

**CHIPPEWA COUNTY**  
**AGRICULTURE & EXTENSION COMMITTEE**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**MARCH 27, 2025**  
**CHIPPEWA COUNTY COURTHOUSE, RM 302**  
**7:45 AM**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

**2. ROLL CALL**

| Attendee Name    | Organization    | Title                   | Status  | Arrived |
|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|---------|---------|
| Kari Ives        | Chippewa County | District 21, Chair      | Present |         |
| Matthew Peterson | Chippewa County | District 10, Vice-Chair | Present |         |
| Joel Seidlitz    | Chippewa County | District 9              | Present |         |
| Pamela Guthman   | Chippewa County | District 2              | Present |         |
| Timothy Goettl   | Chippewa County | District 6              | Present |         |

**3. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WISHING TO BE HEARD**

There were no members of the public wishing to be heard.

**4. CONSENT AGENDA**

|                  |                                           |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>               |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Pamela Guthman, District 2                |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Matthew Peterson, District 10, Vice-Chair |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Ives, Peterson, Seidlitz, Guthman, Goettl |

1. Approve the agenda
2. Approve the Minutes

Agriculture & Extension Committee - Regular Meeting - Feb 6, 2025 7:45 AM

3. Schedule Next Meeting Date - Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 7:45 am

**5. REPORTS**

1. Area Extension Director Report - Kristen Bruder  
Kristen provided a report to the committee and advised that the annual report was in the packet.
2. Extension Educator Reports  
Each educator provided a committee a summary of the last two months. See the attached report.  
  
Crops and Soils - Jerry Clark  
  
Livestock - Ryan Sterry

# Agriculture & Extension Committee

Minutes  
Regular Meeting

Chippewa County Courthouse, Rm 302

March 27, 2025  
7:45 AM

Community Development - Garret Zastoupil

Horticulture - Margaret Murphy

Health and Well-Being - Sandy Tarter and Hillarie Roth

Human Development and Relationships

Positive Youth Development - Jordan Blue

3. Discussion on Meeting Format - Kari Ives  
Discussion on how the committee can better support the department and how to inform the whole County Board of the items UW-Extension is offering.

## 6. BUSINESS ITEMS

## 7. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

Committee would like an update on the Community Hospital.

Committee would like resolutions to come as business items to show support for different initiatives and programs UW-Extension offers.

## 8. ADJOURN

|                |                                           |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>               |
| <b>MOVER:</b>  | Joel Seidlitz, District 9                 |
| <b>AYES:</b>   | Ives, Peterson, Seidlitz, Guthman, Goettl |

**CHIPPEWA COUNTY**  
**AGRICULTURE & EXTENSION COMMITTEE**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**FEBRUARY 6, 2025**  
**CHIPPEWA COUNTY COURTHOUSE, RM 302**  
**7:45 AM**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

**2. ROLL CALL**

| Attendee Name    | Organization    | Title                   | Status  | Arrived |
|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|---------|---------|
| Kari Ives        | Chippewa County | District 21, Chair      | Present |         |
| Matthew Peterson | Chippewa County | District 10, Vice-Chair | Absent  |         |
| Joel Seidlitz    | Chippewa County | District 9              | Present |         |
| Pamela Guthman   | Chippewa County | District 2              | Present |         |
| Timothy Goettl   | Chippewa County | District 6              | Present |         |

**3. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WISHING TO BE HEARD**

There were no members of the public wishing to be heard.

**4. CONSENT AGENDA**

**RESULT:** APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]  
**MOVER:** Joel Seidlitz, District 9  
**SECONDER:** Pamela Guthman, District 2  
**AYES:** Ives, Seidlitz, Guthman, Goettl  
**ABSENT:** Peterson

1. Approve the agenda

2. Approve the Minutes

Agriculture & Extension Committee - Regular Meeting - Dec 5, 2024 7:45 AM

3. Schedule Next Meeting Date - April 3, 2025

**5. REPORTS**

1. Extension Educator Reports

All the Educators presented to the committee. See attached report.

Crops and Soils - Jerry Clark

Livestock - Ryan Sterry

Community Development - Garret Zastoupil

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Feb 6, 2025 7:45 AM (Consent Agenda)

# Agriculture & Extension Committee

Minutes  
Regular Meeting

Chippewa County Courthouse, Rm 302

February 6, 2025  
7:45 AM

Horticulture - Margaret Murphy

Health and Well-Being - Sandy Tarter and Hillarie Roth

Human Development and Relationships - Jeanne Walsh

Positive Youth Development - Jordan Blue

## 6. BUSINESS ITEMS

There were no business items.

## 7. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

Chair Ives would like to discuss at a future meeting about the committee participating in different events or traveling to see the educators "in action".

## 8. ADJOURN

|                  |                                 |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>     |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Joel Seidlitz, District 9       |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Timothy Goettl, District 6      |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Ives, Seidlitz, Guthman, Goettl |
| <b>ABSENT:</b>   | Peterson                        |

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Feb 6, 2025 7:45 AM (Consent Agenda)

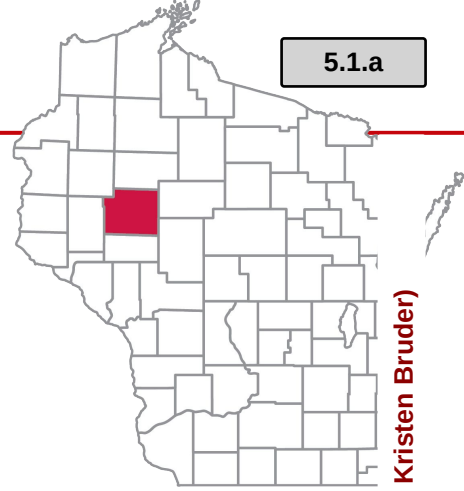




**Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
CHIPPEWA COUNTY

5.1.a



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Attachment: 2024 Chippewa County Annual Report (8889 : Area Extension Director Report - Kristen Bruder)

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**Thank you to the 2024 Agriculture & Extension Committee for providing oversight for Extension:**

Kari Ives – Chair, Matthew Peterson – Vice Chair, Joel Seidlitz, Pamela Guthmiller & Timothy Goettl.

