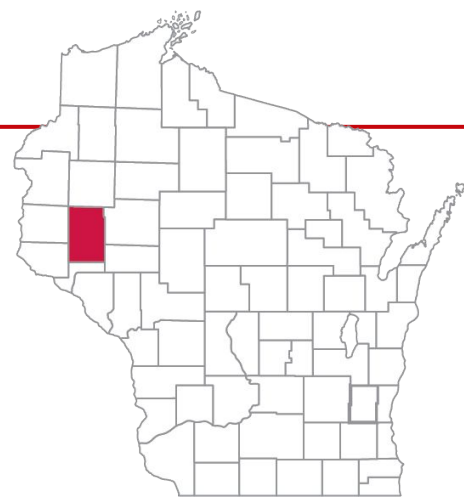




Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
DUNN COUNTY



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

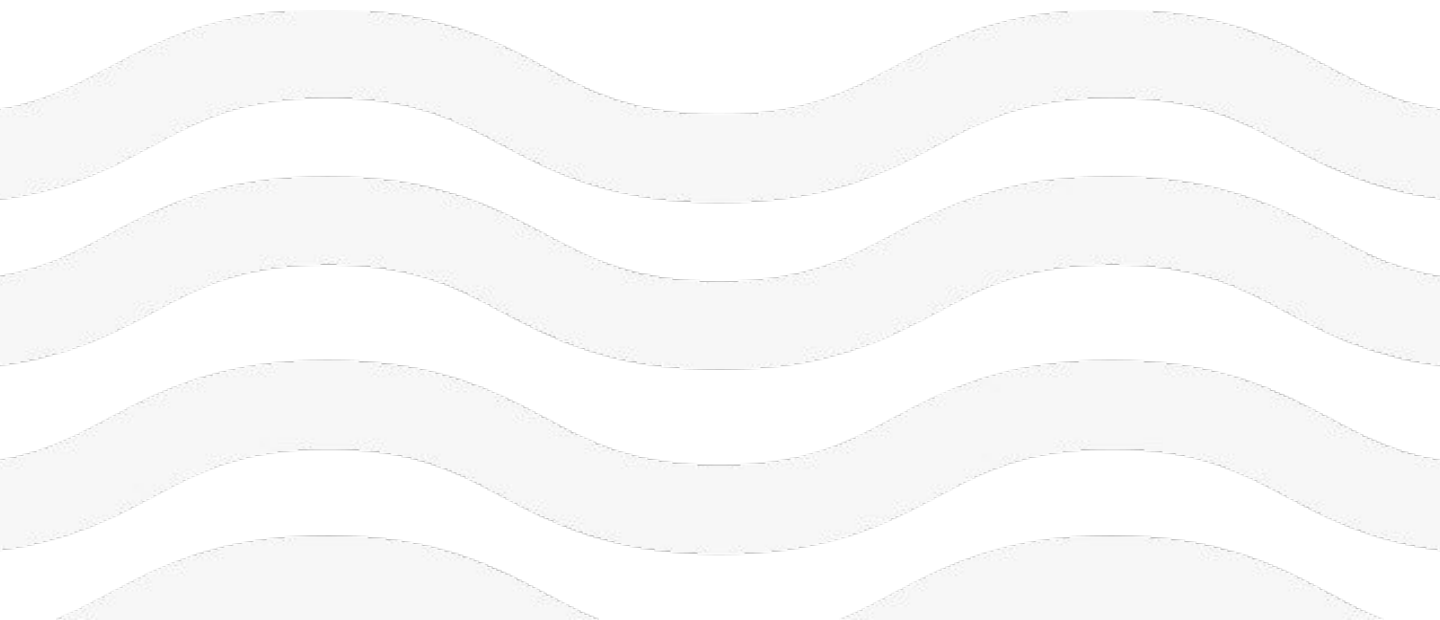


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Thank you to the 2023 Community Resources & Tourism Committee for providing oversight for Extension:

Jim Zons – Chair, Ann Vogl – Vice Chair, Monica Berrier, Larry Bjork, & Thomas Quinn

Thank you for your support and guidance.

University of Wisconsin–Madison Extension Dunn County

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Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

UW-Madison Extension's outreach creates key connection points for families, farms, businesses, nonprofit organizations, government, and more. We support local volunteers and leaders to take action and serve as role models in their communities, and we make sure Wisconsinites have the latest research, best practices, and educational opportunities.



