



2015 Annual Report

Note from Dane County UW-Extension Department Head

This report highlights just a few of the many programs and services provided by Dane County UW-Extension this past year. A partnership between Dane County and the University of Wisconsin, Extension responds to local needs with useful information, resources, and educational programming.

Our primary goal is improving lives, organizations and communities. We do this by providing a wide variety of programs and services focused on our educational priorities. These priorities include: Thriving Youth, Families, Organizations and Communities; Resilient and Productive Environment; Strong Economies; and Food Safety, Food Security and Health.

As you will see from the programs featured in this report, we value our partnerships and believe community voices are critical to success. We strive to work in community and build a culture of collegiality. We also recognize, appreciate and honor the differences, similarities and contributions of all people and communities. We are intentional in our efforts to ensure equity, justice and fairness. We embrace new ideas and approaches in our work, and we empower others and ourselves by listening to, learning from and respecting local knowledge.

I hope you find this report informative. We are proud to serve Dane County and strive to make our community a great place for all residents to call home.

Sincerely,

Carrie Edgar

Greetings from Dane County Executive Joe Parisi



Bringing people together to find creative solutions to the challenges in our community is important to me and I am proud of the work UW-Extension does towards this end. Dane County UW-Extension provides people from all walks of life access to what they need to succeed, by strengthening neighborhoods and organizations, by helping families to be strong and healthy, by supporting youth to become contributing community members, by protecting our natural environment and by helping farms and businesses grow and thrive. I am particularly proud of the focus Dane County UW-Extension puts on addressing the

challenges faced by our youth, people living in poverty and those most vulnerable in our community.

Making sure everyone in our community has access to opportunity is my highest priority and UW-Extension illustrates that principle. Their work embodies the Wisconsin Idea: strengthening our community by bringing university research and resources to the people. Dane County UW-Extension is an important resource for Dane County.

Thank you for all you do to support our mission.

Farmers Partner to Improve Organic Weed Control

Weed control is one of the most pernicious problems in organic agriculture. In addition to long-standing management techniques like crop rotation, cover cropping and careful crop spacing; the use of plastic mulch has become a common practice on many organic vegetable farms in Wisconsin. Mulch in general can prevent weeds from germinating; plastic mulch in particular affords the added benefits of being cheap, easy to apply and warming to crop roots.



Counting seedlings and weeds

Unfortunately, plastic mulch has a number of drawbacks as well. For eco-minded organic growers the most significant drawback is the negative environmental

impact of this single-use plastic which is deposited directly to the landfill after the arduous job of removing it from the field.

In an effort to explore alternatives to plastic mulch, Claire Strader, Small-Scale & Organic Produce Educator, teamed up with four local vegetable growers to conduct on-farm research using cover crops as living mulches under vegetables. The research project, funded by North Central SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education), is taking place in 2015 and 2016. Kristen Kordet is one of the growers hosting the research. She uses plastic mulch under a number of vegetables on her farm and is anxious to find alternatives. Cover crops as living mulch are an exciting possibility because in addition to crowding out weeds they can also improve soil quality and fertility. By working together, Strader and Kordet can test and explore solutions that neither could do on her own.

For more information on this project, see the short 2015 video produced by SARE: www.youtube.com/watch?v=apXcQnkuz0I

Hmong Farmers Learn to Manage Pests and Improve Safety

Dane County UW-Extension and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) partnered in 2015 to offer a Pesticide Applicator training course for Hmong farmers. The idea originated when a Hmong grower contacted Heidi Johnson, Crops & Soils Educator, with questions regarding organic production techniques and best management practices with pesticides. Heidi then contacted the Minority Farmer Educator at DATCP, Jack Chang, to discuss a jointly taught course. Jack enthusiastically agreed due to a what he described as a large need for this type of education in the Hmong farmer community.

The Pesticide Applicator Training course typically taught in Wisconsin was significantly modified to meet the needs of this audience. Extensive discussion on managing agricultural systems to avoid pests rather than using pesticides was added. The class covered appropriate application techniques and how growers can keep themselves and their families safe.

UW-Extension and DATCP received funding from the **Extension Risk** Management **Education program** to fund two pilot classes. The first class was held in Dane County in December and a second class will take place in Marathon County in March 2016.

