

EXTENSION DUNN COUNTY MARCH HIGHLIGHTS



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
DUNN COUNTY

Check Out What We've Been Up To:

- An article for Agriview newspaper featuring an area goat farmer that Extension ag agents nominated for the annual Wisconsin Outstanding Young Farmer award.
- Facilitated focus group sessions with farmers where participants shared unique challenges and stressors related to farmer mental health. Results from these sessions will be used to teach health care and mental health care professionals about farm life and farm culture so they can better support their patients/clients in Wisconsin's rural communities.
- Planning for a 3-county cooperative program for 4th to 8th graders, where youth get to meet other families virtually for 5 weeks to participate in hands-on 4-H activities. The goal of this program is to introduce more families to 4-H and to re-involve youth who have been waiting for 4-H to start meeting again.
- Planning for summer camp(s) for 4-H families in collaboration with Eau Claire 4-H educator and several volunteers from both counties. The goal is to plan options for shared summer camp(s) that may be traditional overnight style, or could be day camps with small pods so that youth may participate in the traditions and educational opportunities of summer camp.
- A 4-hour online class for parents in a legal court case for divorce, placement change, child support or paternity, where they learn about the effects of family transitions on children and how parents can minimize problems for their children through cooperative co-parenting strategies.
- A 12-week virtual strength training series for older adults where participants improved strength, balance, and flexibility. This effort was designed to help individuals stay healthy and socially connected during a difficult time of isolation.
- Lessons for elementary grade classrooms where youth learned to identify MyPlate food groups and why nutritious foods are important for their growth. This helps to foster more varied consumption of foods and supports making the healthy choice an easier choice in the home.

Testimonials:

"I saw your article on "End of Year Considerations and 2020 Tax Planning". Your article, by the way, is so well-written and clear. Thank you for all you do." - Dunn County tax preparer & farmer

My biggest takeaway from the Parents Forever class was: "ways to effectively communicate with my co-parent and putting my child first in every interaction with them. Also will be a good resource to look back on when my child has questions or feelings about the divorce. I will be more equipped to respond in the most loving way." - Parents Forever Participant

"The Parents Forever class was a great eye-opener and really good advice for when you are feeling lost." - Dunn County Parent

"I went cross-country skiing this winter. I noticed greater balance and strength from the Strong Bodies classes than ever before. That was really cool. Because I thought I may have to give up my skiing, but now I know it is possible to improve with age and a wonderful program like Strong Bodies." - StrongBodies Participant

SELECT UPCOMING EVENTS: For more visit dunn.extension.wisc.edu/calendar/ and extension.wisc.edu/events/

April 7th, 9-10am - Kick-off of the Wise Wisconsin Series every Wednesday in April. Register at <https://go.wisc.edu/jk800o>

April 9th, 11am-Noon - Farm Management Fridays: Healthy Minds, Healthy Farms. Register at <https://extension.wisc.edu/agriculture/farm-ready-research/>

April 13th, 9-10:15am - Kick-off of a StrongBodies Program that continues every Tuesday and Thursday and goes through June 10th. Register at <https://go.wisc.edu/uk33x3>

April 15th, 12-1pm - Common Tree Diseases. [Click here to register](#)

April 23rd, 11am-Noon - Farm Management Fridays: FARMing for Health. Register at <https://extension.wisc.edu/agriculture/farm-ready-research/>

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Originally created for promotion of the Alice in Dairyland Finals in Dunn County, these agriculture promotion videos highlight the variety of agriculture that is produced in the county. Videos were created by Jonathon Wheeler, UW-Stout Video Production graduate student, with assistance from Katie Wantoch. The final edited videos are posted on Dunn County's YouTube channel and available at [Dunn County Agriculture - Short](#) and [Dunn County Agriculture -Long Video](#).



Katie Wantoch | Associate Professor and Agriculture Agent, Specializing in Economic Development

"Goat farm comes long way from start" article in the weekly Agriview newspaper featured a St. Croix County goat farmer, Leslie Svacina of Cylon Rolling Acres. Leslie participated in the six-week Annie's Project program for beginning and women farmers interested in value-added agriculture in 2013. The program series was hosted by UW Extension ag agents Ryan Sterry and Katie Wantoch. Both agents nominated Svacina for the annual Wisconsin Outstanding Young Farmer award in 2021. Article quotes both Wantoch, - "Leslie is a great communicator. She helps educate people about meat goats and speaks at various conferences on the subject," and Sterry, - "She's grown her business in a short amount of time. What also stands out to me is that she's the farm's principal operator." You can read the full February 25, 2021 Agriview newspaper article by clicking on these links: [page 1](#) and [page 2](#).

