

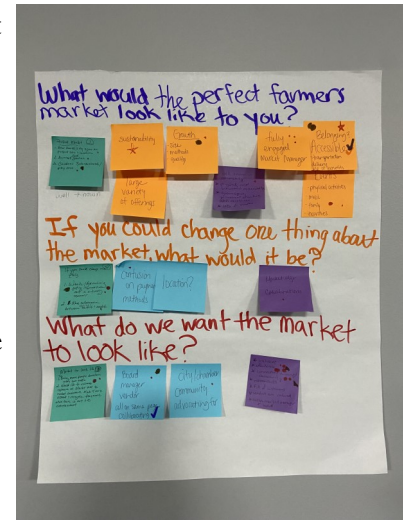


Extension Impact: Education Makes a Difference

Visioning: Unlocking Organizational Potential

By Amy Ebert, UW-Madison Extension Community Development Educator for Waupaca County

A vision statement is a short, written statement that captures the essence of an organization, defining why it exists and providing guidance for future aspirations. These statements are powerful in that they can create motivated and cohesive teams, facilitate decision-making and goal setting, and improve organizational performance. Unlike a mission statement, which defines who and what the organization is, a vision statement expresses what it aspires to become. Both of these statements, along with organizational values, are key components of an organization’s overall planning process.



Recently, I had the privilege to facilitate a visioning session for the Waupaca Farm Market board, attended by seven individuals. To prepare, I collaborated with a key leader to understand their goals for the session, plan relevant activities, and co-create an agenda tailored to the board’s needs and objectives. The session was structured to maximize engagement and valuable outcomes. Participants were guided through facilitated discussions and activities that promoted self-discovery, brainstorming, and reaching group consensus.

Following the session, 71% of participants completed a post-session evaluation, with aggregated ratings indicating high satisfaction:

- Learned something: 4.6/5
- Usefulness: 4.8/5
- Quality of Presentation: 4.8/5

One participant noted in the evaluation, “Our board would not be as cohesive in our pursuit of a vision without this session!” Such feedback underscores the session’s effectiveness in



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moving the board towards a shared vision. This data informs future planning and ensures continued delivery of impactful programming.

Looking ahead, I am excited about the opportunity to facilitate a visioning session for a statewide organization. I am looking forward to empowering organizations to articulate their visions and navigate toward their desired futures.

References

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4-H AmeriCorps in Waupaca County

By Alison Acker, 4-H AmeriCorps Member for Waupaca County

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



Alison Acker, from New London, is serving as a half-time 4-H AmeriCorps member in Waupaca County. Alison's service started in January and runs through August. Two goals are to expand the reach of 4-H by providing opportunities to more youth in the county that may not currently be 4-H members and increasing 4-H membership. The WI 4-H AmeriCorps program has a focus on offering new, more, and different opportunities to youth. We are 1 of approximately 25 counties in WI to have an AmeriCorps member this year. Alison has been reaching out to potential community partners and offering a variety of 4-H lessons and activities. Below is a list of community partnerships:

- ◆ Marion: Beginning in February, Acker and Tank joined Shawano County 4-H at the Marion Elementary School After-School program on Thursdays. Approximately 30-45 students have been learning about a different animal each week, which has been linked to discussions around traits that can be applied to how we live our lives in a positive way.
- ◆ New London: On Mondays in March, we are bringing STEM activities to the Parkview Elementary After-School Program. These sessions include circuits, soda bottle rockets, and rain gutter regattas. Approximately 15 to 20 youth are present.
- ◆ Clintonville: A rocket session will be held in April for the Clintonville Middle School After-School program.
- ◆ Public Libraries in Manawa, New London, Waupaca, and Fremont have so far planned take home project kits and/or in person educational programs with us for this summer. Topics range from STEM activities to music to art and nature.
- ◆ We will also provide an educational booth at the Waupaca Parks & Recreation Department 3rd grade Environmental Day in May for approximately 150 students.



FoodWise Supports Community Partners in Highlighting Wisconsin-Grown Fruits and Veggies

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

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

Wisconsin Harvest of the Month is a statewide campaign that empowers students to eat more fruits and vegetables. Each month, schools and community partners showcase one seasonal, Wisconsin-grown fruit or vegetable and encourage students to taste, explore, and learn about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables.

FoodWise has been working with two community partners to implement the Harvest of the Month Campaign. Each month, Hailee Paul, FoodWise Nutrition Educator visits Clintonville's Compassionate Connections Resource Center to highlight the selected Harvest of the Month with a recipe demonstration, food samples, and recipe handouts to encourage families and individuals to explore a new food.

Compassionate Connections procured local funds to purchase the Harvest of the Month food and have it available for their clients all month long. Additionally, the resource center's back program, Nutrition Mission showcases this selected fruit or vegetable in their backpack one time a month with accompanying resources and recipes. After sampling a baked apples and squash recipe, highlighting winter squash in the Month of October a grandmother came back to the center to share her pride in using her free squash to make the recipe at home for her family and her grandkids loved the recipe so much she's made it once more since.

Lincoln Elementary School in New London has also been participating in the Harvest of the Month campaign. FoodWise provided the elementary school with funding to purchase supplies to make trying new foods each month fun and exciting at school. A cart on wheels, chef aprons, chef hats, and marketing materials were

purchased at Lincoln and their Principal, Kirk Delwiche teams up with FoodWise to visit each classroom handing out samples, delivering a small presentation and distributing take home recipes with all 220 students.

FoodWise is very excited to begin a new collaboration with the WI Food Hub to team up with a Farm to School Educator to implement the Harvest of the Month Campaign across the county with several schools and early childcare centers and procure local produce in the 2024-2025 school year.





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Meet Amy Ebert, Full-Time Community Development Educator



Over the past year I've had the privilege of serving as the part-time Community Development Educator in the Waupaca County Extension office, where I have enjoyed building relationships with a variety of community partners and working alongside them to increase their capacity. I have provided support to these partners through facilitated conversations, workshops, various engagement strategies, and more.

Since 2019, I have worked as a Program Assistant at the Extension office while earning my B.S. in Health and Wellness Management at the same time. This role granted me insights into the inner workings of Extension programs, from budget management to program communications. I also learned a great deal about local government, which made me a more engaged citizen as a result.

My experience working in the Extension office and academic background in Health and Wellness Management have equipped me with a unique and holistic perspective on community development. I've come to realize there is an intersection of community development and health which leads to a wide array of opportunities to promote vibrant, thriving communities.

Looking ahead, I am excited about the possibilities in the community to increase belonging, develop local leaders, and drive civic engagement. It is an honor to serve in this capacity and to help communities and individuals overcome obstacles in reaching their full potential.

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