



This monthly summary report highlights a few of the programs and projects that Extension Educators in Dane County are currently working on as well as upcoming events. If you would like more information on any of the programs mentioned here, please contact us or visit our [website](#).

Carrie Edgar, Director

Agriculture

- A spring field day for the 'Farmers for the Upper Sugar River' group where members viewed a demonstration of soil aggregate stability with cover crops and learned about the life cycles and best management practices for plant diseases. The goal of this effort was to encourage the adoption of conservation practices which can improve water quality and to give producers the information to make economical diseases management decisions.
- An on-farm research project that will study the use of living aisles and no-till planting strips to mitigate the impacts of intense rain events. The results of this study will be used by diversified vegetable producers to improve the productivity of their organic vegetable farms while reducing soil erosion and effects on water quality.
- A program for landowners where participants learned about practices to improve soil health and water quality.

Community Development

- Planning for a food system study for partners, leaders and policymakers will learn about food systems needs to inform development of policies and programs to address those needs.
- Coordination of the Double Dollars program with City of Madison, Public Health Madison Dane County, Community Action Coalition of South Central Wisconsin, and Willy Street Grocery Co-op to improve and enhance access to produce incentives so that more people can receive more healthy food, which also supports local growers.
- Planning for a series of webinars to equip food entrepreneurs with increased skills and knowledge for operating successful food business enterprises.
- Planning an initiative for growers, food producers, and school food service staff in collaboration with UW-Madison and community organizations to expand access to farm-to-school market opportunities (especially for people of color) and improve school food service worker labor conditions, to increase equity in school food operations.
- A training session for nonprofit organization program planners on how to do background community development research prior to developing new organizations, programs, and initiatives.
- An electronic newsletter for nonprofit organizations about Extension training programs, community-based professional development opportunities, and grants that might support their work.
- Collaborative design with organization partners of a neighborhood leadership training series to encourage more resident connection and engagement in building better neighborhoods. The purpose is to reinvigorate neighborhoods and community organizations in Southwest Madison through skill building and networking.
- Developing relationships with organizations working on climate change initiatives in Dane County, in order to understand the work already ongoing in this issue area, and to get a sense of the challenges that these organizations are experiencing. The purpose is to build a roadmap for how Extension can develop and deliver programs related to climate change, through education, facilitation, convening, and building organizational capacity.
- Support to the Dane County Broadband Task Force with planning of monthly meetings, survey development, and design of public input strategy.

Health and Wellbeing

- Participation in a coalition of public and private organizations to monitor and improve traffic safety and identify opportunities for traffic safety initiatives in Dane County. The goal is to understand the safety risks that limit engagement and identify strategies to increase residents' access to walking and its related health benefits.
- A new community partnership with an organization providing solutions to homelessness in Madison (Porchlight). The first in a planned series of meetings with partners to understand the nutrition education needs and strategize on how to provide education, materials and support to complement their existing programming.
- Monthly educational training for pediatric residents on school nutrition programs and policies that mitigate food insecurity among children from low-income families, and provides resources and training to expand pediatricians' understanding of food insecurity among their patient population.
- Participation in a monthly, multi-sector coalition focused on expanding access to health care coverage and care issues for Dane County residents. The coalition shares knowledge and resources among community partners and advocates for underserved populations on issues relating to access to coverage and quality health care services, especially among populations experiencing health disparities.
- Developing food waste reduction educational materials for Dane County households. This effort is designed to increase public awareness of the impact of food waste on climate change and equip residents with strategies that reduce food waste at the household level, simultaneously supporting residents in stretching their food budget.
- A 6 week virtual nutrition education series for elementary age youth where they learn the importance of choosing from the five food groups and how to create snacks without the need for a stove or oven. The goal is to help youth make healthy choices the easy choices and improve their overall dietary habits at a young age.
- A 9 week nutrition education series, (Eating Smart Being Active) offered to Dane County SNAP eligible residents to learn healthy lifestyle choices, food preparation, food safety, food resource management and physical activity.

Human Development & Relationships

- Coordinated the free volunteer income tax center from January to April at the UW Madison South Partnership office. 2,170 returns were completed this year resulting in 4.8 million in tax refunds.
- Taught Habitat for Humanity home ownership program for seven prospective homeowners on finances and saving for housing related expenses, building future equity in their home and to strive for overall financial well-being.
- Provided financial coaching for seven participants in the Working Wheels program (a vehicle loan program for low-income families) to prepare them to manage their finances and purchase a vehicle to access and keep employment.
- Individual coaching with 13 individuals to increase knowledge and skills needed to manage their finances in a very tough financial situation.
- Trained 50 potential presenters on the Planning AHEAD curriculum in a 2-day train the trainer event

Horticulture

- Planning for a statewide webinar series for consumer horticulture audiences where participants will learn about pollinator decline, climate change, and environmental contamination and pollution.
- A class for the Sunset Garden Club where they learned environmentally sound strategies for selecting and growing healthy tomato plants, using primarily organic techniques.
- The Green Thumb Gardening series provided attendees with information to more sustainably and successfully grow while protecting the environment. Sessions included: Organic gardening strategies; Plant diseases; Selecting, planting, pruning and managing insects and diseases on fruit trees; and Vegetable crop diseases and insects.
- A presentation and demonstration on container gardening for Oak Park Retirement Community residents to learn how to choose containers and plants be successful in their gardening environments and increase their quality of life.
- An online class for adults where they learned about Wisconsin native plants for forested and prairie/meadow environments that bloom in spring, are good garden performers and support pollinators.

