



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
EAU CLAIRE COUNTY



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

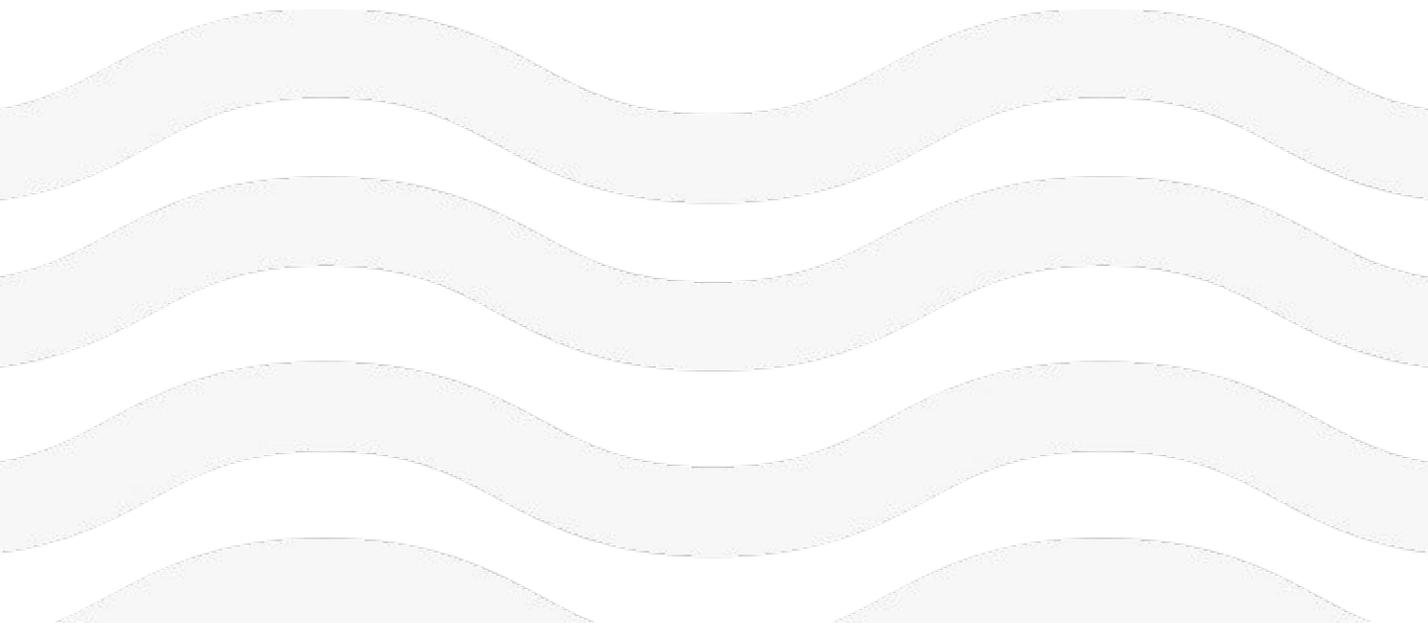


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The Extension Education Committee provides oversight for Extension

Heather Deluka - Chair, Joe Knight - Vice-Chair, Bob Swanson, Lorelee Clark and Nick Smiar

Thank you for your continued support and guidance.

University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension Eau Claire County

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Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

UW-Madison Extension's outreach creates key connection points for families, farms, businesses, nonprofit organizations, government, and more. We support local volunteers and leaders to take action and serve as role models in their communities, and we make sure Wisconsinites have the latest research, best practices, and educational opportunities.



Learn more at
extension.wisc.edu





Kristen Bruder
Area Extension Director
Chippewa, Dunn, and
Eau Claire Counties

"I am so proud to be part of a team that genuinely cares about the people they serve and brings passion and dedication to their work every day. Their commitment continues to make Eau Claire County an incredible place to live and work."

