



# EXTENSION FOCUS

SAUK COUNTY

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2021

## Agriculture - Alana Voss

Alana is collaborating with the Sauk County Land Resources and Environment Department to create and host an Absentee Landowners workshop. Workshops are taking place every Tuesday evening in February from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm via Zoom. Each workshop covers a different topic. So far, workshops have highlighted; understanding the value of your land, Sauk County current events, conservation programs farms can enroll in, management practices, lease agreements, as well as agency updates & resources for the agricultural land and farms. This workshop series fosters participants to ask questions and provides targeted resources to assist in their conversations with renters regarding cropland, pastures, and farm buildings. It has also helped build connections between individuals of differing backgrounds while sharing a passion for owning and farming agricultural land. In addition, to supporting this workshop series, Voss is also continuing with the Marketing with Confidence program, specifically the two tracks of grain production and livestock sessions, along with a regional group of agricultural colleagues.



## Horticulture - Tim Ripp

With spring around the corner, what better time to offer a hearty and happy welcome to our new horticulture educator, Tim Ripp! With a background in backyard shenanigans, including some bee-utiful hive-related work, the Extension team is excited to have Tim on staff. We'll let Tim fill out this space in the months to come so you can have the pleasure of getting to know him yourself. So watch this space - we think it will definitely be worth the read!



## Human Development & Relationships - Amanda Coorough

A winter session of Raising a Thinking Child completed in February. The collaboration between Sauk and Richland counties was able to help five families complete the program virtually. Moving into March, Amanda will be working with Crawford, Dodge, and Winnebago counties to make Triple P parenting available to Sauk families. This program, available to parents of children aged 0-12 yrs, helps to strengthen family relationships while addressing common parenting challenges. Amanda will also be working to support another Parent Connect collaboration with education colleagues in the region to decrease parent isolation and increase social-emotional skill-building.



## FoodWise - Melissa Beernick

Nutrition virtual education continues within Sauk County Elementary schools. Melissa has been using the conferencing platform Google Meet to virtually connect with classrooms and provide nutrition education. Up to date 130 lessons have been scheduled within Sauk County, with more being added daily. Melissa has co-piloted an additional 53 lessons with peers throughout the state in addition to support nutrition lessons in other counties, per the FoodWise virtual standards.

## Community Development - Jenny Erickson & Morgan McArthur

In collaboration with Sauk County Land Resources & Environment, Jenny's offering Extension resources to support a limited number of free pollinator demonstration garden kits to qualifying organizations located in Sauk County. Applicants can apply for a pre-planned pollinator garden kit with plants and instructions on how to attract a variety of bees and butterflies. The kit includes 32 plants (in 3" pots) and is suitable for a 10' by 5' space. Eligible applicants include schools, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and community gardens located in Sauk County. For more information, including a link to the online application, go to the link <https://sauk.extension.wisc.edu/> before the April 16th deadline. Jenny reminds us that the importance of protecting pollinators like birds, bats, bees, butterflies, beetles, and other small mammals comes down to the fact that they are responsible for bringing us one out of every three bites of food. They also sustain our ecosystems by helping plants reproduce. This pollinator demonstration project is to raise awareness of the issues facing pollinators and provide simple steps residents can take to support pollinators. Funding for this project was provided through the Ho-Chunk Nation and Sauk County.



## Positive Youth Development - Meg Sage

Meg is hosting virtual "office hours" twice a month in support of leaders and 4-H families, where they can pop into a Zoom, ask a question, and get support. The 2nd Thursday of each month from 6:30-7:30 PM is open Zoom office hours for Leaders (project leaders, club leaders, resource leaders, etc.). The 3rd Tuesday of each month from 6:30-7:30 PM is open Zoom office hours for 4-H members and families. Zoom access and log-in information are provided in a bi-monthly email update. 4-H project work happens year-round, pandemics haven't slowed these busy kiddos down! For the last 3 months, Columbia, Dodge and Sauk County Educators have created Explore 4-H at Home project kits. There are three different kits available each month through June 2021. Kits are available for anyone whether they are enrolled in 4-H or not. Kits will be project area-focused and will contain: 1) Directions and supplies for 6-8 activities to explore the project area, 2) 2-3 activities from recommended project curriculum, and 3) 4-5 activities from other 4-H project resources. Kits are available for \$10 per kit; \$15 with project curriculum book; \$20 for those not yet a 4-H member. Reserve kits for April NOW! Register at: <https://forms.gle/3QBssALCSmsj7yxM>

## Community Collaboration Efforts

**Food Pantry and Partners Coalition** The coalition continues to examine the outcome of the needs survey for local residents in getting access to safe food sources. Area partners continue to discuss what the greatest needs are as they relate to what the findings in the survey show, as compared to site experiences. The group is focusing on getting word out about equipment repair and replacement to many homes right now regarding food preparation items (cookers, refrigerators, etc).

**The Farmer Angel Network** February's virtual education highlighted handling stress during a pandemic with Project Recovery and Agriculture Educator Alana, taught on "Breaking the Farm Stress Cycle." Sauk Soil and Water Improvement Group (SSWIG) representative was the host. The network is finishing up its winter, virtual education series with a final health & well-being event in March. They are currently working on grant writing and collaboration with their Richland County neighbors in hopes of doing some amazing appreciation events this summer for area farm families!

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