UW Extension and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's (DATCP) Farm Center are partnering on a project to learn about farmers'/farm families' unique challenges and stressors related to farmer mental health. This project is part of Wisconsin's research activities for the North Central Farm & Ranch Stress Assistance Network grant (PI - Joy Kirkpatrick).

Three focus group sessions were held on February 16 and 18 and on March 5, 2021. A total of 9 farmers joined the teleconferences by phone. During the teleconference, facilitators from UW Extension (Joy Kirkpatrick, Katie Wantoch, Stef Morrill, and Alana Voss) and facilitators from DATCP (Morgan Cavitt, Tracey Brandel) asked a series of questions to generate discussion among the farmers about the unique challenges that face farmers today, some of the stresses that farmers and their families feel, and the resources that might be most helpful in handling those stressors.

The study was specifically interested in learning from farmers/families:

- What are the unique challenges of farming?
- How farmers/farm families manage stress?
- How do these unique challenges make it difficult for farmers/farm families to seek help from health care providers?

Facilitators will review the information collected. This information will be used to teach health care and mental health care professionals about farm life and farm culture so they can better support their patients/clients in Wisconsin's rural communities. Funding for this project is provided by [USDA NIFA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network \(ERSAN\) grant](#).



Margaret Murphy | Horticulture Outreach Specialist

In 2020, Master Gardener Volunteer training was suspended though Area 6 was one of a few areas able to offer an online horticulture class. This resulted in several participants signing up for and completing the Master Gardener Program's newly required onboarding class. Area 6 now has 11 new Master Gardener Volunteers to welcome for 2021. To assist new volunteers, we will launch our newly developed mentorship program in April. Several established Master Gardener Volunteers from all three counties in Area 6 will serve as mentors. Margaret has a growing list of people interested in training in 2021, which we hope to offer in the fall.

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Master Gardener Volunteers have successfully completed their Growing Together 2021 virtual garden seminar. There were over 300 registrants. The program was advertised statewide though we also had participation from people outside of Wisconsin. Close to a third of the registrants came from Chippewa, Dunn and Eau Claire Counties.

April 5-9 the Wisconsin Master Gardener Program will be celebrating Master Gardener Volunteer Week with Wednesday, April 7, designated as "Thank a Master Gardener Volunteer Day." Extension wants to recognize all of our Master Gardener Volunteers for their dedication and contributions to Wisconsin. Join us by making a phone call, writing a note, or just saying "Thank you!" to a Master Gardener Volunteer on April 7!

Margaret is working with 4H on a multi-county garden mini-camp that includes connecting with elementary aged kids virtually throughout the growing season as they work in their gardens. The focus will be on food growing. Participants will grow lettuce, beans and squash either in containers or in an in-ground garden.

Upcoming programs include [Vegetable Diseases](#) by Dr. Brian Hudelson, Director of the Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic, on April 29th hosted by Dunn, Chippewa and Eau Claire Counties. Margaret will also be presenting on vegetable gardening 101 for beginning vegetable gardeners on April 13 hosted by the Chippewa Falls Public Library and vegetable container gardening with the Strong Bodies program in May.



Sandy Tarter
FoodWise Coordinator



Nancy Fastner
FoodWise Educator



Pamela Warren-Armstrong
FoodWise Educator



Joy Weisner
FoodWise Educator

FoodWise staff have all been busy in both direct education and planning this month. Additionally, it is time to start the process of developing our 2022-2024 3-year FoodWise plan along with FY22 specific implementation. It is a relief that we will have the same budget for FY22.

Stepping Stones Food Pantry: Clients are receiving lentils and not knowing what to do with them. In previous lessons we've always shared how to utilize food pantry items so that clients will take and utilize those ingredients. Nancy prepared a video making lentil tacos. Stepping Stones shared Nancy's video to over 500 clients. You can see that video here: <https://youtu.be/0vozyGP2NG8>

Cooking Matters Series: We continue to offer classes including parents from Dunn County through Head Start recruitment at the Menomonie and Colfax Centers. This gives parents tips and ideas how to include children in making healthy meals and snacks and why that is important. All new participants get a \$20 Walmart gift card to purchase food items in making our suggested recipes. We also offer continuing participants helpful kitchen items such as a cutting board, veggie brush, and measuring utensils for example.

