

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

- Helped to plan and teach at the 2023 Winter Leadership Camp. There were 41 youth from eight counties who attended. When asked, 95% of the teens reported that they felt safe at camp, 98% felt welcomed, 90% made new friends, and 85% left the program knowing how to set achievable goals. When asked what their favorite thing about camp was, 9 said making new friends. Other responses included: “the food and seeing the adults be good role models for the youth, the adults taught me how to be a good leader,” “the leadership activities,” and “trying new things and meeting new people.”
- During camp I also led robotics breakout sessions where youth learned what goes into building a robot and how to program the robot to complete certain tasks.



- Conducted two virtual training sessions for six 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.
- Worked with two 4-H project leaders to plan, facilitate, and host a series of 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. This is the third year the sewing project series is being held. The first year the meetings were virtually and this year they have transitioned into in-person meetings where youth are encouraged to bring their sewing machines. 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. Three of the four sessions are completed. This year there is one more instructor and eleven participants.

Agriculture

Ken Schroeder, Agriculture Agent

- Taught a session on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in Wisconsin Hops at the 2023 Annual Wisconsin Hop Production Conference. Hop growers learned the basics of insect IPM, how to calculate degree days for insect development, got an overview on several common hop insect pests, and learned about options and advantages of applying insecticides through drip irrigation.



- Assisted with the Annual Farmers for Tomorrow Kickoff Program and shared information on the Conservation incentives available for 2023 through the producer-led watershed project grant from DATCP.
- Completed the 2022 DATCP grant reports for the Farmers of Mill Creek and Farmers for Tomorrow watershed projects.
- Writing articles and assembling content for the March editions of the Farmers of Mill Creek and Farmers for Tomorrow newsletters.

Additional Agriculture work being conducted in Portage County

- A seminar for hop growers where participants learned current crop production and marketing strategies to increase profitability and sustainability. – *Jerry Clark, Agriculture Educator, Chippewa County*

Community, Natural Resources & Economic Development

Nathan Sandwick, Community Development Educator

- Provided information to the towns of Linwood and Carson and other stakeholders about opportunities to support proposed broadband expansion projects grant applications.
- Introduced CSGCC participants to a questionnaire for use in assessing a community's readiness and capacity to effectively manage groundwater resources.

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*

- A winter forestry conference for Wisconsin woodland owners, where landowners network with each other and learned from forestry experts to promote the sustainable management and conservation of privately owned woodlands in Wisconsin. – *Tony Johnson, Regional Natural Resources Educator*



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 six-week nutrition education series was offered 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.



- A 12-week series of strength training sessions (StrongBodies) in partnership with Portage County ADRC, where older adults also receive nutrition and health education. Participants engage in regular strength training exercises to improve muscle strength, balance, and flexibility so they can stay healthy and socially connected.
- FoodWise staff attended the Giving Gardens Committee meeting through Hunger & Poverty Prevention Partnership and met with community partners to collaborate on Local Food Promotion Program grant through USDA to sustain EBT programs at central Wisconsin farmers markets.

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 support.
- 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.
- A virtual and in-person training for university students where they learn how to be good financial coaches to their peers as part of the Financial Security Association. The goal of this effort is to increase financial literacy among college students.
- 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

- **Triple P Parenting Seminars & Discussions:** a program for parents or caregivers, with teenagers, interested in learning and discussing specific behavior challenges.
 - Sessions are Tuesday Evenings from 6:00-7:30pm. For more information and specific dates [click here](#).
- **Encouraging Financial Conversations:** 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.
 - Sessions are Tuesdays from 12:00-1:00pm. For more information and specific dates [click here](#).