



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
PORTAGE COUNTY

June 2020 Educator Update

FoodWise Education - Kelly Hammond, Penny Schmitt & Hannah Wendels

FoodWise continues to provide programming and support to community programs throughout the pandemic:

- Team is part of several state-wide initiatives to expand programming and train staff on online education techniques, including Yuck to Yum online, teaching core competencies, Greener FoodWise committee, and Healthier FoodWise Initiative. Penny Schmitt was nominated to sit on a multi-state panel for the development of core competencies for paraprofessional nutrition educators working in EFNEP and SNAP-Ed.
- Continued systems and environmental work with a new project called Portage County Pop-Up-Produce (pup) kits which are providing free seeds/seedlings, soil and containers. 125 kits have been provided to the community, with 100-200 more that are committed to local agencies including WIC, Head Start, Foster Families and early intervention home visitation programs.
- Continued work with state and local teams to develop a proposal for state-supported expanded FoodShare access at local farmers markets.

4-H Positive Youth Development Programming - Connie Creighton

Since March I've been facilitating a series of on-line meetings for my clientele using Zoom.

- Worked with 4-H leaders to facilitate and host a series of two 4-H record book zooms the week of May 27th. Using a PowerPoint I adapted, three 4-H leaders, in the first session, taught the value of record books and what the Portage County 4-H program requires in their record books and why. In the second session the leadership team used a less formal format looking at specific project sheets that members and leaders were interested in and discussed what, if any, updating was needed. Both sessions were attended by thirteen youth and adults. In the second session one youth leader presented two project sheets she worked on and wanted adapted and others in the session volunteered to update project sheets they felt were not as relevant as they could be. All participants felt the workshops were extremely helpful and that they would be able to take what they learned back to their club members.
- The Portage County 4-H Leaders Board held their April meeting via zoom. They conducted 4-H business including the upcoming fundraising event, 4-H scholarship

recipients, the fairs, and summer programming. The board members also discussed different ideas to help 4-H leaders and members during this time of social distancing. They support and encourage the following actions: 1) invite each club to submit a picture collage thanking anyone one they want – the collages will be posted on Facebook and in the 4-H newsletter (a few of the collages are below); 2) highlight 1-3 4-H clubs each month in the newsletter; 3) do a senior spotlight – highlight high school seniors in the newsletter and maybe on Facebook.

- The Portage County 4-H Leaders Association and 4-H Teen Leaders Association held their May meeting via zoom. They met as one group for the first part of the meeting discussing 4-H business including the upcoming fundraising event, the fairs, and how to help 4-H leaders and members during this time of social distancing.
- In April and May several Portage County 4-H Clubs met and organized their own meeting via various web-based programs, but three 4-H Clubs met via zoom where I organized and participated in the meeting. The three clubs were the Almond Busy Bees, the Plover Clovers, and the Tomorrow River Voyagers. Club officers conducted 4-H business and discussed how to adapt their programming to fit the social distancing directive. Many programs were canceled or postponed and several new programs were discussed and implemented. I educated families on county and state programming and provided a welcoming environment activity.
- The end of April we started a new series, 4Hers teaching 4Hers, with two youth leaders who expressed interest in teaching on-line animal science programs. I worked with the teens together and separately to set up the zoom workshop. The 4-H youth leaders planned and scheduled 4 workshops. The April 24 session was teaching youth how to trim their goat’s hooves and prepare them for the fair. The second session was held May 2nd by a different 4-H youth leader, her presentation was on how to prepare chickens for the fair. After the class the 4-H youth leader sent out a follow-up packet of materials she discussed during the class for their reference. The next two Saturday sessions were beginner rabbit showmanship and advanced rabbit showmanship in the advanced class both youth leaders taught the class together. May 29th two different youth leaders taught Cat Showmanship. All the sessions were well received and participants reported that they learned something new and liked the Zoom format.



