

## Agriculture

For updated Valley E-Newsletters click [here](#)

### Jerry Clark | Regional Crops & Soils Educator



A series of in person and virtual crops and soils update meetings for crop and forage growers, consultants, agronomists, students and agency staff where participants were provided relevant research updates from Extension specialists regarding soil and water management, forage and grain production, pest management considerations and economics of crop production. Through this program, attendees can make more informed decisions related to these topics to improve productivity and economic viability for their farms and their client's farms.

A leadership program presentation for business and industry leaders in the Chippewa Valley where leaders learned of the economic impact of Chippewa Valley agriculture to increase awareness and understanding of the local agricultural industry. The goal of the presentation as invited speakers is to increase awareness of the economic, social, and environmental impact of the agricultural industry.

### Ryan Sterry | Regional Livestock Educator



Planning for a dairy heifer reproduction data collection and survey project in collaboration with UW-Madison Department of Animal and Dairy Science faculty and graduate students. The goal is to assess current management practices and identify areas for improvement. Raising replacement dairy heifers is a significant and rising cost to dairy farms, and poor reproductive performance only adds to rearing costs.

Planning for an introductory Farm Succession program for farm families in collaboration with the Extension Farm Management program. The goal is to help farms identify legal risks in farm succession and estate planning and to begin those first conversations around succession planning.

## Horticulture

### Margaret Murphy | Horticulture Educator



In 2024, I provided 402 individuals plant advising services who contacted the County Extension offices in Chippewa, Eau Claire and Dunn Counties by phone, walking in, email or through the "Ask Your Gardening Question" page of the Extension Horticulture website.

In 2024, participated in providing editorial reviews for the UW Plant Disease Facts fact sheets series.

Horticulture articles for Extension in the Valley newsletter - Continue to provide timely garden and landscape articles in the Extension in the Valley, tri-county monthly newsletter that focuses on Agriculture and Horticulture news to keep participants connected to current horticulture matters.

# Extension Eau Claire County

## December 2024 Report

*Creating Wild Bird Food Garlands - An activity for the public 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. This effort also provided information on best practices for supporting wild bird populations through the winter.*

### Spotlight

*Through a request from a local partner, I was asked to offer a fun, seasonal activity for the public. I offered a hands-on activity that was both fun, social and informative. Participants engaged in creating food garlands for wild birds and were provided educational information on best practices for supporting wild bird populations through the winter.*

## Community Development

Garret Zastoupil | Community Development Educator



*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.*

*Provide a leadership role in the founding and operation of the Chippewa Valley Health Cooperative. Extension is working closely with a cooperative board of local civic and business leaders to move forward on constructing a new hospital and related clinics. The goal of the cooperative is to create renewed healthcare access in a region adversely impacted by the recent closure of two closed hospitals and 19 clinics, to preserve nearly 1,400 high paying jobs, and to support local economic development efforts and to support the local tax base.*

*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

*Eau Claire County's 19 municipalities provide EMS services through one of the six EMS services operating in the county. Rural towns are struggling with the cost of providing the service to constituents in part because of levy limits but are also struggling to maintain adequate levels of state-licensed EMS providers due to lower volunteer rates. This is causing the rural towns to struggle to meet the state's minimum EMS service standards, causing rural residents to face long wait times for EMS response. This in turn is leading to a greater risk of death. U.W.-Madison Division of Extension's Local Government Education Program, and Eau Claire County Extension, are working closely with County Administrator Kathryn Schauf and her senior staff to create a framework for a*

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county-based EMS service beginning in January 2026. Extension staff have extensive EMS experience, including laws and regulations, and are contributing unique expertise to the county's efforts. Extension staff is also facilitating the community conversations needed to successfully implement such a countywide EMS service. This project began in July of 2024 and is ongoing. If successful, the rural towns within Eau Claire County will be relieved of the expense of funding EMS service for their constituents while receiving a higher level of service from a county-based EMS service. Moreover, this is likely to create a model that can be duplicated by other counties across the state.

