



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

- 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. Last year the meetings were virtual 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.
- We have brought back the two-part Discovering Rocks Workshop series. We have 50 youth across the state signed up for the virtual workshops. The first workshops reached capacity within twenty-four hours so we are offering the workshop series twice. Covered in part one this workshop: hand polish a Petoskey stone, discuss rock collecting and rock identifications, discuss polishing with a rock tumbler. The second part of the workshop covers what you can do with polished rocks. We will make a macramé holder to show off the stone, make a pendant &/or a magnet, and learn about wire wrapping stones.

Agriculture

Ken Schroeder, Agriculture Agent

- Participated in the Friends of Mill Creek annual meeting sharing information on the 2020 and 2021 Farmers of Mill Creek Watershed project and what is to come in 2022.
- Attended and assisted with Wisconsin Prairie Chicken Festival where attendees learned about the prairie chickens in central Wisconsin along with learning about prairie plants, pollinators, and the youth education project.
- Published the April Farmers of Mill Creek Watershed Council Newsletter with information about the 2022 conservation cost-share incentives, Planting Green, cover crop termination, the 2021 roller/crimper project, crediting on-farm nutrients, and determining optimum nitrogen rates for corn.



Additional Agriculture work being conducted in Portage County

- A study to learn about how much neonicotinoid 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*



Community, Natural Resources & Economic Development

Nathan Sandwick, Community Development Educator

- Attended and helped to put on the statewide Joint Council of Extension Professionals conference in April, with in-person components taking place nearby in Rothschild. I served on the JCEP-WI as well as the logistics committee for the conference.
- Completed a draft strategic plan for the Village of Park Ridge. The draft synthesizes extensive public input along with ideas further developed over the course of a series of planning task force sessions that I've been facilitating since last summer with assistance from a local government specialist. Collaborated with county planning and zoning staff to facilitate efforts to include, as appropriate, several goals and objectives of the strategic plan within the Village's comprehensive plan, which is also being updated.
- Prepared and delivered a presentation to a classroom of UWSP students explaining carbon pricing and market-based approaches among other policies for lowering greenhouse gas emissions. I explained that the market for carbon credits presents local and global project opportunities. Some purchase credits voluntarily; others for compliance purposes.

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*

FoodWise

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

- A virtual and in-person weekly educational series (Extension Wellness) 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.
- 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. Starting in May, the boxes will feature locally procured fruits and vegetables available from a collaboration with Farmshed, Marshfield Clinic and FoodWise.
- 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 learn about shopping



healthy on a budget, increase fruit and vegetable consumption and improve overall health.

- The development of a Food Resource Directory for food/nutrition insecure community members, where consolidated and organized information is made available. The goal of this effort is designed to allow for better collaboration among area food pantries and increase access to food and food resources.
- 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 series of Strongbodies strength training "fidelity checks" sessions in Portage County, where older adults learn best practices and learn nutrition and health education. Volunteers are offered support and guidance in order to best adhere to evidence-based practices in leading classes. Overall goal is to promote regular strength training exercises to improve strength, balance, and flexibility so that participants can stay healthy and socially connected.
- 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.
- Nutrition Education offered in Almond for the first time, with 1st grade classrooms receiving a series of 5 nutrition education lessons.
- Partner with UW-Madison Farm to Facts, UW-Stevens Point and other community organizations to implement a 200K USDA Local Food Promotion Program planning grant aimed at learning more about food access and equity at farmers markets in central Wisconsin, including the Stevens Point summer and winter markets. See news report here: <https://www.wsaw.com/2022/05/03/usda-grant-aims-address-sustainability-wis-farmers-markets-equitable-food-access/>





Human Development and Relationships

Sherry Daniels, Human Development and Relationships Educator

- 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 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 six-module course for social workers, case managers, and community agency staff where they learn about financial 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.

Upcoming Programs

- [Planning AHEAD - Mondays & Thursdays: May 9, 12, 16, 19, 23, 26, and June 2, 11:00am-12:00pm](#)
 - A series of seven workshops for people who are interested in planning for the end of life to make things easier on loved ones, have lost a loved one, or are in the process of losing a loved one and are dealing with the transition.
- [Family Living Transitions Triple P Parenting - Tuesdays, April 19th - May 17th, 7:00-9:00 pm](#)
 - A series of five workshops for parents separating or going through a divorce. This assists parents adjust and manage the transition from a two-parent family to a single-parent family.