

### Agriculture

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#### Jerry Clark | Regional Crops & Soils Educator



An on-farm research study for farmers, agriculture industry and agency professionals where manure application and nitrogen credits will be evaluated to better understand the effect of corn yield to validate current nitrogen rates and manure credits for corn production and protect ground and surface water quality.

A clinic for students where students learned forage feed and nutrition analysis recommendations and the nutrition impact on dairy cattle and type and structure of dairy cattle to improve forage and feeding practices and increase dairy production efficiency and improve farm profitability. The goal of the program is to increase knowledge and understanding of the importance of forage and feeding impact on dairy animals.

A field event for 5th grade students where participants learned about conservation issues and careers to increase student awareness about the importance of conservation.

#### Spotlight

Students in agriculture education programs needed hands-on experience of analyzing forages and dairy cattle. Agriculture instructors were seeking research-based information, expertise, and experiences in the dairy and forage industries to help students better understand animal performance. A forage and dairy evaluation clinic was held to help students increase their understanding, knowledge, and awareness of the importance of quality forage and feeding efficiency on dairy production. The clinic provided students an opportunity to examine forages, and the impact forage has on dairy animal performance and health. Students from area high schools attended the clinic as part of their agriculture and animal science programs. Students examined forages and evaluated dairy cattle to learn the influence forages and feed efficiency has on dairy animals. One hundred fifty-three students attended the clinic. A post-meeting evaluation indicated 88% of students increased their knowledge of forages in relation to forage impact on dairy animal performance.

**Regional Livestock Educator - Look for an announcement soon!**

### Horticulture

#### Margaret Murphy | Horticulture Educator



A UW-Madison Division of Extension table at a WI Dept of Corrections staff wellness fair where participants learned about health and wellness programs offered through Extension including horticultural resources and programming that illustrates how gardens can be a source of high-quality nutrition, provide opportunities for exercise at any age, and add to personal and community well-being.

An activity for seniors where individuals engaged in a nature-based craft. This effort was designed for participants to take part in a hands-on, festive activity as crafting along with

other such hands-on activities has been shown to help enhance cognitive function, boost creativity and provide an opportunity for positive socialization.

An activity for people living with dementia and their care partners where individuals engage in a seasonal, nature-based craft. This effort is designed for participants to take part in a hands-on, festive activity that encourages the use of fine motor skills, stimulates the senses, boosts creativity and provides an opportunity for positive socialization.

A program to Hmong Elders where participants learned about basic soil characteristics and soil testing. This effort was designed to share information on garden soil basics to help grow healthy plants and how UW Madison Division of Extension can aid in attaining resources and interpreting soil test results.

### Spotlight

This is part of a horticulture-inspired program for persons living with memory loss nature-based and their care partners. This is the 2nd year of the program that plans monthly activities for participants. The Eau Claire ADRC Dementia Care Specialist reached out to me in 2023 to partner on a nature-based program offered monthly to people experiencing the beginning stages of dementia and their care partners. This program was offered to provide a seasonal, festive activity that would engage the senses, and fine motor skills plus provide opportunity for positive socialization.

## Community Development

### Garret Zastoupil | Community Development Educator



An initial three-hour visit of State Extension Specialists, local educators, and local leaders to understand the opportunities and potential for the Design Wisconsin or Main Street Development programming offered through CDI. From this meeting Todd Johnson will develop potential activities to be implemented in spring 2025.

A two-day Design Charette led by the Design Wisconsin Program with UW-Extension in Fairchild. The charette focused on developing preliminary plans for three different public spaces in Fairchild—Chat-A-While Park, Area Historical Tribute Park, and the Historical Society exterior space. Community members participated in a visioning and feedback session to craft the design. Community Development Educators from Eau Claire and Clark Counties helped facilitate, analyze data, and develop action steps to support organizational capacity. Volunteers developed illustrations of these three sites.