**Thank you for your continued support and guidance.**

**University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension Chippewa County**

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715-726-7950| [chippewa.extension.wisc.edu](http://chippewa.extension.wisc.edu) | [chippewa@extension.wisc.edu](mailto:chippewa@extension.wisc.edu)



## Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

UW-Madison Extension outreach creates key connection points for families, farms, businesses, nonprofit organizations, government, and more. We support local volunteers and leaders to take action and serve as role models in their communities, and we make sure Wisconsinites have the latest research, best practices, and educational opportunities.



Learn more at  
[extension.wisc.edu](https://extension.wisc.edu)





**Kristen Bruder**  
Area Extension Director  
Chippewa, Dunn, and  
Eau Claire Counties

*"I am so proud to be part of a team that genuinely cares about the people they serve and brings passion and dedication to their work every day. Their commitment continues to make Chippewa County an incredible place to live and work."*

5.1.a

Over the past year, Extension has continued to evolve to better serve the needs of Chippewa County. We have shifted our emphasis from Dairy to Livestock, ensuring broader support for farmers and producers across multiple species. Additionally, our focus has transitioned from Food Systems to Community Development, allowing us to better address local economic growth, leadership development, and civic engagement. Our educators and staff have worked tirelessly to build partnerships, provide research-based programming, and support initiatives that strengthen our community. Through collaboration and innovation, Extension remains committed to making a lasting impact in Chippewa County.

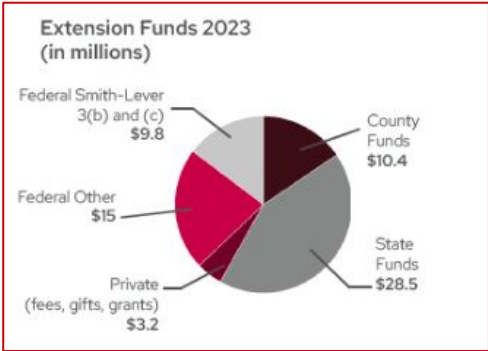
Extension fully invests in Area Extension Directors (AEDs), who serve as key administrators for our county-based programming. AEDs manage partnerships, support staff development, handle financial management, and coordinate programs throughout their designated areas. By regularly engaging with county partners and local educators, AEDs build strong relationships and gain a thorough understanding of local needs and county priorities. They help ensure that Extension's educational programs closely match the community's goals and address specific local challenges.

### Leveraging Funding for Greater Impact

Extension's partnership with counties ensures impactful, research-based programming for local communities. By strategically combining county investments with state, federal, and grant funding, we amplify resources to expand education, support economic development, and address local needs.

The graph highlights how Extension maximizes funding to deliver greater value, align with county priorities, and drive measurable impact. Together, we can strengthen communities by making the most of available resources.

The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 established the Cooperative Extension Service. It provides federal funds for Cooperative Extension activities through USDA. The act requires that states provide a 100 percent match from non-federal resources. Wisconsin provides a greater match: a \$3.95 state, county, and tribal funding leverage per \$1 of Smith-Lever funding.



### UW-Madison Extension: By the Numbers

Extension is funded through Smith-Lever dollars, which are matched state and county/tribal funds. Each FY 2023 dollar received under the Smith-Lever 3(b) and (c) appropriation was leveraged by:

\$2.90 in state funding  
+ \$1.05 in county/tribal funding  
= \$3.95 state and county leverage

CONTACT:  
Karl Martin, Dean and Director | UW-Madison Extension  
608-263-2775 | [karl.martin@wisc.edu](mailto:karl.martin@wisc.edu)



**Amber Gilles**  
Administrative Assistant II

Amber plays a pivotal role in supporting educators and managing the daily operations of the Chippewa County office. She skillfully maintains a social media account and a webpage, ensuring consistent and engaging communication. Amber also formats and distributes two email newsletters: "Chippewa Chatter" for 4-H and "Extension in the Valley" for Agriculture. Additionally, she handles essential walk-in services, generates reporting to share our value and the Wisconsin Idea, and track the office budget. Each day is different in this role!

# UW-MADISON EXTENSION

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES *with* THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

## Agriculture & Horticulture >>

Our network of researchers, outreach specialists, and local educators are on the leading edge of creating practical solutions for livestock and crop production in addition to farm and labor management. We provide customized guidance, business planning assistance, and industry knowledge for what today's agricultural operations are facing.

## Community & Economic Development >>

Businesses, governments, and organizations succeed through development from Extension educators and specialists. We provide education for elected officials to understand their roles and responsibilities in helping communities thrive. We offer businesses the direct technical assistance and connection to support structures they need to help them succeed. Our rural entrepreneurship program identifies ways for businesses to overcome challenges and take advantage of unique opportunities.

## Health & Well-Being >>

We're supporting positive change for families through physical and mental health programs in addition to structural improvements needed to make the healthy choice the easy one. Our physical fitness classes and mental health training equips people with the tools they need to lead healthy, active lives. We provide public health resources and tools for community action. We provide guidance on systems changes for food security and food access.

## Human Development and Relationships >>

Reinforcing family connections, financial knowledge, and strong relationships is at the heart of Extension's programming. We support learning and emotional bonding by building literacy skills in justice-involved families. We guide community and individual development across lifespans. We teach financial security through rent planning and budget management.

