



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
DANE COUNTY

May 2025 Program Report

This summary report highlights just a few of the programs and projects Dane County Extension Educators facilitated or taught this past month. If you would like more information on our programs, please contact me or visit our [website](#).

Carrie Edgar, Director

YGP Participants Coordinate Wildly Successful Sustainability Safari!

The Sustainability Safari was YGP's collaborative project this year. The group created an event at the Henry Vilas Zoo, where kids and community members could explore different educational stations led by YGP youth and Dane County departments. Alongside the six youth-led stations, the Waste & Renewables and Land & Water Resources departments offered engaging demos and exhibits.

From the start, this was a completely youth-led project. The YGP youth actively engaged in research, connecting with experts, and took initiative to shape a project that reflected their commitment to sustainability and civic engagement in their community. YGP wanted to create something fun and meaningful that would inspire younger students and show how sustainability connects to everyday life and how youth can be part of the solutions.

On the day of the event, the Henry Vilas Zoo welcomed approximately 1,336 visitors, including 780 students and chaperones on school field trips. This event was an innovative approach to climate education to foster environmental responsibility in an engaging, creative, and approachable way!

New Career Pathways Interns Start in June

The new Dane County Career Pathways program is offering a variety of engaging paid summer job opportunities (June - August 2025) designed to provide young people in high school with valuable work experience, professional development, and community engagement. Through hands-on experience, participants will develop leadership skills while supporting programs



The Youth Governance Program 2024/25 Cohort

"I had a great time planning our YGP group project with my fellow peers. The memories and relationships that were created at each of these meetings allowed us to build a successful event that had a lasting impact on young minds. After the Sustainability Safari, I felt truly accomplished because of the journey we had embarked on as a team" — YGP Youth Representative.

Learn more about the [Youth Governance Program](#) or contact Ely Moya Malaver, Youth Development Educator, at moya.ely@danecounty.gov.

that serve the local community in education, government, and recreation. The seven participating youth will learn what it is like to work in the Dane County Executive's Office, Dane County Land & Water Resources Department, the Dane County Zoo, and Dane County Library Services. Click to learn more about the [Career Pathways Program](#)

TEAMs Prepares Farmworkers for Leadership Roles

Farmworkers laboring on diversified vegetable farms seek assistance and support with building their leadership skills. Research shows that feeling more confident in this area will likely lead to farmworkers accepting formal management positions on farms and thus furthering their careers in this industry. Meanwhile, established farm employers are looking for long-term farm managers as a way to strengthen farm viability and improve quality of life.

Training and Education for Aspiring Managers (TEAMs) is a program that connects aspiring and early career farm managers with training in key human resources topics - from farm culture and emotional intelligence, to engaging with conflict and much more. We deliver this online training to the public annually. This spring, 140



current and aspiring farm managers from 24 states and 2 Canadian provinces participated in the TEAMs course. Coordinated by Sarah Janes Ugoretz, Dane County Diversified Farm Educator, she along with 7 experienced farm managers serve as trainers for the TEAMs sessions.

In the evaluation survey all respondents indicated their knowledge of the topic and their preparedness to apply new skills was improved. One farm manager shared, "I want to use delegation to empower more of my team to take on leadership roles and strengthen my core year-round farm team."

TEAMs also provides a long-term community of practice, where farmworkers can continue to learn from and support one another through a listserv, partnering on workshops and presentations serving growers from around the country, and through ongoing engagement with TEAMs from year to year.

For more information contact Sarah Janes Ugoretz at janesusgoretz.sarah@danecounty.gov

Teens Learn Skills and Healthy Behaviors through the FoodWise Program

FoodWise Educators, Kelsi Salm and Edwin Huayta, teach Choose Health, Food, Fun and Fitness lessons for teens at the Dane County Juvenile Corrections residential program. The teens learn basic cooking skills, safe knife handling skills, food safety principles, label reading and choosing healthy alternatives in recipes. The goal is to build confidence in the kitchen and empower teens to make healthy choices by teaching them the skills needed to prepare nutritious recipes on their own.



