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Getting to Work: Partners in Transportation Beginning a Journey to Meet Transportation Gaps

By Jessica Beckendorf, UW-Madison Extension Community Development Educator for Waupaca County

In March of 2020, Partners in Transportation began a planning process led by Waupaca County Community Development Educator Jessica Beckendorf. Through the process, the group determined that coordinating with existing programs that provide transportation services would be the most efficient and effective way to find and fill transportation gaps in the county - an effort referred to as “mobility management.”

Who is Partners in Transportation?

Partners in Transportation is a collection of public and private organizations who care about collaborating with and working alongside existing transportation services in order to fill transportation gaps in Waupaca County to make sure that residents in need of service are able to obtain it, regardless of age or mobility. So far, the fledgling partnership includes: ThedaCare, Make the Ride Happen, East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, and Extension.



Next Steps

- Keep collaboration at the center of our efforts by **connecting and coordinating with more stakeholders**. This ensures coordinated efforts, and avoids duplication.
- Continue **working with the New London transportation committee**, building support and effectively making use of local assets and knowledge.
- Conduct an **inventory of transportation service assets** - private and public. Share this with all stakeholders.
- Begin offering services in the **New London area** to start, with a focus on workforce transportation gaps, while offering referrals for those that can be served by another program (to avoid duplication).

The effort has received some grant funding to begin work, and is seeking to work with existing stakeholders such as transportation companies, non-profits who provide rides, and governmental bodies for the purpose of understanding the needs and gaps and coordinating efforts.

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Extension Impact: Education Makes a Difference

Project Boxes Provide Hands-on Learning at Home

By Penny Tank, UW-Madison Extension 4-H Program Educator for Waupaca County

4-H project boxes offer a variety of 4-H projects for both youth and adults including lesson plans, directions and supplies to continue 4-H learning at home. Based on evaluation results from the first set of project boxes earlier this year and interest within the county, a second set of project boxes was created and promoted this winter. Since in person project meetings are limited at this time, the project boxes are a way for families to get everything they need to continue hands-on 4-H learning at home.

Youth Ambassadors and volunteer leaders helped determine some of the project box ideas. Two of the boxes included more holiday focused projects, one box was a woodworking step stool kit, one box was string art, and the last box had a literacy focus for younger children with the book *The Rainbow Fish* and activities that relate to the book. One hundred four boxes were purchased, compared to 54 with the first set of boxes in July/August. Two 4-H clubs offered to purchase a box of choice for each family to complete as club projects. With this set of project boxes, two live zooms were planned where families could sign on to make a project together and the Rainbow Fish box will include a time where we read the book together, discuss, and make a project. Boxes were advertised to 4-H and non 4-H families through 4-H emails, facebook, and the Extension facebook page. Feedback will be collected soon for this set of project boxes, some remarks from the first set of project boxes included “please keep offering things like this”, “we took our boxes camping with us for 5 days; lots of fun activities that we got to share with friends and family,” “excellent project; I have promoted it to current members and a new family”.

Additional new project boxes are being considered by the Super Saturday project day planning committee for early spring.



Woodworking project box – each box comes with a lesson plan with project directions and supplies.



Working on a holiday craft box.



Brynn enjoyed all of the painting projects.

Virtual Parenting Workshops Provide Opportunity to Learn and Connect

By Sandy Liang, UW-Madison Human Development & Relationships Extension Educator for Waupaca County

Parenting workshops that were once held in-person, moved to a virtual format. In a survey from last spring/summer, parents reported feelings of stress, isolation, and difficulty parenting during the pandemic. These virtual workshops held through Zoom allowed parents to learn and connect, with the purpose to learn easily-implemented strategies and have support from others.

Last fall and winter, the workshops were offered once a month on Tuesday in the evening and covered the following topics:

- How to Talk to Kids About Tough Stuff
- Emotion Coaching
- Easy Routines for Families



These evidence-based workshops were developed through the Human Development and Relationships Institute as part of the prevention education and brief interventions programs and to potentially spark interest in more in-depth longer duration programming.