## Health & Well-Being

Sandy Tarter | FoodWise Coordinator



Joy Weisner | FoodWise Educator



A 6-week nutrition education series to 1st graders in Lakeshore and Locust Lane Elementary schools. The goal of this effort is for students to learn about eating healthy, being active, exploring fruits and vegetables, and the importance of handwashing.

A 4-lesson series at Affinity House, a treatment facility for women in residential care. The Food Smarts lessons cover MyPlate, gut health, food waste, stretching produce, meal prepping, reading nutrition labels, and understanding sugar in drinks. This effort expands the resident's knowledge of healthy foods, food preparation with safety in mind, and helps to prepare them for independent living.

Participation in Eau Claire Health Alliance-Nutrition and Physical Activity Action Team. Review of past year's achievements and prioritize initiatives and work to be continued in 2025. Through this collaborative community effort, the health and well-being of residents will be enhanced.

A 6-week nutrition education series to 1st graders in Flynn and Longfellow Elementary schools. The goal of this effort is for students to learn about eating healthy, being active, exploring fruits and vegetables, and the importance of handwashing.

A 4-lesson series for Altoona Head Start 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.

## Spotlight

FoodWise has collaborated with Eau Claire Area School District and Augusta School District food service managers to take part in the WI DPI School Meal Appeal program. This effort has supported Longfellow, Locust Lane, and Augusta Elementary schools in completing a self-assessment of their food service and each one has

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selected strategies to enhance their meal service. Schools will receive \$1000 reimbursement towards implementing those strategies. The goal is to increase student satisfaction and participation in their breakfast and lunch programs. FoodWise will continue to support these strategies within their upcoming direct education.

## Margo Dieck | Health and Well-Being Educator



Developing the Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) educational program in collaboration with Health and Well-Being Institute colleagues. The goal of this effort is to develop a program plan, logic model, evaluation methods, etc. so that other Extension educators can offer similar programming to their target audience(s).

A series of meetings for WeCOPE facilitators where the curriculum is being reviewed and revised. This effort is being conducted to ensure a quality learning experience for participants in this program and to support consistent facilitator delivery of the content.



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### Health & Well-Being Institute

Your hub for resources, programs, and support to enhance well-being across Wisconsin.

WEBSITE NOW LIVE!

Working Together for a Healthier Wisconsin

Working Together for a Healthier Wisconsin

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The Health and Well-Being Institute has launched a new website to connect community leaders and Wisconsin residents with resources, programs, and success stories that advance health and well-being across the state. Explore opportunities to collaborate, access tools for building healthier communities, and learn more about our impact.

We encourage you to share this resource with your networks and anyone who could benefit from our work. Together, we can advance health and well-being throughout Wisconsin.

Visit the website: [go.wisc.edu/7zzvqh](https://go.wisc.edu/7zzvqh)

## Spotlight

I have facilitated the ProQOL program with three county departments and have requests for more partnership opportunities. Other Health and Well-Being educators have also expressed interest in offering similar programming with their target audiences. I will create a program plan, logic model, evaluation methods, supporting documents, and other materials to make the ProQOL program easier for other educators to offer. I will partner with state specialists to ensure best practices are met in the development of this program. Will be forthcoming. Creating a 'canned program' with robust supporting documents will enable Extension educators to provide evidence-based programming around professional quality of life.

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## Positive Youth Development

Rachel Hart-Brinson | 4-H Program Educator



A virtual "Cultural Baking Series" where we baked recipes from different countries and talked about cultural practices in our cooking and language. This virtual series was developed to introduce cooking techniques, allow opportunities to try new and different ingredients, and to help participants recognize aspects of their family culture and in others to promote belonging.

An interview with the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reporter about how the Juntos program supports kids' academic success and families' feelings of belonging. Quotes from our interview and pictures of current Juntos members ran in the article, 'We want to be here for

you:' How Wisconsin Schools Welcome Immigrant and Refugee Students and you can find the full article at the following link.

