



EXTENSION FOCUS

SAUK COUNTY

JUNE 2020

FoodWise Nutrition

Our FoodWise educator has been busy collaborating with Sauk County elementary school teachers to create a series of online nutrition lessons. This has allowed students to continue to engage in the high quality nutrition education programming provided by FoodWise throughout the school year, despite the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. FoodWise has now successfully established fiscal year 2021 planning which will include 270 teaching events across Sauk County. Nutrition education will reach children, youth and families in our community in a variety of venues, to include elementary schools, Head Start, food pantries, and summer school programming.

As our FoodWise nutrition educator transitions to less teaching hours over the summer, she will be working diligently with community partners to ensure that the pandemic does not decrease healthy and safe nutrition education at food distribution sites.



Community Development

Demonstrating flexibility and creativity that is the backbone of Extension, our educators converted the April and May Sauk County Institute of Leadership (SCIL) sessions to Zoom format so that the sessions could continue as scheduled. SCIL participants shared leadership lessons learned from historical Sauk County leaders, reported out on the impacts of their community projects, and discussed transforming organizational culture with Laura Walczak, CEO of SSM Healthcare Baraboo. The class conducted an interview of Sauk County Conservation experts to gain perspective on balancing the preservation of natural resources with the desire for growth

Adapting an approach from the Native American planning process, the CD educator then facilitated three virtual meetings with the Sauk County Historical Society Sacred Sites Committee. In preparation for the county's outdoor recreation planning process, the committee outlined their vision for the future for three of Sauk County's sacred sites (Man Mound, Chief Yellow Thunder Memorial and Hulburt Creek Garden Beds).

Rounding out a busy month, the CD educator developed and distributed a survey designed to gauge the need for a shared commercial kitchen in Reedsburg. She also outlined a process to measure the potential economic impact of the multi-use recreational trail that ultimately will connect Middleton to Reedsburg.

Human Development & Relationships

In the month of May, programming efforts focused on the development, promotion and launch of a new virtual Parent Café. This online learn, listen and share group helps to minimize the isolation parents experience while also reinforcing and building their parenting skills and is free to join. The HDR educator extended financial education support to Sauk County residents as they navigated the ongoing changes brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. On average, the educator supported 2-3 calls a day, directing residents to resources, advising people on available benefits and helping people understand how to manage their resources in these tough times.

After transitioning "in-progress" Raising A Thinking Child and Parents Forever classes to an online format in April, a brief respite was taken at the beginning of May to revise the curriculum in order to improve class delivery online. Parents Forever classes are now available and running at the end of May through the summer for those parents court ordered to complete co-parenting.





Collaboration Efforts

Community Development, Agriculture and Human Development & Relationship educators came together to work with the Farmer Angel Network of Sauk County to envision, evaluate and establish their mission and goals for 2020. Moving forward the Ag and HDR educators will continue to advise the Farmer Angel Network as community partners and support with ongoing education events.

Agriculture and Human Development & Relationships educators across Sauk, Juneau, and Dodge counties supported the Heart of the Farm regional Coffee Chats online series this summer for South Central WI. The series consisted of one-hour educational sessions once a week, for 4 weeks. Sessions were delivered by both Ag and HDR educators in the identified region and farm families were able to join for free to the 7pm events.

The PYD educator worked with colleagues from Columbia, Dodge and Waukesha Counties to conduct an online, "Volunteer in Preparation Orientation" session. Eighteen potential volunteers participated in this new way of providing a required training.

Human Development & Relationship educators in Sauk, Richland, Iowa, Grant, Crawford, Dodge, and Washington counties designed and delivered a six week virtual Parent Cafe. Families in all seven counties were able to join for free to engage in light education and peer group discussion about the challenges and joys of parenting during isolation.

Agriculture

The Agriculture educator has been connecting our Sauk County farmers with the new COVID-19 resources coming out as well as contacts that will help in making the critical decisions for their farms and businesses during these increasingly stressful times. She has been working to update and print the 2020 Sauk County Farm Connect Guide. This guide helps connect individuals to farms that are direct marketing products, farmers markets, and other local agricultural based businesses. It also incorporates education into the document with facts, resources, and recipes to support buying from local vendors.

Horticulture

The face-to-face limitations of the pandemic have impacted the guidelines provided to the horticulture program. However, our educator has continued to lend her expertise and advice to the growing number of garden enthusiast in the county. Currently, the Prairie du Sac Community Garden is full and now open to 19 garden members.

Positive Youth Development

Across the country, individuals and communities are facing unforeseen challenges due to the impact of COVID-19. Here in Sauk County a network of 150 volunteers have adapted traditional means of delivering the 4-H program and supporting young people. Over the last 8 weeks the Positive Youth Development educator has worked with volunteers to develop new and innovative ways to keep 4-H members engaged. The PYD educator, 4-H Clubs and project groups are embracing technology tools like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google to bring youth together for Club meetings and continued project learning. Continued engagement provides youth opportunity to connect, share and talk about their feelings, as well as get support.

In order to keep youth engaged and provide something fun, the PYD educator has created a reverse scavenger hunt. Dolly, the unofficial Sauk County 4-H mascot, is being photographed in different locations around Sauk County with different project supplies. A photo is posted twice a week on Facebook and Instagram and youth are encouraged to guess where Dolly is and what 4-H project skill she is working on developing. Youth and adults have shared that they are enjoying this fun new activity.