## Positive Youth Development & 4-H >>

Community-led 4-H programs deliver quality activities and leadership opportunities that are leading to engaged, energized, and informed young people across the state. 4-H is a movement – in Wisconsin, 98% of our 4-H members are inspired to make positive changes in their communities.

## Natural Resources & Conservation – Value Added State Funded Programs >>

We work at the crossroads of communities, natural resources, and agriculture to protect our environmental assets and guide resource management. We support individual and regional water-well testing, along with education to address safe drinking water. We educate farmers, businesses, and communities on safe practices to ensure access to plentiful, sustainably managed sources of food, water, and energy.





## Supporting Livestock



The University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension Livestock Program strengthens the industry through statewide education and research. The program has educators and campus-based specialists focused on the following areas: bee, cattle, poultry, sheep and goats, swine, and meat science.

## The Landscape

297 farms with 4,531  
beef cows that have calved  
(breeding stock)  
in Chippewa County

97% Percent  
Family Farms  
(2022 Census of Ag)

51,039  
total head of cattle  
(beef and dairy cattle all ages)

\$85,144,0  
in total ag sales from  
livestock & poultry pr  
(2022 Census of ,

## Achieving More Together



UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work – on the farm schools and throughout urban and rural communities. Early relationship building includes Chippewa Valley Technical College, Western Wisconsin Agricultural Lenders, Wisconsin Farmers Union, and local Farm Bureau chapters.



Ryan Sterry  
Regional Livestock Educator

Ryan is the regional Livestock Educator for Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties. I have served as an Extension educator since 2006, and transitioned roles to Regional Livestock Educator for Area 6 in late 2024. I enjoy the variety the job brings, and finding ways to take research based information and make it applicable to our area farms. I am excited to learn more about and serve our producers in the Chippewa Valley.



## Supporting Crops and Soils



The Division of Extension UW-Madison Crops and Soils program connects regional educators and statewide specialists to focus on issues and challenges facing today's field, vegetable, fruit, and emerging crop producer. The Crops and Soils Program focuses on Forage and Grain Production and Management, Emerging Crops, Grazing, Pest Management, Soils, Nutrient Management, and Economics of Crop Production.

## The Landscape

173,000

Acres of corn, hay, and soybeans in 2023

\$ 306.5

Million dollars of agricultural products sold

339,000

Acres of land in farms

51%

Land in Agriculture

## Achieving More Together



UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work – on the farm schools and throughout urban and rural communities. In 2024, partners included FFA Chapters, Chippewa Valley Forage Council, Western Wisconsin Agricultural Lenders, Wisconsin Farmers Union, Chippewa Valley Farmer-Led Watershed, Land Conservation and Forest Management Department, Chippewa Valley Technical College, Mayo Clinic Health System Community Action Board.

## Community Impacts In 2024

A part of the Crops and Soils program that brings additional value to the area is localized, on-farm research. Ten different on-farm research projects were conducted in 2024. Grant funding drives these projects as over \$238,000 were secured to implement research projects. Research projects included nitrogen rate applications, spring barley variety and fertilizer trials, winter barley variety and cropping system trials, alfalfa-interseeding with corn silage and industrial hemp planting date, variety, and nitrogen rate trials. All of these projects serve as a backdrop for educational workshops and field days held throughout the area.



## Forage and Soil Management

Alfalfa Inter-seeding with corn silage was investigated to determine if this method of alfalfa establishment would work in western Wisconsin. Alfalfa producers face low forage yields during the seeding year when alfalfa is direct seeded in the spring. Alfalfa forage yields are typically higher the year after the seeding year. To attempt to get a full season of forage yields and increase overall production, alfalfa was inter-seeded with corn silage in 2023 to obtain a full season of alfalfa production in 2024. Alfalfa was also direct seeded in 2024 to compare a more conventional establishment method. Results indicated inter-seeded alfalfa produced 1.1 ton of dry matter alfalfa compared to the direct seeding. Farmers at an educational field day mentioned they would try this establishment method in 2025.

## Agronomy Research and Field Days

On-farm research and corresponding field days were designed to inform farmers and agronomy professionals about new potential crops and cropping systems. Research was conducted on spring and winter barley varieties and fertility management, industrial hemp planting dates, varieties, and nitrogen rates. Research projects were implemented in partnership with Michigan State University, Purdue University, University of Minnesota, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Corresponding field days were held in conjunction with each research project. Over 130 farmers and agronomy professionals attended field days in 2024.

## Manure and Nitrogen Management

Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program 2024 was the first year of the Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Project which is funded through a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection. The research seeks to validate the recommended manure nutrient credits and MRTN values for corn. Participating farmers and extension educators anticipate there will be an increase in yield for plots with manure and nitrogen applied, but a lower crop response to nitrogen as the amount of nitrogen applied increases. This would allow manure sample data to be utilized to correlate total amounts of nitrogen received for each plot to the harvested yield. Six rates of nitrogen from 0, 40, 80, 120, 160, and 200 pounds per acre are applied with four replications at six farms across Wisconsin. Water quality measurements through lysimeters installed at one location will assist in evaluating the movement of nitrogen through the water profile. This is a two-year project to be completed in fall of 2025.



**Jerry Clark**  
Regional Crops & Soils Educator

Jerry is the regional Crops and Soils Educator for Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties. I have served as an educator in Extension since 1998 and continue to enjoy the opportunities and challenges that come with serving the agricultural community. I find the variety of tasks most rewarding such as on-farm research, working collaboratively, helping individuals to improve their lives.





## Supporting Our Community



The new Community and Leadership Development Educator, Garret Zastoupil, has engaged Chippewa County around critical conversations related to Emergency Medical Services. Garret has pulled together representatives from the county and state resources to advance conversation that will strengthen the EMS System in Chippewa County.

