

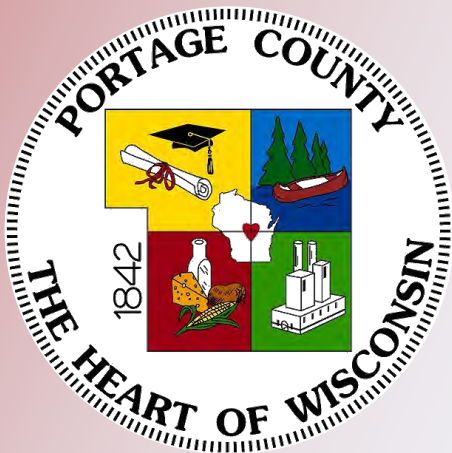


**Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
PORTAGE COUNTY

# 2018

## Annual Report



**Portage County**

**Extension**

**1462 Strongs Avenue**

**Stevens Point, WI 54481**

**715-346-1316**

**[portage.extension.wisc.edu](http://portage.extension.wisc.edu)**



**We teach, learn, lead  
and serve, connecting  
people with the  
University of Wisconsin  
Madison, and  
engaging with them in  
transforming lives and  
communities.**



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PORTAGE COUNTY



## Jason Hausler

Area Extension Director

Portage, Wood, Marathon & Clark Counties

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## Lisa Henriksen

Support Staff

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## Denise Rocha

Support Staff

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### Portage County Extension Portage County Annex Building, 2nd Floor 1462 Strongs Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54481

#### Walk-in Services & Items Available

##### Plat Books

- 2017 = \$40
- 2014 = \$20

##### Soil Testing

- Garden & Lawn = \$16/sample
- Animal Food Plot = \$16/sample
- Farm/Field = \$9/sample

##### Pesticide Applicator Manuals & Testing

- Independent Study = \$30/manuals

##### Farm Record Books

- \$6/book

##### Plant Identification

- Free if done in-house
- \$20+ if sent to lab

##### Plant Disease Diagnostics

- Free if done in-house
- \$20+ if sent to lab

##### Insect Identification

- Free in-house or lab

##### Pressure Canner Testing

- Free by appointment



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**Our Mission: To bring University of Wisconsin unbiased, research-based educational information to the residents of Portage County.**

## Ken Schroeder

Agricultural Agent

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**The Agricultural Agent provides educational services and programs to farmers and homeowners in:**

- **Field and Vegetable Crop Production**
- **Integrated Pest Management**
- **Insect, Weed, Disease Identification**
- **Farm Financial Management**
- **Nutrient Management**
- **Pesticide Applicator Training**
- **Home Horticulture**
- **Master Gardener Volunteer Advisor**
- **General Farm Information**

## Farmers of Mill Creek Watershed Project

A Producer-Led watershed project to improve water and soil quality in the Mill Creek Watershed.

In 2018, 21 farmers installed conservation practices on their farms such as no-till planting, cover crop variety demonstration plots, cover crop planting, waterway buffer strips or hosted an on-farm research project. These conservation practices covered more than 1,645 acres. Two field days and one lunch and learn shop-talk throughout the year attracted approximately 225 area farmers, local residents, and agriculture students to learn about conservation practices that will ensure clean water and healthy soils for future generations while maintaining or improving farm profitability.

\$26,100 in direct cost-share funds were provided to farmers as part of this project from a Wisconsin DATCP Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant.

### Farmers of Mill Creek, 2018 By the Numbers:

- 749 acres no-till planting cost-shared for first time in 2018
- 207 acres no-till planting cost-shared previously and in 2018.
- 30 acres single species cover crops cost-shared (planted before Sept. 10)
- 227 acres single species cover crops cost-shared (between Sept 10 and Oct 10)
- 280 acres single species cover crops cost-shared (after Oct. 10)
- 150 acres multi-species cover crops cost-shared
- 2 acres cover crop variety demo plots planted
- On-farm research plots
- Hosted 1 Lunch and Learn program April 27 on no-till and inter-seeding cover crops (15 farmers attended)
- Hosted 1 educational field day and bus tour June 20 with inter-seeding demo (70 famers and interested public)
- Hosted 1 educational field day and bus tour December 5 to see inter-seeded rye in soybeans and covers inter-seeded into corn silage (65 farmers and interested public plus 60 Ag students from high schools and tech college)
- Sponsored 13 farmers to attend the Wisconsin Cover Crops conference February 27
- Sponsored 2 farmers to attend the Healthy Soils Healthy Waters program March 22



