

*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*

- Over 44 adults and 120 youth attended the 4-H Award program. Youth were recognized for their role in leadership events, programs, and positions. Eighteen 4-H youth received special recognition for the leadership they showed in their club and county programs and projects. Thirty-eight first year members and sixty-three 4-H members were recognized for their participation in leadership. This program is youth focused with the outgoing President of the 4-H Teen Leaders Association hosting the program with help from the 4-H Ambassadors and the Awards Committee.
- Adult volunteers were recognized at the 4-H Leaders Banquet which had a total of 60 attendees. Seventeen 4-H adult volunteer leaders were recognized for their years of leadership, with a combined total of 248 years of volunteer service in the Portage County 4-H program. Representative Katrina Shankland and the Agriculture & Extension committee members were also in attendance.
- Facilitated 4-H Leader's Association meeting and the 4-H fair book committee meetings. This year it's time to put out a new fair book so we are looking at additions to DATCP's ATCP 160 and making sure we comply. The committee is taking ideas and recommendations to improve projects areas. Both meetings were held in-person with a Zoom option.
- Participating in the Cohort 1: Learning Community for Inclusive Organizational Citizenship Class.
- Working with 4-H Clubs and Groups to complete the Charter process.



Pictured Above: Zachary & Juniper, Key Award winners who were recognized at the 4-H Awards Program



Pictured Above: 4-H Alumni Award winner Mary Ann Kuklinski who was recognized at the 4-H Leaders Banquet



## Agriculture

*Ken Schroeder, Agriculture Agent*

- Harvested Adaptive Nitrogen Management for Corn plots and took postharvest soil samples for evaluation. The goal of this project is to improve grower's understanding of N cycling such that they can implement and adapt N management practices to optimize economic return and improve efficiency of N fertilizer resulting in more sustainable corn production.
- Assisted the Farmers of Mill Creek and Farmers for Tomorrow with revising their budget requests based on the amount of grant dollars awarded to each group for the 2023 DATCP Producer-Led Watershed grants.
- Writing articles and assembling the December issues of The Farmers of Mill Creek and Farmers for Tomorrow River Watershed newsletters.



### **Additional Agriculture work being conducted in Portage County**



A study to learn about how much neonicotoid pesticides from seed treatments and from field applications leach into groundwater in areas of sandy soil. Results will help WDNR regulate this class of pesticides to protect water supplies statewide and agricultural producers to design farm management practices to mitigate pesticide impacts. – *Geoffrey Siemering, Outreach Specialist, UW-Madison, Department of Soil Science*

- A class for members of the Mosinee community, where participants learned the requirements when planting bulbs for forcing, including the chilling process. The goal of this effort was to increase participants' well-being through successful gardening. – *Janell Wehr, Horticulture Educator Wood & Marathon Counties*

## Community, Natural Resources & Economic Development

*Nathan Sandwick, Community Development Educator*

- Sandwick participated in November's Diversity Affairs & Inclusiveness Committee meeting where he presented on "Committee-level Actions, Possible Results", led a very short visioning exercise, briefly revisited the committee's scope as outlined by ordinance, and facilitated a brief brainstorming exercise around potential goals.



- Participating in the Portage County LIFE Report Steering committee session in November on Employment, Income, Post-secondary Education, and Transportation (supporting development of the next LIFE Report). Sandwick noted that showing up for work takes a lot, emphasized the importance of household assistance programs, and characterized the lack of availability of affordable rental options (and affordable homes worth buying) as a *community* issue that calls for community-based action and solutions.
- Sandwick presented to local town officials about "Empty Houses: Concerns and Possible Actions" during a recent meeting of the Portage County unit of the Wisconsin Towns Association. His talk featured 1.) local estimates of housing vacancies, including ~700 "other vacant" homes in Portage County that are neither on-the-market nor held for occasional or seasonal use; 2.) funding available for rehabilitation; and 3.) Extension's available guidance for local governments that seek to encourage intervention before many more homes are effectively lost to demolition by neglect.

### Additional Natural Resources work being conducted in Portage County



A study to better understand neonicotinoid concentrations in groundwater and surface water in the Central Sands Region of Wisconsin. Results from this study will help farmers, citizens, scientists, local/county/state officials, and regulatory agencies make decisions regarding water-resources. – *Michael Parsen, Hydrogeologist, UW Madison Division of Extension*



*Denotes educational or planning efforts that work toward improving water quality in Portage County, Central Wisconsin, and the State as whole. While these efforts are highlighted in this report, there is more work being done by Extension to address water quality concerns outside of what is here. For more information about these efforts, or other efforts Extension has undertaken regarding water quality, please reach out to our office.*

## FoodWise

*Kelly Hammond, Healthy Community Coordinator; Hannah Wendels & Penny Schmitt, FoodWise Nutrition Educators; Mallory McGivern Nutrition Administrator*

- Interactive Grocery Store Tours offered twice monthly at Walmart in Plover and Wisconsin Rapids to low-income families. The goal of this educational program is for participants to learn about shopping healthy on a budget, increase fruit and vegetable consumption and improve overall health.
- Strongbodies 12-week series in partnership with the Portage County ADRC for low-income seniors, where nutrition education is offered to complement the physical activity to build strength and community resilience.





- A partnership with ADRC that provides "Stockboxes for Seniors", a monthly food box service where low-income seniors can receive at least 10 pounds of pantry staples and nutritious foods. The goal of this partnership is to promote the boxes with community partners with the overall goal to improve food security.
- Backbone support for a health-focused HEAL coalition on expanding food resources and active living opportunities in Portage County, where individuals and agencies come together to empower people through education and resources. The goal of this effort is to increase community partnerships, capacity, and collaborative efforts to support healthy choices.
- A monthly nutrition/food demo series for Hmong elders participating in the Hmong American Center where participants taste new foods and learn healthy ways to prepare them. The purpose of this program is to improve the quality of their families' diet and increase their ability to manage their food resources.

## Human Development and Relationships

*Sherry Daniels, Human Development and Relationships Educator*

- 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.
- A 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 supports.
- A 12-session virtual series (Aging Mastery Program) for seniors, where participants learn how to navigate longer lives through healthy eating, exercise, financial fitness, healthy relationships, medication management, and community engagement. The purpose of this program is to develop sustainable behaviors that lead to improved health, stronger economic security, enhanced well-being, and increased societal participation among seniors.

## Upcoming Programs

- Triple P Parenting Seminars & Discussions: Sessions are Tuesday Evenings from 6:00 – 7:30 pm. For more information and specific dates [click here](#).