## Facilitating Community Conversations

Garret facilitated two breakout sessions at this fall's Chippewa Falls Chamber of Commerce Nonprofit Roundtable Discussion, encouraging sharing across nonprofit leaders to build and strengthen our civic and charitable organizations.

## Achieving More Together



The Community and Leadership Development Educator completed a series of workshops with Chippewa County Public Health on StrengthsFinder. Two sessions were done with the entire team. Garret facilitated two sessions with just the leadership team. These sessions aimed to "strengthen" Public Health's mission and impact by understanding how teams can work better together.

## Building Stronger Relationships

Our new Community Development Educator continues to build relationships with nonprofit, private, and public leaders in Chippewa County. Please reach out with support for projects such as leadership development, program development and evaluation, and strategic planning.



**Garret Zastoupil**

Our new Community Development Educator, Garret Zastoupil, started his position mid May. He came coming from North Dakota State College, where he served as an Assistant Professor of Sustainable Rural Economic Development.

Garret completed his PhD at UW-Madison in Human Ecology and is excited to serve the communities of Chippewa County.



## Supporting Healthy Choices & Healthy Lives



FoodWise is federally funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). With local strengths, we support healthy eating habits, active lifestyles and healthy community environments for Wisconsin residents experiencing limited incomes through nutrition education at the individual, community and systems levels.



## The Chippewa County Landscape

Whether people are healthy or not is affected by systems, policies, and environmental factors.

42%

of children in schools were eligible for free or reduced price meals

9.2%

of county residents (6,211) use SNAP benefits to purchase food for themselves and their families.\*

^County Health Rankings  
\* WI Dept of Administration and WI Dept of Health Services

## Achieving More Together



UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin throughout urban and rural communities to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work. In Chippewa County, FoodWise partners with schools, after-school programs, senior housing, Public Health, early child care programs, and food pantries to help make the healthy choice the easy choice in our communities.



## Community Impacts In 2024

- Engaged with 604 learners making 2,972 direct educational contacts around nutrition education topics in a variety of settings, including Boyd and Cadott early care centers, Parkview, and Lake Holcombe Elementary Schools, WIC, Romeis Apts, St. Francesca Resource Center, and Boys and Girls Club.
- Provided Agnes' Community Table translated flyers in Hmong and Spanish to outreach to more underserved community members.
- Worked with the CHIP Chronic Disease Prevention Action Team to support and expand Monday Market at the Y serving FoodShare families with limited income.



## Inspiring Collaborations

### 2024 Monday Market at the Y Successes

- EBT sales increased from \$205 to \$321.
- Market Match tokens given increased to \$291.
- Sponsorship funding for the Match program : Mayo Health System, Northwestern Bank.
- Free Rideshare tokens to individuals at low income apartments, transitional housing for homeless, free meal site, and food pantries.
- WIC & Senior Vouchers- 29, \$237 redeemed
- Better signage and flyers were created and distributed throughout the area.
- Completed FoodWise direct education at farmers markets for WIC families.
- Farmers Market funding purchased all the vendor produce at the end of market and distributed at the Agnes' Food Pantry



## Multi-Level Program Efforts

Romeis Apartments serves low income seniors and individuals with disabilities.

- During each FoodWise lesson, residents learned the basics of nutrition, active lifestyle guideline and created a healthy, easy recipe utilizing foods from their food pantry and commodity boxes.
- We promoted the Monday Market at the Y enabling residents to use their FoodShare benefits to purchase produce tokens, get additional Market Match tokens, and receive free transportation vouchers so there was no barrier getting to the market.
- "I heard residents reference your classes and food ideas as they came through our food pantries when deciding what to pick. We had residents that got to try new foods during the classes and now they are incorporating them into their diets, which is amazing to see." Site Coordinator



**Hillarie Roth**  
Nutrition Educator



**Sandy Tarter**  
Nutrition Coordinator

We're fueled by a passion for community nurturing and empowering families with evidence-based nutrition education. From kids trying new fruits to teachers praising our impact, a from 'aha' moments among parents to young adults mastering dishes like sesame chicken stir fry, we live for these rewarding experiences. But our mission extends further—we're dedicated to improving food access, supporting FoodShare families, an expanding coalition outreach. Curious? Reach out anytime! We're here to chat and answer your questions!



# Horticulture

## Supporting Lawns, Gardens & Landscapes

Horticulture is the connection between people and plants. It supports environmental stewardship, human wellness, and the growing of local food. The program focuses on strategies to mitigate environmental challenges such as pollinator decline and environmental pollution. It offers education on how to grow your own produce to help reduce food costs and aid in nutrition, communicates the physical, mental and social wellness benefits gardening provides, and encourages people of all ages to incorporate gardening into their lifestyle even when space or mobility is limited.



## The Landscape

402

Lawn, landscape and gardening questions responded to regionally

90%

Positive rating from end of season survey of regional horticulture advising service

63%

End of season survey respondents who changed or adopted new practices based on guidance received; 51% shared what they learned with others

57

Outreach events, program presentations participated in or offered regionally

## Achieving More Together

UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin throughout urban and rural communities to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work. In Chippewa County, the horticulture program partnered with several organizations including Chippewa Falls Public Library, GE Bleskacek Family Memorial Bloomer Public Library, Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District's Cardinal Community Learning Center, Chippewa Falls Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department, Mayo Clinic Health System – Chippewa Valley in Bloomer, Chippewa County Wellness Committee at Lake Wissota State Park.