Learn more at
extension.wisc.edu



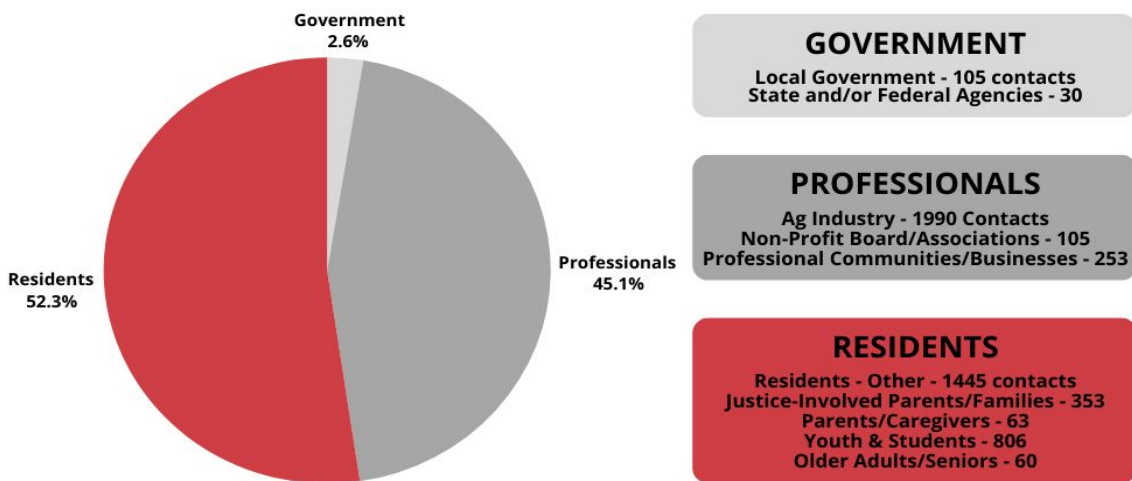


Kristen Bruder
Area Extension Director
Chippewa, Dunn, and
Eau Claire Counties

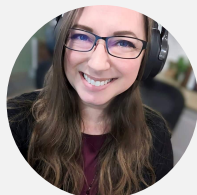
"I am excited to have completed my first year as the Extension Director for Dunn. It is an honor to now serve in the community I have lived in with my husband and three children for over 20 years. The first year has been filled with a lot of learning, listening, and relationship building. I look forward to many more years!"

I am pleased to share the remarkable contributions of Extension in Dunn County in this report. Over the past year, Extension has remained committed to serving our community through education, outreach, and research-based initiatives. In agriculture, Extension has been a vital resource for farmers, offering the latest research-based information and technical assistance. In nutrition education, Extension has empowered individuals and families to make informed dietary choices, leading to improved health outcomes. Our 4-H program has positively impacted the lives of Dunn County's youth, providing essential life skills and leadership opportunities. Our parent programs equips parents with the knowledge and skills needed to building strong, nurturing relationships with their children. Looking ahead to 2024, I am confident that Extension will continue to drive positive change in our county. Thank you for your ongoing support, and I look forward to our future accomplishments together.

Extension Dunn County Educational Contacts



5,210 Total Contacts



Melissa Burke
Outreach Support Associate

I joined Extension Dunn County as the Outreach Support Associate in 2023, and feel very fortunate to be part of such an amazing team. I support the Extension educators in their programming, and also run the daily operations of the office – there is never a dull moment! A large part of my job consists of connecting the citizens of Dunn County with all the information, research, and resources that Extension has to offer. Nothing brings me more joy than helping others, and this job allows me that opportunity!

UW-MADISON EXTENSION

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES *with* THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

Agriculture & Horticulture >>

Our network of researchers, outreach specialists, and local educators are on the leading edge of creating practical solutions for livestock and crop production in addition to farm and labor management. We provide customized guidance, business planning assistance, and industry knowledge for what today's agricultural operations are facing.

Community & Economic Development >>

Businesses, governments, and organizations succeed through development from Extension educators and specialists. We provide education for elected officials to understand their roles and responsibilities in helping communities thrive. We offer businesses the direct technical assistance and connection to support structures they need to help them succeed. Our rural entrepreneurship program identifies ways for businesses to overcome challenges and take advantage of unique opportunities.

