



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
OCONTO COUNTY



ANNUAL REPORT 2020



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University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension Oconto County

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UW-MADISON EXTENSION

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES *with* THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

As a statewide engagement arm of UW–Madison, the Division of Extension embodies the Wisconsin Idea to extend university knowledge to every corner of the state. That mission started in 1912 with Extension’s first agent making farm visits and continues today along with community and business development, youth engagement, and well-being programming. Our statewide network of educators and specialists with the UW–Madison College of Agricultural & Life Sciences and on UW campuses across Wisconsin is responding every day to emerging and longstanding hurdles residents are overcoming to compete and prosper. We’ve identified key opportunities to leverage local resources and leading research to affect change and improve lives through:

Supporting Wisconsin’s Agriculture Industry »

We use applied research from UW–Madison’s College of Agricultural and Life Sciences in addition to other Campuses along with educational outreach to support an economically viable agricultural industry that produces safe food in an environmentally responsible manner.

Fostering Leadership and Civic Engagement »

We work with communities across the state to support individuals, groups, and organizations to enhance quality of life and improve overall well-being, leading to stronger communities today and for generations to come.

Creating Positive, Healthy Change »

We catalyze positive change in Wisconsin families through evidence-based programs focused on nutrition, food security, food safety, chronic disease prevention, mental health, and substance misuse.

Empowering Families and Communities »

We support families in caring for each other in ways that promote growth and understanding, enhance aging-friendly communities, coach effective parents, and help families put technology, mindfulness, and financial awareness to use.

Enhancing Resilient Natural Resource Systems »

We help individuals and communities make informed decisions that support the state’s rich land, water, and mineral resources. We’re working to ensure that our resources remain at the heart of our communities, economies, and state identity.

Furthering Positive Youth Development »

We prepare the youth of today to become effective, empathetic leaders of tomorrow. From teens advising local government to Wisconsin 4-H clubs, we offer diverse educational opportunities that put youth on the path to success in Wisconsin and beyond..

The UW-Madison Division of Extension's Agriculture Institute uses applied research and educational outreach to support an economically viable agricultural industry that produces safe food in an environmentally responsible manner. The Institute's Horticulture Program also provides research-based information to help home-gardeners and green industry professionals manage landscapes to beautify communities while maintaining and improving the environment.

Working with researchers from the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences as well as educators across the state, the Agriculture Institute responded to urgent challenges and adapted outreach to virtual platforms at the start of the COVID crisis in April 2020.

While the Agriculture Educator position remained vacant in Oconto County this year, producers and agri-businesses were still able to tap into Extension programming and resources via statewide Zoom webinars, newsletters, social media content, news releases and radio outreach.

Topics included:

- Assistance in participating in governmental programs, including how to apply for coronavirus response financial assistance.
- Resources related to the 2020 corn silage and alfalfa harvests.
- Information regarding Farm Service Agency cropping programs.
- Workshops to assist NE WI producers manage feed inventories and improve forage and grain crops management.



Scott Reuss

*Joining the Oconto County Extension Team in 2021 will be **Scott Reuss**, Agriculture/Horticulture Educator. Oconto County will be sharing Scott with Marinette County. Scott can be reached via phone at 715-732-7510 or by email scott.reuss@wisc.edu*

Written report submitted by Nancy Crevier, AED.



Community Development



Extension

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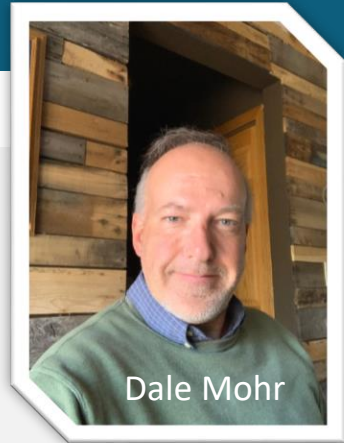
BRINGING RESOURCES AND SOLUTIONS TO OCONTO COUNTY THROUGH...

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,
ORGANIZATIONAL & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT,
& LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPACITY BUILDING**

"My Mission is to work alongside you to identify critical needs, strategize doable solutions, organize responses, create actionable steps, and roll up my sleeves to make positive things happen and to positively transform your local organization, business or community."