A Strategic Planning process for the Eau Claire County Criminal Justice Collaborating Council (CJCC), where seated members completed individual interviews, and participated in a three-part workshop series to affirm the purpose, establish goals, and develop work plans to achieve them. Through this effort, the CJCC will build its organizational capacity to address pressing issues in the criminal justice system and enhance the efficacy of the system to build safer and more just communities.



A design for Chat-A-While Park in Fairchild that incorporates the community's railroad heritage.

# Extension Eau Claire County

## October 2024 Report

In collaboration with Bill Oemichen, UW-Madison Professor of Practice for Local Government Education, UW-Madison Division of Extension is facilitating a study by the Eau Claire County Government to move to a county-wide emergency medical services (EMS) program. Extension staff are regularly meeting with Eau Claire County leadership and have begun interviewing county EMS service and local government leaders as part of a study on how to best create and implement a county-wide EMS service that will replace struggling local EMS services. This program is intended to put the pieces in place to create a county-wide EMS service beginning January 1, 2026. The EMS service is intended to relieve the EMS expenditure burden off of local 19 local units of government and to provide enhanced emergency services response across the county.

### Spotlight

On January 21, 2024, HSHS Hospital Sisters announced the closing of major hospitals in Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls, and Prevea simultaneously announced the closing of 19 West Central Wisconsin clinics. This placed nearly 1,400 high paying jobs at risk, along with the local tax base and local economic development efforts in Wisconsin's second fastest growing region of the state. U.W.-Madison Extension Local Government Education Program staff were immediately contacted to assist to create new healthcare access in the region. U.W.-Madison Extension staff connected local business and civic leaders with a financial consulting firm, helped to obtain an initial cooperative development grant from WEDC, helped create a Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 193 cooperative by writing draft articles and bylaws, helped vet and train cooperative board members, assisted in apply for IRS Section 501(c)(3) charitable status, assisted in reviewing fundraising agreements, co-led efforts to obtain hospital/clinic construction and operational financing, educated state healthcare policymakers and acted as liaison with local units of government across 15 counties in West Central Wisconsin. Extension staff attend weekly board meetings, and the above efforts are ongoing. With Extension's substantial assistance, the Chippewa Valley Health Cooperative (CVHC) was formed in April of 2024. The CVHC Board of Directors is meeting weekly; CVHC financial, legal and public relations consultants are working with Extension staff on a variety of tasks, including meeting with local units of government across 15 counties, working with lenders and federal agencies to obtain construction and operational financing, working with federal agencies and cooperative organizations to obtain grant funding to form the necessary equity base, and working with CVHC board members on setting up a fundraising program.

## Health & Well-Being

Sandy Tarter  
FoodWise Coordinator



Joy Weisner  
FoodWise Educator



Jael M. Wolf  
Bilingual FoodWise Educator



Participation in Building Nourishing Pantries training. This effort expands understanding of how positive and adverse experiences affect individual and community relationships to food and health, principles of trauma-informed approach and how to apply it to pantry work, and the role food pantries have in supporting community food security.

# Extension Eau Claire County

## October 2024 Report

A 4-lesson series for 4K preschoolers at Eau Claire and Altoona Head Start Centers. This effort helps youth to learn about fruits, vegetables and keeping their bodies healthy. This effort helps children to learn to use their senses with colors and tastes to explore foods and also includes movement.

Outreach to schools to connect them to the DPI Team Nutrition -School Meals Appeal Grant Opportunity. This effort supports schools in training and selection of cafeteria strategies to enhance healthy offerings for school meals and snacks. FoodWise also promotes those strategies during classroom education. The partnering schools that have agreed include Augusta Elementary and ECASD Longfellow and Locust Lane Elementary.

Participation in Eau Claire Health Alliance meetings to develop the Community Health Improvement Plan with a focus on Nutrition and Physical Activity- one of CHIP's priority areas to be addressed during 2025-2027. This effort will include reviewing data, mapping partners, and developing goals and strategies as they link to basic needs of residents.

Celebrating the Great Apple Crunch 2024 in collaboration with Eau Claire Health Alliance- Chronic Disease Prevention Action Team. The goal of this effort is to promote healthy eating and bring awareness to the Great Apple Crunch resources for more community involvement, including local apple growers.