Over the past year, Extension has continued to evolve to better serve the needs of Eau Claire County. We have shifted our emphasis from Dairy to Livestock, ensuring broader support for farmers and producers across multiple species. Additionally, our focus has transitioned from Food Systems to Community Development, allowing us to better address local economic growth, leadership development, and civic engagement. Our educators and staff have worked tirelessly to build partnerships, provide research-based programming, and support initiatives that strengthen our community. Through collaboration and innovation, Extension remains committed to making a lasting impact in Eau Claire County.

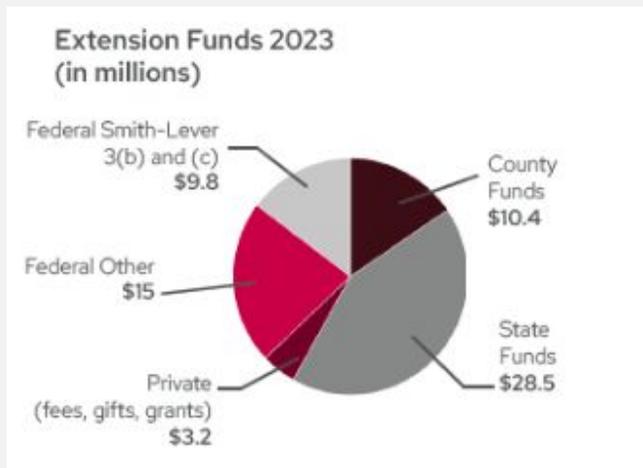
Extension fully invests in Area Extension Directors (AEDs), who serve as key administrators for our county-based programming. AEDs manage partnerships, support staff development, handle financial management, and coordinate programs throughout their designated areas. By regularly engaging with county partners and local educators, AEDs build strong relationships and gain a thorough understanding of local needs and county priorities. They help ensure that Extension's educational programs closely match the community's goals and address specific local challenges.

Leveraging Funding for Greater Impact

Extension's partnership with counties ensures impactful, research-based programming for local communities. By strategically combining county investments with state, federal, and grant funding, we amplify resources to expand education, support economic development, and address local needs.

The graph highlights how Extension maximizes funding to deliver greater value, align with county priorities, and drive measurable impact. Together, we can strengthen communities by making the most of available resources.

The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 established the Cooperative Extension Service. It provides federal funds for Cooperative Extension activities through USDA. The act requires that states provide a 100 percent match from non-federal resources. Wisconsin provides a greater match: a \$3.95 state, county, and tribal funding leverage per \$1 of Smith-Lever funding.



UW-MADISON EXTENSION BY THE NUMBERS

Extension is funded through Smith-Lever dollars, which are matched with state and county/tribal funds. Each FY 2023 dollar received under the Smith-Lever 3(b) and (c) appropriation was leveraged by:

- \$2.90 in state funding
- + \$1.05 in county/tribal funding
- = \$3.95 state and county leverage

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Andy Heren
Program Support Assistant

My main work is assisting the 4-H Program. I also assist the Ag and Horticulture Educators. I maintain our website.

I greet the people who walk in our office and test their pressure canner gauges, explain how to collect a soil sample for testing, sell plat books, and answer the many questions they may bring.



Kristi Peterson
Outreach Support Associate

My role is to support educators with their programming as well as generate reporting to share our value and spread the Wisconsin idea. I strive to ensure we are equipped with the proper tools for success.

I support each program with Facebook, the website, I co-pilot meeting and organizing data. I draft the yearly budget and track daily to ensure accurate and concise details. I also act as clerk for our county committee. Each day looks a little different!

UW-MADISON EXTENSION

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES *with* THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

Agriculture & Horticulture >>

Our network of researchers, outreach specialists, and local educators are on the leading edge of creating practical solutions for livestock and crop production in addition to farm and labor management. We provide customized guidance, business planning assistance, and industry knowledge for what today's agricultural operations are facing.

Community & Economic Development >>

Businesses, governments, and organizations succeed through development from Extension educators and specialists. We provide education for elected officials to understand their roles and responsibilities in helping communities thrive. We offer businesses the direct technical assistance and connection to support structures they need to help them succeed. Our rural entrepreneurship program identifies ways for businesses to overcome challenges and take advantage of unique opportunities.