KEY PROJECTS IN 2020:

- Village of Lena, Land Use Comprehensive Plan update;
- 23 Towns Comprehensive Plan - supporting Planning & Zoning Staff;
- Leadership Oconto County LOC – Steering Team;
- Teen Court "Restorative Justice";
- County Board Support 'Lean Process';
- 2020 Lake Study Grants;
- M&O Literacy Board of Directors – Advisor & Support;
- Local Government Education – 'One-on-One' Plan Commission Trainings/workshops;
- Stock-Bridge Munsee Tribe strategic support;
- CDBG HHS Project Grant writing Team



Dale Mohr



SERVED:

**130 Riparian Owners
and 6 Lake Groups;
68 Local Government Officials;
20 Non-Profit Members;
12 Youth Jurors;
3 Local entrepreneurs;
Multiple Media publications**

PARTNERED WITH:

**Local Municipal Judges & Law Enforcement;
County Staff/Department Heads;
Wis. Department of Natural Resources;
UW-Stevens Point;
OCEDC/Tourism;
Oconto County Lakes & Waterways Assoc.**

GRANTS PARTNERED ON:

**WDNR Grant
County Healthy Waters Grant
Community Development CDBG Grant**



Community Development

OCONTO COUNTY LAKES PROJECT MULTI - YEAR PROGRAM OF 60 “PUBLIC ACCESS LAKES” FUNDED IN LARGE PART BY WDNR GRANTS \$600,000

In the sixth year, the goals of the project remain the same: **Goal** 1. Develop a scientific understanding of nearshore and shoreline habitat; **Goal** 2. Develop a scientific understanding of aquatic plants and AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) in the lakes and develop new bathymetric maps. **Goal** 3. Develop a scientific understanding of lake water quality and its relationship to land use. **Goal** 4. Assess the capacity of groups and lakefront property owners to implement management strategies. When needed, work towards building capacity. **Goal** 5. Develop a scientific understanding of the social setting associated with the lakes in Oconto County.

More than 200 local and seasonal residents came together; participated on ZOOM meetings; or where educated or took an active role as a volunteer in 2020. Our project held 12 virtual meetings involving people during the year, as well as used the media and direct educational mailings to reach our audience. The information expressed to us from the attendees is critical in creating overall lake studies. Our post assessment indicates that 100% of the participants gained knowledge and learned how best to further participate within the project enhancing their knowledge and improving upon the water resources.

Hundreds of hours were spent gathering key lake data throughout the year to include the frigid winter month of March!



TEEN COURT – RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAM COMPLETES 2ND YEAR!

Teen Court is an innovative legal tool supported by local Municipal Courts and their Justices and Local Law Enforcement throughout the county. Without their continued support and confidence that justice is being carried out this vital program affording teens the ability to make amends, pay for their infractions through hard work and giving back to their community, would not be possible. National research shows that first time offenders are helped immensely by being afforded a second chance to correct wrongs they committed. Having a Teen Court option in Oconto County has afforded about a dozen teens in 2020 this opportunity while giving back to their local community instead of paying a punitive fine.

This past year we were able to continue this vital program throughout the lockdown and Covid-19 restrictions. Two of our Teen Jurors received their **2nd Year Achievement Award** while ten others received their **1st Year Award**. These local teens serving as jurors & tasked with hearing the infractions have further honed their listening, questioning and leadership skills.

Our goal remains to be able to take Teen Court beyond the County Courthouse and into the local communities. This year posed logistical and legal challenges, using Zoom and the willingness of our teens ensured the success of the program and we have risen to the challenge. Teen Court remains an educational, relevant, and sought out program giving back to our community.



Human Development & Relationships

Human Development & Relationships (HDR) educators responded to the Covid pandemic in a variety of ways to meet the needs of families and address issues associated with mental health, parenting challenges and community connectedness. During 2020, programs and workshops moved to online formats or were delivered via alternative methods to residents in Oconto County.

Extension Addressed Isolation of Older Adults

Older adults represent the most vulnerable population to Covid-19. As the coronavirus spread, many older adults had to adjust to distancing tactics especially if no family members were living nearby. We all know that living alone can be more difficult and challenging for older adults. In coordination with our community partners, a community-driven volunteer program was created for older adults living alone to provide essential support and services while sheltering safely at home.

Check-in calls were organized for older adults living alone and arrangements were set up for grocery, medical supplies or medication deliveries as needed. Maintaining communication channels with isolated individuals was absolutely critical during this period.