- A Hmong farmer

After the Marathon

County class, the instructors will modify the curriculum based on the farmers' feedback and then offer the class in four additional locations in the state in late 2016 or early 2017.

"I'm glad to have attended this training, I learned how to use proper protections, how to identify diseases, problems with the right pesticide products application. I like to practice my safety and follow federal and state regulations while farming."

Youth Leaders Grow in South Madison

In 2015 a need to revitalize the Hammersley Community Garden on Madison's southwest side was identified. Lexa Dundore, Community Food Systems VISTA, and Joe Muellenberg, Horticulture Coordinator, recognized it was critical to the garden's success to involve local youth. They partnered with the Mellowhood Foundation, whose goals are to build and raise the quality of life in underserved communities by increasing family involvement, improving educational opportunities and guiding children to recognize their self-worth while becoming a positive influence in society.

Working with Mellowhood Foundation Director, Tutankhuman (Coach) Assad, the P.A.I.D. Program was founded. The program encourages youth to become engaged, productive citizens with job skills and a sense of personal responsibility. The youth (ages 12-14) were responsible for the care of large garden plots to grow food for the community as well as general maintenance of the Hammersley Community Garden area. The youth also assisted other areas of the community with street cleanups, garden maintenance and invasive species removal. UW-Extension provided horticulture, nutrition and work skills education.



"UW-Extension exhibited an honest and conscientious effort to address the factors that keep minority communities in a constant state of struggle. Their sincere desire to roll up their sleeves and engage in the task of being community change agents was refreshing given the usual standard of neighborhood engagement from outside.

With UW-Extension's help, we hold all participants [in the P.A.I.D. Program] to the highest achievable standards of conduct in both their public and private lives. Our goal is to insure that that they conduct themselves in a manner that honors the program, the community, their families and themselves at all times. By doing this, we are changing the mindset of entire neighborhoods."

- Coach Assad

Dairy Farmers Look to Grazing as a Sustainable Practice



In 2015, Jennifer Blazek, Dairy & Livestock Educator, began the Dairy Heifer Grazing Initiative: a partnership between Dane County UW-

Extension, the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems at UW-Madison and the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Program. A grant from Yahara WINs to implement adoptive best management practices with farmers funded the project. This initiative encourages dairy farmers and custom heifer growers to consider raising replacements on pasture, not only for environmental reasons, but also for the benefits of reduced labor and expenses.

A Dairy Heifer Grazing Field Day was held in September at a custom heifer raiser's rented farm where he utilizes pastures instead of confinement. More than 20 people attended including dairy and livestock farmers, ag professionals and community members. From the field day, a list of farmers interested in participating in the initiative was identified. Currently there are four Dane County farmers who have shown interest in grazing their dairy heifers, two within the Yahara Watershed and two in Northwestern Dane County. The Dairy Heifer Grazing Initiative will continue in 2016 with implementation through pasture establishment and grazing heifers on each farm. Blazek with the assistance of an intern, will be analyzing the results of the project and the initial farmer participants will share their stories with other farmers to increase awareness and interest among dairy farmers in the county.

Public Participation Enhanced in Making Public Policy

Representative democracies work best when ordinary citizens are deeply engaged in public life, both as informed voters and as participants in decision-making. Likewise, elected officials have the responsibility to represent their constituents in determining public policy. Representation necessitates a two-way process of communicating with the public – where the elected official not only informs constituents about key issues in governance, but also regularly check in about constituent opinion on issues of concern.

Dane County took steps to improve public participation and engagement in policy making this past year. The effort started with Supervisor Paul Nelson, who was concerned about how he and other supervisors encourage public participation in identifying issues of concern for the County, and in suggesting innovative and equitable responses to these issues. He engaged UW-Extension Community Development Educators, Mindy Habecker and Sharon Lezberg, to assist him in developing a plan to explore ways to promote public participation in Dane County.

Over several months, a planning committee met to design a process for a pilot public participation meeting. The goal was to provide opportunities for constituents to engage in conversations about new and developing issues, propose ideas and initiatives the County Board should address, and to identifying best approaches for interacting on county issues.

