



This summary report highlights just a few of the programs and projects Dane County Extension Educators are working on to provide you a sample of the programming offered. Be sure to check out the impact report on Increasing Access to Fresh Produce for Seniors at the end. If you would like more information on any of our programs, please contact me or visit our [website](#).

Carrie Edgar
Carrie Edgar, Director

Rachel Fricke Joins Extension



In October, Rachel Fricke joined the Dane County FoodWise program as a Nutrition Educator. She holds a B.S. in Animal Sciences from UW-Madison and an MSc in Global Food Security & Nutrition from the University of Edinburgh. [Click here to learn more.](#)

USDA Highlights Dane County Nutrition Educator



Venkata Karri is currently featured on the [USDA's MyPlate website](#) for her impact in promoting healthy eating in diverse classrooms. She encourages students to connect healthy eating with their cultural traditions, making nutrition education relatable for students and their families.

Agriculture

Alison Pfau, Regional Dairy Educator and **Carolina Pinzon-Sanchez**, Bilingual Dairy Outreach Specialist, led a workshop about calving management and neonate care for dairy farmers and employees, where farm personnel learn to recognize the imminent signs of birth and calving process and the importance of calf management and neonate care after calving. The goal of the workshop is to create positive impacts on animal welfare and performance, thus increasing the overall farm profitability. The program was offered in Spanish and English. Reach: 30 Latino workers & 5 dairy owners

"I really enjoyed today. It was very well organized with good information. I thank you very much! ~John

"Que todo fue muy interesante y ella es una excelente educadora" ~ Juan

Everything was very interesting and she is an excellent educator. ~ Juan

Will Fulwider, Regional Crops & Soils Educator, along with his colleagues and local farmers have an on-farm research project to determine the performance of five winter barley varieties at different planting dates, where performance is determined by winter survival, yield as well as malt, forage, and feed analysis. Results from this study will help determine if/how winter barley can be integrated into Wisconsin cropping systems and if it can serve as an overwintering cover crop that can potentially garner higher prices and yield than winter wheat for farmers in the state.

Community Development

Sharon Lezberg, Community Development Educator, led a community engagement workshop where participants learned about housing issues in the Village of DeForest and discussed housing strategies to inform the Community Development Division about next steps to increase workforce and senior housing availability. Reach: 30 participants in the workshop; 10 trustees and village staff. Outreach to Village residents was made through multiple channels, including a social pinpoint website for interactive input: <https://www.engagedeforest.com/housing-strategies-workshop>

Bill Oemichen, Extension Local Government Specialist, presented at the Mount Horeb Library on how to leverage federal, state and local governments to advance communities. Participants learned how each level of government is structured, how to provide input and guidance through service on advisory boards, and how to leverage each level to support local economic development and other community efforts. Reach: 25 including elected and appointed officials.

Health and Wellbeing

Jasmine Carbajal, Bilingual Youth Development Educator and **Leo Munoz**, Bilingual Nutrition Educator partnered on a hands-on activity for 4th and 5th graders, where they learned about MyPlate and made a healthy snack to practice making something they can eat during their work/school day. Reach: 8 youth.

Claire Mance, Healthy Community Coordinator, worked with a group of volunteers to plan a new StrongBodies program in the village of Cambridge as the first of several new sites to be supported by Dane County. This effort to establish the Cambridge site was driven by interest from a previous Dane County Board Supervisor after hearing a FoodWise presentation about the StrongBodies program. The goal of StrongBodies is to support healthy aging for seniors by establishing sustainable physical activity programming that is driven by strong volunteer engagement.

Human Development and Relationships

Clare Dahl, Financial Security Educator, taught two sessions for families interested in Home Ownership via Habitat for Humanity, Down Payment Assistance Programs and/or Traditional Mortgages about how to become eligible by means of improved credit, savings, debt-to-income ration and income stability. Reach: 10 participants

Kula Yang, Family Engagement & Relationships Educator, has implement a program called Storytime ("Piav Dab Neeg" in Hmong) for seniors at the Southeast Asian Healing Center. The goal is to provide a culturally appropriate program for the participants, and they can learn the benefits of reading aloud through role modeling and interactive activities and use these strategies to improve their interpersonal relationships with their family and grandchildren. Reach: 12 seniors



Natural Resources

Wade Moder, Natural Resources Educator, is partnering with three farmer-led groups in Dane County and the Southern Wisconsin Bird Alliance to better understand the interaction between agricultural field types and birds during nesting season. The goals of this project include 1) Identify farms within the Sugar River and Yahara River Watersheds to perform bird surveys; 2) Survey for bird species presence/absence; 3) Analyze and present findings to conferences and producer-led groups around Wisconsin. The goal is to better understand Ag's role in bird habitat by studying which species are utilizing different land uses and empowering farmers locally with the findings.

