

Monthly Highlights

July 2020

Area Extension Director



Catherine Emmanuelle
Area 6 Extension Direction
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COVID-19 continues to inform the way in which we work and operationalize our efforts, and will do so for many months down the horizon. Your local Extension office continues to work together as a team. We meet together as an Area (Chippewa, Dunn, & Eau Claire Counties), have scheduled and impromptu county staff meetings (we are getting to know Zoom and Microsoft Teams very well!), and continue to serve the local needs through Extension programming and partnerships. Statewide, Extension employees are continuing to telecommute, and that continues to be the case for Eau Claire County colleagues. Colleagues do have the occasional need to go to the office to print, pick up supplies, work with IT, etc. and we support that need. Extension is also thinking ahead of how to prepare for the return of state employees who are based in county offices to the county office. I don't know when or how often that will happen, however we are getting ready and I'm working with support staff on what this looks like. Our goals are the health and safety of employees, and supporting their efforts to continue to teach and serve in Eau Claire County.

Our colleagues have engaged in meaningful conversations around race and racism in America - and what that means for us as Extension professionals. Extension Dean Martin shared a statement of condemnation of the shameful killing of George Floyd, and lifted up Extension's commitment to inclusion. His statement can be found here:

<https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/news/2020/06/01/condemnation-and-extensions-commitment-to-inclusion/> As an organization, we are interested in the long-view and meaningful changes and efforts we can do.

Our team has held these discussions with respect, candor, and support for one another as we reflect personally and professionally on our contributions to support communities of color as we continue our work to serve everyone in our beautiful state.

Many state Extension staff are taking their 2nd furlough day in the month of July. They will continue to take occasional furlough days through October. This is part of a campus-wide effort to adjust to the budget reductions due to COVID. The county's fees for the educators will be reduced based on the furlough days, so there will be savings to the county as well.

You may have heard that former Governor Tommy Thompson was named the new UW-System President. Our statewide communications team is working with the UW-Madison campus to help get President Thompson up-to-speed on our work, including the work of Extension! An early communication is being prepared for him, including the work from a couple of Area 6 educators that has been submitted to be a part of that initial report. Your Eau Claire County team continues to be a great example of using research-informed practices to help and lift up the local community.

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



Lyssa Seefeldt

Agriculture Educator

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July has come in with some spectacular heat which the corn crop especially is appreciating. I'm pretty sure I could hear the corn growing the past two weeks and we recently got some much-needed rain.

My work with the [Chippewa Valley COVID-19 Economic Recovery Task Force](#) Agriculture & Rural sub-committee has continued. We brought a new member onto the sub-committee, Paul Kohler, President and CEO of Charter Bank, to make sure financial questions that relate to farm recovery can be addressed.

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

Programming development has been on-going with my colleagues across the state. I have been working with colleagues to develop dairy heat abatement information to be released mid-July for our farmers. Work has also continued on a livestock transport emergency response planning curriculum that will hopefully be released in the fall for first-responders to learn more about planning for when livestock transport accidents happen in their territory. I have also started work with colleagues on revising a section of the [dairy workers skills training modules](#) as they haven't been updated very frequently since the original release several years back, and research has been completed that alters suggested protocols and practices.



Margaret Murphy

Horticulture Agent

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The changes in lifestyle brought on by COVID-19 have created a surge in gardening and landscaping activity especially with first time gardeners. The horticulture team continues to create virtual programming for gardeners of all levels and I'm currently working on creating virtual presentations on common garden pests for the Eau Claire Area Master Gardener Volunteers.

I continue to support MGVs by keeping them informed of Extension-related programs/news and online opportunities for continuing education. I have also worked with Eau Claire County MGVs to transition from face-to-face meetings to meetings via Zoom. Recently, MGVs were permitted to go back to no-contact gardening activities. We must submit a Program Guidance Approval request before embarking on the activity. To date, requests submitted for Eau Claire County have been approved. These Master Gardener led garden projects manage natural areas, improve community greenspace, and provide education.

Part of the surge in gardening activity has been an increased interest in food gardening. This generated some media attention early on and I was contacted by a couple of local newspapers to comment on the topic: VolumeOne Magazine: https://volumeone.org/sites/homegarden/articles/2020/04/29/35974_gardening_is_cheaper_than_therapy_and_you_get and Leader Telegram: - https://www.leadertelegram.com/country-today/country-life/gardening/gardeners-look-forward-to-opening-of-community-plots/article_0ec5f0b1-fa13-5b70-8ddf-636f703d5716.html.

I continue to answer horticulture inquiries via email and phone. Since the gardening season began, I have received over 130 inquiries throughout the four counties I serve. I work with clients on submitting photos in lieu of physical samples for diagnostic and ID help. As many of the plant ID questions concern invasive species, I attended a virtual training by the Lower Chippewa Invasives Partnership Inc. (LCIP) to be able to participate in their Invasives Monitoring Program. Participating in the monitoring program will aid in strengthening my skills at invasive species identification and creates a working relationship with LCIP to help map both invasive species and critical native species in our area.

Health & Well-Being



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Let's start with some Good News! Our Chippewa, Dunn, & Eau Claire FoodWise FY21 budget and plan of work was approved at the state level. For the past three years we have had to adjust FTE's and programming to accommodate a significant budget reduction each year... thankfully, not for FY21! It will say the same as FY20. The state budget is being sent to the federal level and we are awaiting approval by October 1st.