The pilot meeting, dubbed "community conversation", was tested in Middleton with approximately 65 community members, 6 county board supervisors, and other elected officials. The meeting included a presentation by Supervisor Nelson and Sharon Corrigan, Dane County Board of Supervisors Chair, on county government. In addition, the meeting included small group discussions to identify and address specific issues. The discussions engaged diverse participants, and all had an opportunity to share their ideas. County supervisors learned how constituents felt about issues.

The pilot community conversation meeting provided a template elected officials can use to bring the public into discussions, both to identify issues and to contribute to identifying solutions. UW-Extension educators compiled the comments and issued a report of the event. Two subsequent meetings have been held using the format. Supervisor Paul Rusk used the process for a community discussion on proposed county recommendations for prison and criminal justice system reform. Supervisor Robin Schmidt used the process to host a series of six public sessions specific to public transportation issues.

To learn more and access the manual visit: http://bit.ly/1PSsan8.

Local Conservancy Creates a Vision to Grow

The Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy turned to UW-Extension for assistance in creating a vision for a 15- acre gateway property that included the Pope farmstead. This property fronts the 105 acre Conservancy land owned by the Town of Middleton.

Mindy Habecker, Community & Natural Resources Educator, assisted the group in planning a visioning process to move forward their goals. She assisted the group to develop guiding principles and values and design a public input visioning session to focus on the key areas of the Conservancy's mission. The process brought in a wide array of stakeholders including local resource people to assist in moving forward with the vision once it was defined. More than 60 attended the visioning session. A retreat followed to distill the



information into themes and the information was further researched and refined.

The Friends have done tours, fundraising and are currently having the barn assessed for preservation needs. Potential partners are being explored and the Natural Heritage Foundation has agreed to help write a grant for preservation of a land parcel. Skilled volunteers have come forward to lend leadership in various phases of the project including developing marketing plans, financial analysis, facilitation of various processes and bringing in new partners.

The visioning process has provided the Friends with a plan to continues to move forward towards its goals.

Diverse Eagle Heights Community Improves Nutrition

The Eagle Heights Community Center provides resources for a diverse community of residents who live in the UW-Madison apartment complex. A significant number of families lack transportation, have limited income and experience food that is very different from their homeland. Language barriers limit access to resources and the community center is a place where they are able to find help and resources.

In 2015, Dane County UW-Extension's Wisconsin Nutrition Education (WNEP) program was able to solidify a partnership with the community center to serve a very diverse audience. That partnership developed over time. In 2013, Nutrition Educator, Kazoua Moua, began working with individual Eagle Heights families who enrolled in the Eating Smart Being Active (ESBA) classes she offered at other locations. During their classes they made wonderful comments about the ESBA program, so in the summer of 2015, Kazoua met with the Eagle Heights Community Center Director and they agreed to partner and offer the ESBA class on a regular basis at the Center.

The classes filled quickly and soon Kazoua had a waiting list. The class included energetic parents of diverse families from China, Ethiopia, Japan, Korea and India.

A family from Korea gave Kazoua a thank-you card that stated, "Your instruction has helped us to survive in the U.S.A."

Two families reported that they had already shared or would share the information they learned with their families back in India.

Another family shared: "It directs my daily cooking, my thoughts of giving enough nutrients to my family, and my shopping. It helps us to eat more healthy."

It took time, hard work, persistence and building trust and relationships to make this partnership a success.



Kazoua (center) with some of the ESBA graduates

Habitat Families Built More Than Houses



Farid and Salima Kerboua came to the US from Algeria in 2006 with the dream of owning a home. Their dream will come true this summer when they move into their home in June 2016.

Habitat For Humanity has been building in the Habitat Housing program in Sun homes with low income families in Dane County since 1987. Each year, approximately a dozen families put in "sweat equity" hours and actively participate in the building of their houses in Madison and the surrounding munici- classroom training, each family was palities. However, the sweat equity doesn't end with the hammer and nails. The families also participate in financial capabilities training where they learn budgeting and saving strategies that will position them for financial security in their new role as homeowners.

In 2015, the Dane County UW-**Extension Financial Education Center** partnered with Habitat Dane to provide financial education to families enrolled

Prairie, Fitchburg, Madison and Stoughton. Each family participated in eight hours of classroom education and learned budgeting, savings, banking and credit strategies. In addition to the paired with a volunteer financial coach to support the establishment of a sustainable savings strategy to build and maintain a household savings fund to cover future maintenance and replacement housing costs. As of year end, all of the families were making progress toward their savings goal.