Strong Bodies: We completed our Jan-Mar statewide series which included 54 Dunn County residents. We get lots of positive feedback about the changes participants are experiencing in their strength, balance, and outlook such as the testimonial featured above. Next series to start April 13th. Feel free to share our registration link: <https://go.wisc.edu/uk33x3>

UW-Stout Community Nutrition class: We were invited to speak to a Stout Community Nutrition class

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with both graduate and undergraduate students. Sharing about Extension and FoodWise programming and how we are impacting our communities is a joy and was well-received. We immediately received responses from students wishing to help out as needed. This month, UW Stout Dietetic Intern, Ruby Beaver, is joining FoodWise and Dunn County WIC for 4 weeks to learn more about what we do and join in our programming.



Stephanie Hintz | Human Development & Relationships Educator

Another big month for programming I am still hosting, two WeCOPE series, a Love & Logic Series, a handful of Learning to Breathe program series, and of course hosting the monthly Parents Forever class.

I'd like to highlight a special project I am working on that just received grant funding is the Fair and Just Recovery project.

The COVID-19 crisis has spotlighted inequities that prevent opportunities for all Wisconsinites to thrive based on the seven vital conditions for health and wellbeing. People of color and lower-income households continue to be disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Attention has focused on addressing critical needs rising from the pandemic. It is also important to ensure recovery solutions address those most impacted and build energy in communities to create a better, and more just, "normal." Without action, the harmful status quo will be maintained and long-standing inequities will continue to grow and impact health. Our plan is to bring together the strengths of our various disciplines in order to create conversation that leads to action focused on creating a healthier post-pandemic Wisconsin where everyone can thrive.

Our project will support colleagues across institutes to facilitate conversations that support a fair and just recovery in communities. These conversations and subsequent actions will focus on centering the voices of those most impacted to build awareness and take action towards addressing social and economic inequalities. The team, composed of colleagues in Human Development, Community Development and Health and Well-being will start by researching and identifying best practices and models. Colleagues across the state will then be recruited from multiple programs to participate in a professional development cohort, in which they will be trained to facilitate community conversations that center the voices of those most impacted. After receiving this initial training, colleagues will conduct one-on-one intentional conversations with most impacted community members to learn their perspectives on community assets and what is happening in the community. This step will deepen and cultivate new relationships, draw out issues of interest, identify individuals who want to co-create a better future, and allow for next steps that build on existing momentum and work being done in the community.

From there, colleagues will assist with the formation of local conversation for action teams. These local teams will be composed primarily of most impacted community members in order to deepen engagement and lead to actions that contribute to a fair and just recovery. Until it is safe to do so, we will rely on innovative virtual approaches to engage and organize these conversations. Conversations will focus on different issues that COVID-19 has highlighted in the local communities, including racial inequities and expanding access and opportunities to thrive. These engaged community members will join the cohort to build capacity alongside Extension colleagues to facilitate Fair and Just Recovery Conversations, identify and engage local allies, and take action in their communities. What we learn from this project will be shared with Extension colleagues so they can replicate and adapt the model in their communities.

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Luisa Gerasimo | 4-H Educator

March seems to be all about getting ready for April and beyond. Here is a short list of what has kept me on the run this month: sent out two newsletters (Clover Courier and a special new family mailing); hosted Dog Project meeting and co-hosted one of the Arts and Crafts mini-camps (for 9 counties); met with the State Treasurer's Office regarding the Youth Forward Wisconsin childhood savings program; hosted the annual Awards and Scholarships Interviews via Zoom; assisted with marketing for the LGBTQ+ state work team's book circle; and spent a lot of time planning, preparing, packing and delivering for our two April mini-camps - Digging Deeper into 4-H, and 4-H Art U. I also worked closely with my colleague Rachel Hart-Brinson in Eau Claire to recruit and begin summer camp counselor interviews for either day or overnight options.