This activity served as an icebreaker and a way to raise awareness about October being Farm to School Month. Jael also shared the exciting news that for this year's Apple Crunch, the Eau Claire Area School District's food director agreed to buy locally sourced apples for all 5 elementary schools that FoodWise works with, using their Fruit and Veggie Grant. It was a great opportunity to remind partners to encourage food service staff to use local foods and to continue promoting the Apple Crunch in their own networks.



### Spotlight

On October 10th, during the Eau Claire Health Alliance Semi-Annual meeting, Jael hosted an Apple Crunch activity to encourage more partners to support next year's event. The Alliance, which has over 250 partners, gathered to share updates from the 4 action teams on their progress over the past 6 months. For the Apple Crunch, Jael purchased 8 apples—2 each of Honey Crisp, Crimson Crisp, McIntosh, and Cortland varieties—from a local orchard. One apple from each variety was sliced, while the other was labeled and set aside. Participants were asked to taste a slice and guess which numbered apple matched each variety. The apples were labeled 1 to 4, and we had 2 winners who received prizes donated by the Eau Claire Health Department. This activity served as an icebreaker and a way to raise awareness about October being Farm to School Month. Jael also shared the exciting news that for this year's Apple Crunch, the Eau Claire Area School District's food director agreed to buy locally sourced apples for all 5 elementary schools that FoodWise works with, using their Fruit and Veggie Grant. It was a great opportunity to remind partners to encourage food service staff to use local foods and to continue promoting the Apple Crunch in their own networks.

### Margo Dieck | Health and Well-Being Educator



A workshop for Eau Claire County Aging and Disability Resource Center staff where participants learned about professional quality of life, contributing factors of compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue, and completed the Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) survey. The goal of this effort was to provide participants with background information, their individual survey score, and to start to build department wide efforts to reduce burnout and secondary traumatic stress and improve compassion satisfaction. Total reach; 27 staff.

An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act requirements.

# Extension Eau Claire County

## October 2024 Report

Participation in the Eau Claire Health Alliance: Mental Health and Community Connections action team in collaboration with community partners. The goal is to review data and develop focus areas, goals, and strategies to address this portion of the 2025-2027 Eau Claire County Community Health Improvement Plan.

A two-session workshop for Eau Claire County Department of Human Services-Behavioral Health crisis staff where participants learned about Emotional Intelligence (EQ), completed an EQ assessment, and learned about ways to improve their individual EQ. The goal of this effort was to provide participants with education, a baseline assessment score, an opportunity to create goals/action steps for their individual needs and build consistent efforts across the entire unit to improve how the unit functions. Total reach: 11 staff.

A 6-session wellness series (WeCOPE) for service professionals where participants learn and practice 11 self-care and coping strategies. The goal of this effort is to improve skills to manage stress, improve coping, increase positive emotions, and improve mental health. Total reach: 3 staff.

Participation in the development of a draft of the 2025-2027 Community Health Improvement plan with the Chippewa Health Improvement Partnership. The goal of this plan is to identify community health priorities for the next three years and create community-led goals for actionable change.

### Spotlight

Responded to an ask from the Lead Community Impact Director of the United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley to join the Health Advisory Council. The Advisory Councils are active workgroups of volunteers established by United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley to set priorities, implement strategies, and evaluate results related to the Community Impact Initiatives.

## Positive Youth Development

### Rachel Hart-Brinson | 4-H Program Educator



Planning for the Area Six Speaking and Demonstration Festival for 4-H youth in collaboration with local 4-H Educators. The goal is to provide participants with opportunities to develop public speaking and demonstration skills by presenting topics they are passionate about. This helps youth build confidence, improve communication, and practice leadership, contributing to their personal and professional growth.

Planning for a 4-H Discovery Day at the Eau Claire Public Library where youth will share different project area activities.