Health & Well-Being >>

We're supporting positive change for families through physical and mental health programs in addition to structural improvements needed to make the healthy choice the easy one. Our physical fitness classes and mental health training equips people with the tools they need to lead healthy, active lives. We provide public health resources and tools for community action. We provide guidance on systems changes for food security and food access.

Human Development and Relationships >>

Reinforcing family connections, financial knowledge, and strong relationships is at the heart of Extension's programming. We support learning and emotional bonding by building literacy skills in justice-involved families. We guide community and individual development across lifespans. We teach financial security through rent planning and budget management.

Positive Youth Development & 4-H >>

Community-led 4-H programs deliver quality activities and leadership opportunities that result in engaged, energized, and informed young people across the state. 4-H is a movement – in Wisconsin, 98% of our 4-H members are inspired to make positive changes in their communities.

Natural Resources & Conservation - Value Added State Funded Programs >>

We work at the crossroads of communities, natural resources, and agriculture to protect our environmental assets and guide resource management. We support individual and regional water-well testing, along with education to address safe drinking water. We educate farmers, businesses, and communities on safe practices to ensure access to plentiful, sustainably managed sources of food, water, and energy.



Agriculture

Supporting Livestock



The University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension Livestock Program strengthens the industry through statewide education and research. The program has educators and campus-based specialists focused on the following areas: beef cattle, poultry, sheep and goats, swine, and meat science.

The Landscape

209

farms with 3,695 beef cows that have calved (breeding stock) in Eau Claire County

97%

Family Farms (2022 Census of Ag)

28,673

total head of cattle (beef and dairy cattle all ages)

\$176,732,000

in total ag sales from milk, livestock and poultry products (2022 Census of Ag)

Achieving More Together



UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work – on the farm, in schools and throughout urban and rural communities. Early relationship building includes Chippewa Valley Technical College, Western Wisconsin Agricultural Lenders, Wisconsin Farmers Union, and local Farm Bureau chapters.



Ryan Sterry
Regional Livestock Educator

Ryan is the regional Livestock Educator for Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties. I have served as an Extension educator since 2006, and transitioned roles to Regional Livestock Educator for Area 6 in late 2024. I enjoy the variety the job brings, and finding ways to take research based information and make it applicable to our area farms. I am excited to learn more about and serve our producers in the Chippewa Valley.



Agriculture

Supporting Crops and Soils



The Division of Extension UW-Madison Crops and Soils program connects regional educators and statewide specialists to focus on issues and challenges facing today's field, vegetable, fruit, and emerging crop producer. The Crops and Soils Program focuses on Forage and Grain Production and Management, Emerging Crops, Grazing, Pest Management, Soils, Nutrient Management, and Economics of Crop Production.

The Landscape

75,000

Acres of corn and soybeans planted in 2024

168,000

Acres devoted to agriculture

\$143

Million dollars of market products sold

41%

Land in agriculture

Achieving More Together



UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work – on the farm, in schools and throughout urban and rural communities. In 2024, partners included FFA Chapters, Chippewa Valley Forage Council, Western Wisconsin Agricultural Lenders, Wisconsin Farmers Union, Eau Claire County Farm Bureau, Land Conservation Department, Chippewa Valley Technical College, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Mayo Clinic Health System Community Action Board.

Community Impacts In 2024

A part of the Crops and Soils program that brings additional value to the area is localized, on-farm research. Ten different on-farm research projects were conducted in 2024. Grant funding drives these projects as over \$238,000 were secured to implement research projects. Research projects included nitrogen rate applications, spring barley variety and fertility rate trials, winter barley variety and cropping system trials, alfalfa-interseeding with corn silage, and industrial hemp planting date, variety, and nitrogen rate trials. All of these projects serve as a backdrop for educational workshops and field days held throughout the area.