## Farmers for Tomorrow/Waupaca River Watershed Project

A new Producer-Led watershed project focusing on elevated groundwater nitrate levels in the Tomorrow/Waupaca River watershed. A 2018 DATCP Producer-Led Watershed Protection grant totaling \$37,120 was applied for and received to educate farmers on conservation practices with potential to reduce groundwater nitrate levels in the watershed.



In 2018, 14 farmers installed conservation practices on their farms such as no-till planting, cover crop variety demonstration plots, cover crop planting, or hosted an on-farm research project site looking at inter-seeding alfalfa into corn silage or nitrogen rates and corn grain yields. These conservation practices covered more than 1,770

acres. One winter kickoff meeting and two field days throughout the year attracted approximately 140 area farmers and local residents to learn about conservation practices that will ensure clean water and healthy soils for future generations while maintaining or improving farm profitability.



\$29,925 in direct cost-share funds were provided to farmers as part of this project provided by a Wisconsin DATCP Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant.

#### **Farmers for Tomorrow, 2018 By the Numbers:**

- 499 acres no-till planting cost-shared
- 43 acres single species cover crops cost-shared (planted before Sept. 1)
- 355 acres single species cover crops cost-shared (between Sept 1 and Oct 1)
- 755 acres single species cover crops cost-shared (after Oct. 1)
- 58 acres multi-species cover crops cost-shared (before Sept. 1)
- 60 acres multi-species cover crops cost-shared (after Oct. 1)
- 2 acres cover crop variety demo plots planted
- On-farm nitrogen rate research plots
- On-farm research and demo plots exploring feasibility of inter-seeding alfalfa into corn silage
- Hosted one winter kickoff meeting and two field days throughout the year attracting approximately 140 area farmers and local residents.
- Sponsored 12 farmers to attend the Wisconsin Cover Crops conference February 27

#### **2018 Farm Safety Programming**

An ongoing project to improve safety on Portage County and Wisconsin farms encouraging farmers to adopt a safety first attitude.

In February 2018, Ken wrote an article for the Wisconsin Agriculturist magazine “What are the Risks from Manure Gases When Agitating Manure”. In July in cooperation with the Biadasz family, UW-Madison/Extension Agriculture Safety Specialist, and local fire and rescue personnel, he organized and hosted an on-farm Farm Safety and Rescue Training for Farmers and Emergency Response Personnel.



#### **Outcomes:**

174 emergency response personnel and farmers attending the Farm Safety and Rescue Training for Farmers and Emergency Response Personnel learned about: Manure storage, handling, and manure gases safety and rescue; Grain handling safety and rescue to include demonstrations on grain bin, auger, and truck hazards and rescue challenges; Farm machinery hazards and potential rescue challenges; and Animal handling safety and rescue considerations.

The risks from manure gases article reached approximately 7,800 farm households in Wisconsin and beyond providing a better understanding of potential dangers from manure gases when pumping out stored manure.

## Expanding Portage County Extension's Outreach through Master Gardener Volunteers

In any given gardening season, the Portage County Extension office receives 400 or more calls requesting horticulture related information or assistance. To expand our educational outreach capacity, UW-Extension Agricultural Agent Ken Schroeder trains Master Gardener Volunteers (MGVs) and supervises the Portage County MGV association.

The Master Gardener Program in Portage County started in 1991. Over 309 people have been trained since that time, and there are currently 34 certified Master Gardener Volunteers (MGVs) for 2019. Portage County MGVs reported 2,483 hours of community service in 2018, at \$25.43 per hour in Wisconsin (*from independentsector.org*), that volunteer service is worth \$63,143 to Portage County.