Health & Well-Being >>

We're supporting positive change for families through physical and mental health programs in addition to structural improvements needed to make the healthy choice the easy one. Our physical fitness classes and mental health training equips people with the tools they need to lead healthy, active lives. We provide public health resources and tools for community action. We provide guidance on systems changes for food security and food access.

Human Development and Relationships >>

Reinforcing family connections, financial knowledge, and strong relationships is at the heart of Extension's programming. We support learning and emotional bonding by building literacy skills in justice-involved families. We guide community and individual development across lifespans. We teach financial security through rent planning and budget management.

Positive Youth Development & 4-H >>

Community-led 4-H programs deliver quality activities and leadership opportunities that are leading to engaged, energized, and informed young people across the state. 4-H is a movement – in Wisconsin, 98% of our 4-H members are inspired to make positive changes in their communities.

Natural Resources & Conservation - Value Added State Funded Programs >>

We work at the crossroads of communities, natural resources, and agriculture to protect our environmental assets and guide resource management. We support individual and regional water-well testing, along with education to address safe drinking water. We educate farmers, businesses, and communities on safe practices to ensure access to plentiful, sustainably managed sources of food, water, and energy.



Agriculture

Supporting Dairy



The University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension Dairy Program strengthens the competitiveness of the Wisconsin dairy industry through statewide education and research. The program has educators and campus-based specialists focused on the following areas: welfare & herd health, emerging technologies & facilities, feed & nutrition, milk quality & milking systems, reproduction & genetics, and youngstock development.

The Landscape

18,700

dairy cows in
Dunn County

96%

family farms

25,064

pounds milk per cow -
WI average

\$989 million

economic impact of Dunn
agriculture (2019)

Achieving More Together



UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work – on the farm, in schools, and throughout urban and rural communities. In 2023, the dairy program partnered with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Chippewa Valley Technical College, Wisconsin Farm Bureau, Western Wisconsin Agricultural Lenders, and Wisconsin Literacy, Inc.

Community Impacts In 2023

65 literacy volunteers learned where to find dairy management resources that have been translated into Spanish for use with English Language Learners (ELL) at the Wisconsin Literacy, Inc. Fall Virtual Conference. An introduction to Extension Spanish translated resources for dairy employees was shared to increase knowledge and awareness of translated management materials. There was a panel discussion by English tutors and Extension on English Language Learner resources for dairy farm employees. The Extension component shared dairy resources that were already translated to Spanish, where to look for dairy events / webinars that may be useful to their students, and how to find other university resources. The recorded webinar session has an additional 39 views online.



Agriculture

Badger Dairy Insights – Webinar series

The Badger Dairy Insight webinar series started in 2020 and has continued due to its popularity. It is a collection of webinars on different dairy management topics ranging from welfare & herd health, nutrition, milk quality, genetics & reproduction, emerging technologies & facilities, and youngstock development. Over 2023, there were 484 participants in the live webinars and 2,536 recorded webinar views on YouTube, illustrating the popularity of the recorded webinar model.

Leadership Eau Claire Ag & Environment Day

Leadership Eau Claire is a skill building program hosted by the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce. Extension partnered to teach developing community leaders about Eau Claire agriculture and its economic contributions to the county. After participating in the program, when asked to agree or disagree with the statement: I learned about how dairy farms function, 96% agreed.



Bees, Trees, & Cheese with NRCS: Conservation Discussion

Extension partnered on the Natural Resource Conservation Service event with other organizations to provide the opportunity for landowners and farmers to explore what resources are available with the various organizations in their local community. Across the three hour event, 83 participants had an opportunity to learn about cover crops being utilized as feed / grazing forages, including being able to see potted forage plants to help them better identify forages on their properties.



Lyssa Seefeldt
Regional Dairy Educator

Lyssa is the regional dairy educator for Chippewa, Dunn, & Eau Claire counties. Working with farmers is always a rewarding experience and I usually learn just as much from farmers as I can share with them. Farmers are some of the most creative problem solvers that I know and helping them add to their toolkit of herd management skills is one of the best pieces of working in Extension. No two days are the same and you never know what questions are coming your way each day.



