



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
WAUPACA COUNTY

Extension Impact: Education Makes a Difference

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FoodWise Collaborates with Community Partners to Create New Opportunities

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

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

FoodWise is jumping back into community collaborations and reconnecting with partners, establishing new programs and building on old relationships.

FoodWise educators Christi Gabrilkska and Hailee Struck established a new relationship with the Waupaca Public Library adding a summer series of Fruit and Veggie related story times to their schedule. June was kicked off with a Strawberry Full Moon Hike at the Waupaca Community Garden, highlighting the garden as a community space open to all. FoodWise provided strawberry yogurt parfaits and helped families harvest rhubarb from the garden while the library read two children stories and led the hike around the neighborhood. Events set for later this summer include storytime at the Chain Exploration Center’s Garden, and Turner’s Fresh Market Stand outside the Library.



The community garden is another project of Christi and Hailee’s through their involvement in the Living the Waupaca Way Coalition. The focus of this garden has shifted from a production garden to a therapeutic garden for education, exploration and relaxation. A lot of energy has gone into emphasizing the community collaborations at this garden. FoodWise reached out to the youth at the Arts Hub, who painted a mural on the garden shed.

Waupaca High School Tech Ed. students built two picnic tables for the garden, and Silver Mist and Faulks Brothers donated mulch and supplies for the garden. FoodWise also contacted a Waupaca summer school class titled “Caring for the Community”, and arranged a volunteer day at the garden. Students spent two hours at the garden helping to clean up the fence line, paint basketball lines on the

In This Issue

**Waupaca County
Transportation Program
Receives Workforce
Innovation Program
Grant** 2

**Junior Camp—Bloom
with 4-H** 3
Annette Spieth Retires

Meet Katie Loehrke! 4

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

pavement, water the vegetables and mow the lawn. The produce that is harvested at this garden will be donated to families and individuals with limited resources in our community.

FoodWise also reconnected with Healthy Beginning and WIC this summer to set a series of events one time per month for participating families to come together outdoors and explore what the county has to offer. Events are hosted at parks in Waupaca and Clintonville as well as the Waupaca Library. The event in June was hosted at Brainard's Bridge where 12 families attended. FoodWise led a lesson with the children, allowing them to explore the parts of a plant that we eat and made food faces out of sliced veggies. Parents were also provided with information on how to redeem their food benefits at farm markets. FoodWise is thrilled to be back in the community providing education and outreach to families again.



Waupaca County Transportation Program Receives Workforce Innovation Program Grant

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



Some members of the workforce transportation team, along with Governor Evers

There is much to celebrate for the network of organizations, including Extension, that have been working on workforce transportation gaps in Waupaca County (primarily in the New London area for the first phase)! On July 1, Governor Evers and his team announced that the group will receive a Workforce Innovation Program Grant totaling over \$3M. WCEDC will serve as the administrative lead on this grant.

Transportation insecurity is a significant issue for employee retention in rural Wisconsin, and it has been magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic and rising costs of vehicles and fuel. This is especially evident for employees of color and employees who live in low-income households.

For example, Tyson Foods in Waupaca County has indicated that more than one third of terminations that occur within the first 3 months of employment are not due to lack of performance, but lack of reliable transportation. That same challenge impacts thousands of other employers across the state, especially in rural areas.

The transportation solution planned by this group of dedicated partners takes an innovative, yet proven approach to addressing rural transportation through an innovative Mobility as a Service (MaaS) and mobility management model - the practice of using all available resources, and developing new ones to improve mobility, increase efficiency and reduce cost. As recovery from the COVID crisis continues, the proposed programming will work to ensure that people facing economic insecurity, returning to employment, or endeavoring to maintain employment have affordable transportation options.

Junior Camp—Bloom with 4-H

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



Twenty-four youth, eight counselors, and eight adults from Waupaca and Portage Counties experienced the first overnight 4-H camp in two years at the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station. Campers ranged from 3rd to 5th grade and the counselors were grades 8 and above. For all 8 counselors, this was their first overnight leadership opportunity in a camp setting since overnight camp was not held for the last 2 years. Three different counselor training sessions were planned to prepare the youth for this responsibility and complete planning parts of camp.

Bloom with 4-H was the theme of camp and activities were designed around nature and flowers. Youth experienced STEM, outdoor adventures, teambuilding activities, and arts & crafts. In addition, this year campers were able to help with a service project of packing backpacks for those in need. Campers reported enjoying trying new activities like archery and canoeing and making new friends.

One of the purposes of camp is to engage young people in leadership roles while learning about team building and mentoring. For most activities during camp, counselors were paired together and supported their group of campers in whatever capacity was needed. Campers reported feeling like their counselor treated them with respect. When asked on the evaluation what an important thing was the campers learned about at camp, they reported staying safe around camp, and that camps are fun – don't be afraid. All campers indicated that they would return to camp another year!



Annette Spieth Retires

Annette has been with Waupaca County for 31 years. 20 of those years has been in the Extension Office as a Program Assistant for 4-H and Human Development & Relationship programs. Annette will be retiring from the county in July.

"I have really enjoyed working for the county, including the 4-H families, HCE ladies, the friends I made along the way, and my co-workers (who I will miss dearly). It has been such a great office to work in. I plan to enjoy my free time doing arts and crafts, thrifting, relaxing at the cabin, traveling, volunteering, and spending more time with family and friends."

Please join me in thanking Annette for all of her work in the Extension Office and with the 4-H Program!! Not only has Annette worked in the office, she has volunteered to teach at 4-H Super Saturday, helped with Cloverbud Day Camp, attended the Banquet, and more. She does whatever she can to help things run smoothly in the program. It has been a pleasure working with Annette and she will be missed.





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Meet Katie Loehrke!

Katie Loehrke has recently begun her role working at the Extension Office this summer as the summer 4-H Program Assistant. Katie was an active member of the Lind Center Beavers 4-H and the Weyauwega-Fremont FFA. She is currently attending UW River Falls where she will be a senior this fall, majoring in Agricultural Education and minors in Animal Science and Dairy Science, with hopes of teaching after graduation.

“I am very excited to be working in this position this summer! I am looking forward to helping to bring new opportunities for our area youth to the county and am most looking forward to helping to prepare for the 2022 Waupaca County Fair!”

Katie will be working with the office throughout the summer and possibly more remotely after the fair. To contact her directly, email: kloehrke@wisc.edu.



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