

EXTENSION FOND DU LAC COUNTY SEPTEMBER 2024 HIGHLIGHTS



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
FOND DU LAC COUNTY

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND RELATIONSHIPS



*The Extension Institute of **Human Development & Relationships** provides the tools Wisconsinites need to thrive as well-rounded, capable individuals and families. We support families in caring for each other in ways that promote growth and understanding. Our programs promote aging-friendly communities, coach effective parents and help families put technology, mindfulness and financial awareness to use.*

Carol Bralich, Human Development and Relationships Educator

The average American tenant is “cost-burdened” (paying 30% or more of income toward rent) for the first time in United States history. According to the 2022 State of Home Affordability in Wisconsin report, 65% of renters in the state pay more than 30% of their income on housing and 37% of renters spend more than 50%/month (among renters who earn less than \$50,000/year). The report also indicates that many renters don’t earn enough to afford the average rental unit. The hourly wage needed to afford fair market rent for a two-bedroom Wisconsin home is \$18.56. In addition, the lack of affordable housing availability makes it difficult for a community to attract and retain workers.

Extension’s Rent Smart course provides participants with knowledge and skills that can help them find and keep safe and affordable housing that meets their needs. The six-session course features lessons on: determining what they can afford to pay for rent, checking out the rental property and landlord, the application process, understanding who’s responsible for maintenance, repair, and care, communication skills, and rental agreements. Prior to Carol’s hire in the spring of 2024, the Rent Smart program was provided to several Fond du Lac County community organization’s clients. Carol contacted St. Katharine Drexel Center’s executive director and discussed the financial and housing needs of clients. The staff was excited to restart offering Rent Smart at the shelter for all residents of the shelter during their stay. In August, there were 16 total Rent Smart participants at the homeless shelter who received a completion certificate. One participant stated that they learned “different ways to communicate with the landlord” and another said “what the landlord has control over and what I have control over.”

AGRICULTURE



If it happens on a farm or in a field, the Extension Institute of Agriculture works with you to achieve better results. Our innovative dairy management programs range from genetics to farm and business management. Extension researchers work hand-in-hand with row crop, forage and fresh produce growers to provide best practices for every aspect of the growing phase. We also advise communities on using sustainable practices to create inviting spaces free from invasive species.

Crops

Liz Gartman, Regional Crops Educator

A bi-weekly radio interview for farmers and agricultural industry persons where they learned about Extension agriculture related resources, information, and timely webinars to help them to be connected, supported, and make better informed decisions regarding their farm business operations to improve farm business viability, environmental sustainability, and food safety.

Ag producers use a variety of means to get information, including radio. Each Tuesday and Thursday morning, I provide a UW Extension update that plays along with the Farm Report. This update focuses on upcoming events, webinars, timely crop production topics, farm management information and dairy production information. Providing this information in a public media metric allows people who may be underserved or unaware of Extension agriculture programs to learn more about the types of programs offered and allows them to engage in the programs that meet their needs. This improved outreach allows Extension to serve clients that are outside of our normal means of contact. Further, it provides ag producers an additional insight into the work that is being done with Extension, and opportunities to engage in programs that meet their farm management needs.

A regional agriculture newsletter for Fond du Lac, Sheboygan, Washington and Ozaukee county agriculture producers, industry representatives and agency staff that provides timely crop production updates, dairy and farm management resources and upcoming agriculture events. The goal is to create awareness of Extension programming and research in the region and maintain a connection between UW and the ag community.

Crop, dairy and livestock producers make key management decisions every day based on challenges related to markets, weather and farm goals. It is important for them to have access to up-to-date information and opportunities to help them choose production methods that help them achieve their goals. As a result, the Regional Ag Updates newsletter is prepared and e-mailed to approximately 900 ag producers, agency staff and agribusiness consultants that support farmers. In the winter months, the newsletter is sent monthly, with issues every two weeks during the crop production months. This newsletter shares field trial opportunities, timely management updates and tools to support production decisions, along with UW Extension and partner event opportunities. This newsletter consistently has a 40% open rate and one recipient shared the importance of having upcoming local and statewide events listed in one place. It further has become a great partnership tool between Extension and local producer led watershed groups, land and water departments and state agencies. This effort creates a greater awareness of resources available to support their farm production goals.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Community Development provides educational programming to assist leaders, communities, and organizations realize their fullest potential. We work with communities to build the vitality that enhances their quality of life and enriches the lives of their residents. We educate in leadership development, organizational development, food systems, community economic development, local government education and much more. In short, the Community Development Institute plants and cultivates the seeds for thriving communities and organizations.

Noah Reif, Community Development Educator

A series of 1:1's supporting the Foot of the Lake Pickleball Club's efforts to incorporate as a nonprofit. A member of the club's leadership contacted Extension seeking support with the organization's efforts to incorporate as a nonprofit. A series of 1:1 meetings were held where the Extension educator coached club leadership through the steps needed to receive nonprofit status. The Foot of the Lake Pickleball Club received their letter of incorporation on September 4, 2024 confirming their nonprofit status from Wisconsin DFI and the IRS.

A workshop for members of the ADVOCAP Head Start program that used the transformative power of questions to develop stronger, more collaborative relationships, build individual leadership skills, and develop organizational culture that will help the organization be more effective. The ADVOCAP Head Start Training and Development Director contacted Extension with a request for a single session focused on developing organizational culture and individual leadership skills at the organization's yearly preservice. The educator designed a workshop that would focus on the transformative power of questions as a tool to develop stronger, more collaborative relationships with community members and colleagues. The workshop was attended by 50 members of the ADVOCAP Head Start team on August 26. Evaluation data shows that the majority of participants feel they gained a high amount of useful knowledge and skills (68%), with a lesser amount (27%) feeling they gained an average amount of useful knowledge and skills. A small number of participants (5%) feel they gained a low amount of useful knowledge and skills.