## Community Impacts In 2024

According to the end of season survey, the top answers for specific actions taken or changes made in response to the information individuals received from the regional horticulture program included:

- I used the UW or other credible resources that were provided
- I shared what I learned with others
- I became more aware of environmental concerns
- I planted for better fit for the site
- I used non-chemical methods to control plant pests/diseases
- I increased areas that can be used for pollinator food, nesting and shelter in my outdoor



## Environmental Stewardship

Together with diagnostic questions, I received requests for guidance on sustainable landscaping, which includes advice on plant selection, soil health and landscaping to support wildlife. I offered programs on how to create ecological niches, even in small yards, that support backyard bird and pollinator populations, both of which are in decline. I also offered pollinator-based activities for youth to teach them about pollinators and how to support them. In addition, I worked with clients on soil sampling as a step toward understanding soil health in their yard and gardens.



## Farm Technology Days – Chippewa County

Our horticulture information booth offered the public opportunity to ask questions and take home information on yard and garden pests and diseases, native plants and the benefits of gardening to our wellbeing. This effort helped raise awareness of the services and information available to the public through the regional horticulture program. We recorded 288 individuals who stopped by the booth.

## Lawn, Landscape & Garden Questions



The regional horticulture program strives to provide expert service that is efficient and beneficial. Here is what people are saying about assistance on common topics of disease, plant selection and lawn concerns.

Fungal issues with lilacs:

- Margaret's responses were thoroughly researched and answered my questions. She also followed up our phone conversation by sending me an extension brochure about lilac diseases via email
- I appreciate having the extension office to reach out to when I have concerns

Fairy rings on the lawn: Thank you so much for the information! I'm relieved as we were fearful it would be harmful to our beautiful maple tree nearby!

Guidance on plant selection:

- your prompt response and recommendations! I'm sharing this with our Condo Board. We have many trees, all 20 plus years old, so will consider what may be a follow-up.
- pollinator friendly and controls erosion: Thanks so much, This (information) is very helpful and just what we needed.



**Margaret Murphy**  
Horticulture Educator

As horticulture educator, I get the perks of cooperative programming with community partners, collaborative work with Extension colleagues regional and statewide, great professional development opportunities and a sense of accomplishment and joy in teaching about the wonders of plants and gardening.

I truly appreciate your support of my program area and any input or questions.





# Human Development & Relationships

## Supporting Finances



UW-Madison Division of Extension's Financial Education program helps families and individuals achieve financial well being – keeping pace with day-to-day expenses, reaching financial goals, planning for life's unexpected events and securing their financial future. Chippewa County offers individual financial coaching, Rent Smart, Encouraging Financial Conversations, Learn & Earn Program, and other programs to help families and individuals achieve financial well being.

## The Landscape

242

211 Requests for Housing Assistance

\$ 43,560

amount of debt paid during Financial Coaching in Wisconsin

98%

of financial coaching clients added funds to a new or existing savings account

98%

of participants in Rent Smart stated the 6 hour course would help them obtain appropriate housing

## Achieving More Together

Local Partners: Hope Village, Workforce Resources Inc, Take A Stand Against Meth, Public Housing Authority, United Way of the Greater Chippewa Area, Royal Credit Union, L.E. Phillips Career Development Center, Chippewa Co. Council on Homelessness and Hunger, Chippewa Co. Aging and Disability Resources, Chippewa Co. Criminal Justice Services, Public Health Department, Chippewa Co. Human Services, Chippewa Co. Jail, WI Department of Corrections, Chippewa Co. libraries

Extension Teams: Financial Wellness at Work, Financial Security, Encouraging Financial Conversations, Financial Coaching, Literacy Link, Re-Entry Ready, Equity and Financial Inclusion, and Rent Smart

## Community Impacts In 2024

- Created and provided Financial Wellness at Work tools including: Financial Calendars, financial topic trainings, financial videos, financial coaching, and Grow You Green Workbooks, to Chippewa County employers.
- Provided 12 Read & Connect parent trainings in Chippewa County, and recorded/sent 231 videos of fathers reading books to their children, allowing fathers the opportunity to build relationships with their children while incarcerated.
- Served on the Chippewa County Healthy Communities Steering Committee
- Introduced a new Reentry Ready: Focus on Finance class for those incarcerated in the County Jail.



# Human Development & Relationships

## Rent Smart Program

A 6-session course for renters where participants learn how to find and apply for rental housing, understand their responsibilities as a renter, how to communicate effectively with their landlords, and manage housing expenses. Through this, those with negative rental records and those new to renting are able to increase their ability to find and keep safe affordable housing, thereby increasing their stability and decreasing their reliance on public supports. When residents have reliable housing that they can afford and landlords have responsible tenants, communities benefit through having a stable workforce.

In Chippewa County, this program is provided monthly on a virtual format, and in-person at the Homeless Veterans Program, Chippewa County Jail, and Hope Village.

## Financial Wellness at Work

- According to the 2024 Financial Wellness in the Workplace Report, 7 in 10 employees are under financial pressure which negatively impacts their work, 45% feel unprepared for the future, and 80% say financial wellness benefits may make them want to stay at their current job.

The Financial Wellness at Work program helps provide financial resources to employers to provide to their employees, thereby reducing financial stress, and helping retain employees.

Through a grant provided by Finra and United Way, UW Madison Extension has been able to provide financial resources and tools to employers in Chippewa County. Employers are able to provide free financial lunch-n-learns, videos, financial education and financial coaching to their employees.

As a service to our community we provide canner gauge/lid testing and answer food preservation questions using evidence based practices.

In 2024:

- 19 canner gauges/lids were tested
- 32 food preservation questions were answered



**Jeanne Walsh**  
Human Development &  
Relationships Educator  
(Finance)

I have been an Extension educator focused on financial stability for the past 10 years. I enjoy building financial wellness programs to help meet the diverse needs of audiences in Chippewa County. Working alongside individuals and families, I strive to help our community learn about and manage their finances. I encourage your questions, ideas, and partnerships.





