



Community Development

Addison Vang | *Community Development Educator*

October was a fairly quiet month after the HERE Conference to regroup and start thinking about future program opportunities.

There are two major grants that were awarded that I am a part of or involved with at the local and state levels. We received a Specialty Crop Block Grant from the USDA to 'enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops'. The grant would fund workshops in Western Wisconsin supporting Hmong and ethnic farmers who specialize in specialty crops over two years. The other grant is also a USDA grant called the Underserved and Veteran Farmers, Ranchers, and Foresters where Extension has partnered with Groundswell, as the lead, to support Hmong farmers in creating a more collaborative network of farmers, organizations, and partners to address Hmong farmer challenges and barriers. These two grants are exciting as they both focus on a demographic that has not historically been supported to this extent. We are just starting this work on both grants and I am excited that it will support our Hmong farmers and overall community food system.

I collaborated with 4 other educators from around the state on a grant writing workshop on October 10th. We had to close registration early because of the overwhelming interest in the workshop. Due to the interest, we decided to add an additional workshop on November 10, 2022. [Click here for the registration link](#) or type in the shorturl.at/efkog.

I have also been working with the state team to work on a 2-day FEED Summit supporting aspiring entrepreneurs in the Ideation phase and early entrepreneurs in the startup phase. Last year the winter FEED program was not programmed, so it is an opportunity to continue with this work supporting our food-related businesses

To register for click on the following link: [FEED Summit 2022 – Community Food Systems \(wisc.edu\)](https://www.wisc.edu/FEED-Summit-2022-Community-Food-Systems)

- Basic grant proposal workshop for local government, businesses, and organization members and staff. The goal of this effort is for people to learn how to find, write and apply for grants so that they can carry out the activities of their organization, business, or government unit.

Horticulture

Margaret Murphy | *Horticulture Outreach Specialist*

I taught my first lab for the Foundations in Gardening course in late September, which received great feedback. Participants found it very useful to learn about the importance of understanding pesticide labels and walking through how to interpret the results of a soil test. We are gearing up for our second lab, which will reinforce how to find and use research-based resources and to know the difference between evidence-based information and gardening myths and misconceptions that abound on the internet. We will also review what is meant by mechanical and cultural pest management techniques.

Keeping in step with the horticulture program's focus on increasing pollinator habitat, I helped staff and volunteers at Lake Wissota State Park create a native rain garden plus, helped find signage for the rain garden and neighboring pollinator garden. In September, we finished planting the rain garden and to date three new educational signs were added. Over the winter, I will work on creating brochures that feature the plants we used and why they are beneficial.

Our garden mini webinars have finished up for October. These are hosted by UW-Madison, Division of Extension, Horticulture – Here is a link to the complete play list in case you missed any over the growing season [-https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLp99J7LkH6pJFhu-W3rzjvVs49tHH5Eu](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLp99J7LkH6pJFhu-W3rzjvVs49tHH5Eu)

I serve on CVTC's Landscape, Plant & Turf Mgmt. Committee. We recently met and updates from the industry included an upward trend in clients wanting more sustainable landscape options and locally sourced materials/plants. This trend is also reflected with students enrolled in the horticultural program at the college showing a heavy interest in sustainable landscaping. This also tracks with what I have been hearing and helping the public with when they contact Extension for yard and garden advice/guidance.

Horticulture inquiries continue to come in daily – questions on harvest, soil testing, fruit, wildlife, trees and plant ID are the most common. As we roll into the colder months, I expect to receive inquiries about home invaders – not space invaders but insect invaders.



For professional development, I recently attended the Community Connections Conference. The focus of this conference was to connect with other groups in the area and hone our skills in putting our ideas into action to make a difference in our community. I found the conference very helpful for making future connections in health and wellness garden planning.

