



**Extension**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
WAUPACA COUNTY

# Extension Impact: Education Makes a Difference

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## FoodWise Collaborates with Waupaca Community Garden

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

Over the course of a few years FoodWise has helped establish a community garden in Waupaca in collaboration with Living the Waupaca Way Coalition. This summer, FoodWise Nutrition Educator Hailee Struck and Coordinator Christi Gabriliska



teamed up with the Community Garden Manager to offer a container garden workshop for families to attend at the garden. Hailee facilitated a youth garden lesson, exploring the parts of a plant that we eat. The garden manager then led the group through a tour of the garden and assisted each child in planting their own pizza garden containing a tomato, pepper, basil and



oregano plant. Plants were donated by local growers and farm market vendors and FoodWise provided the soil and containers. This was the first year FoodWise provided direct education at the

community garden, but has been involved in establishing and supporting the garden. Additionally, FoodWise provides the Waupaca Area Food Pantry with recipes and tips for storage and handling the produce they receive from the garden.

Next summer FoodWise plans to expand on the direct education provided at the garden and hopes to write a grant to support supplies for the garden.

The Waupaca Community Garden is located at 913 Riverside Drive in Waupaca.



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## County Early Childhood Network to Offer Support and Educational Opportunities

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



Early childhood is a critical period of brain development--these early experiences influence the wiring of the brain, affecting the cognitive and social-emotional development of young children. Early adverse experiences such as abuse and neglect, poverty, and lack of access to quality child care can all influence these outcomes. However, parental support, access to quality child care, and community support can be part of an environment that promotes resilience.

Liang initiated the Waupaca County Early Childhood Network this past summer to support and connect those working in the early childhood field and/or young families. She invited professionals

and surveyed them on interests and needs. There were 24 professionals interested in the network from various sectors in the community—child care providers, school counseling, speech-language pathology, and non-profits. Survey results showed that 82% wanted to join for connection to other professionals for ideas and support. About 64% of those who responded to the survey were interested in professional development opportunities

The kick-off meeting will be in October, where the group will further develop the structure and content of network. As part of this network, members will benefit by: 1) being able to discuss topics of shared interest with support from members; 2) gave access to Extension's evidence-based programming including: Raising a Thinking Child; Raising Care Kids, and training in Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs); and 3) have an increased understanding and connection to the wider community's early childhood landscape.

## Build it Strong: Child Care Business Foundations Program

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

Waupaca County's economy relies on the early childhood education (ECE) system - this was true before the pandemic and has become painfully evident during the pandemic when many large licensed group centers and licensed family centers closed statewide. While some of these facilities have reopened, the truth is that there weren't enough to begin with.



Most of Waupaca County is in a “child care desert,” represented by the orange color on this 2018 map. A child care desert is an area that either has no child care providers, or has so few that there are more than three children for each available spot.

When adequate child care is not available for families, they might end up making difficult employment decisions or

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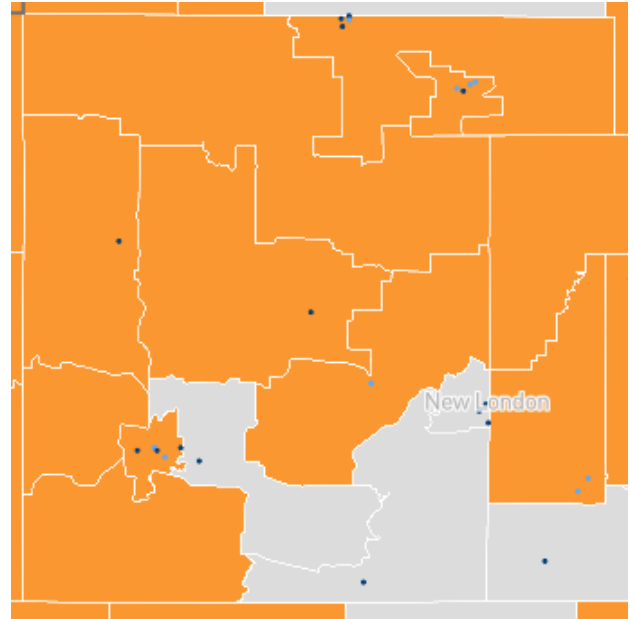
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moving out of the area entirely. This is important because local business and industry need to be able to attract and retain employees. Child care is an important component of workforce attraction and retention.

That is why the UW-Madison Division of Extension worked with partners to develop the Wisconsin Child Care Business Initiative. Jessica Beckendorf was the Northeast Region lead coordinator, with assistance from HDR Educator Sandy Liang.

The Northeast Region sessions were held in June, with several Waupaca County child care businesses in attendance. The program was free to attend, paid for by a generous grant from the SBDC. Each Saturday in June, participants gathered to learn about child care business foundations like:

- Finance
- Operations
- Outside services
- Accounting and record keeping
- Funding
- Professionalism



After taking this program, participants reported large increases in confidence with running their business. They also reported making many changes to their operations, particularly with finance, record keeping, and planning for retirement.

## 4-H Summer Camp Opportunities

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



This summer we were happy to be able to offer in person camp experiences again for 4-H and non 4-H youth! First there was Outdoor Adventure Day, a full day camp at the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station (CWES) planned and organized in partnership with Portage County 4-H. Nineteen campers (grades 3-7) and 7 counselors (grades 8 and above) attended. Counselors participated in a virtual training session prior to camp to prepare them for their leadership responsibilities. At camp, youth experienced STEM, outdoor adventures like archery and canoeing, and arts & crafts. Campers reported enjoying the chance to try new activities and make new friends. Campers and Counselors who completed the evaluation felt safe and welcomed at camp. One

counselor wrote that “this (experience) was impactful because we were really in charge of our own groups and were responsible for all of the campers. It was a different kind of responsibility and was helpful in practicing skills with leading activities, being patient, and staying positive for the campers.”

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Second, Tank planned Summer Fun Day Camp with 4-H Ambassadors and adult volunteers. This experience is focused on younger youth and is a great opportunity to invite non 4-H members. Thirty campers in grades K-4 participated with 5 of them being non 4-H members. Fourteen youth in grades 6 and above volunteered to help as group counselors or session teachers and helpers. In addition to hands-on projects led by 4-H youth and adults, the Weyauwega Fire Department was invited to come and do a presentation about fire safety. On the evaluations, members reported learning new things at camp and one non 4-H family said it was a great opportunity to learn more about 4-H.



## 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](http://waupaca.extension.wisc.edu)**

You may also **call** our office at 715-258-6230 or **email** [amy.ebert@wisc.edu](mailto:amy.ebert@wisc.edu) for assistance.

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