



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
WAUPACA COUNTY

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Extension Impact: Education Makes a Difference

A Partnership with the WI Food Hub Cooperative is Increasing Access to Fresh Food at Local Schools and Food Pantries in Waupaca County and Northern WI.

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

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

FoodWise is teaming up with the WI Food Hub Cooperative to help schools and food pantries procure local foods for school meals and increase access to fresh local produce for families and individuals with limited incomes through Farm to School Initiatives and Local Foods Promotion Grants.

FoodWise developed a partnership with Tara Turner and the WI Food Hub Cooperative, and has played a partnering role in a Farm to School Grant in Waupaca County increasing youths exposure to and knowledge of fruits and vegetables grown in Wisconsin. FoodWise staff Hailee Paul and Christi Gabriliska connected the food service directors at Clintonville, New London and Manawa school districts to the Food Hub to purchase local foods from the Food Hub. FoodWise supports these schools in an effort called Harvest of the Month, where the school highlights a WI grown food each month, with the hopes that the food is menued a few times on the lunch line that month. In the New London School District at Lincoln Elementary, a Farm to School Coordinator facilitates mini lessons to each classroom one time per month highlighting the food, and distributes a food sample. Kirk Delwiche, principal at Lincoln Elementary school, has expressed that he has seen a large increase in the amount of fruits and vegetables his students have been willing to taste and enjoy because of Harvest of the Month and Farm to School efforts.

**This image shows the refrigerator at the Waupaca Public Libraries Little Free Food Pantry stocked with fresh produce after a delivery from the WI Food Hub LFPA program this summer. The pantry receives this food for free.*



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FoodWise has also partnered with the Food Hub to broaden and strengthen partnerships of local producers and processors with food distribution partners and local food networks to ensure the distribution of fresh and nutritious foods in underserved communities through a Wisconsin Local Food Purchase Assistance Program (WI LFPA). This program awarded farmers and community partners grant contracts to grow fresh, nutritious food that was picked up and distributed to food access partners throughout Wisconsin and provided to underserved communities at no charge. FoodWise has played the connector role in supporting the WI Food Hub in finding local Food Pantries in Waupaca County to distribute to. Since January, 2024 FoodWise helped to onboard Foundations for Living, The Little Free Food Pantry at the Waupaca Public Library, Compassionate Connections Center and the Clintonville Food Pantry into the program.

FoodWise has also played a large role in connecting the Food Hub to Several Rural Food Pantries outside of Waupaca County in Northern WI. As a result of the collaboration and connection to local food pantries in Rural WI and the Food Hub, 28 new food pantries in WI are receiving fresh, locally procured food for free.

Building Stronger Teams with Real Colors^o

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

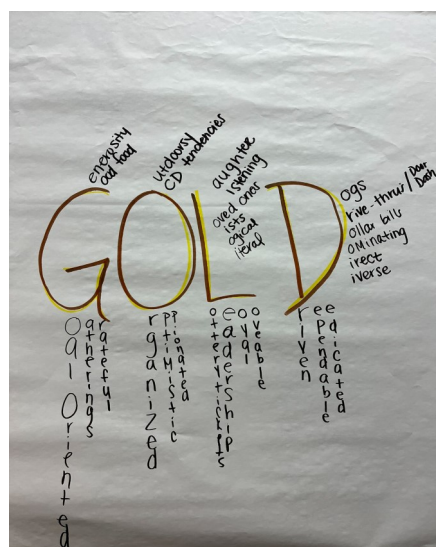
In December, I facilitated a 3-hour Real Colors workshop for 15 staff members of the Waupaca County Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). The session focused on improving teamwork and communication.

Participants took part in a personality assessment and interactive activities to explore their individual strengths and work styles. By the end of the workshop, they learned tools to:

- Better recognize their own and others' strengths.
- Build rapport quickly.
- Understand different communication styles.
- Adapt how they interact to connect more effectively.

Feedback from participants:

- 100% increased their ability to recognize strengths in themselves and others.
- 87% improved their ability to build rapport quickly with colleagues.
- 100% gained a better understanding of how others process information.



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- 100% felt more equipped to adjust their communication styles to connect with others.

The session received an overall rating of 4.9 out of 5 for facilitation. One participant shared, “I will use this information to better understand myself and function better with my team,” while another noted, “It helps me value my coworkers’ unique attributes.”

This workshop helped ADRC staff improve their communication and teamwork, supporting their ability to work together more effectively in serving the community.

As a certified Real Colors facilitator, I offer workshops for organizations in Waupaca County looking to enhance teamwork and communication. To make professional development opportunities more accessible, I offer special pricing to nonprofit and public sector organizations, especially those that work with vulnerable populations.



Real Colors®

Supporting Caregivers: Empowering Those Who Care for Others

By Alicia Utke-Becher, UW-Madison Extension Human Development and Relationships Educator for Waupaca County

Caregivers play a critical role in supporting loved ones, but caregiving often comes with emotional, physical, and mental challenges. Providing caregivers with tools to reduce stress, set boundaries, and find resources is essential for their health and ability to care.

I recently facilitated *Powerful Tools for Caregivers*, a six-week evidence-based program. The program helped participants improve self-care, manage emotions, and find supportive resources.

Post-session evaluations showed positive outcomes:

- **100%** of participants agreed they could better manage stress, ask for help, and communicate their needs.
- **100%** felt confident taking action to care for their health and cope with caregiving challenges.

One participant shared, “*It’s powerful to be with others in the same situation. The knowledge and support were meaningful and reassuring.*” Another noted, “*This program gave me strategies to care for myself, which makes me a better caregiver.*”

In addition to this program, I participate in the Waupaca County Caregiver Coalition to strengthen local support networks. I have recently agreed to take a leadership role with the coalition, which will be hosting a caregiver resource fair in the spring. Moving forward, I plan to expand programming into the less reached areas of our rural community and explore opportunities for ongoing connection among caregivers.

Winter Leadership Camp 2025

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

Tank partnered with 4-H Educators from 7 other counties to plan and lead Winter Leadership Camp. This Friday night to Sunday morning overnight experience was held for 4-H members in 7th grade and up at Spencer Lake Camp in Waupaca with 40 youth attending. The focus of Winter Leadership Camp is to participate in leadership development activities, have fun, learn more about older youth opportunities in 4-H, and meet other teens. The 8 participating counties were Calumet, Fond du lac, Manitowoc, Marinette, Oconto, Portage, Sheboygan, and Waupaca. The leadership lessons were put together from a research-based leadership curriculum called Leadership Summit: Hike Your Leadership Trail, from Nebraska Extension. Through hands-on, interactive leadership sessions the youth learned about their leadership temperament, strengths of each leadership style, and practiced teamwork along with other life skills. Along with leadership learning, youth had the opportunity to participate in a variety of recreational activities that included Spark stations, gym & game time, outdoor activities, and a chance to engage with others from the other counties. Evaluations are being tallied and there were many positive comments throughout the weekend of how much the campers enjoyed their time at Winter Camp.



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