



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
DANE COUNTY

April 2024 Program Report

This summary report highlights just a few of the programs or projects Dane County Extension Educators were working on in April to provide you a sample of the type and breadth of programming offered. Also included are upcoming events. Be sure to check out the report on the By Youth for Youth program 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

Alison Pfau, Regional Dairy Educator, coordinated an on-farm training for farm personnel, where participants learned the importance of safe handling of animal health products such as vaccines and medication and the consequences of improper handling and administration. The goal of the program is to ensure products are administered and handled in a manner that is safe for both animals and farm personnel.



Will Fulwider, Regional Crops & Soils Educator, presented during a webinar to the collaborators and producers belonging to the producer-led watershed groups contextualizing climate-smart agriculture. The goal of this effort was to frame the current funding for climate-smart agriculture projects as a refocusing of conservation agricultural practices towards soil carbon in order to make climate smart initiatives more recognizable to farmers while also equipping them to view the current lack of consensus on carbon sequestration in annual cropping systems with a critical lens.

Community Development

Sharon Lezberg, Community Development Educator, facilitated a network retreat for the Dane County Crisis Providers Network, where participants discussed purpose and values of the network and identified activities for the network that would strengthen the crisis care continuum. This effort built connections amongst network participants and set a strong foundation for the upcoming year. The Dane County Crisis Provider Network had suspended operations since Covid-19. County staff at the behavioral health division wanted to restart the network, but recognized that many care providers had not participated in the previous iteration of the network. The organizers recognized that they would need to rebuild and re-energize the collaborative network. Sharon worked with the organizing team over three months to plan for the launch of the Network. They developed a survey of care providers to identify current gaps in the continuum of care. The survey also indicated care provider hopes for the network. They then worked together to design the kick-off retreat. Sharon facilitated the day-long program attended by 28 participants and provided an evaluation survey. The network was launched, with the kick-off retreat providing opportunity for participants to get to know one another and to identify areas for collaboration. The retreat set the stage for future work of the network. Evaluation results indicated that the activities that were planned were useful for participants in understanding the intent and work of the network. Participants appreciated the range of activities/processes included in the facilitation. Participants provided ideas for moving forward.

Human Development and Relationships

Clare Dahl, Financial Security Educator, taught a two-session workshop for Russian-speaking Ukrainian Refugees that are a part of the Stoughton ReSettlement program, where participants learned about the American tax system, tax preparation options, the credit system and scam prevention. Through this workshop series, participants gained knowledge to more easily navigate U.S. financial systems.

Kula Yang, Family Engagement & Relationships Educator, led a Read and Connect workshop for parents in the Dane County jail to learn the importance of reading aloud to children and ways to engage their child through books. The goal of the program is to help parents strengthen the parent-child bond and build children's early literacy skills, which are an important foundation for success in school and life. In Wisconsin, conservative estimates suggest that nearly 90,000 children have experienced the incarceration of a parent with whom they live. Parental incarceration is associated with increased risk of negative outcomes for children, including impacts on behavior, academic success, and health. Supporting parents during their incarceration allows Extension to reach an underserved and often invisible population and provide them with support to effectively maintain contact with their children until their re-entry into the community. For nearly 3 in 4 parents who participate in Read and Connect, the workshop was their first ever exposure to parenting education. As a result of the workshop, parents improve their understanding, attitudes, and intentions about parenting their young children. Most parents who respond to our post-workshop survey report significant improvements in their attitudes towards dialogic reading, interacting with their children, and maintaining their relationships and report improving their confidence about reading to their children. They also report intentions to maintain relationships, read more, and communicate more often with their children. Improving parents' intentions to use interaction, reading, and communication to connect with their children during separation is an important way to mitigate the risk children experience during this time.

Positive Youth Development

Lisa Curley, 4-H Extension Educator, assisted with the development and teaching of a "Connecting Volunteers: The Heart of 4-H" webinar. Volunteers in 4-H are ever growing and want to learn more about creating positive, high-quality learning environments for youth. Providing opportunities for volunteers to share ideas amongst themselves is a great way to build a community of volunteers and share knowledge and ideas. To meet the need, the Volunteer Systems Standing Committee discussed the idea of offering a zoom for volunteers to share, along with staff support to facilitate discussions in breakout rooms. The webinar was offered twice during Volunteer Appreciation Week. During the two zooms, staff and volunteers engaged in idea sharing, brainstorming and troubleshooting issues that are occurring in local 4-H clubs and groups. The volunteers expressed appreciation for the opportunity to share and offered ideas for future idea sharing. Based on feedback from volunteers and staff in attendance, the Volunteer Systems Standing Committee will look into future opportunities.

