



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

4-H – Positive Youth Development

Connie Creighton, 4-H Youth Development Agent

- A Multi-County 4-H Teen Leadership Winter Camp where 31 teens practiced cooperation, leadership, and communication skills.
 - 4-H Teen Leadership Winter Camp was held January 29th at the Lions Camp in Rosholt. This was a multi-county camp involving Langlade, Lincoln, Shawano, Wood, Oconto, Marathon, Winnebago, Portage & Waupaca counties. Nine chaperones and thirty-one teens participated in camp. Youth practiced cooperation, leadership, brain development, and communication skills.
- Three Robotic project workshops were offered by Creighton at the Portage County library in December and January. Five individuals and two families participated in the three-part project classes. Two of the three classes were completed in December with the final class being January 22nd. Youth learned what goes into building a robot and how to program a robot to complete certain tasks.
- Portage County 4-H Tech Changemakers (TCM) are meeting weekly to develop and give a presentation on Social Media use and safety. The presentation is planned for February 19th opened to 4-H adults and their family members. The 4-H teens will present information on privacy challenges, how to change privacy settings, and on both the positive and challenging attributes of social media format that families should be aware of to make informed decisions.

Agriculture

Ken Schroeder, Agriculture Agent

- I wrote an article entitled "Credit Your On-Farm Nutrients to Reduce Crop Production Costs in 2022" that will be published in the March 2022 edition of the Wisconsin Agriculturist magazine (circulation about 26,000).
 - With looming unprecedented high fertilizer prices and availability challenges farmers are struggling to figure out how to manage these high input costs. This article focused on helping farmers understand the value of their on-farm nutrient sources that can be used to replace expensive commercial fertilizers. I provided information on the nutrient content of livestock manure and the value of these nutrients as substitutes for commercial fertilizers. This article also provided information on taking nitrogen credits towards subsequent crops following a legume crop thus reducing the need for purchased fertilizers. Additionally, I provided information on soil nitrate-nitrogen testing options to estimate the amount of plant-available nitrate-nitrogen in the root zone that could be used to adjust the growing crops future nitrogen needs thus reducing input costs. With the information provided in this article farmers can take advantage of these readily available, on-farm, low-cost nutrients in a year when crop production input costs are high and availability is uncertain.



Additional Agriculture work being conducted in Portage County

- A newsletter for farmers and agribusiness professionals where they learned about upcoming programs and topics including optimizing the value of dairy beef cross cattle, the Wisconsin Cover Crop Conference, upcoming Pesticide Applicator Training sessions, the Grassworks Conference, Nutrient Management Planning Training Sessions, the Focus on Forage Program, CAFO updates, and Heart of the Farm Coffee Chats. The purpose of this effort is to work collaboratively to provide timely education for improving agricultural production with multiple county farmers and stakeholders. - *Matt Lippert, Wood County Extension Agriculture Agent*
- Planning for the Agriculture Education area at 2022 Wisconsin Farm Technology Days, an outdoor trade show for farmers and rural communities to increase knowledge of Extension Agriculture programs in crops and soils, dairy, farm management, livestock and horticulture. - *Matt Lippert, Wood County Extension Agriculture Agent*

Community, Natural Resources & Economic Development

Nathan Sandwick, Community Development Educator

- Worked with downtown business development specialist Bill Ryan and county-based educators in Sauk and Dane Counties in co-leading a webinar in January on the creation and operation of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), and the role these entities can play in activating downtowns. Participants included community and downtown leaders from several small Wisconsin cities including Stevens Point. Featured experts with decades of relevant experience in Ithaca, NY shared insights and all contributed to discussion.
- Continuing to support strategic planning and timely stakeholder input efforts underway with Park Ridge as well as SWANA-WI (a solid waste management professionals' association).
- Continuing to convene meetings of the Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative (CSGCC). The communications work group identified strategies to connect with stakeholders including underserved populations informed of progress on the current study. Collaborating researcher Carla Romano has assembled over 110,000 nitrate measurements, collected between 1951 and 2020, from several local and state agencies (DATCP, USGS, DNR, Water and Environmental Analysis Lab, EPA, UW-Madison, Portage, Adams and Wood County). She has also assembled over 2,500 neonicotinoids measurements collected in wells by DATCP and USGS.

Additional Natural Resource work being conducted in Portage County

- A webinar for participants in Water Action Volunteers (WAV) where they learned about how we use volunteer data for real-world projects. The purpose of this program is to create a greater connection with volunteers' data and the people who are actively using it. - *Emily Heald, Rivers Educator Natural Resources Institute*



FoodWise

Kelly Hammond, FoodWise Nutrition Coordinator; Hannah Wendels & Penny Schmitt FoodWise Nutrition Educators

- FoodWise is contributing to an-area wide hybrid program for Central WI residents where participants learn a variety of topics to improve overall well-being and health. The purpose of this series is to increase overall well-being and health of residents through programs on financial, nutrition, horticulture, and behavioral health education.
- Each month, FoodWise partners at the ADRC provides a free "stockbox" pickup of commodity food from the Hunger Relief Federation. Farmshed provides local vegetables to supplement the boxes when possible, and Curbywise bicycle transportation delivers the boxes to home-bound individuals.
- The FoodWise Team in Portage and Wood County continue to offer online StrongBodies programming to Central Wisconsin participants. Programming is focused on low-income seniors, but all are welcome to join. We have maintained a strong relationship with our local ADRC as well as been able to continue to offer opportunities for our seniors to engage in physical activity and nutrition education .
- Monthly Grocery Store Tours offered at 10am and 7pm at WalMart in Plover and Wisconsin Rapids one Thursday a Month where participants learn about shopping healthy on a budget to improve overall health and increase fruit and vegetable consumption.
- In November 2021, after over 2 years of research and networking, FoodWise along with several state and local partners has received a 200K Local Food Promotion Program planning grant from the USDA. The purpose of this grant is to research and evaluate the best methods for improving access for underserved audiences at farmers markets, particularly to increase FoodShare/EBT access at farmers markets across the region. A team of researchers from UW-Madison, UW-Stevens Point and local partners is beginning to plan for what the research will look like, and identify partners in the community. We are also in the process of hiring a part time regional farmers market coordinator to oversee the effort.