### Program Highlights:

- **Teach kids to garden at youth facility:** MGVs worked with the YMCA Farm to School representative to provide lessons and hands-on gardening experience for four and five-year-old students weekly during summer. Students learned about planning, planting, growing and harvesting vegetables. They were able to sample vegetables grown in their plots as well as donating excess produce to local hunger prevention programs.
- **Educate community on gardening:** Garden Dreams an all-day workshop featured presentations on succulents, daylilies, and maximizing available garden space. A display at the annual Home and Garden Show highlighted information on attracting pollinators, and the July Garden Parade included education about beekeeping, bats, and leaf casting.
- **Host Earth Day celebration:** MGVs assisted with the Earth Day celebration at the Boston School Forest. More than 400 people attended. Students were able to participate in hands-on learning activities to increase their knowledge and awareness of the natural world around them.
- **Answer gardening questions at farmers' market:** MGVs answer gardening questions from Stevens Point farmers' market attendees. MGVs provide information on current pest issues, including early blight and late blight on potatoes and tomatoes.
- **MGV Outreach in Portage County not included above:** Garden Parade,



Community Education, Boston School Forest, Rosholt Fair, Golden Sands Home & Garden Show, Rosholt & Amherst Fairs, Portage County Libraries, Portage County Healthcare Center and many public flower beds.







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## Nathan Sandwick

Community Development Educator

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**The Community Development Educator provides a variety of educational programs and resources to local government officials, community organizations, and businesses including:**

- **Organizational Development**
  - Strategic Planning
  - Board Development Training
  - Team Building
- **Community Development**
  - Comprehensive Planning Education
  - Citizen Participation Methods
  - Economic Development Education
  - Natural Resources Education
- **Local Government Education**
  - Training for Public Officials and Staff
  - Public Policy Decision Support

In 2018, educational programming the area of community development focused on visioning for communities and organizations, and strategic community economic development.

### Visioning

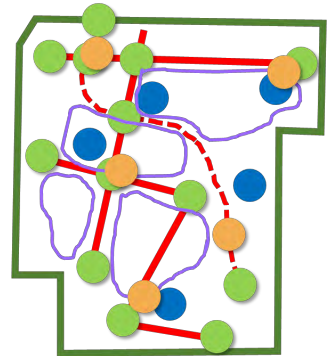
Nathan supported two Wisconsin Design Team visits as part of Extension's Community Vitality and Placemaking team. As a co-team leader he helped with preparations, served one the design team, and shared observations and suggestions to improve future design team visits.

Community visioning is a central feature of these visits, and participating communities gaining greater clarity around ideas for possible community improvements.



Nathan led a brief and timely image-ability workshop for people in the Village of Whiting to support an ad-hoc community development committee. This was a fairly positive new experience for participants.

To set the stage for future programming efforts, he introduced county planning staff to a customizable scenario planning tool called Envision Tomorrow.



Serving as a facilitator, Nathan helped four organizations complete their strategic plans in 2018. Each organization's plan identifies suitable goals and actions to effectively advance its mission. As shown in the examples featured in this report, organizations engaged in the process of strategic planning can also make a point to clarify how their well-focused efforts can also help advance broader community vision ideas shared by stakeholders throughout the communities they serve.

- The Portage County Public Library system's strategic planning process began with a visioning session and outreach effort aimed at gathering input from a wide array of community stakeholders representing a variety of community interests, not limited to conventional library services. During subsequent strategic planning steps, the library board and staff were able to identify several areas where the library could play a role in advancing broader community vision ideas. This process helped to ensure that the short range service priorities of the library system will support some of the broader community pursuits that matter to people throughout the community.



- Feedback from a board member of the Friends of Hartman Creek State Park: "...All agreed that the meetings we had with you three, the reflections we did on who we are, made it possible to come up with the vision and mission. We also voted in October to expand our naturalist position to year round[...] We were able to discuss and act on it because we felt it was part of our mission."