Virtual Lessons

- We are all a part of Strong Bodies.. Pamela is joining Sandy in leading Tuesday/Thursday classes virtually throughout the state.
- Cooking Matters is a national program that WI FoodWise is piloting to parents with young children. We are now scheduling virtual lessons throughout our area with WIC partners and Augusta Elementary parents..
- Curriculum workgroups continue. We are having statewide discussions on developing online lessons, videos, and activities in anticipation of continued virtual classroom education in the fall.
- Staff is connecting with Boys and Girls Clubs in the Chippewa Valley to see how we can collaborate and be a resource to their participants this summer.

FoodWise staff continue with professional development opportunities that include but not limited to the following:

- Interstate meetings with University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Illinois, and Iowa State SNAP-Ed colleagues on multiple topics including recruiting, self care, equity and disproportionate impact, and planning virtual lessons.
- Technology training-developing zoom and virtual lesson presentation skills
- Area 6 Dare to Lead workgroup on developing leadership skills- lead by Stephanie Hintz, Human Development and Relationship Educator.

Human Development & Relationships



Yia Lor
Human Development & Relationships Educator
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Can you believe we are already in July?! Goodness, summer is flying!

During the month of June, I completed the Triple P training with several community partners who are looking to bring this parenting program to Eau Claire County. I am hosting practice sessions to prepare for accreditation in August. July will be another month of practice.

I am working on the draft of my Plan of Work and am looking forward to finalizing this hopefully by the end of summer. The focus will be on advancing equity and resilience to build strong families and inclusive communities.

I was excited to hear that Resmaa Menakem, a social worker and trauma specialist, is offering a free racialized trauma e-course, which discusses the impact of racialized trauma and how it moves through generations. I participated and appreciated learning about the different types of body trauma. Community partners and I have been exchanging ideas and resources to support individuals and families in our community with advancing racial equity and inclusion. I also plan to continue conversations around racism as a public health crisis.

The Vulnerable Populations Groups that I am a part of through the Eau Claire City-County Health Department put together a couple community resource documents around COVID-19, one for the Eau Claire area and one for rural areas. These documents have been distributed to community partners and will be available in Spanish and Hmong. They will be updated if services change, and the most updated versions will be on this website: covid19eauclaire.org.

There are many things to look forward to, but one thing I'm really excited about is offering a citizen science lesson to our 4-H and youth audience on fireflies. Thanks to my colleague Lyssa, I am now a firefly watcher and am thrilled to share this new hobby with others!

Positive Youth Development



Rachel Hart-Brinson

4-H Program Coordinator

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I continue to work with the Fair Committee and Fair Coordinator to support the modified "Eau Claire Summer Showcase" that has been approved by the Fair Committee. Due to Extension policy, I am unable to participate in the fair in a staff role on-site. However, I continue to work with all of the entities and the county to help support the fair as it goes forward in its modified form. If you have questions regarding the fair, please see the Fair's website or facebook page or contact Debbie Kitchen.

I received 44 responses to the survey I sent out asking if people wanted county-organized programming. A significant majority said "yes" or "maybe" for a total of 89%. I have put together a schedule of zoom programs that I can lead. I have them scheduled once to twice a week. We will see what kind of response I get. I have had two high school youth sign up to lead a demonstration. Katy Haworth led a "drama activity" demonstration with 4 participating youth. Lily Schwartz led a face-painting demonstration with 4 youth.

I have also been in communication with Upham Woods, the Environmental Education Center associated with the Natural Resources Institute of Extension. They received a grant to develop programming and promote it across the state for 10,000 hours of conservation activities. Anyone can participate. You do not have to be in 4-H, but I will be contacting specific 4-H club leaders who I think will be interested in it and provide them with the support materials on wacky water bugs (macroinvertebrate study), trash pick ups, invasive pulls, etc. Anyone who logs 10 hours or more will be given an Upham woods camp t-shirt.

As we continue to see coronavirus cases in Wisconsin, I am thinking toward fall and how to provide programming in a virtual format. There was great success with Camp in a Box for many counties (and other organizations) this summer. I am considering putting together something like "4-H in a Box." The idea is in the infant stages, but I hope to develop it further.

Support Staff



Kristi Peterson

Office Coordinator

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Catherine and I have been working with staff to prepare the 2021 budget. This is usually my favorite time of the year, but this new budget will be a bit of a challenge. I still really enjoy the logistics and organization of the details.

We are also working to prepare the annual report for presentation to the Extension Committee this month. This is a great overview of our department and what amazing services we provide to our citizens. Together we continue to make our community a better place.

The educators continue to work from home. Thanks to technology, my job getting them the supplies they need is easily met. We are also working to ensure the safety of the staff when the day arrives that they will be back into the office.



Andy Heren

Administrative Specialist

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July has brought with it many things, including stifling heat and humidity! I feel as if I'm living in Missouri again. Yuk!

July has also brought the 2020 Eau Claire County Fair, which is scheduled for July 27-August 2. With the creation of a Fair Coordinator, my work with the fair has been greatly diminished and will be even more so in the next year or two. This puts us in line with so many counties whose Extension office has little or nothing to do with the county fair. I will miss some of that work, but this is the best course to take.

With the Educators working from home and no programming taking place, it has given them the opportunity to look over their sections of the website. I have been making their requested updates, especially for FoodWise, 4-H, and Families and Relationships.

Now that we are back open by appointment, I am again collecting soil samples to be sent to the UW Soil & Forage Lab in Marshfield. People are emailing and bringing in samples of insects and plant parts for identification of plant disease diagnosis. I try to field some for Margaret, but send most along to her. It also brings the usual tasks, such as the 4-H newsletter, the *Clover Leaves*. Please visit our website and take a look around!

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/>