



Agriculture & Natural Resources

Agriculture



Katie Wantoch
Agriculture Agent, Specializing in
Economic Development
katie.wantoch@wisc.edu

A statewide webinar for ag professionals, where participants gained an awareness of stress management tips and resources to help farmers cope with stress during COVID-19.

The Wisconsin Association of Professional Agricultural Consultants requested a presentation to support their members working with farmers under stress during COVID-19. To address this need, Katie Wantoch (Dunn County) and Nancy Vance (Clark County) provided the presentation, "Communicating with Farmers Under Stress" on Thursday, December 10th. Ag professionals were provided with tips and strategies to assist farmers during challenging times such as COVID-19. Stress management, behavioral health and mental health resources were shared.

As a result of attending this Zoom meeting, participants (N=26) indicated that they plan to use strategies, tools, or skills learned during the webinar to engage and refer farmers to mental health resources, as appropriate. All participants also indicated they feel more confident in responding to others experiencing stress.

Horticulture



Margaret Murphy
Horticulture Outreach Specialist
margaret.murphy@wisc.edu

As the year closes out, I am busy making plans for the next growing season. I remain optimistic that we will be able to do some hands-on gardening next summer but will be prepared to keep people engaged if we can't.

Dunn County Master Gardener Volunteers (DCMGVs) have done a great job in conquering Zoom and other virtual platforms to allow for new approaches to educate. They are moving full speed ahead in transitioning their traditionally in-person annual garden seminar to a virtual platform and have embraced partnering with other counties in the western region to create a robust program.

Despite the restrictions we faced with in-person programming, DCMGVs were allowed to continue work on several of their volunteer projects including the Cedar-Rama Park Garden that, in partnership with the City of Menomonie, maintains community green-space and manages the natural area by planting native plants and removing invasives. Similarly, their work with the Dunn County Humane Society manages a natural area by removing invasive plants such as buckthorn and garlic mustard. Their work with the



Dunn County Historical Society involves demonstrating how a rain garden works by capturing and holding rainwater to slow the flow of rainwater from impervious surfaces such as roofs, streets and parking lots to allow the water time to be absorbed by the soil. They continued their work at the Dunn County Jail Garden Project. This year's total of produce donated to Stepping Stones food pantry was 2,228 pounds! Not bad for using only half of the space and having to go without help from the inmates.

Veteran's Memorial Garden Project looked great for Flag Day.

Happy New Years!

Youth, Family, & Community Development

Health & Well-Being



Sandy Tarter
FoodWise Coordinator
sandy.tarter@wisc.edu



Joy Weisner
FoodWise Educator
joy.weisner@wisc.edu



Pamela
Warren-Armstrong
FoodWise Educator
pamela.warren-armstrong@wisc.edu



Nancy Fastner
FoodWise Educator
nancy.fastner@wisc.edu

River Heights Elementary: Joy and Pamela taught 3rd grade nutrition lessons at River Heights in December and will continue with more 3rd grade nutrition lessons in February. So fun to see those bright faces again!..even through a screen :)

Workforce Resource: Joy and Pamela continue to plan and develop a series of virtual adult nutrition lessons that will be offered via Zoom to FSET (Food Share Employment Training) and W2 participants from Dunn, Chippewa, and Eau Claire Counties in January. They will utilize our Healthy Cents curriculum which combines nutrition education and food resource management principles to encourage limited resource families to make healthy food choices on a limited budget.

Strong Bodies: We finished up our virtual fall series Dec 17th and plan our new one to begin on January 5th, 2021. In addition to our post-exercise nutrition chats in December, we invited 2 guest speakers this month: Dr. Beth Olson, Extension Nutrition Specialist, on gluten-free principles and Selena Freimark, Extension Health and Well-Being Educator, who presented on Grief, Loss, and New Traditions During the Holidays.

Strong Bodies registration -January 5- March 25, Tues/Thurs 9 am- link here: <https://go.wisc.edu/58h0qb>

WIC: Virtual classes were offered twice by Nancy and Sandy in December to Dunn and Chippewa Counties WIC participants. Healthy snack ideas and ways to create mealtime harmony were reviewed. Participants received lots of helpful tips, recipes, 2021 calendars, and gas or grocery cards through a Cooking Matters grant to WI FoodWise.

Wishing you all a healthy 2021....Happy New Year!