- Four sections of an online Lab component for the 2022 Foundations in Gardening (previously Foundations in Horticulture) course where participants from the Foundations in Gardening course (home gardeners) apply what they learned from the Foundations course through interactive activities. This effort is designed to encourage best horticultural practices in Wisconsin for better environmental outcomes.
- An online course for consumer audiences (home gardeners) where participants learned fundamental knowledge of Wisconsin horticulture with an emphasis in Integrated Pest Management. The goal is to increase decision-making and problem-solving skills, improve the productivity / health of gardens and landscapes, and to implement gardening practices that have a positive impact on the environment.
- Planning for a statewide webinar series for consumer horticulture audiences where participants will learn about pollinator decline, climate change and environmental contamination and pollution. The goal of this effort is to increase adoption of horticultural practices addressing identified environmental issues in Wisconsin.

Health and Well-Being

Sandy Tarter | *FoodWise Coordinator*

Joy Weisner | *FoodWise Educator*

Jael Wolf | *FoodWise Educator*

Vacant | *FoodWise Educator*

October kicks off our new fiscal year in FoodWise and school programming is back in session!

Joy and Jael began a 6-lesson series for 1st and 3rd graders in River Heights Elementary. All of these lessons provide hands-on and engaging activities that include tastes such as spinach, red vs green apples, whole wheat crackers, and pea pods. First graders also receive a taste chart with information in English and Spanish. First and third graders are exposed to the lesson's vocabulary in Spanish as well.

Head Start programming also started in Menomonie and Colfax centers. Youth enjoyed hearing fruit/vegetable stories and learning the colors of fruits and vegetables along with tasting mangoes and jicama.

All FW staff attended a webinar on Indigenous Food Sovereignty and Health with Dr. Valerie Blue Bird Jernigan. She shared her work on fostering long-term relationships with Indigenous communities that promote tribal sovereignty and building capacity to improve health through food.

Sandy's work with the Chronic Disease Prevention Action Teams in Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire includes partnering with Stout students and the Regional Diabetes Prevention Program team to identify community intervention strategies and action. We are promoting the pre-diabetes risk assessment with coasters that will be distributed around the county, information flyers distributed by Stepping Stones Food Pantry, and working to develop grocery store tour videos for health food selection. We are also in development of a winter activity promotion program to support families.

Training: Jael joined the Extension New Colleague Cohort in Madison. This onboarding engages staff in learning which models Extension's purpose/mission/values, creates a learning community of colleagues across institutes, and provides awareness of resources to support educational delivery. Sandy joined the Community Connections Conference in Rice Lake that showcased communities that used innovative methods to problem solve challenges and advocate change.

- A series of follow-up emails and phone calls to area partners to discuss FY23-24 agreements and collaborations with FoodWise. This effort strengthens local relationships and ensures understanding between partners.
- A collaborative effort with Mayo Health System providers and St. Francesca Resource Center to implement a program that screens for chronic diseases and connects people to healthy food and nutrition education at a food pantry. This program aims to promote healthy eating and active living as action steps to reduce chronic diseases.
- Monthly meetings with the Chronic Disease Prevention Action Teams under the Eau Claire Healthy



Communities, Health Dunn Right, and Chippewa Health Improvement Partnership coalitions. This effort helps guide the action teams in providing community awareness and activities concerning healthy food access, food security, and increased physical activity for local families.

- Monthly Steering Committee meetings with the executive leadership of the Chippewa Healthy Improvement Partnership and Health Dunn Right during which organizational needs are reviewed and discussed. The purpose of this effort is to help the organization identify a strategic direction in order to more effectively guide its action teams including the Chronic Disease Prevention Action Teams.

Human Development and Relationships

Luisa Gerasimo | *Human Development and Relationships Educator*

October included in person meetings with community partners including the Center for Independent Living, Dunn Co. Criminal Justice Collaboration Division, and Reach out and Read, and the Dunn County Community Foundation. At each meeting I learned what the organization is doing, let them know the programs I am involved in and asked about unmet needs. In addition to the programming outlined below I am also still in training, and doing academic reading to gain a broader understanding of evidence-based programs that can help our community be stronger and more resilient. I took an all day training to learn how to be a better workshop facilitator and went to the Community Connections Conference in Rice Lake with other Extension colleagues.

- An evidence-based in person co-parenting class designed for parents who will be sharing custody of children. This four-hour course is designed to improve parenting to protect children, increase cooperation between parents and help parents care for themselves in a time of stress.