Program Benefits:

*Family Well-Being, Emotional & Physical Well-being
Reassurance, Safety & Support System
Community Connectedness*

Facilitated bi-monthly education/support group for family caregivers to assist and reinforce their ability to continue caring for recipient and/or loved one. Topics included tech tools for communication, managing stress, routines and sleep, activities for healthy minds and bodies and ways to remain connected to group participants.

"We all must help take care of each other."



Jill Cholewa
Extension Educator

42
Programs/Workshops

3290
Educational Contacts

2020 HDR PROGRAMS

*Rent Smart Tenant Education
Family Caregiving Group
Financial Coaching
Grandparenting Families
Intergenerational Program
Staying Safer at Home
Older Adults – Social Isolation
Youth Restorative Justice
'Just In Time' Parenting*

Health Promotion:

*Health Literacy
Brain Health
Strong Bodies*



Human Development & Relationships



MONEY As YOU GROW

HDR educators embraced a new financial video series, Money As You Grow Book Read. During the Covid pandemic, each week a popular children's book was read that teaches children about money and also shared a fun activity for families to do at home. These fun educational videos reached over 460 families in Oconto County.

NATIONAL CAREGIVERS MONTH – NOVEMBER

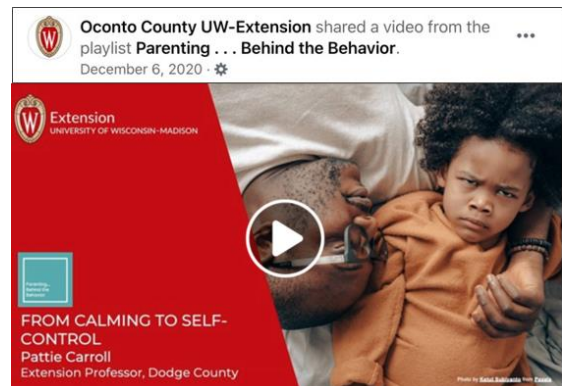
This was our 4th year offering the Healthy Aging & Family Caregiver series. Caregiving is challenging and during the pandemic stress levels were even higher for our caregivers. Programs included; home safety tools & aides, monitoring devices, communicating emotions clearly, caregiver burnout and self-care.

Results from annual survey, learners reported:

- 76% - enjoyed virtual format
- 82% - will share information with family or friends
- 90% - prefer breakout room activities versus lecture
- 37% - experienced internet connection issues

PARENTAL SUPPORT - SOCIAL MEDIA

Shared social media videos that provided support about topics related to family stressors during the pandemic. Due to the abrupt nature of changes that occurred within schools, students and families lives were put on pause. These videos were a powerful method for reaching young families and caregivers in Oconto County. (topics like stress in kids & teens, finding 'new' ordinary & contributing to at-home family)



'JUST IN TIME PARENTING'

In 2020, over 510 families received 'Just in Time Parenting' newsletters. Just in Time Parenting is a free newsletter that is delivered by email and specific to each child's age and needs. Available in English and Spanish, each issue includes easy to use guides on child development, tips on raising healthy kids, and tools and strategies for coping with difficult parenting problems.

"Oh my, how was I to remember everything in those parenting books, ...thank goodness, this newsletter came just in time to help us. - JITP County Participant"

Our audience and community connections include new parents, teachers, grandparents, family relatives, health care providers and church organizations. Newsletter effort and success is due to longstanding partnership with Health & Human Services and local public libraries. 8





Positive Youth Development

4-H empowers young people with the skills to lead for a lifetime. It is a research-based experience that includes youth and adult partnerships, hands-on learning, and meaningful leadership opportunities.

The Wisconsin 4-H program is committed to providing youth development opportunities and promoting positive change for all young people in Wisconsin. The 4-H Movement defines the values of the Wisconsin 4-H program and helps bring together it's mission and vision.

In Wisconsin 4-H we value:

Being Yourself: Find and share your authentic sparks and interests;

Belonging Together: Recognize, understand, respect, and appreciate each other;

Building Connections: Grow positive relationships with peers and adults;

Discovering Skills: Develop skills through hands-on learning to help you succeed and thrive; **Exploring New Opportunities:** Open the door to new experiences, projects, and places; and **Giving Back to Your Community:** Make meaningful contributions through community service and leadership.

Over this past year 4-H Programming has looked a little different to meet the guidance and requirements of the CDC, DHS, and University of WI- Madison, Division of Extension. Through creativity and perseverance members have been able to participate in a variety of programs in a modified in person or virtual format.



