

# EAU CLAIRE COUNTY MARCH HIGHLIGHTS



## Check Out What We've Been Up To:

- A positive parenting seminar for parenting adults and professionals where participants gained tools to support raising confident and competent children. This effort is designed to support the local Triple P efforts in addressing parenting challenges.
- A 12-week strength-training program where HMoob-speaking participants can learn and build a regular strength-training routine. The goal of this effort is to support the physical, social, and mental health of HMoob adults.
- A virtual meeting for cranberry growers, where speakers presented on strategic planning and succession planning, so cranberry growers could identify needs within their operations.
- An oral history and art project for Eau Claire County 4-H members in partnership with the Heartbeat Center where young people will practice interviewing skills, creative writing, and create an artistic representation of their interviewee. This is designed to engage young people with members of their community while developing critical thinking skills and creativity.
- Lessons for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade classrooms where youth learned to identify MyPlate food groups and why nutritious foods are important for their growth. This helps to foster more varied consumption of foods and supports making the healthy choice an easier choice in the home.
- Development/revisions of the bilingual Dairy Workers Training Skills modules for dairy employees where they will learn principles of and how to do each task on the farm. This effort is designed to support them in doing their daily tasks more confidently and efficiently while maintaining employee safety and animal welfare.
- Planning for a Tri-County Speaking Festival for all ages of 4-H youth in collaboration with 4-H educators. The goal is to put on a virtual version of the usual speaking festival so that 4-H youth may perform and compete for fair ribbons and certificates.



## SELECT UPCOMING EVENTS: For more visit [extension.wisc.edu/events/](https://extension.wisc.edu/events/)

- April 13, 9am - Raising A Thinking Child for parents of children age 4-7, educators or childcare providers
- April 14, 7:00pm - Wednesday Nite @ The Lab features a new speaker teaching science
- April 15, 4:30pm - Teen Eats Virtual Series of six lessons
- April 23, 12:00pm - Bedtime Routines for Parents
- Farm Ready Research series: Extension's agriculture winter webinar meeting series for farmers and ag professionals. [extension.wisc.edu/agriculture/farm-ready-research/](https://extension.wisc.edu/agriculture/farm-ready-research/)
  - April 9, 11:00am - Farm Management Fridays: Healthy Minds, Healthy Farms
  - April 21, 7:30pm - Small Ruminants: designing Your Sheep and Goat Grazing System
  - April 23, 11:00am - Farm Management Fridays: FARMing for Health

Eau Claire County Staff Highlights



**Lyssa Seefeldt | Agriculture Educator**

This past month we have wrapped up our winter Badger Dairy Insight series, finishing off with sessions on improving feed efficiency through genetic evaluation and robotic milking.

I have been working with Greg Leonard, from the Land Conservation Division on Agriculture and Environment day for the Leadership Eau Claire 2020-21 class. Normally, Leadership Eau Claire kicks off with Ag and Environment day in the fall, but with COVID restrictions, we requested the scheduled “rain date” of May 6 to give us more time to pivot how our day would be structured. We are working with the Farm Technology Days publicity committee to help capture some farm tour footage that can be shared between our two groups. This will allow us to have some of the farm tour “feel” to the day, without being on the farm. I am helping integrate local Eau Claire County-specific agriculture trivia and information into our shortened day session, to help our developing leaders learn more about agriculture here.

Educators from CVTC and I have been starting to develop plans for youth tractor safety this year with the help of our Agriculture Health and Safety Specialist, Cheryl Skjolaas. This class usually brings in about 20 local youth under the age of 16 that are wanting to work on their parent’s farm, or be employed by a farm that may require some tractor driving. Youth can enroll in the program if they are at least 12 years of age at the start of the class. This class is important for youth to complete as it meets state and federal training requirements that help ensure that youth can safely operate farm equipment. Youth complete 24 hours of instruction, complete a written exam, and a driving test to be certified.



**Margaret Murphy | Horticulture Outreach Specialist**

In 2020, Master Gardener Volunteer training was suspended though Area 6 was one of a few areas able to offer an online horticulture class. This resulted in several participants completing the newly required onboarding class for new volunteers. Area 6 now has 11 new Master Gardener Volunteers to welcome for 2021, eight from the Eau Claire area. To assist new volunteers, we launched our newly developed mentorship program in April. Several established Master Gardener Volunteers from Area 6 will serve as mentors. We currently have a growing list of people interested in training in 2021, which we hope to offer in the fall.