Agriculture

Supporting Crops and Soils



The Division of Extension UW-Madison Crops and Soils program connects regional educators and statewide specialists to focus on issues and challenges facing today's field, vegetable, fruit, and emerging crop producer. The Crops and Soils Program focuses on Forage and Grain Production and Management, Emerging Crops, Grazing, Pest Management, Soils, Nutrient Management, and Economics of Crop Production.

The Landscape

175,000

Acres of corn and soybeans planted in 2023

260,795

Acres in farmland

14%

Land under irrigation

\$381

Million dollars of market product sold

Achieving More Together



UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work – on the farm, in schools and throughout urban and rural communities. Dunn County Demo Farm Committee, FFA Chapters, Chippewa Valley Forage Council, Western Wisconsin Agricultural Lenders, Wisconsin Farmers Union, Dunn County Farm Bureau, Land Conservation Department, Chippewa Valley Technical College, Mayo Clinic Health System Community Action Board.

Community Impacts In 2023

As part of the Farm Pulse Crop Insurance and Grain Marketing course, farmers learned about grain marketing strategies and trends to develop a grain marketing plan. Farmers learned to identify grain marketing risk and their personal comfort with risk, and used that comfort level to begin to develop a grain marketing plan. The Crops and Soils Program Crop Enterprise Budget Tool, developed by Extension educators, was used to provide cost of production estimates to determine break-even and profitable commodity prices. Grain marketing tools such as hedging and price forecasting were also covered in the course. A partnership with the University of Nebraska–Lincoln provided access to the Marketing in a New Era web-based marketing simulator. Post-program evaluations indicated all participants have increased knowledge in all topics presented. Farmers also indicated they want to continue to meet to discuss and learn about current commodity markets and trends.



Dunn County Demonstration Farm

I was introduced to the Dunn County Demonstration Farm in the summer of 2023 to begin planning educational programs and potential on-farm research projects. The Demonstration Farm committee is a partnership of Dunn County Land and Water Conservation Department, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Chippewa Valley Technical College, and Extension. The Demonstration Farm hosted a field day for farmers and agriculture professionals where participants learned adaptation of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and emerging technologies to cropping systems to manage crop pests and increase crop and farm profitability. Forty-three participants learned about emerging technology for crop protection and pest management during the Red Cedar Demonstration Farm Fall Field Day. Plans for 2024 are to implement a nitrogen rate application to corn study to determine effects of nitrogen rates on corn yield and soil nitrate content.



Badger Crop Connect

The Badger Crop Connect was a webinar series held throughout the growing season to provide timely crop production and market information to farmers, agribusiness professionals, and agency personnel. The series connected UW-Madison researchers and Extension educators together to address current growing season issues. The purpose of this event was for farmers and agribusiness professionals to gain knowledge and skills that can be directly applied to their acreage in terms of pest, soil, water, and crop management utilizing cutting edge technology to increase sustainability and profitability on farms across Wisconsin.

Manure and Nutrient Management

Dairy and livestock farmers are faced with manure management challenges to properly apply manure and fertility products at agronomically determined rates while balancing environmental concerns to protect ground and surface waters. The distance manure needs to be moved from farm to cropland for feed is increasing as dairy and livestock farms grow in animal numbers. Field events and training for farmers, manure applicators, and agriculture professionals was provided where participants learned manure management application and manure spill response techniques to maximize nutrient efficiency, protect ground and surface water, and increase farm profitability. The goal of the program is to increase knowledge about manure application, placement, and timing while preventing manure and soil runoff. Future on-farm research will investigate the effect manure and commercial nitrogen application has on yield and nitrate concentrations in groundwater.



Jerry Clark
Regional Crops &
Soils Educator

Jerry is the regional Crops and Soils Educator for Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties. I have served as an educator in Extension since 1998 and continue to enjoy the opportunities and challenges that come with serving the agricultural community. I find the variety of tasks most rewarding such as on-farm research, working collaboratively, helping individuals to improve their lives.



Horticulture

Supporting Lawns, Gardens & Landscapes

Horticulture is the connection between people and plants. It supports environmental stewardship, human wellness, and the growing of local food. The program focuses on strategies to mitigate environmental challenges such as pollinator decline and environmental pollution. It offers education on how to grow your own produce to help reduce food costs and aid in nutrition, communicates the physical, mental and social wellness benefits gardening provides, and encourages people of all ages to incorporate gardening into their lifestyle even when space or mobility is limited.