Left: Member Aubrey practicing baking, participant online Clover Cookie Connection Series, Right: Cloverbud Brielle with complete gnome from project box kit.

BELONGING

MASTERY



INDEPENDENCE

GENEROSITY

196

Youth Club Members

40

Dedicated Adult Volunteers

12

Active Clubs

1500+

Hours of service in the
Community

4-H PLEDGE

I pledge my **HEAD** to clearer thinking,
my **HEART** to greater loyalty,
my **HANDS** to larger service,
and my **HEALTH** to better living,
for my club, my community,
my country, and my world.





Positive Youth Development

This past year has created lots of opportunities for connection, collaboration, and team efforts involving colleagues near and far along with community members, and other youth serving organizations.

Opportunities provided to our membership, volunteers, and greater community included:

- Virtual Summer School (Oconto Elementary)
- Going on a Fair Hunt
- Virtual Leader Training/Support
- State-wide Virtual Learning Community
- Wonders of WI Winter Virtual Learning Sessions
- Youth Thriving Survey
- And many more...
- *Camp in a Bag (Multi-County)
- *Virtual Fall Forum
- *Multiple Take and Learn Kits
- *Clover Cookie Creations Virtual Sessions
- *Ceramics Course- in person
- *Virtual Trivia and game nights



Left: Ceramics Demonstration by Leader Brigid McDowell Center: Member Alorah working on project Right: Completed Pieces

In addition to providing support and programming to my local 4-H programs I have been able to participate on several teams and workgroups to support 4-H at the state and National levels including, Youth Thriving Research Team, JCEP Awards Committee, Program Quality Team- Volunteer Training Subgroup, and New Club Kit Research Teams. Through these groups we are creating supportive trainings, documents, and presentations for colleagues and volunteers across the state and nation. The Youth Thriving Team, as well as the group of area colleagues who developed the Clover Cookie Creations learning series have received Professional Award Recognition. Despite the challenges that the world-wide pandemic, COVID-19 presented this past year, the 4-H program continues to thrive, and strive to "Make the Best Better!"



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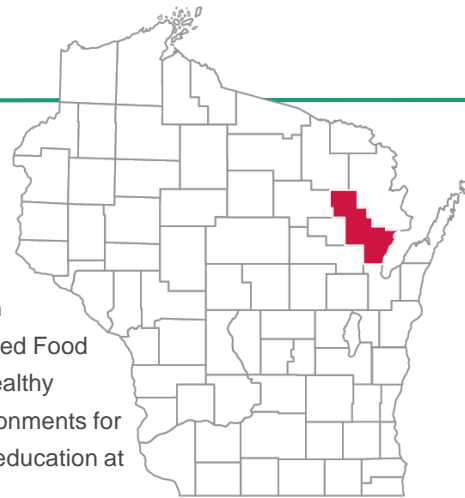


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OCONTO COUNTY



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). We advance healthy eating habits, active lifestyles and healthy community environments for Wisconsin residents with limited incomes through nutrition education at the individual, community and systems levels.

The Challenge

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the food security of 3319 residents due to income and job loss, as well as significant changes in local, regional, and national food systems. Based on increases in Oconto County residents participating in FoodShare and federal Pandemic EBT benefits, we see a greater need for members of our community in accessing food that is healthy, safe, and affordable. FoodWise educators support our community by providing education on how families can stretch their food dollars in these difficult times and continue to put healthy meals on the table in their homes.

Oconto has seen a **17% increase** in Food Share participation (including adults and children) from prior to the pandemic.



Based on comparison of FoodShare participation in February, 2020 and September, 2020. Data from Wisconsin Department of Health & Human Services.

Community IMPACTS



- At the onset of the pandemic, extra effort was put into aiding local pantries with outreach and supplying them with timely information to help families and community members suffering from increased food insecurity.
- A hands on cooking class was taught to Head Start families.
- A series of nutrition lessons were taught in 19 classrooms in 3 school districts in Oconto County.
- A partnership was formed between Nutrition Educator Sarah Schindel and the Suring school district nurse to collaborate on their weekend backpack program providing healthy food and nutrition information to students and families most at risk of food insecurity.

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 Oconto County, FoodWise partners with schools, Public Health, Head Start and food pantries to help make the healthy choice the easy choice in our communities.