Youth Garden Program Changes Lives

4-H Youth Development, Community Development, and Horticulture Educators at Dane County UW-Extension collaborated with several organizations and community members to coordinate the Brentwood Gardens for Empowerment (BG4E) program again in 2015. In addition to providing part time jobs for 8 youth from the Brentwood neighborhood on Madison's north side to build and tend to community gardens and do community service projects, BG4E strives to improve the livability of the neighborhood and create a model of youth development and community capacity building that can be replicated in other Dane County communities.



This year the BG4E program was fortunate to collaborate with UW-Madison's Nutrition, Environment and Food Systems for Empowerment (NEFSE) program and received the support of two interns. One of those interns, Dani Hurlbutt, a recent graduate who started

the summer with an intended career path in public health and/or nutrition education, quickly realized that working with youth was where her passion and interest for the future lies. Dani received hands on experience working with young people as well as developing and writing curriculum for the program while connecting with others in the field of youth development. Dani continues to develop her skills working with young people while serving on a year long mission trip in Senegal and plans to pursue a future in youth development upon her return to the U.S.

The youth learned valuable job and life skills and had the opportunity to explore careers in various fields. The work in the gardens demonstrates how youth development not only impacts the lives of young people but also positively impacts the lives of adults.



Dane County 4-H Ambassadors Learn While Promoting 4-H

The Dane County 4-H Ambassadors include 4-H youth in 8th grade and above who are interested in developing their leadership and communication skills by coordinating educational opportunities for younger youth, promoting the 4-H program throughout Dane County and leading community service events.

In 2015, approximately 20 youth ambassadors met on a regular basis to plan and promote the mission and philosophy of 4-H. At 4-H club enrollment time, Ambassadors offered New Member Orientation on



three different dates for families. At the orientations, the Ambassadors were in charge of providing activities to the new youth members including get-to-know-you games, blender bike smoothies, obstacle courses, scavenger hunts and more. The smiles on the faces of

the participants as they rejoined their parents was priceless.



The Ambassadors also spoke with the parents about 4-H Camp, Youth Conference, 4-H trips, state teams, scholarships and other exciting opportunities available through 4-H. As the new families were leaving, many of them commented that they had learned so much as a family and they had a great time too. One mother spoke privately about her daughter being very shy and how the Ambassadors made her feel welcome and got her to talk, smile, laugh and actually join in the activities. Mom was thrilled and very impressed.

Dane County UW-Extension 4-H staff are proud of the Ambassadors and the work they do to promote 4-H.

A new 4-H dad shared,
"This whole night was very well done!"

Dane County Master Gardener Volunteers Help Grow Community

The UW-Extension Master Gardener Program provides intensive horticultural training to adults who, in turn, volunteer on projects that benefit their local community. Since 2000, the Master Gardener volunteers have provided 201,577 hours of volunteer service to Dane County communities providing education and technical assistance for a wide variety of projects. These projects strengthen healthy communities by supporting food security efforts, community gardens, school gardens and other horticultural initiatives.

Master Gardener activities in Dane County

- Dane Co UW Extension Teaching Garden
- Allen Centennial Garden
- West Madison Ag Research Station
- UW-Arboretum
- Olbrich Botanical Garden
- Westside Police Station, Madison
- Frank Allis Elementary School
- McFarland School Garden
- And many more. . .

2015 Dane County Volunteer time

Youth education: 579 hours Adult education: 2026 hours Other support: 14,159

Total: 16,764 Value* \$372,831



^{*} Using the current estimated dollar value of volunteer time in Wisconsin of \$22.24 per hour, from Independent Sector. Cumulative value based on previous annual estimates.

Master Gardener Couple Making A Difference in their Community

Roger Hanson and Anna Biermeier have a deep commitment to service work. it was a big part of their decision to become Master Gardener Volunteers (MGVs) with Dane County UW-Extension. The couple are very engaged in their community and use their gardening knowledge and skills in multiple ways to support Dane County UW-Extension's outreach mission and give back to their community.