Human Development and Relationships

Sherry Daniels, Human Development and Relationships Educator

- Financial Wellness of Portage County (FWPC) is a 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. In 2021 FWPC served 75 individuals/families, compared to 30 in 2020. Most were RentReady clients.
- Lead a series of three Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) for teenagers, seminars for parents/caregivers where they learn simple and practical strategies to help build healthy relationships, increase confidence, independence, and develop a healthy lifestyle. Triple P seminars contribute to supporting family stability and resiliency. Held because the mental health of teenagers in Portage County has gone way down during the COVID pandemic.



- Lead an in-person course for renters where participants learn how to find and apply for rental housing, understand their responsibilities as a renter, how to communicate effectively with their landlords, and manage housing expenses. Through this, homeless populations and those who have negative rental records are able to increase their ability to find and keep safe affordable housing, thereby increasing their stability and decreasing their reliance on public support. We have over 30 placed in the RentReady program but have placed many more than that because those clients in the Salvation Army Rapid Rehousing programs also attend our course.
- Completed multiple trainings with Drug Court participants teaching financial wellness concepts. I use the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau curriculum for incarcerated populations. This has been very beneficial to participants by helping them pay off court fees and fines, establish a budget, and improve their credit. The goal is to help them make a successful transition.

Upcoming Programs

- Encouraging Financial Conversations: A six-module course for social workers, case managers, and community agency staff where they learn about financial competency skills such as goal setting, budgeting, building credit and paying off debts, strategies for saving money, and how to engage their clients in money management discussions. The goal of this effort is to build their knowledge and confidence when engaging clients in financial conversations (see included flyer).



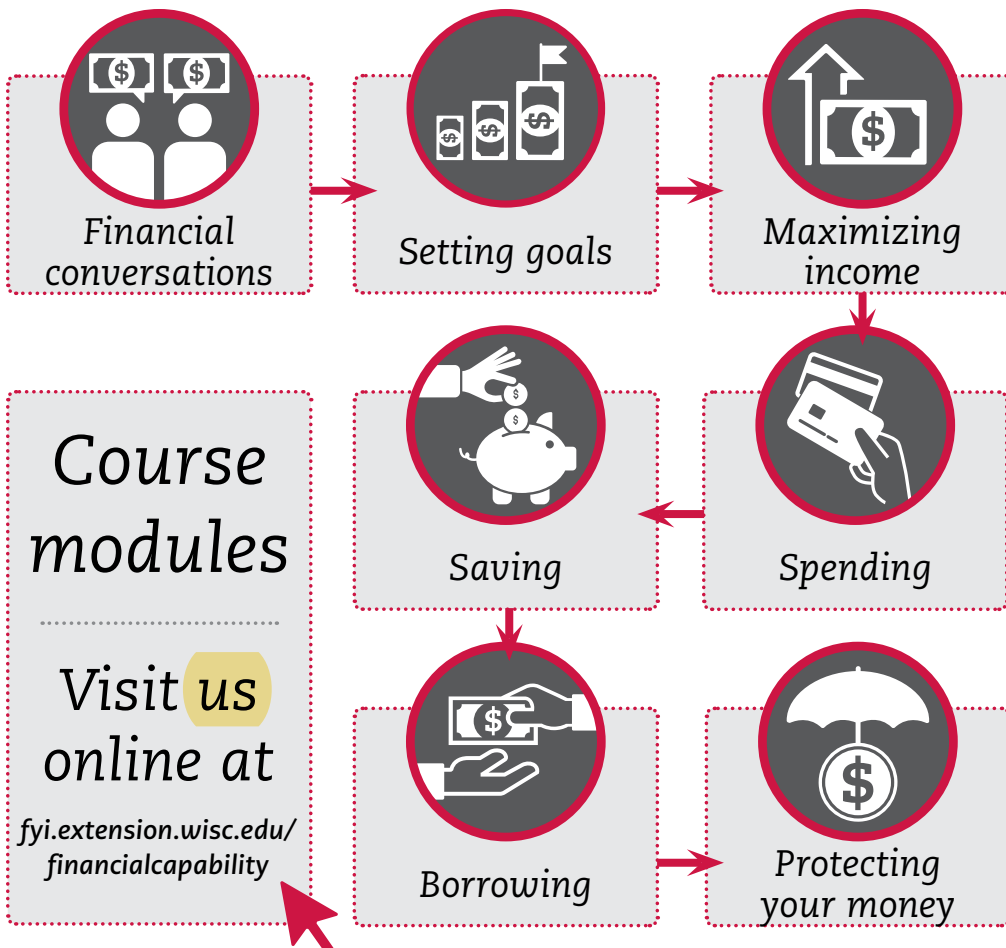
ENCOURAGING FINANCIAL CONVERSATIONS



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Encouraging Financial Conversations is a program designed for case managers, social workers, and other frontline staff to help empower clients to achieve their financial goals and manage their money. Participants will learn techniques and strategies to help their clients create a

financial goals action plan, build and maintain good credit, pay off debts, develop a spending and savings plan, and protect themselves from fraud and identity theft. Participants will also learn coaching strategies that capitalize on a client's strengths and resources in coming up with solutions.



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