Planning for the 2025 Area Six STEM Partnership Development for 4-H youth in collaboration with UW-Stout STEM Programming. The goal is to explore future collaboration opportunities and provide youth with hands-on STEM experiences, so that participants can enhance their skills in science, technology, engineering, and math, fostering innovation and preparing them for future academic and career success.

Working with a group of UWEC college students to prepare a hands-on and interactive interview workshop for our middle and high school members.

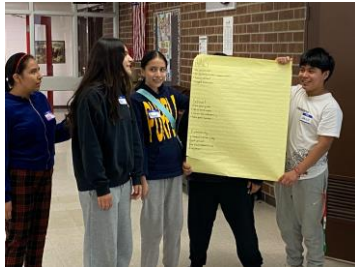
# Extension Eau Claire County

## October 2024 Report

*Planning for a virtual Cultural Baking Series that will engage youth in their Spark of baking and also explore culture.*

*A Facebook campaign during National 4-H Week where we engaged current 4-H or former members and their families with posts meant to increase belonging.*

*A record book review process as part of the Eau Claire 4-H Leaders Association awards and recognition process. This process allows adults to see what young people are doing as 4-Hers before they interview them which helps build skills in the young people and relationships between the interviewers and the interviewees.*



*Juntos 4-H Club meeting for Spanish speaking families at South Middle School in Eau Claire where we discussed what we learned last year at our family night series and planned our activities for the coming year. You can see in the photo on the left, the youth presenting their ideas on what they wanted to accomplish this coming year in the areas of Family, Community, and School.*

*Rachel helped present an hour session at the National Conference for 4-H and Positive Youth Development Educators describing the process our team went through to develop our current Wisconsin 4-H volunteer training system. This presentation allowed us to share how we addressed volunteer needs and UW-Madison policy requirements through adaptation of software capabilities so that other state programs can use what we have learned in developing their own systems. This committee also was recognized with a national award for "Excellence in Volunteerism" at the same conference in Boise, Idaho. In the photo at the right, you can see Rachel as part of this team, along with the PYD Institute Director, Jessica Jens, and the rest of the team.*



### Spotlight

*The Area Six Speaking and Demonstration Festival was developed in response to the need for youth to enhance their public speaking and communication skills, which are essential for leadership and personal development. Many 4-H youth expressed interest in improving their ability to confidently share their knowledge and passions with others but lacked formal opportunities to practice these skills in a supportive environment. Recognizing the importance of these abilities in future career and community leadership roles, we engaged in this program to provide a platform for youth to gain experience and feedback, helping them grow as effective communicators and leaders.*

## Area Extension Director

# Extension Eau Claire County

## October 2024 Report

Kristen Bruder | Eau Claire, Chippewa, and Dunn Counties



*The role of the AED is like that of the department head in the county. If you have ideas, thoughts, or want to chat about Extension please reach out! Below is a brief overview of the role of AEDs: Extension fully invests in Area Extension Directors (AEDs) who oversee an area. These administrative positions are responsible for partnership management, staff development, financial management and program coordination.*

*Through the many interactions the AED has with county partners and local educators, the AED develops a solid understanding of the local needs and county priorities and helps to align Extension educational programs to ensure the programs address county needs. Educators also communicate local needs to their programmatic Institutes which collectively identify opportunities to address statewide needs.*

For a full list of upcoming events throughout Extension, click [here](#)

### Value Added Programming

*Facilitation of regular (every other month) meetings of the Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership, where partners meet to discuss ways to implement a ten-year comprehensive watershed management plan, plan events, assess activities, update each other on work being done, and formulate new ways to collaborate. (Daniel Zerr, Becky Brathal, Kelsey Hyland)*

*Facilitation of regular monthly meetings of the Eau Claire River Watershed Coalition, where partners meet to discuss ways to implement a ten-year comprehensive watershed management plan, plan events, assess activities, update each other on work being done, and formulate new ways to collaborate. (Daniel Zerr)*

*Two legal clinics about business law for Wisconsin's community action programs to promote rural entrepreneurship among low-income people. (Maggie Cornelius, Addison Vang, Katie Livernash, Mia Ljung)*