Integrated Pest Management

Workshops and field days focussed on crop pest management to properly identify and management emerging pest issues. Farmers also learned about the proper use of restricted-use pesticides through Private Pesticide Applicator training and certification testing programs. Farmers learned rules and regulations to safely handle and apply restricted-use pesticides. Topics covered included, basic pest management identification and physiology, federal and state regulations, personal protective equipment, handling pesticides, calibration, and keeping pesticides on target. Following training, farmers completed a 70-question examination Certification lies within the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection.

Badger Crop Connect

The Badger Crop Connect was a webinar series held throughout the growing season to provide timely crop production and market information to farmers, agribusiness professionals, and agency personnel. The series connected UW-Madison researchers and Extension educators together to address current growing season issues. The purpose of this event was for farmers and agribusiness professionals to gain knowledge and skills that can be directly applied to their acreage in terms of pest, soil, water, and crop management utilizing cutting edge technology to increase sustainability and profitability on farms across Wisconsin.

Manure Management



Dairy and livestock farmers are faced with manure management challenges to properly apply manure at agronomically determined rates while balancing environmental concerns to protect ground and surface waters. The distance manure needs to be moved from farm to cropland for feed is increasing as dairy and livestock farms grow in animal numbers. Field events and training for farmers and agriculture professionals was provided where participants learned manure management application and manure spill response techniques to maximize nutrient efficiency, protect ground and surface water, and increase farm profitability. The goal of the program is to increase knowledge about manure application, placement, and timing while preventing manure and soil runoff.



Jerry Clark
Regional Crops &
Soils Educator

Jerry is the regional Crops and Soils Educator for Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties. I have served as an educator in Extension since 1998 and continue to enjoy the opportunities and challenges that come with serving the agricultural community. I find the variety of tasks most rewarding such as on-farm research, working collaboratively, and helping individuals and farms to improve their lives.



Wisconsin 4-H

Supporting Our Youth



4-H is the largest youth development organization in the United States. Eau Claire County 4-H currently has 15 chartered clubs and groups. Three of these are project-specific: Shooting Sports, Horse & Pony, and Dog. There is one Leaders Association, an Older Youth Council, and eleven Community Clubs. The most popular project areas are Art (122), Photography (63), LEGO (58), Cloverbuds (K-2 grade; 57), Foods & Nutrition (40), Cake Decorating (31), Youth Leadership(29), Flowers(28), Ceramics(28), Candle Making(27), and Shooting Sports(25).

The Landscape

324

Enrolled Youth
up 17% over 2023

97

First Year Members

62

authorized adult volunteers

\$51,474

value of hours volunteered

Achieving More Together



UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work – on the farm, in schools and throughout urban and rural communities. In 2024, Eau Claire 4-H partnered with the L.E. Phillips Memorial Library, the Eau Claire Area School District, Eau Claire County Friends of the Fair, the Eau Claire County Livestock Project, the Wisconsin Educational Opportunities Program, Eau Claire Energy Cooperative, and the Hmong Mutual Assistance Association.

Community Impacts In 2024

- The Older Youth Council and Pleasant Hill Go Getters 4-H Club worked together on the Field of Screams Haunted Trail and Barn. This acts a fundraiser for their clubs, but also for Feed My People Food Bank. They collected 1,600 pounds of food and donated \$5,000 to Feed My People.
- Thirty-two young people practiced interview skills through the 4-H Leaders Association Awards process.



Wisconsin 4-H

Juntos Family Nights

4-H Youth Development partnered with the Eau Claire Area School District to hold a series of Juntos family nights. Juntos, which means, “together” in Spanish is a program developed by North Carolina State Extension to support Latino youth achieve academic success. The 5-week family night series at South Middle School saw attendance between 7 and 14 families. One of the participants said, “We have been waiting years to have our voices heard.” Upon request, the school put into practice some new things, including having Spanish-speaking secretarial staff put up a sign that said, “Se habla español,” which means, “I speak Spanish.” Staff mentioned that they have seen more engagement from families with services and with extracurricular activities since the program.