The Landscape

344

Lawn, landscape and gardening questions responded to regionally

93%

Positive rating from end of season survey of regional horticulture advising service

83%

End of season survey respondents who changed or adopted new practices based on guidance received

60

Regional programs, presentations, classes offered, and community events participated in

Achieving More Together



UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin throughout urban and rural communities to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work. In Dunn County, the horticulture program partnered with several organizations and individuals to offer garden-based educational programs, including Dunn County Facilities and Parks Department, Dunn County Master Gardener Association, University of Wisconsin-Stout, and Boys & Girls Clubs of the Greater Chippewa Valley-Menomonie Center.

Community Impacts In 2023

Established an educational garden for the public consisting of 17 different species of native plants to demonstrate plantings that, once established, support pollinators by increasing habitat, lower water needs and reduce fertilizer and pesticide use, helping to keep our waterways clean and reduce chemical input to our environment.

Cultivated a previously untapped area of educational outreach for our region involving the mental, physical, and social benefits of gardening.



Horticulture

Supporting Youth Gardening with the Boys & Girls Club, Year 2

We plant vegetables, flowers and herbs using the gardens to teach kids the basics of growing and tending plants. Plants in a child’s learning environment enhance learning capabilities by helping to increase focus and concentration. Benefits also include increased exercise, cooperation, and making personal connections. Studies also support that kids who grow vegetables tend to eat more vegetables and try a wider variety.



Supporting Pollinators

Over 75 percent of all the flowering plants on earth are pollinated by insects and animals! Pollinators play a critical role in the world’s ecosystems, facilitating the reproduction of flowering plants and ensuring the production of fruits and vegetables. Insect pollinators have undergone significant declines globally as well as in WI. The creation of a native pollinator garden showcases the value of creating ecological niches in home landscapes, allowing urban areas to support insect pollinators. This effort is to encourage individuals to adopt gardening practices that support pollinator habitat and health throughout the year.



Lawn, Landscape & Garden Questions

An end of season survey reported that clients consistently praised the horticulture advising service, emphasizing its efficiency, care, & knowledge.

“It was such a pleasure speaking with Margaret Murphy. She not only answered my question but provided tips & resources that I am sure I will use in the future.”

“I received helpful, friendly, & informative feedback to rescue an indoor plant that had great sentimental value to me. I learned a number of plant care strategies in the process. I’m very grateful for the service I received.”



“The information you have available in articles and by responding to questions is wonderful! We bought our house with 1-1/2 acres on Beaver Creek a couple of years ago. The previous owner let most of the land grow over so there is an abundance of honeydew, black locust, climbing vines and buckthorn. I’m slowly clearing it all out and with your help replanting a lawn, so it becomes a healthy yard. Your help is invaluable in this!”



Margaret Murphy
Horticulture Educator

As horticulture educator, I get the perks of cooperative programming with community partners, collaborative work with Extension colleagues regional and statewide, great professional development opportunities and a sense of accomplishment and joy in teaching about the wonders of plants and gardening.

I truly appreciate your support of my program area and welcome your input or questions.



FoodWise

Supporting Healthy Choices & Healthy Lives



FoodWise is federally funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). With local strengths, we support healthy eating habits, active lifestyles and healthy community environments for Wisconsin residents experiencing limited incomes through nutrition education at the individual, community and systems levels.



The Dunn County Landscape

Whether people are healthy or not is affected by systems, policies, and environmental factors.

6%
of county residents (2,807) experience limited income and have low access to a grocery store[^]

9.4%
of county residents (4,211) use SNAP benefits to purchase food for themselves and their families.*

[^]County Health Rankings
* WI Dept of Administration and WI Dept of Health Services

Achieving More Together



UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin throughout urban and rural communities to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work. In Dunn County, FoodWise partners with schools, summer garden programs, early child care programs, transition shelter, and food pantries to help make the healthy choice the easy choice in our communities.