## Beyond Ready, Supporting Our Youth

4-H is the largest youth development organization in the United States. Chippewa County has 16 chartered clubs and groups, including four project-specific ones: Cloverbud, Shooting Sports, Horse Project Club, and Livestock Education. There is one Leaders Association and 12 community clubs. Popular project areas include Cloverbuds, Swine, Arts, Photography, Beef and Archery.



*"As a Chippewa County 4-H member, my leadership roles have been invaluable. They've taught me to speak confidently, organize meetings, lead activities, and work as a team. These skills will be essential as I pursue my goal of becoming a High School History Teacher." - 2024 Graduate*

## The Landscape

355

Enrolled Youth

62

First Year Members

56

Volunteers

\$192,689

Value of Volunteer Hours

## Achieving More Together



The UW-Madison Division of Extension collaborates with the people of Wisconsin to deliver practical educational programs where they live and work – on farms, in schools, and throughout urban and rural communities. In 2024, Chippewa County 4-H partnered with the Chippewa Falls Unified Area District, the New Auburn School District, the Northern Wisconsin State Fair, AmeriCorps, Wisconsin Farmers Union, Chippewa Falls Parks & Recreation, various town halls throughout the county, Bloomer Rod and Gun, Chippewa Falls Armory, and Christensen's Floral.

## Community Impact In 2024

In 2024, the 4-H program made a lasting impact in the lives of the youth of Chippewa County. The overall program quality scored 5.87 out of 7, surpassing the state average of 5.76. The thriving score was 5.88, again above the state average of 5.75. However, the developmental outcome score was 5.93, slightly below the state average of 5.96.



## Igniting Curiosity in Project Learning

Super Saturday is a project discovery day for youth in kindergarten through 5th grade, with 36 participants this year. The event acted as a placeholder for our Clover College Program, which was on hold due to the educator position vacancy. It provided a fun and engaging environment for young learners to explore new interests and ignite their curiosity.



## Discovering Wisconsin's Rich History and Culture

Discover Wisconsin is our county educational travel experience, engaging 3 volunteers and 26 youth in a trip to Sauk County, Wisconsin. This overnight program helps youth grow as community leaders, learn about Wisconsin history and explore various communities throughout the state.

## Empowering Youth Through Summer Camp

One of the largest and most robust programs is Summer Camp, which reached over **115 young people** this year. The program offered three camping experiences: a one-night overnight camp, a day camp, and a three-night overnight camp. Youth engage in hands-on learning, led by **18 older youth counselors** and supported by **11 dedicated adults**.

The Chippewa County is proud to sustain a single-county camp program, preserving this tradition and providing enriching experiences for youth. The camp fosters personal growth, strengthens community bonds, and creates lasting memories.





## Fostering Curiosity in Youth

At the end of the 2024 program year, there were 60 youth in kindergarten through 2nd grade. Recognizing the need, and with the addition of a Wisconsin 4-H AmeriCorps Member, the program has been able to provide monthly project meetings. These meetings empower the youth and spark their curiosity.



## Collaborative Initiatives in the Valley



In the Chippewa Valley, Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties have collaborated to offer showcase opportunities for youth, such as the Speaking and Demonstration Contest, Performing Arts Festival, Art U, STEM Day, Clover U and Summer Day Camps.

## Thriving Together, Growth in Clubs and Project Groups

The Chippewa County 4-H program has seen significant re-engagement with its Club Leaders, Project Groups, and County Committees. Jordan has worked closely with the Horse, Livestock Education, and Shooting Sports Programs, as well as the Community Clubs, to expand and strengthen the program as it continues to grow.



**Jordan Blue**  
4-H Program  
Educator

Jordan assumed the Chippewa County 4-H Program Educator role in December 2023. Since then, the program has seen increased engagement and the formation of strong community partnerships. Aligned with the 4-H Thriving Model, the program has successfully reached new and diverse audiences. Under Jordan's leadership, the program is poised for continued growth and development. Jordan looks forward to sharing more of this growth and development in 2025.





# Extension

## UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

[www.extension.wisc.edu](http://www.extension.wisc.edu) | [info@extension.wisc.edu](mailto:info@extension.wisc.edu)



### Crops & Soils

Jerry Clark | Regional Crops and Soils Educator

To view the *Extension in the Valley, E-Newsletter*, [Click Here](#).



*A training session for manure applicators and farmers where participants learn to apply manure safely and accurately to keep themselves safe, protect the environment, respond to manure spills and increase farm profitability.*

*A presentation and discussion for farmers and agronomy professionals where participants learned the impact of organic matter content on nitrogen, water, and nutrient management to increase awareness of the influence of organic matter on nutrient and water management to increase soil and crop*

*productivity and farm profitability. Total Reach: 21 farmers and agronomy professionals*

*A nutrient management program for farmers where participants learned to identify nutrient application strategies and management decision points to improve farm profitability and protect ground and surface water. The goal of the program is to increase overall efficiency of nutrients applied to the landscape.*

*Total Reach: 43 farmers and landowners*

*A training program for private applicators where participants learned about safe handling and application of restricted-use pesticides to protect themselves and the environment. Total Reach: 39 farmers and private pesticide applicators*

*A panel discussion for educators, agronomy industry and agency professionals where attendees learned about the Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program (NOPP) to increase awareness of nitrogen management results and involvement in the program. The goal of the presentation as a panelist was to discuss experience with the program as an extension educator and fiscal agent. Total Reach: 106 agronomy professionals.*

*Planning for a four session Focus on Forage webinar series for forage growers and agriculture consultants in collaboration with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the US Dairy Forage Research Center. The goal is to provide research based forage management solutions to improve forage quality and meet producer goals.*


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*A study to better understand the performance of new seedless table grape cultivar. Results from this long-term study will help grape growers in Wisconsin choose the right cultivars for their farm operation.*