Art U

4-H has collaborated with UW-Stout Art Education students to provide a series of virtual art lessons culminating in an art show and celebration to support the “spark” of art for 3 years now. This is important practice for the Art Education students as well as an important spark exploration for the 4-H members.

4-H Summer Camp

Research shows that attending camp has far-reaching benefits well into adulthood. The 4-H Summer Camp program is both for the campers and the counselors. We hired and trained 20 high school 4-Hers as counselors for our 2024 summer camp. These young leaders helped plan and carry out a 4-day, 3-night base camp experience at Kamp Kenwood for 57 campers and an outpost experience for 18 campers at Lake Wissota State Park. Counselors learn leadership and planning skills while building relationships with campers. The campers practice making new friends, trying new things, and building independence.

4-H Activity Tables at “the Fair”

The 4-H Educator planned activity stations and then recruited youth to lead the activities. These were the stations: Lego challenge, cookie decorating, butter making, building spoon catapults, oobleck play, and a “build-a-boat” and float it. Over 175 young people participated in at least one activity with 75 adults also involved. One adult said, “these activity stations are amazing. It makes me want to look into the 4-H program in my home state.

Responses to “What Have you Learned in 4-H?”

- Don’t give up on things, even if it seems hard.
- Rachel has helped me a lot in 4-H by pushing me to do things out of my comfort zone, and turns out I actually loved it.
- The importance of being an engaged citizen in my community and being vulnerable and able to make mistakes and learn from them.
- I value the shooting sports program and all I have learned through archery.



Wisconsin 4-H



4-H Thriving Model – Program Quality Scores

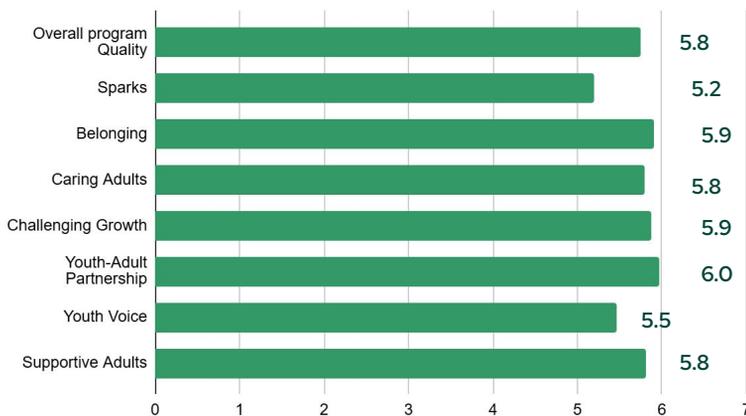
Eau Claire County 2024

The 4-H Thriving Model shows that youth who participate in high-quality youth development programs will thrive. The model predicts that thriving youth achieve key developmental outcomes.

To determine scores for Wisconsin 4-H Program Quality, youth members age 13 and up were invited to take an online survey asking them questions about their 4-H experience. The survey was developed by Mary Arnold, Oregon State University and Ryan Gagnon, Clemson University. **Thirty-nine Eau Claire youth responded to the survey sent in 2024, a 32% response rate.**

Scores are compiled for each component of the model on a scale of 1-7, 7 meaning outstanding program quality. Scores between 4.9 and 6.1 are considered "high quality."

Eau Claire County Program Quality 2024



Implications:

The data indicates that Eau Claire County 4-H program quality is high, with some room to grow. The lower score for Youth Sparks is not surprising – Sparks are tied to the opportunities to learn new things (projects) and develop an interest in a topic/project. This is the lowest score statewide. In 2024, we have been working on ways to offer more project-based learning for members.



Rachel Hart-Brinson
Bilingual 4-H Educator

I have been the 4-H Educator in Eau Claire since April, 2019. I wanted a career where I was never bored. Mission accomplished. There is always something happening and I really appreciate being able to continue learning and growing in the position. My favorite part is working with young people and watching them grow and develop into confident leaders. I also really enjoy building partnerships with community organizations and the dedicated volunteers that make 4-H possible. I look forward to reporting on our efforts to grow the program with new audiences and club types for 2025.