Community Impacts In 2023

- Completed 268 educational contacts around nutrition education topics in a variety of settings, including Menomonie/Colfax Head Start Centers, River Heights and Downsville Elementary classrooms, Boys and Girls Club, and Bridge to Hope.
- Partnered with River Heights Elementary to expand the Harvest of the Month campaign, reaching students, parents & caregivers with messages in English & Spanish to promote eating Wisconsin-grown fruits & vegetables.
- Supported Market Match program at the Menomonie Farmers Market. This gives community members with limited income double tokens to purchase food.



Inspiring Collaborations

FoodWise teaches about Food Resource Management and supports food pantries:

- New programming at Bridge to Hope started in 2023. They have a food pantry in-house and our lessons provide information on utilizing foods from the pantry while stretching food dollars.
- With the rise in Hmong and Hispanic families in our area, FoodWise collaborated with Stepping Stones Food Pantry and Feed My People Food Bank to support access to culturally relevant food options. This is the second year for SSFP to offer the Whole Community Foods Program with increased options for Hmong and Hispanic families. FoodWise will continue to support the pantry with materials as needed.



Multi-Level Program Efforts

- FoodWise provided lessons with elementary-age youth in River Heights, Downsville, and Boys & Girls Club. We encourage students to taste, explore, and learn about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables.
- We also provide culturally sensitive food tastes, Spanish materials, and Harvest of the Month (HoM) guidance. HoM focuses on seasonal fruits and vegetables with tastes, teacher activities, classroom/cafeteria posters, and caregiver handouts.
- School staff and youth have been very positive about our lessons. During the summer garden program, one boy exclaimed, "I am giving this spaghetti squash 4 thumbs up"! (He included his big toes!)



Sandy Tarter
Nutrition Coordinator



Joy Weisner
Nutrition Educator



Jael M. Wolf
Bilingual Nutrition
Educator



Hillarie Roth
Nutrition Educator

Ever wonder what drives FoodWise? Here's a glimpse: With 35 years of combined experience, we're fueled by a passion for community nurturing and empowering families with evidence-based nutrition education. From kids trying new fruits to teachers praising our impact, and from 'aha' moments among parents to young adults mastering dishes like sesame chicken stir fry, we live for these rewarding experiences. But our mission extends further—we're dedicated to improving food access, supporting FoodShare families, and expanding coalition outreach. Curious? Reach out anytime! We're here to chat and answer your questions!



Human Development & Relationships

Supporting Healthy Relationships



Good relationships are universally important to child and adult well-being. Families do not exist in isolation; they are influenced by surrounding people, institutions, social norms, and policies. Rooted in research, Extension offers education and support to people near and far. If we wish to truly impact families, we must focus on preventing harm. We save money and lives when we teach new skills that help families grow and thrive.

The Landscape

Top 211 call
from Dunn?
Housing!

55 recording
sessions
via Making Reading
Memories for
parents in jail to read to
their children

95%
Of parents in our
co-parenting classes say
they feel more confident
they can keep kids "out
of the middle"

25 hours:
provided focus group
data analysis for the
Public Health
Department

Achieving More Together



Local Partners: Arbor Place, Bridge to Hope, Center for Independent Living, Chamber of Commerce, Clerk of Court, Community Foundation, Dunn Co. Public Health Department, Dunn County Housing Workgroup, Dunn Co. Human Services, Dunn Co. Jail, EC Area Hmong Mutual Assistance Association, Housing Action Team, Head Start, Health Dunn Right, Friday Play Group, Literacy Link, United Way.

Extension Teams: Early Childhood, Fatherhood, Co-Parenting, Raising a Thinking Child, Raising Wisconsin's Children, and Youth Forward Wisconsin (childhood savings accounts)

Community Impacts In 2023

- ★ VP of the United Way of Dunn County: worked diligently on behalf of our community throughout a difficult crisis.
- ★ Led Health Dunn Right's **Housing Action Team** and helped with the Community Health Needs Assessment for Dunn, EC and Chippewa, so that the community's top needs can be elevated.



Raising a Thinking Child



In the fall of 2023 we offered a free 6-week series for parents and caregivers of 4-8 year olds. This program helps children learn to evaluate their actions and to understand emotions. I co-facilitate this series with colleagues in Dane and Barron counties, and people from all over the state can sign up. Dunn County residents stop by our office to pick up their free materials. In late 2023 my colleagues and I were able to provide over 50 virtual offerings to families statewide. Busy parents often prefer virtual to in person as it fits into their schedules better.



Our People Need Places to Live!

