



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

- The 4-H Tech Changemakers (TCM) program was started in 2022 by a national grant with the premise of using teens-as-teachers with teen leaders learning digital skills to teach to adults. Portage County has 4 teen 4-H Tech Changemakers (TCM). Currently Portage County (TCM) are developing an informational workshop on social media and privacy for 4-H parents and adults. The workshop is scheduled for May 13th. Prior to the event they sent out a survey about the type of technology they want highlighted.
- 4-H Program Educators from Waupaca and Portage Counties partnered to teach 4-H Summer Camp Counselor Training. The training was supposed to be in person for the counselors and due to a variety of schedule conflicts, we changed it to a zoom because only a few counselors could participate. The zoom was recorded and will be shared with those who could not attend. A variety of topics were covered to prepare the youth to take on the role of being a counselor at camp in early June. Tank led the conversation and activities around health and safety at camp, counselor responsibilities and roles, responding to challenging situations, noticing and dealing with bullying or unwanted behavior, and other similar information. Creighton had the lead role on camper behavior and expectations along with youth protection best practices for supervision, ages and stages of campers, and more. Some camp planning was completed as well like picking a theme for camp.
- Attended a three-day virtual conference from a national program, Positive Youth Development (PYD) Academy. The program focused on the importance of implementing positive youth development practices in camp programming. This includes where and how to infuse positive youth development into the camper experience and in the youth leadership training experience. UW-Madison Division Extension PYD Institute funded the professional development opportunity.
- Planning and facilitating series of project workshops offered both in person and virtually. Portage County 4-H Leaders received a donation of over 80 boxes of ceramics. The county 4-H ceramic leader is holding two workshops out at the Boston School of Forest. The generous donation allows for us to offer the workshops free of charge. We are donating 20 boxes to the Waupaca 4-H program. We have 2 virtual record book workshops in May led by 4-H teen leaders and volunteer adult leaders. A second barn quilt workshop is scheduled for June.
- Over 40 youth attended a national certification program Youth for the Quality Care of Animals.



(YQCA) focuses on animal welfare, food safety, and life skill character development with the main objective of teaching youth to produce safe and wholesome food products for consumers.

Agriculture

Ken Schroeder, Agriculture Agent

- Assisted with No-Till Planter Clinic for the Farmers for Tomorrow March 31st. Farmers learned about no-till planter setup, waterhemp management and other weed management tips including wild parsnip management in Portage County, and learned about a new local aerial application service using a drone.
- Field-Scale Corn Nitrogen Rate Study on Irrigated Loamy Sand Soils in Portage County, a DATCP commercial nitrogen optimization pilot program announced.



The goal of this project is to improve our understanding of Nitrogen cycling so we can implement and adapt N management practices to optimize economic returns while improving efficiency of N fertilizer use resulting in more sustainable corn production on our sandy soils in central Wisconsin. I am assisting our local farmer with this 2-year project.



A Producer-Led watershed protection project for Mill Creek Watershed farmers, students, and local residents where they learn about and adopt soil and water conservation practices to reduce the environmental impact of agriculture.



A Producer-Led watershed protection project for the Tomorrow/Waupaca River Watershed farmers, agribusiness professionals, and area residents where they learn about and adopt soil and water conservation practices to reduce nitrates entering the groundwater and the overall environmental impact of agriculture.

Additional Agriculture work being conducted in Portage County

- A presentation for the Portage County Master Gardeners, where participants learned about basic landscape design. This effort is designed to increase awareness and knowledge of resources to address environmental contamination and pollution due to overuse of horticulture chemicals. – *Janell Wehr, Horticulture Educator Wood & Marathon County Extension*
- A therapeutic horticulture program for lifelong learners through UWSP LIFE, where participants learned best practices in creating container gardens. This effort is designed to



support lifelong learning, healthy wellbeing, and positive socialization. – *Janell Wehr, Horticulture Educator Wood & Marathon County Extension*

Community, Natural Resources & Economic Development

Additional Natural Resources work being conducted in Portage County



A facilitated discussion for lead producers and collaborators from producer-led watershed groups in the North Central Region where attendees discussed future events, such as field days, and explored opportunities for future collaboration of events. Attendees also discussed their needs within the producer-led watershed group and planned for a future meeting to review plans of work and grant proposals as a team. Through this activity, producer-led watershed groups within the North Central Region had the opportunity to share their planned activities and group ideas while asking for feedback from other groups. – *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 series of strength training sessions (StrongBodies) in Plover in partnership with ADRC, where older adults learn best practices and learn nutrition and health education. Participants engage in regular strength training exercises to improve strength, balance, and flexibility so they 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.
- A five-week nutrition education series for youth in 1st & 3rd grade classrooms in McKinley & Almond Elementary Schools where students 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 monthly nutrition education Healthy Eating Series was offered to SNAP-eligible residents, where participants learn healthy lifestyle choices, food preparation, food safety, food resource management and physical activity. The topic of the



lesson was whole grains and label reading and the goal of the series is to improve healthy eating and physical activity habits for participants.

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.