

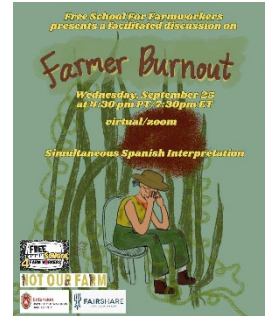


This summary report highlights just a few of the programs and projects Dane County Extension Educators are working on to provide you a sample of the type and breadth of programming offered. Be sure to check out the impact report on When Large Scale Solar Comes to Town at the end. If you would like more information on any of our programs, please contact me or visit our [website](#).

  
Carrie Edgar, Director

## Agriculture

**Sarah Janes Ugoretz**, Diversified Vegetable Farm Educator, planned and facilitated an interactive workshop for farmworkers where participants created a collective definition of burnout, explored how burnout impacts their bodies and minds, and shared tips in order to better understand and manage burnout over the long-term. The guest speaker discussed how burnout shows up in our bodies and our minds before pivoting to strategies that workers could utilize to help them find rest and relief. Knowing that workers may have limited ability to adjust their day-to-day responsibilities and workloads in a way that might ease burnout, these strategies focused on actions that workers do have control over. In closing, two farmworkers shared their own stories of navigating burnout.



Attendees shared powerful responses through the evaluation, confirming the value in convening farmworkers. One attendee shared that, *"Solidarity with the experiences of other farmworkers means so much. Farming is often an isolating job and feeling the support and love that can be shared through communicating with people who are experiencing similar things was very fulfilling."* Meanwhile, another attendee shared that, *"Learning about the different body parts most affected by stress / burnout helped me identify how to listen to my body more effectively and hearing other people's stories helped me not feel as alone."* Ultimately, sessions like this one are building community and offering farmworkers support based on the challenges they face - with the goal of supporting long term careers in farm working. Reach: 155 farmworkers participated representing 26 states and 6 countries.

## Food Systems

**Jessica Calkins**, Food Systems Educator, led a presentation for community members at the YWCA Racial Justice Summit where they learned about food justice and how to work towards this goal in Dane County. Total Reach: 54

## Health and Wellbeing

**Claire Mance**, Healthy Communities Coordinator and **Kelsi Salm**, Nutrition Educator facilitated a series of pop-up farmers markets for low-income seniors at senior center sites in Waunakee and Middleton where Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) vouchers can be redeemed. The goal was to increase access to fresh produce for seniors who receive FMNP vouchers but face challenges accessing traditional farmers markets to spend them. Coordinating markets in a place that seniors already access for other services increases their opportunity to benefit from the FMNP program. A participating farmer reported that at one September market she had her best day ever of sales and she already plans to return for next season and add a third site.



**Emily Randerson** and **Kelsi Salm**, Dane County FoodWise Educators taught a 6 week series for teens in a juvenile corrections residential program setting where they 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 and build skills needed to prepare nutritious recipes on their own. Reach: 9

## Human Development and Relationships

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**Clare Dahl**, Financial Security Educator, provided an interactive presentation for the Women's Employee Resource Group at UW Health on effective strategies to manage money where participants set and create a plan for achieving their financial goals, can create a spending plan that allows them to manage their monthly income and expenses, and can make a plan to become debt-free. Total Reach: 40

**Kula Yang**, Family Engagement & Relationships Educator, collaborated with her Extension colleagues to offer an 8-week program series where parents, caregivers and child-serving professionals learn trauma-informed practices to build healthy relationships with children who have experienced trauma. The goal is to better support children who have experienced trauma and promote family resilience. Total Reach: 152

## Horticulture

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**Lisa Johnson**, Horticulture Educator, along with her state-wide horticulture colleagues offered an online webinar where participants learned about proper tree planting techniques. The goal is for participants to adopt proper gardening practices that will improve their landscapes, ecosystem function, mitigate climate change and reduce pollution for horticulture chemicals. 88 participants learned proper tree planting techniques. On a pre/post survey, participants indicated significant increase in understanding of the five essential steps to planting a tree successfully.

[Click here for 5 Steps to Plant a Tree on Lisa's blog!](#)

## Natural Resources

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**Wade Moder**, Natural Resources Educator is partnering with UW Arboretum to plan a day-long workshop for citizen/community science coordinators in Dane County to learn about other projects, network with colleagues, hear from experts in volunteer coordination/retention, and have a facilitated discussion on data collection, all in an effort to help coordinators more effectively manage their programs. There are over 50 citizen/community science projects currently going on in Dane County alone, and without any shared collaboration, these projects typically work within their own silos without the support of their peers. Our hope is to create community around the large contingent of citizen/community science projects happening in Dane County, and provide a space for these projects to collaborate and learn from each other. The summit will be held in November 2024.