Horticulture

Supporting Lawns, Gardens & Landscapes

Horticulture is the connection between people and plants. It supports environmental stewardship, human wellness, and the growing of local food. The program focuses on strategies to mitigate environmental challenges such as pollinator decline and environmental pollution. It offers education on how to grow your own produce to help reduce food costs and aid in nutrition plus, communicates the physical, mental and social wellness benefits gardening provides and encourages people of all ages to incorporate gardening into their lifestyle even when space or mobility is limited.



The Landscape

402

Lawn, landscape and gardening questions responded to regionally

90%

Positive rating from end of season evaluation of regional horticulture advising service

63%

End of season evaluation respondents who changed or adopted new practices based on guidance received; 51% shared what they learned with others

57

Outreach events, programs and presentations participated in or offered regionally

Achieving More Together



UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin throughout urban and rural communities to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work. In Eau Claire County, the horticulture program partnered with several organizations to offer garden-based educational programs including the ADRC Dementia Care Program, Eau Claire Area Hmong Mutual Assistance Association; Augusta Memorial Public Library, the Jeffers Road Community Garden, and the Eau Claire Area Master Gardener Association.

Community Impacts In 2024

According to the end of season survey, the top answers for specific actions taken or changes made in response to the information individuals received from the regional horticulture program included:

- I used the UW or other credible resources that were provided
- I shared what I learned with others
- I became more aware of environmental concerns
- I planted for better fit for the site
- I used non-chemical methods to control plant pests/diseases
- I increased areas that can be used for pollinator food, nesting and shelter in my outdoor growing spaces



Horticulture

The Nature Prescription, Year 2

Continued my partnership with the Eau Claire ADRC Dementia Care program. A growing body of research supports how horticulture based activities, especially hands-on activities, help people concentrate better, increase memory retention, stimulate the senses, and provide opportunities for positive socialization. We offer monthly programs for participants to come together in a safe environment to connect through experiential learning that stimulates the senses and offers a sense of accomplishment and purpose.



“Extension in the Valley” Newsletter

To increase outreach to the public, I contribute to a tri-county monthly newsletter that focuses on agriculture and horticulture news. My effort is designed to keep participants connected to seasonal gardening topics. Engagement can be on multiple levels such as providing information through garden articles or fact sheets, by inviting people to events and inviting people to connect with their county extension office with landscape and garden questions. Current distribution is 655.

Lawn, landscape & garden questions



The regional horticulture program strives to provide expert service that is efficient and beneficial. Here is what people are saying about assistance on common topics of disease, plant selection and lawn concerns.

Fungal issues with lilacs:

- Margaret's responses were thoroughly researched and answered my questions. She also followed up our phone conversation by sending me an extension brochure about lilac diseases via email
- I appreciate having the extension office to reach out to when I have concerns

Fairy rings on the lawn: Thank you so much for the information! I'm relieved as we were fearful it would be harmful to our beautiful maple tree nearby!

Guidance on plant selection:

- your prompt response and recommendations! I'm sharing this with our Condo Board. We have many trees, all 20 plus years old, so will consider what may be best follow-up.
- pollinator friendly and controls erosion: Thanks so much, This (information) is very helpful and just what we needed.



Margaret Murphy
Horticulture Educator

As horticulture educator, I get the perks of cooperative programming with community partners, collaborative work with Extension colleagues regional and statewide, great professional development opportunities and a sense of accomplishment. Much joy in teaching about the wonders of plants and gardening.

I truly appreciate your support of my program area and welcome your input or questions.



