



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

- 4-H club officer training: Four teens from the Portage County 4-H teen leader's board, and the adult volunteer advisor to the teen leaders board helped plan, organize, and/or teach the Officer training. The fourteen 2023 club officers who attended the training reported learning how to make a motion using parliamentary procedure and the importance of their officer role. Youth who participated in the training increased their knowledge about parliamentary procedure, learned about how to run an effective meeting, and the importance of providing a welcoming environment. Teen leaders also facilitated small group discussion sessions with club officers concentrating on their individual officer responsibilities. The leadership skills youth gain when they assume an officer role in their club is a valuable part of positive youth development.
- Five 4-H teens filled out applications and interviewed to be a county 4-H Ambassador. This is our first time a youth with special needs applied for, was interviewed, and accepted into the ambassador program. The 4-H leader board approved opening the Ambassador program from four to five this year to accommodate all youth applicants. Teens also interviewed for the Key Award and the Leader of Tomorrow Award.
- I am part of a team planning and teaching at 4-H Winter Leadership Camp 2023. There are 41 youth from eight counties signed up to attend. This leadership focused camp will take place in February.
- I conduct a virtual training for new 4-H adult volunteer leaders so they will learn about Extension, expanding access, risk management, 4-H policies, and positive youth development which will make them more effective in working with youth and other adult leaders.

Agriculture

Ken Schroeder, Agriculture Agent

- Recruiting Tomorrow River area farmers to participate in new Nitrogen management DATCP grant
- Farm Profitability Expo planning
- Planning for & attending Farmers for Tomorrow Annual Kickoff Event
- Planning for & procuring speakers for upcoming Annual Processing Crops Meeting
- Attendance & presentation at Annual Hops Conference
- First Pesticide Applicator training and exam was held Friday, Feb 3rd; March 3rd is full.
- Attending & participation in Annual WPVGA Conference



Community, Natural Resources & Economic Development

Nathan Sandwick, Community Development Educator

- Connecting people with information about broadband development resources and opportunities - notably an opportunity for residents of underserved area(s) to challenge assertions about coverage presented in National broadband maps, targeted outreach about a prospective broadband expansion effort, and an opportunity to attend an informational webinar about the availability of Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) funding for Wisconsin Counties & Tribes.
- Participated in a well-attended Local Indicators for Excellence (LIFE) Report “Calls to Action” selection committee meeting in January, convened by United Way and executive committee for the upcoming report.
- Working on program review, evaluation, and reflection in preparation for post tenure review in February.

Additional Natural Resources work being conducted in Portage County



Planning for an annual conference for producer, advisors, and conservation professionals where they learn to encourage profitable farming by building resiliency, diversifying farming operations, reducing inputs, and increasing farmers' return on investment. The goal of this effort is to improve water quality through farming practices. – *Anna James, Natural Resources Educator, Wood County 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

Mallory McGivern Nutrition Administrator; Penny Schmitt, FoodWise Nutrition Educator

- A 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. Participants engage in regular strength training exercises to improve muscle strength, balance, and flexibility so they can stay healthy and socially connected.



- A six-week nutrition education series for youth in sixth grade classrooms in Jefferson Elementary School where they learn about eating a variety of foods from MyPlate, label reading, the importance of breakfast, physical activity, and hand washing. The goal of this effort is to encourage healthy habits in school and at home.
- FoodWise staff worked with 60+ community leaders and subject matter experts to identify critical human service needs in Portage County during the LIFE Report Calls to Action session, hosted by Portage County United Way.
- A quarterly nutrition education series utilizing the MyPlate for MyFamily curriculum for adults with teenage children as part of the Children's Wisconsin Parents and Teens connecting series where they learn about incorporating healthy eating habits into the family routine, including family meals and eating more fruits and vegetables. The goal of this effort is to encourage healthy eating behaviors at home.



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.
- Held the Quarterly meeting for the Financial Wellness of Portage County (FWPC) Board meeting. Discussed options to increase referrals to the program while RentReady is paused. The members decided FWPC needs a stronger on-line presence. I wrote an intern job description to bring a UWSP marketing student in to assist in this process.
- Led the quarterly Right from the Start (RFTS) Networking group to share resources for professionals working with families who have young children. Updates and new programs for 2023 were distributed.