*Total Reach: 2024 field days - 32 farms 2024 WI Growing Connection Conference - 64 farms*

## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:

*Manure applicators handle approximately 2/3 of Wisconsin's 12-billion-gallons of dairy manure produced annually. Proper training about accurate and efficient manure applications is critical to applying manure where and when it is needed to reduce environmental risk and improve farm profitability. Manure applicator training 101 sessions were offered to commercial applicators and farmers. These sessions are part of a series of statewide applicator training. A new interactive mapping exercise was created to engage applicators and farmers in problem solving and decision making. The mapping exercise focused on manure storage siting, transportation, environmental setbacks and impact, application methods, safety, spill response, and communication. A new Manure Application Workbook was developed to correspond to the new mapping activity. The workbook and materials were created by team members Kevin Erb, Conservation Training Specialist, Jerry Clark, Becky Brathal, and Scott Reuss and delivered and taught with assistance from Anastasia Kurth. After two training sessions, ninety-three applicators completed the training. Participants received a certificate of completion at the end of the course. A post activity evaluation indicated a 1.12 point increase about Manure Storage Site Selection and a 1.04 increase about Setbacks and Sensitive Areas on a 5-point Likert scale. A knowledge increase was indicated on Road and Transportation, Semis, Dumpster, and Hose Location, and Manure Gas and Road Safety with an overall increase of 0.81. Additional trainings' are planned statewide in late February and throughout March.*

Attachment: February 2025 Monthly Report (8881 : Extension Educator Reports)





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## Livestock

Ryan Sterry | Regional Livestock Educator

To view the Extension in the Valley, E-Newsletter, [Click Here](#).



The school for Beginning Beef Producers was a six-part virtual series for individuals new to beef production or dairy producers transitioning to beef production. Participants learned about various aspects of beef enterprises, including marketing strategies, cattle health, nutrition and reproduction, and cattle enterprises. My teaching roles included animal handling, record keeping, reproduction, and genetics. The goal of this series is to enhance the economic sustainability of emerging beef producers. (Partnered with Sandy Stuttgen, Adam Hartfiel, Beth Mcilquham, Bill Halfman, Kimberly Kester)

*Two Beef Quality Assurance training sessions were held in Northwest Wisconsin (Eau Claire and River Falls) in early 2025. These were part of a coordinated statewide effort to provide BQA certification to producers throughout Wisconsin through the Fall and Winter of 2024-25, which will be summarized at the conclusion of all training. A total of forty-eight individuals attended the Northwestern Wisconsin trainings.*

*Continued meetings with community partners: Ryan attended the Northern Wisconsin Beef Producers Association annual meeting to learn more about the organization, its membership, and needs of beef producers in the area.*

*Planning for an artificial insemination course for dairy and beef producers. The goal is to teach farmers how to breed their cattle, so that they are not dependent on an AI technician.*

*A monthly webinar series of timely topics for beef producers to inform and assist them in decision making on their own operations.*

Attachment: February 2025 Monthly Report (8881 : Extension Educator Reports)



### Community Development

*Garret Zastoupil | Regional Community Development Educator*



*Provide a leadership role in the founding and operation of the Chippewa Valley Health Cooperative. Extension is working closely with a cooperative board of local civic and business leaders to move forward on constructing a new hospital and related clinics. The goal of the cooperative is to create renewed healthcare access in a region adversely impacted by the recent closure of two closed hospitals and 19 clinics, to preserve nearly 1,400 high paying jobs, and to support local economic development efforts and to support the local tax base.*

*Planning and offering guidance for Chippewa County elected officials and leaders in collaboration with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) who are part of the Chippewa County Broadband Advisory Group. The goal is to prepare the community for the upcoming BEAD application to meet their stated vision of "All Chippewa County residents should have access to broadband that is affordable, reliable, and sustainable in the future." Total Reach: Each meeting involves approximately 15 members of the Chippewa County Broadband Advisory Group in person and virtually attending.*

### Health and Well-Being

*Sandy Tarter | FoodWise Regional County Coordinator*

*Hillarie Roth | FoodWise Chippewa & Dunn Educator*



*A 6-week series with 53 second grade students at Parkview Elementary where students will learn about healthy eating and the 5 food groups of MyPlate: fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy. Each lesson will dive deeper into the different food groups, helping students to understand why each one is*

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important for their health and how they can make balanced food choices. This effort engages students with interactive, fun activities and gives them a hands-on experience to taste a variety of healthy foods from each food group related to the lessons.

A 6-week series with 73 5th grade students from Parkview Elementary where students will learn about healthy eating, the 5 food groups of MyPlate, and important food safety practices. Each lesson will dive deeper into the different food groups, helping students to understand why each one is important for their health and how they can make balanced food choices. This effort engages students with interactive, fun activities and gives them a hands-on experience to taste a variety of healthy foods from each food group related to the lessons.

A 6-lesson series with high school seniors at Chippewa Valley High School where the students are learning fundamental nutrition principles, MyPlate guidelines, and food resource procurement and management, alongside hands-on food preparation experiences. These interactive lessons are designed to equip young adults with essential skills to make informed, healthy choices when they transition to living independently. The focus is on providing practical knowledge that will support their long-term well-being and self-sufficiency.

A 6-week nutrition education series for 3rd graders at Parkview Elementary to learn about establishing healthy habits, the 5 MyPlate food groups, and the importance of food safety. Each lesson was engaging and interactive, with fun activities and discussions that helped the students connect nutrition to their daily lives. This effort provides students with the opportunity to taste a variety of healthy foods, reinforcing the idea of trying new, nutritious options.