*Community Development continued on back page*



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## Sherry Daniels

Family Living Educator

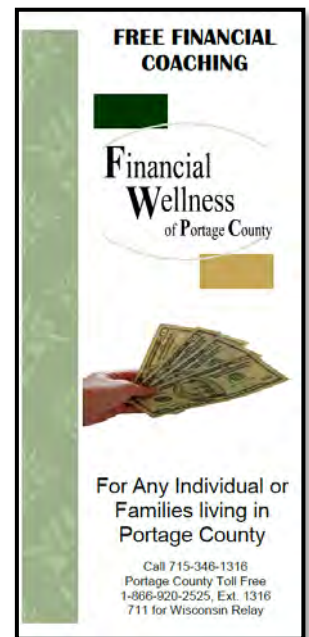
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**The Family Living Educator offers a variety of educational opportunities that strengthens both families and communities by teaching family members to:**

- **Become more effective parents**
- **Manage family finances**
- **Strengthen family relationships**
- **Make healthy choices about diet, exercise and food safety**
- **Maintain independence and economic security for older adults**
- **Food preservation**
- **Mindfulness**

## Financial Wellness of Portage County

Financial Wellness of Portage County (FWPC) coaches are community volunteers trained by Sherry to work with families. The coaches' help clients make spending plans, review and correct credit reports, and help people set short/long term financial goals. Those helped are better able to reach their financial goals through improving their financial literacy. They share the information they learn from their financial coach with friends and family members. Overall the community improves its financial literacy and is better able to thrive in the future. Clients are referred to the program through a variety of community partners, including CAP Services, Work N' Wheels, Operation Bootstrap, financial institutions, professional counselors, and area churches. In 2018 twenty-eight individuals/families were matched with our volunteer coaches.



## Strong Bodies

The StrongBodies™/StrongWomen™ program offers a means to help people achieve better health and fitness through delivery of a national evidenced-based strength training program targeted to midlife and older adults. While research shows that regular exercise provides many benefits to mature adults, only 7% of middle-aged and older adults exercise daily. Strong Bodies has been demonstrated to build strength, balance and flexibility and also helps to improve bone density and prevents falls. Sherry and the ADRC offered the first Strong Bodies training to their clientele in September 2017.

In 2018 additional classes began with FoodWise in Junction City and Plover. A few weeks into the program participants started to see improvements in their strength and balance. One participant noted she could now stand on one leg and put on her sock; she could not do that before. Another participant started the class with a walking cane and at post-test no longer needed the cane.

The pre/post assessments, designed to measure strength, flexibility, and overall fitness, showed that 100% of participants improved in at least one of the areas tested. Program evaluations showed that participants enjoyed the program, felt stronger because of it, and were interested in continuing. Some quotes from the participants: "Really enjoyed learning with others – lots of laughs." "Thank you for helping us meet our goals and beyond." "Sherry has helped me get moving after retirement." As a result of this program, participants are more likely to be able to stay independent in their homes longer and continue to be active members of the community.



*Family Living continued on back page*



## Connie Creighton

4-H Youth Development Educator

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**The 4-H Youth Development Agent assists youth in their efforts to become capable, self reliant, contributing adults through:**

- 4-H Club Programs
- Leadership Development
- Prevention Education
- Development of Life Skills
- Community Service and Awareness
- Career Education

## 4-H Youth Development

**380** youth are enrolled in the Portage County 4-

H program. **103** 4-H adult volunteers serve the Portage County community through their work with youth. Volunteers receive resources (research based literature, newsletters..) and training (face-to-face training & one-on-one consultations), through the 4-H Extension Staff. Our adult 4-H volunteers carry out the roles of club organizational leaders, project leaders, activity leaders and resource leaders to supplement the work of Extension professionals in providing educational opportunities our youth.

The typical 4-H adult volunteer contributes **7.9 hours a month** valued at **\$25.43** per hour in Wisconsin (from independentsector.org), that volunteer service is worth **\$248,309** to Portage County each year. This

doesn't include the volunteer hours youth engage in through their clubs.



## Youth Leadership Development

Through our 4-H program older youth gain character, competence, confidence, communication, connection, caring, and community service through participation in 4-H activities.

In 2018 Portage County had 104 4-H Youth Leaders. In December of 2018 five teens from the Portage County 4-H Teen Leader's Board helped

plan, organize, and/or teach 4-H Club Officer Training to fourteen incoming club officers. Of the thirteen youth who completed the evaluation only two had been

an officer before. Youth who participated in the training reported that they increased their knowledge about parliamentary procedure, learned about how to run an effective meeting, and how putting fun into meetings enhances the members' experience and aids in providing a welcoming environment.