Agriculture Education - Ken Schroeder

- Designed and laid out Adaptive Nitrogen Management in Corn on-farm research plots as part of an on-going statewide project with UW-Madison Soil Scientist Carrie Laboski. Took initial soil samples and applied at plant nitrogen treatments.
- Designed, laid out, and applied first nitrogen treatments to my Hop nitrogen rate research plots.
- Working with Farmers of Mill Creek Watershed and Farmers for Tomorrow River Watershed project to promote adoption of soil and water conservation practices to reduce the environmental impact of agriculture. Holding virtual “Lunch and Learns” and one-on-one consultations with farmers focusing on no-till planting, using cover crops, and pollinator plantings.
- Completed the level one Master Gardener training class with 6 in-person classes and finished up with 6 online virtual classes.

Community, Natural Resources & Economic Development Education - Nathan Sandwick

- Ongoing support to local government units and others exploring options for meeting remotely. This includes assistance to local municipal officials; hosting a portion of the 2020 Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention which had gone entirely online in April; and technical support for the Central Sands Groundwater Coordinating Collaborative to meet remotely in May.
- As a co-chair for this year's conference of Wisconsin's Joint Council of Extension Professionals (which had to be cancelled), Sandwick worked with several colleagues to instead establish an online weekly webinar series ("Forward Fridays", now underway since April) that will feature ~25 presentations that had been selected for the 2020 conference.
- Co-leading Extension's Community Vitality and Placemaking Team, Sandwick supports the team's work which continues to gain statewide recognition, and recently shared examples of recent placemaking efforts in Portage County during one of two recent webinars attended by about 50 educators from throughout the state.
- Piloted and fostered local engagement in a series of discussions among community leaders from several states about local real estate development accomplishments in a setting similar to ours in Portage County.
- Provided extensive information from Portage County's broadband needs assessment to four interested individuals working on related studies and projects.
- Worked with nearby colleagues to gauge local interest in topics related to agriculture and food systems development and/or small business development, and helped promote resulting programs and prompt discussion for one on alternative delivery methods for businesses.
- Helped identify existing community assets and economic development services as part of a nascent economic development planning effort prompted by immediate concerns and hopes for economic recovery.

Human Development and Relationships Education - Sherry Daniels

- Since March 23 StrongBodies classes have been held every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, via Zoom. On Monday and Wednesday Penny does nutrition lessons after the work-out and on Friday I teach Mindfulness/Taking Care of You. We have 25 registered participants and since many of them have chronic conditions that make them more susceptible to COVID this is the only socialization they have during the weeks. They are incredibly grateful we are offering these classes, especially during this time of isolation.
- The Right From the Start Networking group, includes front-line workers who assist families, decided they need to meet more often because programs available to families are changing day-by-day. As Chair of this group I have been setting up Zoom meetings every two weeks to discuss new and existing resources for families in Portage County..
- Financial Wellness of Portage County Volunteer Coaches (who were interested) have been trained to do financial coaching for community members via Zoom, or over the phone if the technology is not available to the client.
- Have been working with other UW-Extension colleagues throughout the state on new curriculum development for “The Loss of a Loved One.” Our goal is to roll out the seven-part series in September. We are considering both face-to-face classes and ways to deliver via Zoom, if need be.
- The RentReady program, working with Mark Kordus, Stevens Point Housing Authority, has continued. We trained two new people this month, via Zoom, and are scheduled to train two more next month.

Area Director Update - Jason Hausler

- Serve on the Dean’s COVID Task Force, examining opportunities and challenges related to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Work has been focused on getting the resources and work of the University out to those that need it during this time, along with how we, as an organization begin to move forward with programming opportunities that may be in person, purely virtual or a hybrid of some sort.
- Facilitate discussions between Extension and the Wisconsin Association of Fair on some best practices and opportunities to consider for this year's fair - should they need to modify or adapt their plans. Also have had conversations with Rosholt Fair Board President, Chris Martin about their plans for this year and where Extension can possibly assist.
- Assist staff and community partners to determine best course of action for minimal face to face programming in June and beyond. While face to face programs are only approved for June with an exemption with Dean approval, we are still actively engaged in numerous programs online and via other distance education models.

- Started to work on the budget for 2021, knowing that adjustments will need to be made based upon state and county funding parameters. Conversations with staff have begun and will continue into the coming weeks.