Join A Community Food Discussion



State of our Food System A Community Discussion

Join us for a conversation about the state of our food system in Dane County. We're bringing together community members to explore the future of food in Dane County and discover how you can play a vital role in shaping it. Your voice matters - help us build a better food system in Dane County.

June 25th from 5:30-7:00pm
South Madison Partnership Building



For the past three years, the Dane County Food Action Plan has been growing through collaboration between REAP Food Group, UW-Madison Dane County Extension, Public Health Madison & Dane County, and others committed to creating a healthier, more equitable, and resilient food system.

Join an open community discussion on **June 25 from 5:30–7 p.m.** at the UW South Madison Partnership building (**2238 S. Park St.**). Learn about the plan, share your ideas, and help shift our food system from a profit-driven model to one rooted in sustainability, equity, and access for all. Your voice is essential to shaping lasting change.

Not available to attend this meet but interested in providing your input? Visit the [Dane County Food Action Plan website](#) to learn more and take the survey.

Contact Jess Guffey Calkins at calkins.jess@danecounty.gov to learn more.

Providing Financial Education to Community Service Providers

Clare Dahl, Dane County Financial Educator, and Kula Yang, Family Engagement & Relationships Educator presented Financial Education concepts, tools, and resources to service providers of The Road Home in Madison. The Road Home helps low-income and unhoused families find and stay in stable housing. Through this effort, case managers and other service providers became more aware of Extension resources as well as practical tools related to Budgeting, Credit, and Debt Management. Eleven service providers were in attendance, and the materials and resources will be shared with 25 staff to reach The Road Home program participants.

New Extension Resource Shared at Wisconsin Public Health Association Conference

Taylor Seale, Youth Development Educator, along with her Extension colleagues presented a poster at the Wisconsin Public Health Association Conference in May 2025 to share the process and final result of the youth-designed "[Foundations for Engaging Young People: A Beginning Guide to Meaningful Youth Engagement in Health Outreach Efforts](#)".

The guide is designed to assist public health professionals to learn about the Extension process of engaging youth in curriculum design and how activating the voices of young people leads to increased community capacity, stronger partnerships, and improved multi-level prevention efforts.

For more information contact Taylor Seale at seale.taylor@danecounty.gov

IMPROVING YOUTH HEALTH OUTREACH EFFORTS WITH YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIPS

Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Jennifer Braun
Health & Well-Being Institute
UW-Madison Division of Extension

Taylor Seale
Positive Youth Development Institute
UW-Madison Division of Extension

01 INTRODUCTION
Through the Department of Health Services' "Maternal & Child Health Title V Adolescent Well-Being Technical Assistance" program, the University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension supports capacity-building efforts of local and Tribal health departments to serve adolescents effectively with an emphasis on incorporating youth engagement and youth voice in their efforts.

02 OBJECTIVE

- ✓ Provide tailored technical assistance to local and Tribal health departments
- ✓ Demonstrate evidence-based tools and practices when working with young people
- ✓ Enhance and improve the capacity of agencies to serve adolescents effectively by incorporating youth engagement in their efforts

03 METHODOLOGY
In 2024 youth involved with PATCH (Providers & Teens Communicating for Health) in collaboration with UW-Extension staff engaged in action planning using UW-Extension's "Youth Advocates for Community Health" curriculum and researched health equity issues in their local counties (Brown, Dane, Marathon, Racine, and Winnebago). Together, youth researched and identified substance misuse and infant mortality as issues that collectively impacted all five of their counties and that also had minimal or no youth engagement within their local and Tribal health departments. From this, youth identified that local and Tribal health departments across the state needed foundational support in designing and planning outreach programs alongside youth, and thus created the "Foundations of Engaging Young People" guide.

