

*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*

- Participated, planned and taught at a joint four-week virtual Holiday International Cookie/Candy Camp with educators from Chippewa and Trempealeau County. Families/youth worked alongside us while we're baking Sweet Potato Spice Cookies, English Toffee, Kolaches, and Fattgmian! Twenty-nine families/youth from eight counties registered for the program. Each week we covered basic baking techniques and worked on reading a recipe along with talking about the history of each cookie/candy and where they came from.
- Participating in the Cohort 1: Learning Community for Inclusive Organizational Citizenship Class. We finalized the class with a two-day wrap-up meeting immediately following the All-Extension Colleague Conference in Madison,
- Working with 4-H Clubs and Groups to complete the Charter process.
- The 4-H fair book committee meetings, this year it is 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 project areas. Both meetings were held in person with a Zoom option.

## Agriculture

*Ken Schroeder, Agriculture Agent*

- Facilitated and taught at the Farmers of Mill Creek Annual Project Update Lunch and Field Tours November 30, 2022. 60 attendees learned about Everyday Agronomy in the ag classroom from the Auburndale High School students, the Petenwell Castle Rock Stewards report and Dustin Albert talked about cover crop use on the Albet farm and different ways of applying cover crops. Field tours followed to see cereal rye broadcast seeded into standing soybeans and corn and rye no-till drilled into a soybean field after harvest.





- Published the December editions of the Farmers of Mill Creek and Farmers for Tomorrow River Watershed Council newsletters. Content included articles on: Youth Soils Education program at Almond Bancroft, Winter Wildlife, The Value of Soil Organic Matter, Benefits of a Nutrient Management Plan along with opportunities for training to write your own plans, Farmers of Mill Creek and Farmers for Tomorrow August Field Days, plus other educational opportunities for farmers and crop consultants. If interested in receiving these newsletters, contact Extension Portage County 715-346-1316.

### 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*



Trainings for farmers and agriculture agency staff where they learned how to implement a nutrient management plan to reduce soil erosion and nutrient runoff and leaching to protect surface and ground water. – *Daniel Marzu, Outreach Specialist, UW-Madison, Department of Horticulture*

- The Healthy Grown program enhanced its Innovative educational approach, expanded certification, and incorporated new water quality/quantity research efforts which resulted in direct farmer engagement and on-farm BMP adoption outcomes. – *Deana Knuteson, Researcher UW-Madison, Department of Horticulture*

## Community, Natural Resources & Economic Development

*Nathan Sandwick, Community Development Educator*

- Convened a meeting of the Groundwater County Collaborative in December. The group discussed the roll-out of the current study (noted below) as well as next steps, including widely shared interest in designing a water quality monitoring program in light of study recommendations.
- Collaborating with city staff, Sandwick assembling Extension resources on Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), and board training in general, for use in development of customized curriculum for a training that will be offered to the board members of a new BID for downtown Stevens Point to be formed in early 2023.



## 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*

- A series of strength training sessions (StrongBodies) in partnership with Portage County ADRC, where older adults also receive nutrition and health education. Participants also engage in regular strength training exercises to improve muscle strength, balance, and flexibility so they can stay healthy and socially connected.
- FoodWise staff attended All-Colleague Conference in Madison, and Kelly Hammond presented “Community to Campus: Growing Connections with Farmers Markets” which featured research and insight into great work in Portage County on building connections with farmers markets and improving access to local resources.
- 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.
- Supporting 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.



## 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](#).