The leadership skills youth gain when they assume an officer role in their club is a valuable part of positive youth development.







## Community Service & Awareness

4-H provide members with opportunities that connect them to their community. All of our 13 4-H Clubs participate in one or more community service projects a year. Examples: highway clean-up throughout the county; senior home visits; food pantry collection; educational workshops for youth; Salvation Army bell-ringing; Summer Special Olympic State Games; participating in Operation Bootstrap; Trick-or-treating for Operation Bootstrap; Volunteer on Make a Difference Day; blanket-making for the women's shelter

and families donating to various programs like Empty Bowls, creating cards, and much more.

## Hosted the 2018 State 4-H Dog Show

Two adult 4-H Dog Leaders, planned, organized, and implemented a successful 4-H state dog show event. There were over 250 participants representing 33 counties and 27 dog breeds including mixed breeds. They set-up 4 obedience rings and 1 rally ring for the 25 obedience classes and 9 rally classes. On Saturday evening, after the state 4-H dog agility show in Amherst, they held the dog quiz bowl which consisted of 21 teams, 5 members per team, totaling about 105 youth. On Sunday 3 rings were

left for 10 showmanship classes. Most of these classes had between 10-15 participants. I observed 4-H members, leaders, volunteers, and parents, who participated in the four-day event, strengthen and develop friendships, leadership, and team building skills with 4-H'ers around the state. We are proud this year to acknowledge one of our 4-H Dog project participants was selected to compete the Westminster Dog Show!



## 4-H Youth Garden Program

Since 2007, the 4-H Youth Development Educator and Portage County UW-Extension staff, have been partnering with the Portage County Boys & Girls Club (B&GC) to establish and maintain youth gardens. In 2018, due to unexpected health circumstances, the Family Living Educator and the 4-H Summer Assistant provided the summer garden program to youth who attended the B&GC's Madison View site. The Extension Staff worked with youth to identify weeds, maintain the garden, and harvest produce. They provided an educational activity along with a snack related to the activity. The lessons ranged from learning about worms, bee pollination, to role playing the territorial habits of hummingbirds.



Twenty-six youth participated in the program providing Extension Staff with a total of 86 contacts over the summer. Attendance at the garden site is voluntary and six youth participated in the formal evaluation that was administered at the end of the program.

100% of the youth reported that they tried a vegetable that they have never eaten before and 60% want to come back to the garden next year.



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A photograph showing a female teacher with dark hair, wearing a blue and white patterned shirt, pouring a red liquid from a white pitcher into a white cup held by a young girl in a pink shirt. Two other students, a boy in a blue shirt and a girl in a purple and white patterned shirt, are also seated at the table, each with a cup and a straw. The background shows a classroom setting with various educational materials and posters on the walls.

## A teacher is sitting on a chair in the center of a classroom, reading a book to a group of young children. The children are sitting on a large, colorful rug with various patterns and letters. The classroom walls are decorated with alphabet charts, a calendar, and a display of children's drawings. The teacher is wearing a dark top and blue pants. The children are dressed in casual clothing. The overall atmosphere is educational and engaging.

*Parent of McKinley Elementary Student: "This has been a great program. My child talks about it each time you came and is excited to tell me what she tried for a new food. When we go into the produce part of the grocery store she points everything out. Great, Great program!!!!"*



## Nutrition Education Starts Early

The Portage County FoodWise team created a class called YUCK to YUM to provide parents with best practices for feeding children, specifically preschool-aged toddlers and kids. A series of three lessons was developed using the Feeding for Healthy Eating Curriculum to address feeding issues such as pickiness and negative mealtime behavior, while fostering healthy dietary patterns in kids and adults. The YUCK to YUM series was taught two separate times in 2018, reaching about 10 participants. As part of an effort to improve access to resources, the team worked with Language-Line Solutions to provide interpretation and translation services for a Spanish-speaking participants, which created an inclusive environment while reducing barriers to education. The Yuck to Yum classes have been so successful, they have been duplicated in two other surrounding counties, Wood and Waupaca.