Master Gardener Volunteers successfully completed their Growing Together 2021 virtual garden semina with over 300 registrants. The program was advertised statewide though we also had participation from people outside of Wisconsin. Close to a third of the registrants came from Chippewa, Dunn and Eau Claire Counties. On April 19, the Eau Claire Area Master Gardeners will host a virtual presentation on composting. [Click here](#) for more information and to register. The event is free and open to everyone. They offer educational programs every third Monday of the month.

We are happy to announce that we have a waiting list for the community garden off Jeffers Road indicating another busy year for community gardens. We are assessing whether we are able to accommodate everyone so it appears the garden will again be at full capacity.

Margaret is working with 4H on a multi-county garden mini-camp that connects with elementary aged kids virtually throughout the growing season as they work in their gardens. The focus is on food growing. Other upcoming programs include [Vegetable Diseases](#) by the director of the Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic, on April 29<sup>th</sup> hosted by Dunn, Chippewa and Eau Claire Counties. Margaret presented a talk for beginning vegetable gardeners on April 13 hosted by the Chippewa Falls Public Library and will be presenting on vegetable container gardening with the Strong Bodies program in early May.

Eau Claire County Staff Highlights



**Sandy Tarter | FoodWise Coordinator**

**Market Match Program** Sandy is working with the organizing team to garner more sponsors so that we will have enough funding to carry us through the 2021 season. It is expected that we will have expanded FoodShare participation and subsequent demand for the match component.



**Pamela Warren-Armstrong | FoodWise Nutrition Educator**

**Strong Bodies** Joy and Pamela along with Sandy and Nancy Fastner continue to lead the class on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, offering a nutrition topic/discussion after the exercises. They just completed a 10 week series and will start up a new series on April 13. Go here for the Tuesday/Thursday 9am Registration: <https://go.wisc.edu/uk33x3>



**Joy Weisner | FoodWise Nutrition Educator**

**Longfellow Elementary and Locust Lane Elementary 1st grade** Pamela and Joy virtually visited each classroom five times in February and March. The 1st graders explored the food groups through a MyPlate activity, set a healthy habit goal, and learned all about fruits and vegetables as they listened to stories on the big screen, and we even played fruit and vegetable clues games. It was so nice to connect with the 1st graders, even though we could not be there in person. They sent home a newsletter with links to MyPlate.gov and recipes for the families. The parents/families and teachers were sent a survey 2 weeks later asking for their feedback.



**Yia Lor | Human Development & Relationships Educator**

March began with a two-day Triple P state conference where we discussed the impact of race in our work with families. Both the Eau Claire and Extension teams presented on our work, and we also got to hear how other counties are successfully implementing this parenting program despite the challenges of COVID-19.

I continue to serve on the health department's Vulnerable Populations Group and share Extension resources along with upcoming workshops to support community partners and their families. Extension recently submitted a letter of support for the health department's application for the WI DHS COVID-19 Community Outreach grant. We look forward to continuing our efforts in reaching vulnerable populations on testing and vaccinations.

Extension along with several community partners will be hosting the 2021 BRAIN Conference virtually on May 4th. The conference is open to anyone, including those outside Eau Claire County. Please consider attending and share widely! Registration information can be found [here](#).

April will be a busy month with running a new program ([WeCOPE](#)), additional training in Triple P along with hosting summer Seminars, and continuing to work with local coalitions to support families.

**Eau Claire County Staff Highlights**



**Rachel Hart-Brinson | 4-H Educator**

WI 4-H just launched its 2nd Annual 4-H Service Learning curriculum. I recruited a youth to work with two other educators and myself to develop this service activity lesson plan for youth and volunteers where they learn about the issue of homelessness while creating a plarn (plastic yarn) mat from recycled plastic shopping bags. The goal of this effort is to teach youth about homelessness and create opportunities for them to take action for the environment as well as those experiencing homelessness.

[Plarn Mats Project Activity Plan - Wisconsin 4-H](#)

Luisa Gerasimo and I have been working on planning summer camp. We have reserved both Beaver Creek Reserve facilities (traditional overnight camp) and Pleasant Valley Community Center (series of day camps) depending on what summer guidance allows us to do. We will receive that guidance on April 13 and make a decision as to which way we will go. We are determined to have some sort of camp this year. Camp Counselor applications were due March 15 and we had 15 applicants. (That's exciting!) We wrapped up interviews last week and sent notification that everyone has been accepted as long as they complete the training and participate in group planning sessions. Interviews were the highlight of our week. We are excited to expand on the leadership skills these young people already possess.

