



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
PORTAGE COUNTY

April 2021 Educator Update

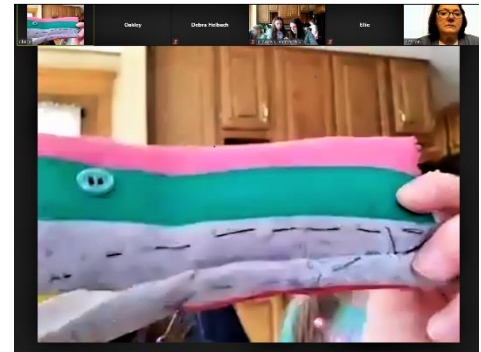
FoodWise Education - Kelly Hammond, Penny Schmitt & Hannah Wendels

- Direct Education: Continuing to offer programming virtually, with pre-recorded and live lessons available. Current classes include FoodWise Strong bodies class, Parenting class for Children's of Wisconsin, Yuck to Yum 3-part series, Kids in the kitchen with Head Start.
- Professional Development: March kicked off program planning. With the team attending the (virtual) state conference and begin 3-year planning and FY22 planning.
- Policy, Systems and Environmental change: Kelly Hammond is working with Community Health Planner Elizabeth Beck to merge Healthy Weight Team with the Fruit and Veggie Network. Team is going to center health equity within that work and is collaborating with state MATCH team to provide training/coaching.
- In an effort to improve access to FoodShare benefits at local farmers markets, Hammond worked with local and statewide coalition that informed a new budget proposal in the governor's budget. This would secure around 180K annually to support EBT at Farmers Markets around the state. Rep. Katrina Shankland introduced the budget item. Team is also working to create a regional pilot that would provide the wrap-around support needed to successfully improve FoodShare access via EBT in Central Wisconsin

4-H Positive Youth Development Programming - Connie Creighton

- In March I facilitated and attended four Portage County 4-H Clubs meetings via zoom where a total of sixty-eight youth and adult leaders met. Club officers ran business meetings, using parliamentary procedure, and planned and organized future club events. Most of the clubs did interactive activities led by the youth leaders, held demonstrations, or invited in a guest speaker. I also facilitated and provided guidance in virtual meetings for the Portage County 4-H Leaders Association, the 4-H Teen Leaders Association, and the Market Animal Committee.
- The 4-H Leaders Association wants to engage 4-H families in projects through the time of COVID-19. Myself and Lisa Henriksen, my support staff, worked with 4-H leaders to plan and implement the third and fourth county-wide program. The winter contest was snowman building and the spring contest was creating peeps dioramas. The programs are designed to engage families in 4-H programming and to provide an outreach activity.
- Worked with two 4-H project leaders to plan, facilitate and host a series of virtual county-wide sewing project meetings for beginner sewers. The project meetings are targeting youth with

limited sewing experience who want to learn the basics of sewing and who want to learn how to use a sewing machine. The first meeting introduced members to sewing supplies, fabrics, and hand stitching. The second meeting introduced youth to their sewing machines. The meeting covered the parts of the sewing machine, how to thread their machine, and youth were able to practice a series of sewing stitches on their machine. In April three more project meetings will be offered, starting with a review session and ending with youth having the skills to sew a basic item. These meetings are meant to increase interest in the sewing project, provide a hands-on active learning environment and to build confidence and relevant life skills in the youth. A total of twenty youth and adults participated in the two March classes and four participated in the planning session.



Agriculture Education - Ken Schroeder

- Assisted the Farmers for Tomorrow with planning and hosting their 2021 winter kickoff event held in February. Farmers and crop consultants learned about using cover crops and crediting the nutrients from these cover crops towards their following crop, we also shared out the conservation incentives and opportunities for 2021 available through the DATCP watershed grant. Farm well water testing was made available thanks to Jen McNelly the county water quality specialist. 30 mostly farmers attended and 11 water samples were brought in for testing.
- Assisted with hosting the 2021 Master Gardener Volunteer Virtual Garden Dreams event held Monday evening March 1. 40 attendees learned about designing a four season garden.
- Organized and hosted the Central Wisconsin Processing Crops Meeting held virtually on March 17th. We had 70 people registered including presenters and co-hosts. There were up to 52 people logged in at any one time. It was great to see that we not only had folks from throughout Wisconsin but also Michigan, Minnesota, and Iowa. Participants included vegetable processors, crop consultants, and vegetable growers. The virtual event expanded our audience outreach and increased attendance numbers over years past in which we averaged 30 to 35 people.

Community, Natural Resources & Economic Development Education - Nathan Sandwick

- Along with other Portage County community members I participated in a dialogue about the availability, affordability, quality and relevance of choices that contribute to quality of life including attractions and things to do, the variety of housing options, environmental quality and resource efficiency, and the availability of health care services. This and other focused dialogues occurred here as a formative part of the Competitive Wisconsin, Inc. (CWI) Be Bold: Rural Resurgence Initiative aimed at formulating development strategies and perhaps some complimentary policy recommendations.
- I collaborated with county planning staff and shared applicable guidance with village leaders considering the use of a community survey to inform a comprehensive plan update and perhaps its long range strategies to address key issues. I shared resources and examples of community surveys and generally emphasized the value of a suitable variety of purposeful public participation efforts.

Human Development and Relationships Education - Sherry Daniels

- Continued holding virtual StrongBodies classes every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, with Penny, and Hannah (Wood County) FoodWise. Forty-four community members are enrolled.
- Held a RentReady training in March with 11 participants, our largest class so far. When the class is over I work with clients on budgets and credit improvements. They all are motivated and want to get this done ASAP. I have become overwhelmed at points so I am now training one of the Financial Wellness of Portage County coaches and also a board member to assist in this process. We have placed fifteen individuals/families in non-predatory rentals. Plus, I work very closely with the counselors at the Hope House so many more families have got housing through their federal grant programs, after meeting with me. No defaults in the program so far.
- We had our first Advisory Board meeting, on March 8, to support the Triple P parenting programming in Portage County. I will be co-leading the discussion groups with parents starting on March 30. It is a series of four 1.5-hour training sessions.
- Completed the state team curriculum titled Planning AHEAD (Advance directives, Home finances, Estate planning, and Arriving at Decisions for the end of this life. This is a six-part training on decisions that need to be made before the end of life. Held first state-wide training to deliver this program as train-the-trainer on March 9 and 11. Portage County will be one of the three counties in WI to deliver this curriculum as a pilot test, beginning June 1, via Zoom.

Area Director Update - Jason Hausler

- Continued serving on the Deans COVID Task Force, examining opportunities to increase in-person programming options using the best health and safety data available. Adjustments have been made and will continue into the summer to increase our numbers able to gather for programs.
- Work with staff to revise our office safety plan. This is done to ensure a safe work environment for all when entering and being in the office more. Telecommuting is still available for colleagues but in office work will be picking back up.
- Lead the WI Fairs Advisory Committee, focusing on partnerships with Fairs around the state.
- Begun examining the 2022 budget with the Extension Budget office.
- Met with Chair Al Haga and Executive Holman to get their perspective on current needs in Portage County as part of the situational analysis process.