*Participant Quote: "I liked the class because I learned different ways to present new food to my kids without pressuring them to eat it. I learned to give options and to wait and let my children accept them and decide that they want to eat them."*

## Grocery Shopping Tours

Cooking Matters at the Store shopping tours provide families with hands-on education as they shop for food, giving them skills to compare foods for cost and nutrition. Six shopping tours were completed by FoodWise Nutrition Educator, Mary Higley.

A total of ten adult participants attended. Numerous nutrition related topics were covered including: What is My Plate?, buying affordable produce, how to store and prepare produce, comparing prices, reading food labels, stocking your pantry, and eating healthy on a budget. Participants were encouraged to actively engage in hands-on learning by asking questions and considering how they could apply the new information to their own lives. 56% of participants were planning a behavior change by reading ingredient lists to identify whole grain foods on their next shopping trip.



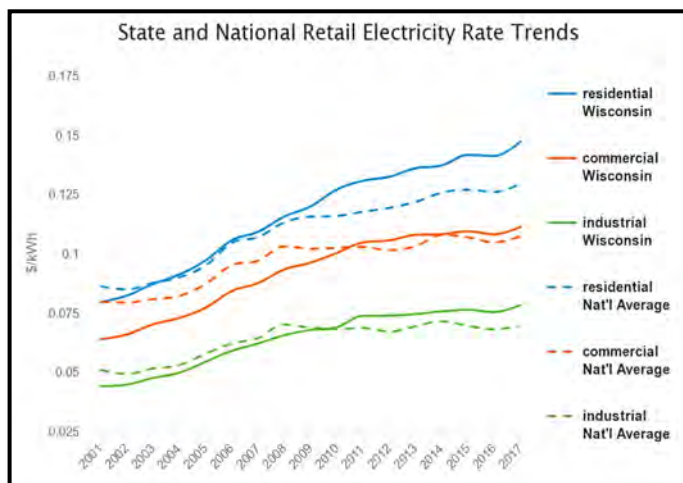
## Portage County FoodWise, 2018 By the Numbers:

- 461 total program participants
- 42 program series at 9 locations
- Adult participants reported a 21% improvement in the frequency of planning meals ahead of time
- 81% of students reported improved willingness to try a new fruit or vegetables
- 2 multi-sector coalition collaborations with over 30 community change-makers

## Strategic Community Economic Development

In a workshop convened by the Portage County Business Council to generate ideas for employee retention and attraction, considerable consensus emerged around the idea to create and enhance public gathering places in Portage County.

In 2018 Nathan supported the launch of United Way's and Community Change Project by contributing and gathering useful information and insights as an active member of the Financial Stability work group. This was a structured effort to establish greater focus and sense of direction ("now what?") in light of the 2017 LIFE report which assessed community issues such as the need for greater financial stability among households and affordable housing in Portage County.



In 2018 Nathan generated interest and support for community energy planning as a means to strengthen the local economy. A scoping effort revealed energy development opportunities and local resources that could be utilized. This led to further exploration and two exploratory sessions with business leaders in the Village of Plover focused on prospects for community energy development. Nathan compiled a community energy profile for Plover indicating that rate payers within the village currently spend approximately \$18 million annually (as estimated) on electricity and natural gas. For the second discussion he was joined by Extension Energy Specialist Shiba Kar. Participants identified some prospects for community-based initiatives and resources that could help promote efficiency

## Family Living continued

### Peer to Peer Financial Coaching at University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point

There is a growing concern over the large amount of college student debt upon graduation. There is also a lack of financial knowledge among graduating college students. Sherry Daniels, Family Living Educator, trains college students interested in finance and family living to do peer to peer financial coaching on campus. They have become a recognized student association at UW-Stevens Point, called the Financial Literacy Association. In addition to meeting one-on-one with their peers to discuss student loans and other financial concerns they do group presentations at dorm meetings, other college groups, and at the Dreyfus Student Center.



In 2018 fifteen student financial coaches were trained. Capacity is built in this program by training past coaches to train new coaches. In evaluating the training program the following quotes were received from students: "This training helped me personally and it is exciting to be able to help others" and "This training provided real experiences; every student should take this training." They go on to help other students improve their knowledge of student loans and other financial topics. This helps to improve financial literacy on campus and after graduation.