According to Dr. Steve Deller, an Ag Economist, rural Wisconsin communities like ours are in rough shape due to severe lack of suitable homes. Over 1/3 of renters now pay more than 35% of their income on rent. The lack of an appropriate home is making local workforce development and the recruitment of healthcare workers harder.

A comprehensive study of our county's housing stock shows that we are thousands of units short of current need. The Housing Action Team and the county's Housing Workgroup have begun trying to address this vital issue.

"I'm glad we are starting to take this [lack of housing] issue seriously. Our neighbors need homes. We are really realizing how much work it is going to take to impact the issue here."

– Community Member,
November 2023



Luisa Gerasimo
Human Development
and Relationships Educator

I truly enjoy family education and outreach. Serving the people-serving organizations that are helping our neighbors is also a key part of my day-to-day work.



Wisconsin 4-H

Supporting Our Youth



4-H is the largest youth development organization in the United States. Dunn County currently has 20 chartered clubs and groups. Six of these are project-specific: Dairy Judging, Dog, Photography, Shooting Shorts, Small Animal, and Equine. There is one Leaders Association, a Youth Activities Council, and twelve Community Clubs. The most popular project areas are Art, Foods and Nutrition, Swine, Photography, Dairy, Drawing and Painting, Cloverbuds (k-2 members), Woodworking, Horse, Beef, and Home Environment.

The Landscape

277

Enrolled Youth
up 5.3% over 2022

71

First Year Members
up 47.9% over 2022

54

adult volunteers

\$44,685

value of hours volunteered

Achieving More Together



UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work – on the farm, in schools and throughout urban and rural communities. In 2023, Dunn County 4-H partnered with Clearwater Trout Unlimited, Red Cedar Speedway, Mabel Tainter Theater, Evolving Colors, Elk Mound School District, Boyceville School District and various townships who host club meetings.

Community Impacts In 2023

- 25 4-H Youth and their families attended a 4-H night at the Red Cedar Speedway. This partnership encouraged the families to explore recreational opportunities in their county.
- A leadership training was held for 30 members of the Elk Mound Middle School Student Council.



Wisconsin 4-H

Summer Project Days

Community members are volunteers led a series of Summer Project Days. These project days focused on some of the most popular projects in Dunn County 4-H. They included Photography, Food Preservation, Painting, and Nutrition. 18 youth were served during these events.

Art U

Collaboration with UW-Stout Art Education program to provide a series of virtual and in-person art lessons, culminating in an art show and celebration. Art education students led the lessons for both members and non-members. Grades k-6 worked virtually, while grades 7 and up met in person.

4-H Summer Camp

Research shows that camp experience has far-reaching benefits well into adulthood. We hired and trained 17 high school 4-Hers as counselors. These young leaders helped plan and carry out a 4-day, 3-night base camp experience at Kamp Kenwood for 42 campers and an outpost experience for 19 campers at Lake Wissota State Park.



"We've loved doing this - I have very much appreciated the ability for my kids to participate from home...Doing the art gallery is a nice conclusion and a great way for the artists to showcase their work! We appreciate the planning and work that goes into this behind the scenes."

--Art U Parent

"4-H has taught me the meaning of leadership and how to be a good role model and have people counting on you."

"I would recommend Outpost camp because it is absolutely awesome."

-- Outpost camper



Zachary Rozmiarek
4-H Program Educator

I have enjoyed my first year as the Dunn County 4-H Educator. Working with 4-H members, families, and volunteers to give them educational experiences and life long memories is something I value.



Community Development

Supporting Our Community



As we step into 2024, we are shifting our focus in Community Development, based on county input, to prioritize Organizational and Leadership Development, with a secondary emphasis on Local Government. We believe this strategic move will unlock numerous opportunities and foster collaboration, innovation, and resiliency in our communities.

Facilitating Community Conversations

The new educator will help Dunn County hold conversations about important issues, identify shared visions for their future, and engage residents.

Achieving More Together



This position will assist leaders and community members in gathering information and applying that information to make decisions that lead to stronger, healthier neighborhoods, organizations and communities.

Building Stronger Relationships

Extension helps leaders and community members build strong, trust-based relationships that serve as the foundation for working together.

Coming Soon!

Interviews are under way and we hope to have a new educator by the end of May!



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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