

Agriculture

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Jerry Clark | Regional Crops & Soils Educator



An outreach education and public relation effort for farmers where farmers increased awareness of extension resources to connect and build relationships and improve their lives and farms.

A field event for farmers, agronomy professionals, and students where participants learned soil nitrogen management strategies to minimize nitrogen application rates to increase farm profitability and protect groundwater resources.



A UW-Madison Extension horticulture information booth at the Chippewa County Farm Technology Days for the public where participants had the opportunity to ask horticulture questions and take-home information on current pests and diseases, native plants and the beneficial impacts of plants and gardening on our health and wellbeing. This effort was to raise awareness of the services and information available to the public through the regional and state horticulture programs.

****SPOTLIGHT**

Farm Technology Days is the largest agricultural event in Wisconsin. Participation in Farm Technology Days 2024 in Chippewa County provided an opportunity for farmers and the public to learn about current Extension Agriculture Institute extension research and educational programs and information. The annual show provides a forum to teach and inform farmers and agriculture industry professionals about current extension resources and research results. Jeanne Walsh, Extension Chippewa County Human Development and Relationships Educator and I coordinated programs and exhibitors in the Rural Event Center. I coordinated the Agriculture Institute exhibit area. Educators leading exhibit areas during the show included Sam Bibby, Becky Brathal, Kelsey Hyland, Steve Okonek, and Ryan Sterry. Although an accurate estimate of attendance is not available, thousands of people visited the Agriculture Institute exhibits and the Rural Event Center. Forty-six local non-profit organizations and food vendors were part of the Rural Event Center.

Regional Livestock Educator

This position is in the process of being filled.

Horticulture

Margaret Murphy | Horticulture Educator



A presentation on how gardening can help us age with vitality for UW Eau Claire Honor Students where participants learn and discuss the mental, physical and social benefits we gain through interacting with and cultivating plants. This effort is designed to illustrate 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.

A field event for 5th grade students where participants learned about pollinators, native plants and invasive plant issues. The goal of this effort is to provide awareness about the importance of pollinators and their conservation.

A presentation on the benefits of sharing space with plants with a focus on plants in the classroom for the 2024 Family and Consumer Sciences Education and WI DPI Childcare Conference at UW Stout where participants learn and discuss indoor gardening strategies and ideas for incorporating plants in classroom lessons. This effort is designed to encourage gardening with interior plants with strategies to engage students in plant-based activities.

Coordinating and co-instruction of the optional Lab component of the fall 2024 Foundations in Horticulture online course that will provide an opportunity for course participants to dig deeper into important horticulture concepts and apply what they learn through interactive activities.

**SPOTLIGHT

I responded to a request for the event organizer to participate and add a pollinator focus. After a brief introduction to the topic with a few questions to help gauge the knowledge of the students, we had the students engage in a game where they were prompted to answer questions about pollinators, native plants or invasive species.

Community Development

Garret Zastoupil | Community Development Educator



Completed hour-long interviews with 13 members of the Criminal Justice Collaborating Council (CJCC) to inform strategic planning activities in December 2024, February 2025, and April 2025. Interviews asked are used to identify the collective assets of the council, along with trends and opportunities to guide the CJCC's strategic action in the next two years.

Host Local Government State Specialist and Professor of Practice, Bill Oemichen, for a meeting of Eau Claire County Government stakeholders to discuss EMS trends and challenges in Wisconsin County. Oemichen assisted in developing a dashboard for a working group to move conversation and action forward.

**SPOTLIGHT

Community-serving organizations, including nonprofits, local governments, and coalitions, are more effective when they have a clear purpose/mission, vision, and goals. When there are changes in leadership, resources, community needs, and other internal or external factors that affect the organization, it is a best practice to engage in some form of strategic planning to set priorities, focus energy and resources, and ensure everyone is working towards common goals. Extension met with organization leaders to diagnose the needs of the organization. When strategic planning was identified as a need, Extension worked with the organization leaders to design and facilitate a systematic process that was unique to the organization, and which helped the organization create, affirm, or revise its mission, vision, and goals. Extension also helped the organization facilitate the development of action plans intended to move the organization forward in addressing its goals. The strategic planning process facilitated by Extension generated several important outcomes for the organization. First, the process provided clarity and direction as outlined in the strategic plan report. Second, it taught organization leaders about the importance of planning as a tool for increased organizational capacity. Third, the strategic planning process-built trust, understanding, and shared knowledge that will lead to collective action to address local needs.