Health & Well-Being

Supporting Healthy Communities

The **Extension Institute for Health & Well-Being** works to catalyze positive change in Wisconsin communities to promote health and well-being. Our research-based programs are focused on promoting mental health, reducing risk for suicide, preventing substance misuse, developing recovery friendly workplaces and communities, supporting service professionals, and addressing root causes of health. Rooted in both urban and rural communities, we're working together to help solve the state's most pressing well-being needs and to ensure that all Wisconsinites have the opportunity to live stronger, healthier lives.

Specifically, **Extension's Behavioral Health program** promotes positive mental health by teaching skills to help individuals manage stress, practice mindfulness, and access mental health resources. We work with local leaders and partners to create healthier communities by building community skills, tools and resources to promote mental well-being.



Eau Claire County Mental Health Landscape

15%

15% of high school students seriously considered suicide in the last 12 months.

(2023 YRBS)

9

Sixteen people died by suicide; **nine** of those deaths were due to the discharge of a firearm.

(2022 Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health)

15%

15% of adults reported experiencing poor mental health for 14 or more of the last 30 days.

(2021 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps)

4.9

Adults reported that their mental health was not good on **4.9** of the previous 30 days.

(2021 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps)

Achieving More Together

UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin throughout the community to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work. In Eau Claire County, local partners included: Eau Claire Health Alliance, Eau Claire City-County Health Department, Eau Claire County Department of Human Services, Eau Claire County Aging and Disability Resource Center, Eau Claire County Register in Probate/Clerk of Juvenile Court, Great Rivers Consortium, Chippewa County Public Health, United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley, and many others through community-based coalition work.





Health & Well-Being

Community Impacts in 2024

- Provided two community-based WeCOPE (Connecting with Our Positive Emotions) courses; an evidence-based course that helps adults cope with life stress. During these sessions, participants learn and practice 11 self-care and coping skills designed to help participants manage stress with healthy strategies and bring more positive emotions into their daily lives to reduce the impact of their stressors.
- Joined the United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley Health Advisory Council, which guides impact efforts in the Chippewa Valley by identifying community needs and supporting efforts to achieve the Bold Goal. The current Bold Goal for the UWGCV Health Initiative is to improve the mental health of Chippewa Valley residents.
- Partnered with several departments within Eau Claire County government to provide Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) education to support improving ProQOL at the individual and organizational level.

Improving Professional Quality of Life

Service professionals are an integral part of our communities. They work in our schools, healthcare systems, social service settings, and more, and support some of the most vulnerable populations, including those affected by health inequities. The nature of the work that these professionals engage in is often physically, mentally, and emotionally taxing. Rates of compassion fatigue, symptoms of burnout, and concerns with mental health are rising in these professionals.

Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) programming has reached over 300 service professionals in Eau Claire County. It aims to improve the professional quality of life these professionals associate with their work through evidence-based strategies proven to increase compassion satisfaction and decrease both burnout and secondary traumatic stress. Strategies to improve the workplace environment include debriefing protocols, peer support systems, and encouraging staff to use their allocated breaks and vacation time. Approaches at the individual level include practicing gratitude, ensuring adequate sleep, and seeking professional support or mentorship.

ProQOL discussion was very helpful. Group discussion was valuable. Reflection on my own self-care practices was strengthened.

I will definitely be doing more self-reflection and work on communicating my needs.

Great discussion surrounding solutions and validation of what's going well.

Feedback from
ProQOL Participants



I have been in my role as an educator in the Eau Claire office for a little over a year. I thoroughly enjoy helping participants make informed decisions about their health and collaborating with partners to positively impact the health and wellbeing of the community. I welcome your suggestions, questions, and partnerships.

Margo Dieck, CHES® - Health & Well-Being Educator



FoodWise

Supporting Healthy Choices & Healthy Lives



FoodWise is federally funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). With local strengths, we support healthy eating habits, active lifestyles and healthy community environments for Wisconsin residents experiencing limited incomes through nutrition education at the individual, community and systems levels.



The Eau Claire County Landscape

Whether people are healthy or not is affected by systems, policies, and environmental factors.