One participating volunteer stated, "I would like to have more opportunities to connect with leaders in other counties."

Ely Moya Malaver, Bilingual Youth Development Educator, gave an educational presentation at the Dane County Youth Government Day for middle school aged youth, where they learned about the Youth Governance Program, how local government works, and the different ways they can positively impact their communities. The goal of this presentation was to inspire and empower middle school-aged youth to actively participate in their communities by understanding the role of local government and the opportunities available through programs like the Youth Governance Program. The presentation included a hands-on activity where the youth learned about the local government budget process and role-played as County Board members, allocating a limited budget to various community services. This activity was designed to promote teamwork and critical thinking, while also highlighting the significance of budgeting in local government, all with the ultimate goal of inspiring students to become active and informed citizens in their communities.

Upcoming Events

[Free School for Farmworkers: Staying Safe in Extreme Heat](#) – May 12, 5-7 pm

[Parents Forever](#) – May 13, 9 am-12 pm

[Triple P: Parent with Children Age 0-12](#) – May 14, 10-11:30 am

[Focus on Fathers Series](#) – May 14, 6 -7pm

[Money Matters Series](#) – May 1, 8, 15 & 22, 10 am or 6:30 pm

[Garden and Landscape Q&A Series](#) – offered monthly

[Regional Broadband Workshops](#) – May 29, 8:30 am – 4 pm

[Strong Couples](#), a free online self-paced course you can take any time

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



By Youth for Youth

Supporting Youth as Decision Makers in their Community

Situation: There is a need to connect youth programming to civic engagement efforts, in particular for youth to have opportunities to make tangible change in their communities. Additionally, youth need to be at the center of decision-making processes with adults, where youth are valued as key stakeholders and experts. The By Youth For Youth (BYFY) program addresses this need. BYFY is a youth committee composed of high school students across Dane County that make investment decisions for youth-led programming and initiatives. BYFY members identify critical issues impacting youth in Dane County, establish funding priorities, review grant proposals, and recommend funding to support projects developed and implemented by youth to serve youth.

Response: Each year, three sponsors provide funding for BYFY grant projects: United Way of Dane County, Dane County Youth Commission, and the City of Madison. Taylor Seale, Dane County Extension Community Youth Development Educator, provides administrative and programmatic oversight in partnership with the City of Madison and United Way staff. BYFY program activities included analyzing the most recent Dane County Youth Assessment Report to identify data driven youth-decided funding priorities. The BYFY staff team also organized site visits and guest speaker panels with community organizations so the youth could learn more about the funding priorities and opportunities for systemic impact. The youth then individually reviewed, evaluated, and ranked each proposal, deliberated the merits of each proposal as a group, and then recommended funding. In April, an Awards Ceremony was hosted to celebrate all the grant awardees and BYFY youth accomplishments. During the ceremony, it was announced that BYFY received a \$20,000 donation from the Madison Civics Club, as well as \$40,000 from Bloomberg Philanthropies to support youth-led climate action initiatives in the summer of 2024.



2024 BYFY Priorities

- Mental and physical health
- Immigration
- Sexual violence
- Poverty
- Climate change

Extension empowers young people in decision making directly in their community, preparing the next generation of civic leaders, and building systems in which youth voice is valued and prioritized.

32

Grant proposals received requesting \$87,000

11

Projects selected for funding

\$25,630

Awarded to selected grant applicants

100%

Of program funds allocated to grants

19

BYFY youth from 11 Dane County high schools

"BYFY is a great way to get involved in the community and voice your opinion. We do this by making funding recommendations based on what we learn through guest speakers and field trips. BYFY is great for resumes and getting a real life perspective on issues in our community."

- Past BYFY Member, 2024

Evidence: BYFY youth vocalize their personal improvements in leadership skills, critical thinking skills, facilitation, ability to work in a large group as well as gaining a better understanding of the issues youth face in Dane County and how to address them. When asked what skills youth members gained from participating in BYFY, youth said they gained "teamwork, leadership, and confidence building skills", "collaborative and communication skills in a professional setting and learning how local philanthropic funding works", and "being able to accept other people's opinions and learn new perspectives." And, when asked what youth members were most proud of from participating in BYFY, youth said they were proud "to give funds to people in need and make an impact", "to make new friends in different schools", and to "be a part of the whole process and feel like we made tangible, positive change in our county."

Celebrating 30 Years!

2024 marks the 30th anniversary of the By Youth For Youth program. Since the early 90s, \$924,753 has been awarded in grants to 496 youth projects from a total of 683 BYFY alumni. In an effort to quantify, celebrate, and highlight the impact that BYFY has had over the past 30 years, a survey is open to BYFY alumni: https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6PrGgOPHLTswSqi



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