Health & Well-Being

Sandy Tarter
FoodWise Coordinator



Joy Weisner
FoodWise Educator



Jael M. Wolf
Bilingual FoodWise Educator

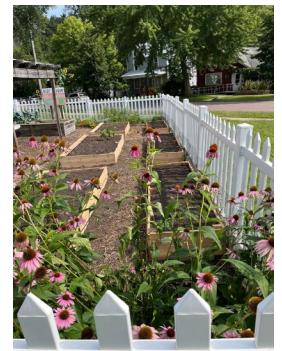


A 4-lesson series at Affinity House, a residential care treatment program, covering MyPlate, food waste, gut health, reading nutrition labels, meal prepping, and understanding sugar content in drinks. This effort helps women to plan and prepare healthy meals while learning to stretch their food dollars.

Planning for the Great Apple Crunch October 2024 for FoodWise eligible schools 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.

A collaboration with Eau Claire Master Gardener Volunteers, Eau Claire City Parks and Recreation, and Chippewa Valley Builders Association to complete activities in implementing the FoodWise Garden Grant program. This effort replaced 6 raised beds and widened pathways for accessibility in the North River Fronts Kids Garden. We hope to garner another grant next year to replace more beds.

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



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the role food pantries have in supporting community food security. FoodWise has connected with Feed My People to discuss potential collaboration.

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.

Outreach to 45 agency partners/programming sites across Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties to review and reaffirm our collaboration, offer opportunity for feedback, develop new relationships, sign FY25-27 FoodWise agreements, and coordinate teaching events for youth and adult nutrition lessons.

A series of strength training sessions (StrongBodies) for adults in the community, where participants engage in regular, progressive strength training and health education to improve their physical and mental health and enhance social connectedness.

****SPOTLIGHT**

The North River Fronts Kids Garden has been in existence for 18 years. FoodWise collaborates with the Eau Claire Master Gardener Volunteers to provide garden and nutrition education to the Boys and Girls Club youth each summer. Overall wear and tear along with weather impact has broken down the raised beds. FoodWise submitted garden grant application with details of partners, work to be done, budgeting, and plan to include the community. The funding was secured for work to be started August 2024 after the direct education was completed. Replacing the old, worn-down garden beds ensures that this Kids Garden will continue for many more years. This effort was made possible by the collaboration of many partners including Master Gardener Volunteers, Chippewa Valley Builders Association volunteers, Ashley Construction, Boys and Girls Club- Mary Markquart Center, and Eau Claire City Parks and Recreation.

Margo Dieck | Health and Well-Being Educator



A workshop for economic support staff over a 10-county region 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 their individual survey score and to build department wide efforts to reduce burnout, secondary traumatic stress and improve compassion satisfaction. Total reach: 130 staff members.

A new partnership with Pamela Guthman, Chippewa County Board, to assist with resource sharing around access to healthcare among Chippewa Valley residents. This effort is designed to increase collaboration among organizations working to increase access to care, specifically for older adults and people who are underinsured and uninsured.

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.

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A UW-Madison Division of Extension information booth at the Veterans Resource Fair in Eau Claire County where participants had the opportunity to ask questions about Extension programming happening in Area 6 (Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties) and statewide. The effort was to increase awareness of and enrollment in the services and information available to the public through the local and state programs. Total reach: 107 veterans and their family members.

Planning to administer strategies associated with Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) for Great Rivers Consortium economic support staff in collaboration with the Great Rivers Consortium leadership team. The goal is to implement interventions sourced from the ProQOL manual and staff input to improve professional quality of life among service professionals who serve a 10-county region.

A Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) presentation for Eau Claire County Department of Human Services (DHS) staff where staff learned the aggregated ProQOL scores for each division, unit, and team within the agency. The goal of this effort is to provide staff with understanding of their personal and organizational level of compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction, ask questions, and learn the next steps in the ProQOL process. Total reach; 125 staff members.

A Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) presentation for Great Rivers Consortium economic staff where staff learned the aggregated ProQOL scores for each unit and team within the agency and participated in an activity to gather feedback on potential interventions for the agency. The goal of this effort is to provide staff with understanding of their personal and organizational level of compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction, ask questions, and brainstorm solutions to improve professional quality of life where they work. Total reach: 111 staff members.

Engagement with the Eau Claire County Substance Misuse Action Team where coalition members learned about Extension's involvement in the Marinette County Recovery Friendly Workplace initiative, including the grant application process, data collection methods, partnerships, and implementation of the program. This effort is designed to support the coalition's efforts in implementing Recovery Friendly Workplaces in Eau Claire County. Total reach: 7 coalition members.

Met with two agencies in effort to better understand the mental health landscape in Eau Claire County and the Chippewa Valley.

****SPOTLIGHT**

Due to the closure of HSHS and Prevea in the Chippewa Valley, there is a large gap in healthcare and mental health care in the greater Chippewa Valley. Many residents are burdened with travel cost to receive care and/or may have lost healthcare coverage as a result. I referred Pam to two HWB programs, Covering Wisconsin and the Center for Patient Partnerships, in her continued advocacy work through her board position and her policy change initiatives. We committed to regular updates on work being done related to improving access to care. Creating and maintaining a strong partnership with a board member in Area 6 is vital for positive relationships with the community. Pam is a strong advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), as well as policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) change work, and continuing engagement with her will improve overall collective impact in this space.

Positive Youth Development

Rachel Hart-Brinson | 4-H Program Educator



Partnership development with Our Nawakwa to explore day camp and winter overnight experiences located at the Nawakwa camp property in Cornell, WI.

Updating the Eau Claire County 4-H Welcome Packet for new 4-H families with club descriptions, current club and project leaders, and accurate meeting locations and times so that families interested in the program can find the information that they need in an attractive and accessible document. To update the club information section, I asked club leaders to send me some club pictures. The club photo at the right shows the Russell Corner Badger 4-H Club food donation drive.



The Eau Claire County 4-H Awards process starts in September when youth turn in their record books where they showcase their work from the previous program year. Volunteers sort the record books and organize them into interview groups in preparation for the interview process that will promote youth development among participants. Completing record books helps teach record keeping and encourages the young people to close the loop in the Learn by Doing Model by reflecting on what they did in the previous year.

Planning for Juntos 4-H Club and Family Education nights in collaboration with ECASD staff. The goal is to continue building capacity for Spanish-speaking families to support their students in attaining their educational goals and build belonging at South Middle School.

Volunteer Systems Committee members attending the National NAE4-HYDP conference are creating a presentation entitled, "Connecting Volunteers to Training on their Schedule." The goal is to share Wisconsin 4-H's volunteer training delivery strategy to peer 4-H Educators across the nation to help other states envision their volunteer training future that better fits volunteer needs.

****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

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.

Value Added Programming

Solar Contract Basics for WI Landowners was presented in Marshfield at the AgCountry Farm Credit regional headquarters on August 21, 2024; in Madison, WI at the Farm Bureau Federation Headquarters on August 22, 2024, and virtually on August 26, 2024. More than 75 farmers and other landowners, as well as local elected officials, learned about renewable energy siting and engagement, common contract terms in solar lease agreements, the potential risks in solar lease agreements, and how to negotiate solar lease agreements mitigating or eliminating the risks while providing economic value to the farmer/rural landowner. (Bill Oemichen, Diane Mayerfeld, Kelly Wilfert, Sherrie Gruder)

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