



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
PORTAGE COUNTY

November 2023 Report

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

Additional Youth Development work being conducted in Portage County

- Planning for a summer camp for 4-H members of Iowa, Portage, and Waupaca counties that provides an opportunity for youth to explore their SPARKS while developing a strong sense of BELONGING in the 4-H Program while developing strong relationships with caring adults and teen leaders. – *Dan Brant, Iowa County as a 4-H Program Educator & Penny Tank, Waupaca County as a 4-H Program Educator*

Agriculture

Ken Schroeder, Agriculture Agent

- Serving on the planning committee for the Badger Crops and Soils Update Program. We will be hosting the meetings in Portage County this year at the Holiday Inn in Stevens Point on Wednesday November 29th 9:00am to 3:00pm. For more information and to register go to <https://cropsandsoils.extension.wisc.edu/badger-crops-and-soils-update-meeting/>.
- Will be harvesting the Nitrogen Optimization project plots the second week in November weather permitting.
- Planning the Farmers of Mill Creek late fall project update and field tours for December. Date to be determined.



Additional Agriculture work being conducted in Portage County

- A 13-week, in-person course for gardeners living in the Fox Valley to learn fundamental knowledge of horticulture with an emphasis in Integrated Pest Management. The goal is to increase decision-making and problem-solving skills, improve plant health and productivity, and implement gardening practices that have a positive impact on the environment. – *Madisen Potratz, Winnebago County Horticulture Educator*



Community, Natural Resources & Economic Development

Katie Livernash, Community Development Educator

- A series of meetings with community partners including Good Steward Consulting, SolSmart, City of Stevens Point, Wisconsin Conservation Voters, Food and Farm Exploration Center, and Alliant Energy where they learned about ways the county and its communities can work together on renewable energy growth, solutions, and projects. The aim of these meetings is to build stakeholder relationships, ensuring resilient and sustainable energy infrastructure that supports thriving communities.

FoodWise

Mallory McGivern, Nutrition Administrator; Michelle Van Krey, Healthy Communities Coordinator; Penny Schmitt, FoodWise Nutrition Educator

- A quarterly nutrition education series in Portage County utilizing the Feeding for Healthy Eating curriculum for adults with young children as part of the Children's Wisconsin LEAP (Learning Essentials about Parenting) program 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.
- Shared leadership on Giving Gardens Committee, a program of Hunger and Poverty Prevention Partnership (HPPP). The Giving Gardens program supports efforts to maintain educational community gardens and to increase food security and provide healthy meal options for economically disadvantaged citizens in Portage County.
- Attended Aging Symposium which showcases cutting-edge science in critical aspects of aging, and the Food As Medicine conference which illustrates the importance of local, culturally relevant foods as a gateway to healthier living.

Human Development and Relationships

Sherry Daniels, Human Development and Relationships Educator

- A quarterly meeting with the Financial Wellness of Portage County (FWPC) Board where we discussed options to increase referrals to the financial wellness program, including bringing on a marketing student to promote the FWPC's on-line presence. The goal is to increase access to resources that help build financial wellness and stability within the community.



- A quarterly networking group (Right From the Start, RFTS) where professionals working with families who have young children can share resources and make connections. Through this, professionals can better serve the communities and young families they work with, promoting family and community strengths.
- 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.