"I was pretty anxious before class but it was well worth the class. Questions and small conversations of what others were experiencing... very informational and beneficial to take. Luisa is a great instructor and made the class very enjoyable and interactive with everyone in attendance.

-Parents Forever Participant

- A community conversation with people from several counties and the Black as UR filmmaker Michael Rice about gender, race, and sexuality. The program was hosted by the Center for Racial and Restorative Justice at the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire and focused on ways to help people in the community feel valued and safe to be who they are without fear of violence or reprisal.
- A presentation on asking better questions for Building Bridges, an after school club hosted by The Eau Claire Area Hmong Assistance Association. The goal is to support teens who are focusing on learning more about themselves.
- A community needs assessment of dozens of county partners and local service organizations. The goal of this assessment is to identify local problems, root causes, local conditions, and appropriate educational support to be offered by the Human Development and Relationships Educator.

Positive Youth Development

The hiring process for the 4-H Program Educator position is ongoing. For information on Extension's 4-H Program, visit <https://4h.extension.wisc.edu/>.

Natural Resources

Dan Zerr | *Regional Natural Resource Educator*

- Technical assistance for a partnership group (Rain to Rivers) which raises awareness and encourages action to reduce storm water impacts. The goal of this effort is to increase storm water management awareness and implementation.
 - Facilitation of bimonthly meetings of the Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership, with the goal to implement a ten-year watershed plan aimed at improving the water quality and soil health of the Red Cedar River Watershed.
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Agriculture

Katie Wantoch | *Professor of Practice and Statewide Farm Management Outreach Specialist*

- A monthly column in WI Agriculturist magazine for farmers and ag professionals, where readers learn about farm management and available Extension resources. The purpose of this effort is to improve farm business decision-making.
 - A podcast series, AgriVision, for farmers and ag professionals, where UW Extension educators answer Farm Management questions and share knowledge and expertise on how farmers can improve their farm management skills.
 - Planning for a survey of QuickBooks users in collaboration with other educators that are part of the North Central Extension Risk Management Education grant. The goal of this effort is to identify what areas of training are needed in QuickBooks, so those producers can have a better financial understanding of their farming operations.
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Support

Michelle Bachand | *Support Specialist*

This month I worked on a variety of activities, some of which include:

- Working with a 4-H Volunteer on a marketing project to celebrate National 4-H Month and increase participation by printing and distributing 4-H flyers for every elementary school in the County.
 - Serving on the 4-H Educator search and screen committee.
 - Creating and distributing the October Clover Courier.
 - Finalizing the fall 4-H award process; creating award plaques, organizing awards, and distributing to clubs.
 - Reviewing 4-H Club and Project charter applications and following up with clubs as we approached the November 1st deadline.
 - Attending a Grant Writing 101 workshop
 - Compiling programming evaluation and demographic information.
 - Creating and updating programming materials for the Educators.
 - Various website and social media updates.
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Area Extension Director

Kristen Bruder | *Area Extension Director – Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties*

The role of the AED is similar to that of the department head in the county. If you have ideas, thoughts, or want to chat about Extension please reach out! Below is a brief overview of the role of AEDs:

Extension fully invests in Area Extension Directors (AEDs) who oversee an area. These administrative positions are responsible for partnership management, staff development, financial management and program coordination.

Through the many interactions the AED has with county partners and local educators, the AED develops a solid understanding of the local needs and county priorities and helps to align Extension educational programs to ensure the programs address county needs. Educators also communicate local needs to their programmatic Institutes which collectively identify opportunities to address statewide needs. Some additional primary duties of the AED include:

- They serve as the county Extension Department Budget Officer and Administrative Officer for the counties in their area. Specific signatory authority is agreed to by the county to allow the AED to serve in this capacity.
- They are the hiring authority of Extension staff and serve as the direct supervisor of Extension educators, conducting annual and mid-point performance evaluations with each Extension employee.
- They are responsible for the regular operations of county Extension offices and provide oversight to county staff within the office.
- They support educators and staff who direct Extension volunteers. They engage when volunteer behavior concerns expand beyond coaching or if dismissal of the volunteer is warranted.
- They monitor and manage risk and liability situations that might arise.