39%

of children in schools were eligible for free or reduced price meals

9.3%

of county residents (10,213) use SNAP benefits to purchase food for themselves and their families.*

^Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
* WI Dept of Administration and WI Dept of Health Services

Achieving More Together



UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin throughout urban and rural communities to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work. In Eau Claire County, FoodWise partners with schools, (youth & parents), summer programs, early child care centers, older teens, and transition programs to help make the healthy choice the easy choice in our communities.



Community Impacts In 2024

- Engaged with 1010 learners making 4,638 direct educational contacts around nutrition education topics in a variety of settings, including Eau Claire, Truax, Altoona Head Start Centers, August, Flynn, Lakeshore, Locust Land Longfellow Elementary schools, Affinity House, WEstern Dairyland Fresh Start and Boys and Girls Club.
- Partnered with 4 schools and summer programs to expand the Harvest of the Month and Great Apple Crunch campaign, reaching students, parents and caregivers with messages in English and Spanish to promote eating Wisconsin-grown fruits and vegetables.
- NEW: Worked with ECASD Life Without Limits program to support neurodivergent graduates with life skills to live independently.



Inspiring Collaborations



North River Fronts Kids Garden received upgrades with new replacement beds and equipment

- 18 year partnership with Master Gardeners, City Parks and the Boys and Girls Club
- FoodWise received a garden grant to update old beds and provide needed gardening items
- Collaboration with Chippewa Valley Home Builders Association to rebuild 6 beds and widen pathways for better accessibility
- 6-week nutrition and garden education to 80 youth; 6 teens helped to assemble new beds
- Together, we are creating a space where learning and growth can thrive for years to come!

Multi-Level Program Efforts

- FoodWise has been a long time partner with the Eau Claire Downtown Farmers Market in supporting the EBT Market Match program. FoodShare (FS) participants can use their benefits to purchase tokens and receive a “match” of that purchase of to \$10 per week.
- In 2024 with 507 FS patrons, EBT sales = \$23,024, Match given = \$14,787
- UWEC Professor Eric Jamelske and students who staff the table collected 231 surveys. Respondents were offered \$5 token incentives weekly to return for 4 weeks. Final data showed:
 - Avg visits per person increased
 - 84% reported eating more fruits and vegetables
 - “FoodShare dollars run out” was a commonly expressed limitation and so added token incentives to return proved successful.



Joy Weisner
Nutrition Educator



Jael Wolf
Nutrition Educator



Sandy Tarter
Nutrition Coordinator

We're fueled by a passion for community nurturing and empowering families with evidence-based nutrition education. From kids trying new fruits to teachers praising our impact, and from 'aha' moments among parents to young adults mastering dishes like sesame chicken stir fry, we live for these rewarding experiences. But our mission extends further—we're dedicated to improving food access, supporting FoodShare families, and expanding coalition outreach. Curious? Reach out anytime! We're here to chat and answer your questions!



Community Development

Supporting Our Community



As we step into 2024, we are shifting our focus in Community Development, based on county input, to prioritize Organizational and Leadership Development, with a secondary emphasis on Local Government. We hired Garret Zastoupil as the regional Community and Leadership Development Educator, who started in May 2024 to serve Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties.

Facilitating Community Conversations

Garret and Bill Omeichen, Local Government Education Specialist with UW-Extension helped move county conversations forward around Emergency Medical Services, organizing data gathering and decision making.

Achieving More Together



The Community Development Educator began facilitating a strategic planning process for the Criminal Justice Collaborating Council (CJCC) in Eau Claire County, supporting diverse partners to establish collective goals.

Building stronger Relationships

Garret conducted numerous one-on-ones with local government and nonprofit organizations as part of his onboarding and has engaged in several county-wide working groups and coalitions to advance issues around nonprofit capacity and housing.



Garret is the Community and Leadership Development Educator for Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire County. Before starting at Extension, he was an Assistant Professor of Sustainable Rural Economic Development at Northland College where he taught courses in public administration, business management, and economic development. He has a PhD in Human Ecology: Civil Society and Community Research from UW-Madison.