## Positive Youth Development

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**Ely Moya Malaver**, Bilingual Youth Development Educator, coordinated a youth-led video project for new Youth Governance Program (YGP) members, where alumni created a welcome video, from scripting to directing, based on their own experiences. This initiative empowered youth to showcase their creativity, develop leadership and communication skills, and provided insight to new members, fostering a sense of ownership and a supportive and engaging community.

**Jasmine Carbajal**, Bilingual Youth Development Educator, is teaching a middle school series called Seeing Yourself in the Future in collaboration with East Madison Community Center. The goal is to teach youth about career exploration, career paths, and give them job interviewing skills, so that they find their sparks and are better prepared when it comes to decision-making related to their future.

## Upcoming Events:

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2024 FEED Summit for food and farm entrepreneurs – Oct 28 & 29

Triple P: Positive Parenting Program: Teens 12-16 - Oct 30

Retirement Planning Today Series – Oct 30 & Nov 6

Plant Parenting: Choosing the Right Plant – Oct 31

Becoming the Employer of Choice for Vegetable Farms – Nov 11 – Dec 9

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



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
DANE COUNTY

# When Large-Scale Solar Comes to Town: Building community capacity to address economic, environmental, and social change

**Situation:** The U.S. is undergoing a rapid energy transformation to clean renewable energy as a major strategy to mitigate climate change. Rural communities in Wisconsin, which are well suited for large-scale solar or wind development, may experience major economic, environment, and social transitions when a large-scale electric power facility comes to town.

With any major transition, community members ideally are actively engaged in land use, economic, and energy related decision-making. Community engagement processes assure that community members receive timely and accurate information and have avenues to voice their hopes and concerns. Yet there are situations, large-scale solar development being one of them, where residents and local government officials actually have little power to determine the trajectory of a development. In these cases, community engagement is important to assure that community concerns are addressed and to dispel misunderstandings or assumptions about the development. Even where communities lack control, there are often strategies available to assure communities reap some benefits from land use developments. More importantly, engaging the community early in a process can reduce community discord.

A team of Extension specialists and educators including Sharon Lezberg, Dane County Community Development Educator, formed to explore ways Extension can support local communities experiencing these transitions. The Portage County Executive invited the team to develop an engagement process for the towns of Grant and Plover, where large-scale solar development had already been proposed.



**Response:** The Extension Team designed a process to include Portage County residents in discussions about the large-scale solar developments. To first learn about the specifics of this unique place, the team convened a local advisory group to guide the process. Preliminary research included key informant interviews and stakeholder focus groups. Through the focus groups, the team gained a sense of opportunities and challenges associated with the proposed solar projects.

The project team then organized two community-wide conversations to provide information to residents and to learn more about residents' hopes and concerns. These events included educational presentations, a Q&A session, and facilitated table discussions. The process was designed to be inclusive of multiple stakeholders in the communities, recognizing there are differing interests in communities, and striving to honor the multitude of voices. All comments were recorded and later presented in a detailed written report, which was shared with Portage County and Town officials, focus group participants, and community meeting participants. The report includes leverage points for community elected officials, landowners, and residents when dealing with solar developers. The team also produced a guidebook for Extension Educators on how to organize community engagement processes for large-scale energy development.

**View the full report:** [Community Centered Solar Development Engagement Project](#)

**Results:** The project helped Portage County officials gain a better understanding of issues for those supporting or opposing large scale solar development. Public officials also gained an understanding of how projects can and cannot be influenced. The Vista Sands project proposal was submitted for review by the WI Public Service Commission (PSC) while the Extension study was underway. Due to increased awareness from the focus groups and community conversations, more residents submitted comments to the PSC. This informed PSC and the DNR and influenced their recommendations to the developer (many of the recommendations were in regard to the impact of the solar facility on the endangered prairie chicken that reside adjacent to the targeted lands at the Buena Vista Natural Areas preserve). The Portage County final report was submitted to the County's Extension, Agriculture and Natural Resources oversight committee. The committee recommended the findings be presented to the WI Towns Assn, as well as the Portage County Towns Assn. The Extension team is developing a presentation to be delivered throughout the state to towns' associations, so officials are better informed and prepared for large scale solar development.

*Extension can assist in providing education and forums for communication when large-scale solar comes to town.*

**Evidence:** Evaluation of the process indicated residents appreciated the opportunity to learn about the specifics of large-scale solar development and to be engaged in conversations regarding their concerns. Participants shared they would have liked to receive information about solar development prior to finding out that a large-scale project was coming to their community.

*As one participant stated "Solar development is a very complex planning issue and involves stakeholders from all parts of the community. Great caution is necessary for these projects, as well as consistent community communication."*