

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 is a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills. 4-H is about having fun, learning, exploring, and discovering. In 4-H, young people make new friends, develop new skills, become leaders, and help shape their communities. Adults and teen leaders have a strong mentoring role in our program.

- We held two Cloverbud/Explorer 4-H Day Camps in August. The first camp took place August 2nd at the Boston School of Forest with nineteen campers and four teen counselors. The second camp was held August 22nd at the Portage County Library where ten campers and three teen counselors participated in the day camp. Day camps provide leadership opportunities to our youth teen leaders who not only help plan and teach at camp, but they mentor our youngest 4-H members.
- Campers participated in the STEM activities of making and launching straw rockets and challenging each other to a tin-foil boat penny challenge. The goal of day camps was to provide hands-on activities that engages and challenges our young people while providing an environment that encourages a sense of belonging and independence.





Agriculture

Ken Schroeder, Agriculture Agent

- Facilitated and taught at the Farmers of Mill Creek Field Day August 11, 2022. 45 attendees learned from a young Portage County Farmer about converting his farm to entirely no-till. They saw and learned first-hand about corn no-tilled into sorn silage stubble and into last year's corn stalks. Also saw soybeans no-tilled into last year's corn stalks. Attendees learned about the challenges of managing wild parsnip on CRP land and heard from a DNR representative about adopting the Paul J. Olson Wildlife Area.



- Facilitated and taught at the Farmers for Tomorrow Field Day on August 18, 2022. 40 attendees learned from a Portage County farmer about no-tilling processing crops. They saw and learned first-hand about: No-tilling green beans into sweet corn stubble and cereal rye cover crops, sweet corn no-tilled into green growing cereal rye cover crop (planting green), a 10 way cover crop blend following canning peas, and relay cropped soybeans into cereal rye. Relay cropping is a version of double cropping where the second crop is planted into the first crop before harvesting the first crop.



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*



- Live radio interviews on local radio stations where the listeners learned about current agriculture programs and issues. The purpose of this effort is to increase understanding of food production systems. – *Matt Lippert, Wood County Extension Agriculture Agent*
- Planning for an animal handling program for EMS personnel in collaboration with District 8 Farm Bureau. The goal of this effort is to train EMS personnel how to handle various livestock animals effectively, so that they do not get injured when responding to a call involving Livestock. – *Heather Schlessler, Marathon County Extension Dairy Agent*

Community, Natural Resources & Economic Development

Nathan Sandwick, Community Development Educator

- Collaborated on an update of Extension's Downtown Toolbox available online (Downtown and Business District Market Analysis).
- Began new role as an officer on the board of the Wisconsin Extension Environmental and Community Development Association (WEECDA)
- Supporting the Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative, I convened a meeting with county staff and Cooperative Extension/WGNHS staff to discuss the anticipated form and format of research project deliverables (report, data sets, guidance) to ensure usability among county staff for a long time.
- Gave a brief presentation to the Portage County Diversity Affairs and Inclusivity Committee on "What we need to know about civic leadership"

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, OPEN; Nutrition Administrator

- As part of an expansion of the Stockbox for Seniors program, FoodWise partnered with the community to administer surveys on the effectiveness of adding a fresh produce option to the stockboxes. "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 improve food security for area seniors.



- Completion of Wisconsin Idea Internship program (WIIP). Abbey Rosenthal participated in collecting data and doing in-person research at Central Wisconsin Farmers Markets and the pilot local produce program with Stockbox of Portage County. Rosenthal presented her research at the 2022 showcase on August 31 in Madison.
- 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.
- Interactive research at 7 Central Wisconsin Farmers Markets. Results from this study will help farmers markets to improve access to low-income communities through expanded EBT/FoodShare access.

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.

Additional Human Development and Relationships work being conducted in Portage County

- A 6-hour mental health awareness program (Mental Health First Aid) for CW Solutions staff and county human services professionals, where participants learned skills and strategies to identify and respond to signs of a mental health or substance use challenge in order to connect individuals to appropriate professional help, provide support, reduce stigma, improve mental wellness and reduce the risk of suicide. - *Sheila Michels, Adams County Extension Health and Well-Being Educator*