Roger Hanson and Anna Biermeier

Roger and Anna have volunteered at the Middleton Outreach Ministry Food Pantry Garden for several years, working as garden mentors. Roger shared, "It is rewarding to help people who are struggling, often working two or three jobs, by helping them gain gardening skills that allow them to grow their own food." He related that food pantry clients who learn to produce a good harvest are so grateful for the training, and proud to

be able to give back to the pantry by sharing their abundant harvest.

Roger and Anna are also involved in a school garden project at Falk Elementary. Working with the art teacher, they recently taught 20 children how to grow vegetables. They both shared how wonderful and amazing it is to have children so captivated by gardening that they compete with each other to see who can harvest and eat the most vegetables.

The couple also volunteer with the landscaping crew for Habitat for Humanity. Anna is a landscaping crew leader, guiding other volunteers and homeowners in designing, planting and maintaining the new landscape. Anna also serves her community at the policy level, volunteering as a citizen member of the Middleton Parks, Recreation and Forestry Commission. Forester Mark Wegner called her "a good citizen, one of the best," as she works to approve park development projects, park endowment procedures and help establish priorities for the Middleton Parks budget. In addition, Roger serves as a co-leader for a Master Gardener booth at the Middleton Farmers Market, providing Extension resources and responding to garden questions.

Thank you to Anna and Roger for their contributions to our community and for being exceptional Master Gardener volunteers!

We invite partners and friends to share their **UW-Extension stories** on social media.

#BecauseofUWEX



Dane County UW-Extension Committee:

Supervisor Shelia Stubbs Supervisor Jenni Dye Supervisor Paul Nelson Supervisor Dave Ripp Supervisor Matt Veldran

Dane County UW-Extension 5201 Fen Oak Dr Madison, WI 53718 608-224-3700 http://dane.uwex.edu

University of Wisconsin, U.S.D.A. and Wisconsin counties cooperating. An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and American with Disabilities (ADA) requirements.



Local Food and Farm Entrepreneurs are Booming in Dane County

The demand for food grown and processed The Edible Startup Summit and Edible close to home continues to grow. But how are new food businesses born? Like other small businesses, new food businesses start with an idea (sometimes a recipe) urged on by the desire and guts of a food entrepreneur. To become successful, food business start-ups often need technical and intensive during days two and three. financial support.

Dane County UW-Extension works with partner organizations to provide educational and networking opportunities to support local food entrepreneurs. In 2015 these programs included:

Grant workshops: Workshops and individual assistance were offered to increase the number and quality of grant applications from Wisconsin to the USDA's Farmers Market Promotion Program and the Local Food Promotion Program. Workshop participants learned about these public funds and how to put together a strong grant application. Four of the five Wisconsin 2015 awardees participated in the training.

Extended Workshop: This was three days of intensive learning, taught by veteran food business leaders, Extension faculty, DATCP experts and others in the industry. The first day drew over 85 participants, with 35 staying for the 'bootcamp'

FEED Kitchens: UW-Extension works with FEED Kitchens to expand their outreach efforts to potential vendors from diverse communities. Planning activities resulted in a USDA Local Food Promotion Program Grant for \$81,202 for FEED Kitchens.

Ready to Explore New Markets: This meeting brought together 65 food producers, food buyers and distributors. The food and farm entrepreneurs learned directly from the buyers what is needed to serve these larger markets.

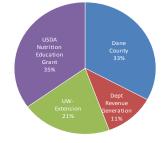
Food Entrepreneurs Meetup Group:

Entrepreneurs learn best from each other. For this reason, we've convened a 'meetup' group so food entrepreneurs can organize their own learning activities.

UW-Extension: An Important Investment for Dane County

University of Wisconsin-Extension is a unique partnership between counties, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the University of Wisconsin working together to help people put knowledge to work. It reflects the vision that has become known as the Wisconsin Idea.

Dane County's partnership with UW-Extension leveraged state, federal and other funds to provide research-based community education programs valued at 2.3 million in



2015. Each Dane County dollar invested brings in more than \$2 worth of additional Extension funding for educational programs and services for Dane County residents.

UW-Extension helps people understand and solve important problems. Educators work with the Dane County UW-Extension Committee and other local groups to identify needs for education and design programs to meet those concerns.

We thank the members of the Dane County UW-Extension Committee for their support and commitment to Extension and the residents of Dane County!