A series of planning meetings with the Fond du Lac County Director of Administration, County GIS Specialist, Extension Broadband Specialist, and Community Development Educator that resulted in a community engagement plan to satisfy grant requirements and strengthen the county's position as it enters the bidding process for broadband projects in late 2024 or early 2025. Through Extension's support, Fond du Lac County will strengthen its position to attract bids from internet service providers to increase broadband access to underserved people in the county.

The county director of administration contacted Extension and requested support in creating a community engagement plan that satisfied BEAD grant requirements through NEW North. The Extension educator organized and facilitated planning meetings culminating in a community engagement plan. This plan will satisfy the grant requirements and greatly strengthen the county's position as it enters the bidding process for broadband projects in late 2024 or early 2025. In collaboration with the Fond du Lac County Director of Administration and GIS specialist, a community outreach strategy focused on engaging with our local towns was decided upon. In addition to a presentation provided for the local Wisconsin Towns Association meeting, the delivery team prepared town level broadband service location maps and demographic data for each town. The data is available on the county website for both municipalities and internet service providers.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



Positive Youth Development prepares the youth of today to become the effective, empathetic adults of tomorrow. Our research-based youth enrichment programs like teens in governance build youth and adult capacity and partnerships that help both sides grow. 4-H clubs, camps and after-school programs give young people the hands-on experiences they need to develop an understanding of themselves and the world.

4-H

Tracy Keifenheim, 4-H Program Educator

- Planning a 4-H Fall Kick-Off meeting for 4-H Club officers in collaboration with adult volunteers. This effort aims to provide a welcoming environment for new families and for the club officers to plan out the year and learn new facilitation skills so they can lead these activities at club meetings.
- An Educator club visit during the Alto All Stars 4-H club meeting for youth members and adult volunteers, where the Educator led a discussion on the transition of leadership to provide support to the club for the new 4-H year.
- An Educator club visit during the Ledgers 4-H club meeting for youth members and adult volunteers, where youth discussed business, elected youth officers, and received feedback from the Educator to build relationships and provide support to the club for the new 4-H year.
- A meeting for youth where they learned about LEGO building skills and participated in a LEGO Build Challenge. This effort is designed to encourage engineering, use of technology, and increase knowledge of LEGO building skills.

Community Youth Development

Kelly Dione, Community Youth Development Educator

Coordination and planning with schools and youth-serving agencies for the Fond du Lac County-wide 2024 Lemonade Day program that aims at empowering FDL's youth (4-6 grade) to become business-minded. The program/ curriculum focuses on youth becoming entrepreneurs and teaches business planning, budgeting, and marketing, which increases the capacity of local organizations by working with young people as future entrepreneurs and philanthropists.

Lemonade Day is a National program that the Fond du Lac County community has participated in since 2015. Lemonade Day took place May 4th, 2024. Planning for Lemonade Day takes about a year to expand the program reach. Youth in 4th-6th grade in Fond du Lac County can participate in this entrepreneurial program which offers lessons to learn how to create and implement a business plan for their own lemonade stand business. On the first weekend in May, all 'teams' that have been formed in the community (schools, churches, youth-serving agencies) open their Lemonade Stand on May 3rd, 2025, aka 'Lemonade Day'. This is a nationally branded program supported locally through a community planning committee, local banks, youth service agencies and schools. Youth teams utilize a Lemonade Day workbook and Extension planned events such as Fun Financial Night, Lemon Loan Interviews (with local banks) to team-build, create a marketing plan, learn cost/profit margins, create a task list for their event and make a 'pitch' to a local bank for a startup loan of \$50 (which needs to be paid back). Youth also plan how to 'save some', 'spend some' and 'give some' of their profits to local nonprofits after May 3rd.

FOOD SECURITY, HEALTHY EATING, AND HEALTHY LIVING



FoodWise advances healthy eating habits, active lifestyles and healthy community environments for families with limited incomes through nutrition education at the individual, community and systems levels. FoodWise reaches individuals and families through local community partners by providing nutrition classes in-person and virtually, indirect education (newsletters, etc.), and social media/marketing. FoodWise is an obesity prevention program that addresses policy, system and environmental changes through local and state public health efforts.

FoodWise is federally funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

Health & Well-Being works to catalyze positive change in Wisconsin families through evidence-based programs focused on nutrition, food security and safety, chronic disease prevention, mental health promotion, prevention of substance abuse and health insurance literacy. Local health coalitions efforts are supported by coalition capacity building tools and health equity frameworks. Rooted in both urban and rural communities, we're working together to help solve the state's most pressing well-being needs and to ensure that all Wisconsinites live stronger, healthier lives.

Amanda Miller, FoodWise Coordinator, Health & Well-Being Educator

- Preparing to be an AmeriCorps Member host site. This position will be responsible for coordinating the 'Farm to Early Childcare Education' pilot project in Fond du Lac County, which focuses on getting locally grown, healthy produce to young children.
- Hosted a county-wide food summit. The purpose of this event was to raise awareness of food insecurity in Fond du Lac County, offer professional development for food pantry staff and volunteers, and to provide networking opportunities for community organizations.
- Planning for a partnership with Chartwells (food service) and Riverside Elementary on a School Meal Appeal and MyPlate Nutrition Education Project. This project will help school meal service staff make positive changes to the cafeteria environment and to encourage healthier choices among students.

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