Positive Youth Development



Ely Moya Malaver, Bilingual Youth Development Educator, coordinated a Ripple Effect Mapping (REM) session with Youth Governance Program (YGP) participants, where they evaluated and visualized the impacts of the program and their involvement in local government spaces. This session helped participants understand and articulate how their efforts have influenced local government processes, affected their communities, and contributed to their own growth. The session also reinforced their sense of ownership and connection to the program, provided valuable feedback, and strengthened its impact on youth empowerment and community development.

Lisa Curley, 4-H Extension Educator, organized the Dane County 4-H Science Fright Night on October 28, a STEM education opportunity for youth in grades K-13. Lisa collaborated with UW-Space Place, UW-Biotech, WI Science Museum, WI DOT Aerospace, Kelch Aviation Museum, UW Physics, UW-Neuroscience and UW-Geology Museum to offer engaging demonstrations and 14 hands on activities. The event was developed to spark youth interest in a variety of STEM related 4-H project areas and to promote 4-H to community members. Of the more than 90 youth who participated, 20% were new to 4-H. The youth involved were introduced to new concepts and useful ideas that may inspire them to explore new project areas.



Visit our [website](#) to learn more about Extension and upcoming program opportunities.



Pilot Project Brings Farmers Markets to Seniors: Improving Access to Fresh Produce

Situation: Low-income seniors who participate in the food access program known as the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) may face barriers in accessing traditional farmers markets. While Dane County distributes all their senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program vouchers annually, redemption of vouchers has been historically low in Dane County as compared to other counties across the state. One of the reasons being that some areas of the county did not have markets or vendors who were approved to accept FMNP vouchers. We wanted to test whether providing alternative markets with FMNP certified vendors would help increase voucher redemptions and therefore connect more seniors with more fresh produce.

Response: Claire Mance, Healthy Community Coordinator, along with a small team of Dane County FoodWise educators pursued an 8 month planning effort to understand community needs, program restraints, and participating agency roles. After many conversations, they proposed the idea of pop-up farmers markets at senior centers, as they are places seniors already gather for other programming and services. They conducted a number of surveys to gauge interest in this program, build relationships, and recruit farmers and senior sites. They matched interested farmers with interested senior sites to plan their market schedules. Over the course of the growing season, one farmer held five markets at the Waunakee Senior Center and two markets at the Middleton Senior Center.

To complement this effort, they interviewed FMNP certified farmers to ask about their motivations in participating in this program. They created farmer profiles using this information and other fun facts about their farm business, and posted them on the Dane County FoodWise Facebook page in a Farmer Profile series.

*When asked why she choose to participate as a vendor in this project, she replied, "It was an emotional thing more than a rational thing. I really wanted to do it. It bought me back to the market."
- FMNP Pop-up Vendor*



Seniors shopping at a pop-up farmers market at a local senior center

Results: Over the course of the growing season, the farmer held five markets at the Waunakee Senior Center and two markets at the Middleton Senior Center. This was a win for both the farmer and seniors. The farmer reported that at one September market she had her best day ever of sales in her entire career. The senior sites enjoyed being able to offer an additional opportunity for seniors to connect with local food, regardless of whether they were paying in cash or using FMNP vouchers. The farmer really enjoyed connecting with seniors, and she already plans to return for next season and add a third site.

Another positive outcome from this effort was that the farmers' market hosted by the Village of Waunakee took interest in the market at the Senior Center and recruited the farmer to vend there. The effort nudged them to explore becoming an FMNP certified market, and adding this certified vendor made them eligible for FMNP certification by finally having enough certified vendors. This is a great outcome because it increases fresh food access for both seniors and WIC families who receive vouchers through the FMNP program.

For more information about this project, contact Claire Mance at mance.claire@danecounty.gov.

*"I had heard of the vouchers but hadn't seen them in use, so I'm pleased we had some customers spend theirs at the pop-up market. I also really enjoyed partnering with Claire for the marketing, recipes and other logistics."
- Senior Center Staff Member*