convert their inventory numbers for some of their forage crops to help them apply for the [Coronavirus Food Assistance Program](#).

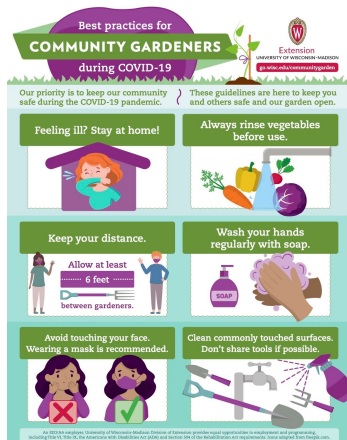


Margaret Murphy

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I have been busy answering horticulture inquiries that are coming in daily. Questions include plant IDs, soil testing, tree questions, pruning and lawn questions, plus wanting information on invasive species and wildlife problems.

I continue to work with the community garden off Jeffers road with Andy. We have posted signage on “best practices” to follow during the COVID-19 pandemic. I participated in a small working group to create an infographic that has been translated into multiple languages that will also be posted at the garden.



I continue to support Master Gardener Volunteers in the four counties I serve to keep them informed of Extension-related programs/news and online opportunities for continuing education. The Horticulture Program offered a training on *Responding to Horticulture Inquiries*. The training had several Extension specialists covering topics that included plant disease, insects, wildlife and weeds. Several Master Gardener Volunteers from Eau Claire County did attend this training. Eau Claire Master Gardener Volunteers have also continued with their monthly meetings and have started their monthly educational program via Zoom.

I continue to stay engaged with Extension colleagues from Area 6 counties and Polk County as well as horticulture colleagues via regular Zooms.

Health & Well-Being



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Covid19 has had a significant impact on food insecurity. Feeding America estimates that since the COVID-19 crisis began, more than one in five US adults have experienced food insecurity. The demand for food assistance increased by **17 million** (46%) nationwide from 37 to 54 million in a matter of a few weeks.

The Great Rivers Consortium manages FoodShare (FS) applications in 10 counties including Eau Claire and our local call center (888-283-0012). They confirm the expected rise in FoodShare applications. Per FoodShare Wisconsin data, from February-April, 2020, Eau Claire County had an increase of 648 households, 1366 individuals receiving FoodShare benefits. To help alleviate hunger, the following changes have taken place:

- Some members are getting additional maximum benefits from previous amounts depending on the number of eligible people in their home.
- Families receiving Free/Reduced price school meals will now get temporary food benefits in place of the school meals- Pandemic EBT.
- FS and P-EBT recipients can now purchase food online at Amazon, Walmart, and on more grocery store websites.

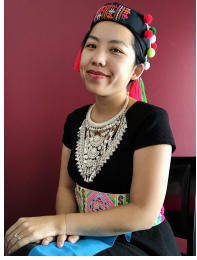
The Downtown Farmers Market- EBT/Market Match program started June 6th. Market Match will double the tokens purchased by FoodShare participants up to \$10 per week. Sandy is connecting with corporate sponsors to garner the funding needed for Market Match. For more information go to <https://ecmarketmatch.wordpress.com/>. We are working with Great Rivers Consortium and WI DHS to send a mailer about the EBT/Market Match program to every Eau Claire County FoodShare household.

Sandy co-chairs The Hunger Prevention Coalition which met in May. A few agency updates include the following:

- Feed My People (FMP) is adapting to the increasing community need and reports getting more government commodities for distribution; delivering food to homes as needed and also including rural areas, Park Towers, Maples Trailer Park, etc; increasing emergency deliveries to those in crisis; and are seeing an increase in pop-up pantries attendance-Eleva, Augusta, Fall Creek..
- The Community Table is seeing an increase, especially new families, per month.
- WIC reported an increase in caseloads; less application documentation needed.

Pamela and Joy continue to take part in curriculum workgroups-Nutrition for Life, Serving Up My Plate, and Growing Healthy Kids-Garden. We are looking into providing an online Cooking Matters class with Augusta families. More info on all that work next month.

Human Development & Relationships



Yia Lor

Human Development &
Relationships Educator
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Can you believe we're already into June? Warmer weather and dripping popsicles are certainly upon us!