04 WHAT WORKED

- ✓ UW-Extension partnered with PATCH (Providers & Teens Communicating for Health) to recruit youth through a trusted adult
- ✓ Stipends were provided for attending virtual monthly meetings, and youth reported wanting to meet more frequently
- ✓ Youth reported pride in their teamwork and communication skills, better understanding of health equity issues in their counties, and providing direct contributions to supporting health departments
- ✓ Youth were given meaningful opportunities to identify new areas for health departments to engage youth

05 RESULTS
Youth created this guide to inspire and inform local and Tribal health departments to meaningfully engage young people in their work, including: community outreach, program planning, examples of successful initiatives, and strategies for building strong partnerships.

Scan the QR code to download and access the guide.

Summer Cloverbud Day at the Arboretum

Join us while we explore the UW Arboretum - 4-H Ambassadors, as well as Dane County Natural Resources Educator Wade Moder, will lead your children in learning about native plants, a rain garden, and pollinators. Come enjoy a scavenger hunt, climb, build forts, and dig in dirt!

Monday, June 23, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm at the UW Arboretum

This event is open to youth in K-2nd grades. Participants must have a parent/guardian/adult present during the event. [Pre-registration](#) is required.



Upcoming Extension Events

- Ask Your Gardening Questions – June 23
- Food Action Plan Community Discussions – June 25th and July 22
- Dane County Fair – July 17-20
- Dane County 4-H Camp Grades 3-5 – July 23-26
- Dane County 4-H Camp Grades 6-8 = July 6-8
- Retirement Planning Today – multiple dates available starting in September

[Click for more information and to register for upcoming events.](#)

University of Wisconsin, USDA and Wisconsin counties cooperating.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming in compliance with state and federal law.

SNAP-Ed IMPACTS

IN DANE COUNTY

NUTRITION EDUCATION

Teaching about healthy eating and active living.

Dane County FoodWise teaches nutrition to students at various grade levels using fun, hands-on activities. Students learn about MyPlate, the importance of eating a variety of foods, and the benefits of staying active. They try new foods through taste tests and join interactive discussions about making healthy choices.

In one first-grade classroom, a parent shared on a post-program survey that the lessons inspired their whole family to be more active. They now spend more time outdoors walking, playing basketball, and tossing a football, making healthy living a family effort. The parent also noted a big change in their child's attitude toward food. Before the program, their child rarely tried new foods. Now, they're open to tasting different things and enjoy exploring new flavors. The parent thanked the program for its positive impact on their child and family.

Early nutrition education can create lasting change beyond the classroom. By helping kids build healthy habits, FoodWise supports the well-being of entire families.

COMMUNITY REACH

IN DANE COUNTY

FOODWISE SNAP-ED NUTRITION EDUCATION ANNUAL REACH:

- ▶ over 1,700 youth
- ▶ over 450 adults

TOTAL LEARNING INTERACTIONS IN FY2024:

- ▶ 8,938 youth engagements
- ▶ 1,385 adult engagements

WHAT OUR PARTICIPANTS SAY



The kids were very excited to have [FoodWise] come each week. It is something we looked forward to. I have a very picky eater this year, however the kids were willing and eager to try the foods, especially as the weeks went on. This morning we had rutabaga as our healthy snack and most kids voluntarily tried it!



1ST GRADE TEACHER AT ORCHARD RIDGE ELEMENTARY, DANE COUNTY

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Working to make healthy choices easier and more accessible.

FoodWise Dane County has been working on a project to increase redemption of Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program Vouchers. After communicating with stakeholders, doing a farmer survey, and meeting with senior center staff, FoodWise decided to pilot a program to host pop-up markets at senior centers so that seniors can redeem their vouchers somewhere they already shop and spend time. So far, there have been four markets at Waunakee Senior Center and one market at Middleton Senior Center. The pop-up booths have been highly anticipated and successful, with folks arriving 30 minutes early just to get in line at the Middleton Senior Center. FoodWise is looking forward to continuing the work next market season and possibly expanding to other low-access areas.