



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
DANE 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 Dane County residents due to income and job loss, as well as significant changes in local, regional, and national food systems. Based on increases in Dane 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.

Dane County has seen a **26% increase in Food Share participation** from prior to the pandemic. We responded by collaborating with Public Health Dane County to create a food access resource page.

[COVID-19 FOOD ACCESS RESOURCES](#)



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

Community IMPACTS



- Dane County FoodWise has built strong partnerships. We continue to collaborate with over 60 agencies, schools, food pantries, JFF sites, WIC centers, senior centers, Play & Learn Centers, as well as after-school and summer youth programs.
- Despite the devastating effects of Covid to our in-person teaching opportunities, we diligently went to work to adjust our efforts to virtual learning. Educators jumped in to learn electronic teaching techniques as well as working to adapt curriculum accordingly.
- Educators reached over 1,660 Dane County adults and children with an emphasis on increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables and handling food safely.
- FoodWise assisted in the alignment of city and county food councils to create a joint response to the impact of COVID-19. FoodWise co-led new work groups and assisted in the development and launching of three food access funding opportunities.
- In collaboration with Public Health Madison Dane County, FoodWise created a COVID-19 food access resource page. The resource included grocery stores supporting online shopping and delivery for FoodShare users and instructions for assigning proxy shoppers in the event that a household is unable to shop.

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 Dane County, FoodWise partners with Elementary Schools, Food Pantries, WIC, Senior Centers, JFF, as well as Community Centers to help make the healthy choice the easy choice in our communities.



Positive Reinforcement of Classroom Education into Lunchroom Experience



“Students are more willing to try fruits & veggies during snack-time. They are using positive words to describe healthy foods as well as sometimes foods.”

To reinforce the nutrition education provided in the classroom, our educator worked with the teachers and school food service staff in a Dane County school to collaborate on offering encouragement in the positive participation of school lunches. Our nutrition educator would observe the Kindergarten students in the lunchroom. Her presence immediately created enthusiasm among the students. The students recognized the educator from their nutrition classes and her sitting with them at lunch time helped direct their conversations around healthy foods. Often unprompted, students pointed out the fruit or vegetable and named the corresponding “food friend” from *Discover MyPlate* curriculum used in the classroom. For example, when broccoli was served, the students told the educator “this is Reggie Veggie.”

The extension of classroom education into their lunch room has made a positive impact on the student's eating behaviors as indicated by verbal testimonials from teachers.



Aracely Portillo



Holly Simon



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Lytonia Floyd



Claire Mance



John Bedigian



Jackie Gehin

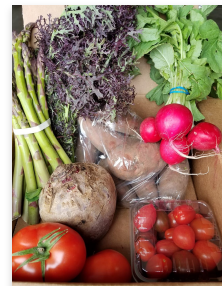
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UW-MADISON EXTENSION

FoodWise connects Farms to Food Bank to feed families in need

After the county provided CARES Act funding to Second Harvest Food Bank to support farmers and families in need, FoodWise convened food systems partners in Dane County to expedite a local food purchasing project. Since May, this project has delivered over 400,000 boxes of local produce, dairy and meat to food insecure families and laid important groundwork in relationship building.



“A ton of local, fresh food went into the food bank that wouldn't have otherwise gone into food banks. We should celebrate this.”

FoodWise co-led interviews with project stakeholders including food pantry staff, farmers, and local food leaders to understand program impact. The valuable insight gained from these interviews, including ideas to improve future iterations and engage more small Farmers of Color, will be reported to the County Executive's office. FoodWise plans to continue supporting project stakeholders to foster the relationships built through this important program. *(Photo credit: Middleton Outreach Ministries)*

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