In what felt like history in the making, I attended the last 4-H & FFA Meat Animal Project meeting under the 4-H banner, and followed that up by sending a detailed email to the whole project (FFA and 4-H) to explain the change from a chartered 4-H project club to becoming part of the Dunn County Fair Board. Many of the youth continue to be in 4-H, and Katie Wantoch and I will continue to offer educational opportunities as the administrative details for the project and the livestock auction move to the fair. I will also continue to support our 4-H families by serving in an advisory capacity on the Fair Board.

The financial assistance fund I began working on in 2018 finally bore its first fruit! The committee awarded money to help a 4-H family afford several of our mini-camps, and their community club voted to support their request almost in its entirety. The difference was made up by the Fund.

March also involved over 29 hours in Zoom meetings not related to the items above, and state level training. We are working together across the state to ramp up for safe 4-H programming this spring with an eye to doing our work even better when we can get back together.

Vacant | Community Development Educator

The hiring freeze for the Community Development Educator position has been lifted. Thank you for your patience and understanding of the fiscal constraints that led to the hiring freeze. The position is posted here <https://jobs.hr.wisc.edu/en-us/search/?job-mail-subscribe-privacy=agree&search-keyword=EXT%2F>. Please encourage qualified applicants you may know of to apply for the position. The posting will be effective until April 26 in order to advertise and cast a wide net of diverse and talented candidates. We will work through a process of preliminary interviews, final interviews, and a hopeful start date mid-July - early August. The county will not be charged during the vacancy period.

Feel free to post this in an email or your media sites to promote the position:

Come be a part of Wisconsin's largest classroom. A rewarding career awaits you as the Community Development Educator in Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties. Our passionate and collaborative staff actively partner with people, organizations, and local government to transform lives and communities through the power of research and education. There are professional development opportunities to continue learning and growing in your career. We offer generous leave (sick, vacation, and personal days, plus holidays), competitive + benefits, and promote a healthy life-work balance. Join our team as we use our gifts and talents to help our community meet local and statewide challenges and opportunities. The position is posted here.



<https://jobs.hr.wisc.edu/en-us/search/?job-mail-subscribe-privacy=agree&search-keyword=EXT%2F>

Click the red *Apply Now* button to submit your application. Please contact

catherine.emmanuelle@wisc.edu 715-450-0823 with any questions. The posting will be effective until April 26. The University of Wisconsin is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer. We promote excellence through diversity and encourage all qualified individuals to apply.

For information on Extension's Community Development efforts see

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	<p>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/.</p>
	<p>Michelle Bachand Support Specialist</p> <p>My major project this month involved detailed logistical planning for 4-H virtual programming, including Art U which is a collaboration with UW-Stout & A.I.M, Art Integration Menomonie. This program included 4 weeks of projects broken into 4 age categories that cover all grades, K-12. After Luisa and the A.I.M team planned the programming and the registration period closed, I went to work determining the amount of supplies needed to cover the 16 total projects and ordered the materials in the most economical fashion while minimizing the amount of excess materials. Registration fees were collected, supply lists created, and the packing days planned. A total of 72 youth across 3 counties will be participating in this project that will be taught by UW-Stout Art Interns.</p> <p>I continued to contribute to the statewide recording results & monthly highlights roll-out by offering feedback from our monthly highlights last month. The format and design of these highlights provided may continue to evolve as we move through 2021, but our focus will be to continue to provide all of the content and information you have always received.</p>
	<p>Catherine Emmanuelle Area Extension Director - Chippewa, Dunn, & Eau Claire Counties</p> <p>The big happy news this month is that we got the hiring freeze lifted for the Community Development Educator position - which is now a focus of my work to organize and facilitate the hiring and the entire process start to end. I am also working with a grant our team received to bring in 3 Community Health Internship Program university students, through a partnership with the Wisconsin Area Health Education Center. The internships typically require matching funding, however, we were able to secure full funding of the interns' 8 week income without using levy dollars, a value of over \$15,000. The interns will partner with Extension educators for their summer programming with a focus on health. The interns are looking for exposure to many aspects of local government, so you may see them at a committee meeting this summer! Last, please save the date for Thursday, September 16, 2021, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. for an Extension Meet & Greet, hosted for our committee members and county leadership for an opportunity to hear from Extension educators in Chippewa, Dunn, & Eau Claire Counties and their educational impact with our communities.</p>