Human Development & Relationships



Stephanie Hintz
Human Development
& Relationships
Educator stephanie.hintz@wisc.edu

The theme of this month has been to button up programming and ideas from 2020 and shifting into the focus of setting up 2021 for success. My programs and activities I normally report are going swimmingly, including but not limited to Parents Forever, Health Dunn Right, and more. After almost a year of virtual work, I have become very comfortable with virtual education and helping people connect to the connect and the tools to be successful in virtual learning. With this in mind, most of the programming I will facilitate in 2021 will all be scheduled out as virtual unless otherwise noted. If we get the green light to do in-person programming that is safe later in the year it will be easy to transfer back to in-person. However, with this in mind I will be able to plan out the program offers for all of 2021 and publish a list of classes in early January.

I've also created some easy and free uses for families to have healthy entertainment as we maintain social distancing during the winter as well as a guide for people to set up healthy goals and plan for success in the year to come. Look for these resources to be published on our website.

Positive Youth Development



Luisa Gerasimo
4-H Educator
luisa.gerasimo@wisc.edu



International Cookie Camp went off without a hitch. Families from a number of counties took part and made a new kind of cookie each week supported by online teaching and group fun. The picture on the left shows the Schmidt Family of Willing Workers getting their hands messy. They sent several pictures and thanked me for the wonderful opportunity. These kinds of notes and the news of clubs donating to charities continue to warm my heart.

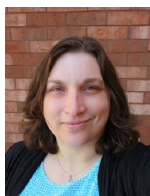
Some 4-H clubs are meeting online, or voting on things by email. Some are 'hibernating' as lack of broadband and cell signal has left them with few ways to participate in our new virtual only world. This remains a serious challenge in our county. We are working hard to get 4-H families re-enrolled in an updated database, but are down 46% from last year.

I collaborated with my 4-H colleague in Eau Claire county to offer two virtual youth officer training sessions this month. I wrapped up training volunteers with one last online training for the year. Planning is afoot for our first ever virtual Tri-County Performing Arts Festival, which will take place the last week of February. I spent time on a number of state committees aimed at expanding access to 4-H to first generation 4-H families. I am also assisting with partner interviews for Youth Forward Wisconsin. We are a part of a midwestern consortium and are moving forward with an effort to provide childhood savings accounts to as many youth as we can; even \$5-\$50 in an account results in youth being 4 times as likely to graduate from college or tech school!

Community Development

The Community Development Educator position is currently vacant. Catherine had a discussion with the Community Development Institute Director regarding his support for prioritizing filling the vacant position. The decision to move from the hiring “freeze” to a hiring “thaw” is made at the Dean’s level. A decision should be made in January for the timing of the filling of this position. Please contact Catherine Emmanuelle with any questions catherine.emmanuelle@wisc.edu 715-450-0823. For information on Extension’s Community Development efforts see <https://extension.wisc.edu/community-development/>, and how Extension is responding to COVID-related work supported by Community Development Educators, see <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/covid19/category/topics/communities/>.

Support Staff



Michelle Bachand
Support Specialist
mbachand@co.dunn.wi.us

One of my big focuses in December was getting information out. Time was spent sending out Ag newsletters, 4-H handbooks, FoodWise cooking matters packets, updating our website, and scheduling Facebook posts to advertise a wide variety of virtual programming that is upcoming for January and February.

This month I participated in the first session of an Extension offered virtual training series on mastering Zoom co-piloting skills. The knowledge and skills I gained in this training session will enable me to provide greater support to the educators as Zoom workshops, classes, and conferences become larger and more frequent.

Budgetary update: As we come to the end of the year we are under budget for 2020. This is for a variety of (hopefully) one time reasons that include the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on in person programming, conferences, and travel, the vacant Community Development Educator position, and Educator furloughs. There are funds that will be submitted as a carryover request because they were donated for the Farmer’s Night Out event that had been planned in the Spring so they can be used when the event can be rescheduled.

Area Extension Director



Catherine Emmanuelle
Area Extension Director
Chippewa, Dunn, &
Eau Claire Counties
catherine.emmanulle@wisc.edu

I hope your holidays were safe and peaceful. Our educators continue to do a blend of work from the office and work from home, with a continuation of mostly virtual programming to meet the needs of our local communities. Our Dunn County Team continues to work with our state Extension data experts to revamp our monthly highlights and our internal system of recording our educational efforts. Once we have the new system in place, it will help to streamline educator’s reporting efforts and still provide our stakeholders with meaningful impacts of Extension programming. In the meantime, you will continue to receive the highlights on this format that you are familiar with. Wishing you a good start to the New Year!