Natural Resources

- Planning for the development of food waste reduction educational materials for Dane County households of all income levels in collaboration with Dane County Natural Resources Educator. This effort is designed to increase public awareness of the impact of food waste on climate change and equip residents with strategies that reduce food waste at the household level, simultaneously supporting residents in stretching their food budget.
- Planning for a Native Youth 4-H Curriculum written by the native community for the native community around environmental science college and career pathways to create sustainable, culturally relevant programming.
- A meeting of Dane County Departments where participants discussed the contamination of groundwater with per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The goal is to work collaboratively to prevent further contamination of Dane County's drinking and surface water, and to implement remediation strategies.
- A presentation for Girl Scouts where members learned about pollinators in order to take actions to protect pollinators in their community.
- Development of a climate change program for local governments, environmental organizations, and leaders in Dane county. The goal is to discuss the impacts of climate change on our community, work with decision-makers on strategies to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, and empower community members to take action.
- Developing relationships with organizations working on climate change initiatives in Dane County, in order to understand the work ongoing in this issue area, and to get a sense of the challenges that these organizations are experiencing. The purpose is to build a roadmap for how Extension can develop and deliver programs related to climate change, through education, facilitation, convening, and building organizational capacity.

Positive Youth Development

- A monthly workshop with Dane County 4-H Ambassadors to discuss a diversity, equity and inclusion as a group in order to introduce these topics in the 4-H clubs as an effort to make these spaces more inclusive.
- A monthly workshop for the 2021-2022 Youth in Government (YGP) participants to come together to discuss their experiences in the program, to learn about local county government, and to develop their leadership skills.
- Coordination with the YGP participants to create a short informational video for Dane County residents on how to participate in local government.
- Planning for a Juntos 4-H program for middle school/high school youth in collaboration with area schools. The goal is to support career access pathways to LatinX students so that they can receive the tools they need to succeed.
- Planning for a Native Youth 4-H curriculum written by the native community for the native community around environmental science college and career pathways.
- Planning with The Bubbler maker space at Madison Public Library to host workshops with a diverse cohort of older youth to collaborate on a meaningful social justice art project and create a community showcase for their pieces.
- Planning for an in-school 4-H program in collaboration with Madison schools to provide a diverse group of students with the hands on learning experiences through 4-H curriculum and programming.
- The Science Expeditions Program for youth and families to explore magnetic forces to understand how electromagnets work and connect youth to technology found in their daily lives.
- Facilitation support for 4-H Horse and Pony Project volunteers with resources and strategies to help develop a plan of action and make sure youth have education opportunities and authentic leadership roles in the project.
- Coordination of high school aged youth to lead community study and engagement efforts for the development of a new teen center in the King James neighborhood in Fitchburg. The purpose is to engage youth in hands-on learning about asset mapping, photo-voice, and healthy community design efforts.
- Coordination of the By Youth for Youth program for area teens to learn about youth programs and identify issues and funding priorities to be supported by grants. The purpose is to provide an opportunity for youth to learn about their community and be engaged in decision making and funding processes. [Read about the 2022 grant awards!](#)

Upcoming Events

- [Dane County Master Gardener Plant Sale](#)
- [Raising Wisconsin's Children](#) – Free parenting classes for all who care for children
- [Rent Smart Virtual Series](#) - Helping to make renting a great experience for you.
- [Managing Your Yard and Garden throughout the Growing Season](#) – Series 2 starts in May on watering practices, Identifying and managing insect pests, and Strategies for identifying and managing plant diseases.
- [Green Thumb Gardening – Spring Series](#) - The practical knowledge to keep your home garden thriving!
- [Nonprofit Virtual Education Series: Tools of the Trade 2022](#) - Free virtual education sessions for nonprofit leaders
- [Youth Tractor Safety](#) – For youth 12-15 to safely operate farm machinery
- [View More Events](#)

New Blog on Climate Change!

Be sure to check out our new [Climate Change Blog](#) to learn about local and statewide climate impacts and issues

Dane County Staff

Gabriella Balza <i>Youth Development Educator</i>	Javiera Gonzalez <i>Clerk (Bilingual)</i>	Michelle Probst <i>Natural Resources Educator</i>
John Bedigian <i>FoodWise Support Staff</i>	Sandy Jensen <i>Deputy Director</i>	Emily Randerson <i>Nutrition Educator</i>
Jess Guffey Calkins <i>Food Systems Educator</i>	Lisa Johnson <i>Horticulture Educator</i>	Taylor Seale <i>Community Youth Development Educator</i>
Vacant <i>Nutrition Educator</i>	Venkata Karri <i>Nutrition Educator</i>	Holly Simon <i>FoodWise Curriculum Coordinator</i>
Lisa Curley <i>4-H Extension Educator</i>	Sharon Lezberg <i>Community Development Educator</i>	Claire Strader <i>Organic Produce Educator</i>
Carrie Edgar <i>Area Extension Director</i>	Claire Mance <i>Healthy Community Coordinator</i>	Chip Thompson <i>Clerk</i>
Will Fulwider <i>Regional Crops Educator</i>	Deb Neubauer, <i>FEC Director and Human Development Educator</i>	Carla Williams <i>Communication Specialist</i>
Jackie Gehin <i>FoodWise Administrator</i>	Aracely Portillo <i>Nutrition Educator</i>	Chelsea Zegler <i>Agriculture & Water Quality Educator</i>