I continue to hold the bilingual "Descubre 4-H" program in collaboration with Vecino a Vecino for young people and their families who speak Spanish so they can experience a variety of 4-H project learning opportunities in the language they are most comfortable in. These activities promote mastery, independence, and belonging.

Eau Claire County Staff Highlights

**Vacant | Community Development Educator**

The hiring freeze for the **Community Development Educator position has been lifted**. Thank you for your patience and understanding of the fiscal constraints that led to the hiring freeze. The position is posted here <https://jobs.hr.wisc.edu/en-us/search/?job-mail-subscribe-privacy=agree&search-keyword=EXT%2F>. Please encourage qualified applicants you may know of to apply for the position. The posting will be effective until April 26 in order to advertise and cast a wide net of diverse and talented candidates. We will work through a process of preliminary interviews, final interviews, and a hopeful start date mid-July - early August. The county will not be charged during the vacancy period.

Feel free to post this in an email or your media sites to promote the position:

Come be a part of Wisconsin's largest classroom. A rewarding career awaits you as the Community Development Educator in Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties. Our passionate and collaborative staff actively partner with people, organizations, and local government to transform lives and communities through the power of research and education. There are professional development opportunities to continue learning and growing in your career. We offer generous leave (sick, vacation, and personal days, plus holidays), competitive + benefits, and promote a healthy life-work balance. Join our team as we use our gifts and talents to help our community meet local and statewide challenges and opportunities. The position is posted here.

<https://jobs.hr.wisc.edu/en-us/search/?job-mail-subscribe-privacy=agree&search-keyword=EXT%2F>  
Click the red *Apply Now* button to submit your application. Please contact [catherine.emmanuelle@wisc.edu](mailto:catherine.emmanuelle@wisc.edu) 715-450-0823 with any questions. The posting will be effective until April 26. The University of Wisconsin is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer. We promote excellence through diversity and encourage all qualified individuals to apply.

For information on Extension's Community Development efforts see <https://extension.wisc.edu/community-development/>, and how Extension is responding to COVID-related work supported by Community Development Educators, see <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/covid19/category/topics/communities/>.



**Andy Heren | Administrative Specialist**

When one task ends, another comes along. I am assisting Lyssa with putting together a mailing list for Agriculture. I am helping Rachel with different 4-H administrative tasks. We are in the middle of the Digging Deeper into 4-H program. I'm stepping out of the office environment to lead the virtual rocket build session on April 22, followed by two rocket launches in early May.

I am also assisting her in the administrative tasks of our summer programming that we are doing in conjunction with the ECASD. I am again leaving the office to teach 2 classes on Aerospace/Model rocketry.

It is also that wonderful time of year that gardeners dream about: Getting back outside and putting seeds and plants into the soil. Our Extension office manages the Jeffers Road Gardens. I assist Margaret with this. We are just filling the last of the available garden plots, and they will be tilled soon! Ahh, Spring!



**Eau Claire County Staff Highlights**



**Kristi Peterson | Office Coordinator**

Our highlights are new and I have been working in collaboration with numerous folks to get this organized. It has a new look, and allows us to provide various aspects of current, upcoming and past details.

The Area 6 Support staff and AED have tackled some professional development in reading Distributed Teams. This is an excellent tool for understanding and appreciating working from home. We will meet regularly as we read “together”.



**Catherine Emmanuelle | Area Extension Director - Chippewa, Dunn, & Eau Claire Counties**

You may notice our monthly highlights format is new! We are taking our pilot statewide recording results work and blending it with our monthly highlights. Please feel free to give me feedback on how this new format works for you. We are one of the first counties to try this out, so we have lots of room to refine and iron as we roll out the new process. Hats off to our local Extension team to help lead this effort in Wisconsin.

The big happy news this month is that we got the hiring freeze lifted for the Community Development Educator position - which is now a focus of my work to organize and facilitate the hiring and the entire process start to end. I am also working with a grant our team received to bring in 3 Community Health Internship Program university students, through a partnership with the Wisconsin Area Health Education Center. The internships typically require matching funding, however, we were able to secure full funding of the interns' 8 week income without using levy dollars, a value of over \$15,000. The interns will partner with Extension educators for their summer programming with a focus on health. The interns are looking for exposure to many aspects of local government, so you may see them at a committee meeting this summer! Last, please save the date for Thursday, September 16, 2021, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. for an Extension Meet & Greet, hosted for our committee members and county leadership for an opportunity to hear from Extension educators in Chippewa, Dunn, & Eau Claire Counties and their educational impact with our communities.