FoodWise Offers Cooking Matters Classes to Head Start Families

COOKING MATTERS®

Oconto FoodWise partnered with Head Start to offer cooking classes to local families focusing on skills such as:

- Washing and chopping fruits and veggies
 - Safe knife handling
 - Food safety
- Cooking (stove top & oven)
- Involving children in food prep
- Shopping tips and recipe following



Families practiced cooking and trying foods together!

Cooking Matters Success...

- A total of 10 people participated in the series of lessons
- After our lesson series, participants had gained the skills and confidence necessary to improve the health of their family by preparing the provided recipes.
- One participant stated, "I can't believe my kids are eating this, I never thought they'd like it!"
- Another stated, "I'm so glad I took these classes, I'm totally going to make these recipes at home!"
- Plans to offer more Cooking Matters classes are planned for 2021

Nutrition in the Schools

During the 2019-2020 school year, nutrition lessons were taught in 19 classrooms at Oconto, Gillett, and Suring Elementary Schools. Children were taught the basics of Myplate with a focus on increasing fruit and vegetable consumption and decreasing sugary beverages.



"Our students look forward to these lessons so much and talk about what they've learned often."

Parents surveys and conversations with teachers indicate that more students were requesting fruits and vegetables at home and consuming less sugary beverages.



Nutrition Educator Sarah Schindel teaching a group of students.



Sarah Ferdon
Nutrition
Coordinator
Marinette & Oconto
Counties



Sarah Schindel
Nutrition Educator
Marinette & Oconto
Counties

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**FOOD
WISE**
Healthy choices, healthy lives.

UW-MADISON EXTENSION



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UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON OCONTO COUNTY



Nancy Crevier,
Area Extension Director –
Marinette, Menominee,
Oconto and Shawano
Counties

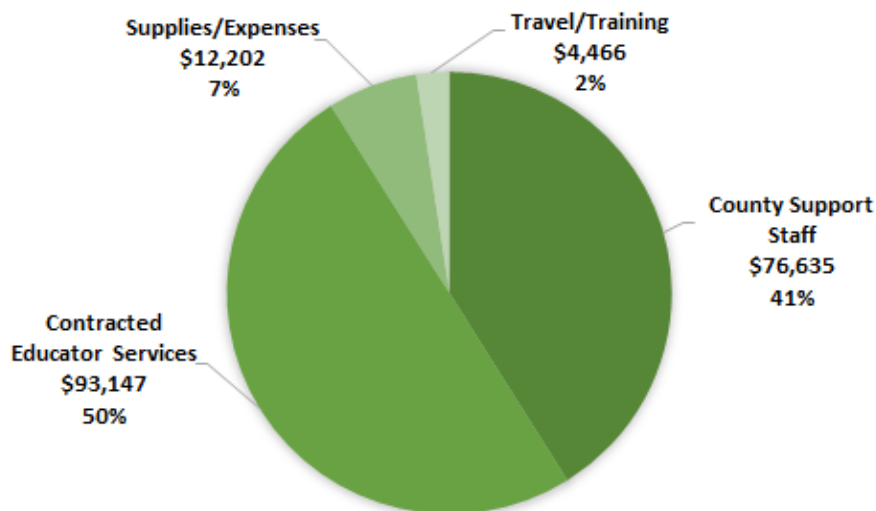
Through the UW-Madison Division of Extension, the people of the state and beyond can access university resources and engage in learning, wherever they live and work. Even during a global pandemic, that work continued here in Oconto County and around the state. As Extension educators began telecommuting, virtual programming and social media outreach efforts were strengthened. Extension continued to provide educational resources to families, farms, businesses and communities. To learn more regarding Extension's impacts in response to COVID-19, click [here](#).

Extension's funding includes a combination of county, state, federal, as well as research/programming funds. During 2020, Oconto County entered a contract with Extension agreeing to co-fund faculty and staff through a flat fee for services. To support their work, Extension also provides resources such as state specialists, professional development, human resources, onboarding support, as well as technical and programming support to assist our educators in meeting the educational needs of this county.

Extension - Oconto County is proud to share our work with you through this annual report. Once again we thank you for your support and we look forward to continuing the strong partnership we have with Oconto County in the future.

Nancy Crevier

Oconto County Budget Expenditures



Educational Program Areas

*Agriculture
Community Development
Human Development &
Relationships
4-H Youth Development
FoodWise*

Budgeted - \$251,468
Expenditures - \$186,450
Budgeted, Unspent - \$65,018



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