<https://www.jsonline.com/story/series/kidsincrisis/2024/11/20/how-wisconsin-schools-foster-the-mental-health-of-immigrant-students/75676831007/>

The Eau Claire County 4-H Awards Banquet is the recognition event for both youth and adult volunteers. It is planned by Older Youth Council members and a volunteer and is an opportunity to recognize scholarship awardees, youth who completed outstanding record books, and outstanding volunteers and 4-H partner organizations. Recognition is an important element in a quality positive youth development program and builds a sense of belonging and accomplishment.

The Area 6 4-H educators have begun planning for Art U 2025. This program is a collaboration between Area 6 4-H, UW-Stout Art Education Department, and Arts Integration Menomonie. To prepare we have met with the professor at UW-Stout to develop this year's program. We have decided on the dates, times, and began looking at the types of activities that will be offered. We have also begun promoting the event through newsletters, Facebook, and a press release that has been picked up by four local news outlets.

Juntos 4-H Club meets every first Tuesday of the month during the school year and shares a meal along with learning about a resource in the community and playing some games. In December, the public library came and talked about the library and the grant they have to increase their Spanish, French, and Hmong offerings. Three families got library cards.

Planning for a K-2 and 3-5 4-H Club opportunity with the Altoona Boys & Girls Club led by the AmeriCorps member. This will provide a way for new audiences to experience 4-H youth development programming, explore their sparks, feel like they belong in 4-H, and build positive relationships with an adult.

Planning for a K-2 grade program in partnership with the Altoona Public Library led by the AmeriCorps member. This will be a 4-H Club opportunity and will reach new audiences and an age demographic that is choosing things to do.

Planning for a 4-H Foods and Nutrition program and other educational opportunities in the food and nutrition project that will allow kids to explore their spark of cooking, baking, or nutrition.

Planning for the 2025 Tri-County Speaking and Demonstration Festival for 4-H youth, including Cloverbuds, in collaboration with Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire County 4-H programs. The goal is to help youth develop

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## December 2024 Report

communication skills, share passions, and boost confidence through speeches, demonstrations, and interpretive readings, so that they build essential life skills and inspire others in a supportive environment.

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.

### Spotlight

Since fall of 2023, I have been working with the ECASD to offer the Juntos program. We have a core set of 10 families that attend. The school district received a grant to support immigrant families, and the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel found out about it. Their reporter, Amy Schwabe interviewed both the EL Director, the DEI Director and the Director of Student Services at the district as part of their "Kids in Crisis" series about kids' mental health challenges. During that interview, Amy heard about the Juntos program. She contacted me to ask about the Juntos program and we connected by phone. Amy included quotes from our interview and pictures from our Juntos kids in the story, which reaches a state-wide audience.

## 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.

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

## Value Added Programming

Planning for a wholesale workshop targeting Hmong small farmers in collaboration with Fairshare, Groundswell, and Eau Claire Area Hmong Mutual Assistance. The goal is to increase awareness and understanding of how to sell into wholesale markets and to provide information about best practices for branding and marketing small farm operations, so that Hmong farmers who play a significant role in local farmers markets increase their revenues. (Addison Vang, Gaonou Thao)

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)

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*A coaching program for families and individuals, where participants learn how to create financial goals and gain money management skills. The goal of this program is to enable participants to prepare for and take charge of household financial situations that occur due to changes in income or unforeseen hardships. (Jeanne Walsh)*

*A presentation to the Farmers of Barron County Watersheds and attendees at their annual winter forum on the topic of the Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership and the upcoming work to update the ten-year watershed plan for the Red Cedar River watershed, with a goal of educating the group about the Partnership and plan, and also to get feedback on the what the Partnership can do for the group in its planning efforts. (Daniel Zerr, Becky Brathal, Kelsey Hyland)*