The virtual format allowed parents from multiple cities and towns to participate. As a result of these workshops:

- Nearly 93% reported feeling an increased feeling of support
- 100% reported that they “strongly agree” or “agree” that the topic was helpful to them and their family
- About 87% reported that the session helped them learn something they did not already know

Next steps include expanding access to more community members and to offer other brief intervention topics.

Connecting with Extension Waupaca County Educators & Staff

Extension Waupaca County is closely monitoring the impact COVID-19 is having on our community and our Extension programming. We are following the guidance from UW-Madison, Waupaca County Public Health and our Waupaca County partner and adjusting our procedures for events and staffing as needed.

To continue to be a resource, Extension Waupaca County Educators continue to **work safely and deliver programming using the most current guidance and best practices**. We are very much available—email is best. **Staff are working on innovative methods to serve YOU!** Please check our website for the latest information and resources: waupaca.extension.wisc.edu

You may also **call** our office at 715-258-6230 or **email** amy.ebert@wisc.edu for assistance. The office is open to the public, and County Support Staff are still able to **mail** 2019 Plat Books as well as provide assistance to our Educators!

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FoodWise Helps Promote Farm Market During Pandemic

By Christi Gabrilska, UW-Madison Extension FoodWise Coordinator for Calumet, Outagamie, Winnebago & Waupaca Counties

After serious consideration, Waupaca Farmers Market Manager decided they would go ahead with the 2020 market season after COVID precautions and policies were put in place. FoodWise stayed in close connection with the market manager throughout the summer sharing updates with the community. In the absence of in-person contacts and market promotion at partnering agencies such as WIC and the Waupaca Area Food Pantry, Nutrition Educator Hailee Struck, created promotional materials for the Farm Market. The importance of shopping local, accessing fruits and vegetables, how to use SNAP and WIC Farm Market Checks at the Market and updated market policies and procedures were highlighted.

Farm Market highlights of the year included:

- Double your dollar days were offered two times/month
- Online ordering and curbside pick-up were offered through a newly created market website www.waupacafarmersmarket.org
- EBT and WIC were accepted online as well as in person at the market
- The market was highlighted by Farm2Fact for their safety policies



“This week’s #modelmarketmonday is Waupaca Farm Market. They have made various changes due to COVID...Thanks for doing your best to keep your community safe!”

The market manager reported over a \$15,000 increase in market sales in 2020 compared to 2019 and a huge increase in vendor participation at the market. Although customer counts were down, Lindsey, farm market manager said vendors noticed every customer was shopping with intention. FoodWise is hopeful they will be able to continue promoting the farm market and help increase access to fruits and vegetables in person at partnering agencies again next year.

Providing Resources to Maintain Partnership

By Hailee Struck, UW-Madison Extension FoodWise Educator for Waupaca County

Throughout the last nine months, our jobs as educators have looked quite different with the restrictions of in person programming and telecommuting from our homes. This has presented the challenge of how to connect with participants and continue a strong relationship with our partners. We have had to get creative, troubleshoot and go about things in a completely different way.



Over the course of time, we have established a fluent partnership with the Waupaca Area Pantry. Pre-COVID 19 we were going in person to provide individuals with resources, recipes, Farm Market incentives, and recently had started bringing a prepared recipe for participants to try and take home the ingredients in addition to their allotment. Although this method is not currently an option for us we have continued to provide assistance to our partner in the best way we are able. We have had multiple conversations about innovative ways of how to enhance food distribute during this significant time. Flyers were made to promote “pop-up” themed pantry distribution

days. Health resources and recipes were provided to be placed in the participants bags through their drive-up food pick up process. Farmers Market promotion and surprise kitchen incentives were also provided to be given to participants.

We are anxiously awaiting the day we can be back in person to provide our nutrition education but we will remain an open source to our partner and will continue to assist in any way we possibly can. The pantry is continuing their drive-up process until an undetermined date but they deserve a round of applause for their response. We value our partnership with them and have recently discussed starting a Hunger Network, where we can connect with them and other pantries in the county to continue to troubleshoot different trials and difficulties during this time.