In May, I spent more time diving into my Plan of Work with my learning cohort. Stressors that greatly impact families are mental health issues, family/relationship conflict, and poverty. Several community partners identified the need for more accessible and culturally responsive services, particularly for those in rural areas and/or who identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC).

Other activities I've been involved with include connecting with JONAH's Child Poverty Coalition and helping distribute their community survey focused on how residents are doing during this pandemic. The information collected will be shared with community organizations and health departments to look at future needs.

I'm also involved with the Vulnerable Populations Group that was created as part of the Emergency Operations Center and Incident Command System to better focus on the increasing challenges of certain groups during this pandemic, such as those experiencing poverty or non-English speaking populations. At the moment, we are working on a community resource document that we hope to release in June.

I've also completed the I Can Problem Solve Training with several HDR educators. This is an evidence-based program that promotes children's social-emotional skills and reduces behavior problems. I also started training in Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) at the end of May and will continue this in June. Triple P has the strongest evidence base of any parenting program world-wide so I'm excited to bring this to Eau Claire County.

Just like May, I'm sure June will go by as quickly as a summer breeze. Before you know it, I'll be back here saying, "Can you believe we're already into July?"

Positive Youth Development



Rachel Hart-Brinson

4-H Program Coordinator
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I'm not sure where May went.... How is it June already?

I participated in the 2nd part of our 4-H Fundamentals training via zoom this past week focusing on the roles of Leaders Associations and Expanding Access to underserved populations. I see lots of opportunities for work with both of these topics.

And, I continue planning for programming. Some counties have had success asking for older youth to host zoom meeting demonstrations on project topics. We have created a sign up sheet. We will see if anyone signs up to host.

I also met with the Home and Family committee last week to see if they had ideas regarding cooking or sewing zooms. I received valuable feedback including some from a teacher that suggested that some folks don't want to be doing ANY screen time and wondered if anyone wanted zoom programming. So, I created a google survey asking what kind of programming folks want. So far, I have eleven responses. The survey will close on June 15 and then I will take that information and create some programming. I'm thinking it will be a series of zooms with lots of different project topics led by me or an adult volunteer. We shall see...

I created a "How to make a cloth face covering with ties" video back in May and submitted it for review. I just received very positive feedback with slight modifications suggested. I will be working to provide closed captions to the video before its eventual release to a statewide audience. The reviewers also asked if it could be presented in different languages. I will be submitting a request to the Office of Access and Inclusion to consult on how best to move forward with that.

And, I continue to work on clarifying roles and responsibilities with the Fair Committee and support their work in organizing an event that supports 4-H's educational programming. There is a Fair Committee meeting on June 9 where some decisions will be made (we hope) regarding what will happen for the Eau Claire County Fair. The Fair Coordinator and Fair Committee chair have been working very hard in consultation with the Eau Claire county Health Department to create contingency plans depending on the county guidance that will be available to us at that time.

Support Staff



Kristi Peterson

Office Coordinator

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With many events being postponed for the summer, I am learning new procedures and processes to work with educators for refunds.

We are working through Extension's Annual report. Soon, budgets for the new year will also be a work in progress.

With the office being open by appointment, we have worked to organize the space available. I continue to work from my home office for now with an occasional visit to the Ag building if and when Andy wants a day away. With all other staff at home for now, this combination works well.



Andy Heren

Administrative Specialist

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I have been able to get back to a somewhat "normal" routine since the office has reopened by appointment. Our hours for now are 9:00 am-noon and 1:00-4:30 pm. (Watch our website and Facebook page for updates or changes) If you need to come to the Extension office for soil testing, plant, plant disease, and insect identification etc. be sure to call first to make an appointment. We are trying to offer our regular services, it just may take a little longer with Educators working from home. When you come by, we will ask you to practice distancing and to wear a mask.

My work with Fair Entry is near an end as we get to the point of entering projects for the fair. Now I can turn my attention to other things. I do whatever the educators need me to do to assist them in their work.

We're a part of UW-Madison! Click here to read about Extension's transition updates.

Developments in the planning process can be found at <https://universityrelations.wisc.edu/extension/>