A 6-week series for 63 Kindergarten students at Parkview Elementary focusing on the foundational principles of healthy habits, the 5 food groups of MyPlate, and the essential practice of hand washing. These hands-on lessons include interactive games, activities, and sampling of healthy foods which helps youth build a positive relationship with nutritious choices from an early age, setting the stage for healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

A series of virtual strength training sessions (StrongBodies) for adults in the community, where participants engage in regular, progressive strength training and health education to improve their physical and mental health, and enhance social connectedness.

Attachment: February 2025 Monthly Report (8881 : Extension Educator Reports)



### Horticulture

Margaret Murphy | Regional Horticulture Educator

To view the Extension in the Valley, E-Newsletter, [Click Here](#).



*Planning demonstration plots for the public on how to use several types of season extenders. The goal of this effort is to help gardeners learn about techniques to extend the growing season for longer harvest potential.*

*Provided garden articles and factsheets for the public in the Extension in the Valley, a tri-county monthly newsletter that focuses on Agriculture and Horticulture news. Included were resources on pruning deciduous trees, apple trees and deciduous shrubs together with information on florigraphy. This effort is designed to keep participants connected to seasonal horticulture topics. Total Reach: Our current number of emails on our distribution list is 655.*

*Planned a garden series for the public that includes guidance on donating garden fare to pantries, container gardening with fruit and common garden pests. The goal of this series is to provide information on garden produce safety when donating produce, expanding your container gardening experience and best sustainable practices when managing common garden pests.*

*Participate in a horticulture workgroup focused on environmental stewardship. Though in its infancy, this effort's intent is to encourage communication and collaboration around common programming topics including sustainable practices and promoting biodiversity.*

### Human Development and Relationships

Jeanne Walsh | Human Development and Relationships Educator



*A 6-session course for renters where women in the Chippewa County Jail learn how to find and apply for rental housing, understand their responsibilities as a renter, how to communicate effectively with their landlords, and manage housing expenses. Through this, those with negative rental records and those new to renting are able to increase their ability to find and keep safe affordable housing, thereby increasing their stability and decreasing their reliance on public supports.*

*Provided an on-demand lesson at the Chippewa Falls Public Library on budgeting, record keeping, saving on groceries, and goal setting. Through this, participants set and create a plan for achieving their financial goals, while learning to create healthy budget friendly meals.*

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*A coaching program for individuals, where participants within the Chippewa County Jail learn how to create financial goals and gain money management skills. The goal of this program is to enable participants to prepare for and take charge of household financial situations that occur due to changes in income or unforeseen hardships.*

*A coaching program for families and individuals, where Chippewa County community members learn how to create financial goals and gain money management skills. The goal of this program is to enable participants to prepare for and take charge of household financial situations that occur due to changes in income or unforeseen hardships.*

*A program (Making Reading Memories) for families involved in the justice system where parents in jail are video recorded reading storybooks, which are then shared with their children at home. The goal is to reduce the trauma of separation, strengthen family relationships and at the same time increase children's exposure to books and reading.*

*Developed and facilitated a nationwide Financial Coaching Foundations course. This course is designed to provide social workers, case managers, and other professionals who provide direct services to individuals with the knowledge and skills to help clients craft solutions to any financial problems they may be experiencing.*

## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:

*In Wisconsin, conservative estimates suggest that nearly 90,000 children have experienced the incarceration of a parent with whom they live. Parental incarceration is associated with increased risk of negative outcomes for children, including impacts on behavior, academic success, and health. Supporting parents during their incarceration allows Extension to reach an underserved and often invisible population and provide them with support to effectively maintain contact with their children until their re-entry into the community. Extension's Family Engagement and Relationship program partners with local correctional facilities, including jails and state prisons, across Wisconsin to provide the evidence-informed parent education workshop Read and Connect for parents while they are incarcerated. The Read and Connect workshop is a one-hour parenting class that teaches parents about dialogic reading and the importance of interaction for children's growth and development and parent-child relationships. The workshop is offered virtually and in-person in 16 counties in Wisconsin via Extension Human Development and Relationship educators. For nearly 3 in 4 parents who participate in Read and Connect, the workshop was their first ever exposure to parenting education. As a result of the Read and Connect workshop, parents that are incarcerated improve their understanding, attitudes, and intentions about parenting their young children. Most parents who respond to our post-workshop survey report significant improvements in their attitudes towards dialogic reading, interacting with their children, and maintaining their relationships. Most parents report improving their confidence about reading to*

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their children. Most parents report intentions to maintain relationships with their children, read more often with their children, and communicate more often with their children. The impact of the Read and Connect workshop is important because parent incarceration can have profound impacts on child well-being. Improving parents' intentions to use interaction, reading, and communication to connect with their children during separation is an important way to mitigate the risk children experience during this time.

## Positive Youth Development

Jordan Blue | 4-H Program Educator

To view the Chippewa Chatter, E - Newsletter, [Click Here](#).



Developing a summer camp program for youth, including a day camp, one-night camp, and a three-night base camp. The goal is to provide participants with immersive outdoor experiences and skill-building opportunities, so that they can develop resilience, teamwork, and a deeper connection to youth and adults in the 4-H Program.

Preparing for an 8-week afterschool club with Cornell School District for youth in grades K-8th in collaboration with AmeriCorps Member, Chloe. The goal is to provide participants with diverse learning experiences and skill development opportunities, so that they can grow personally and academically, fostering a sense of community and belonging.

Art U, a six-week art program has been a huge success. Each Monday evening, 55 youth in grades K-6 join online for an hour, while those in grades 7-12 meet in person on the UW-Stout Campus. These sessions are presented in collaboration with the UW-Stout Art Education Department.

Revamp of the Wisconsin 4-H Arts Ambassadors program for youth in collaboration with State Expressive Arts Specialist Jay Johnson and Lafayette County 4-H Program Educator, Hailee Kammerud. The goal is to immerse youth in pathways to find their spark, communicate the work of the Arts Ambassadors, and grow as leaders in their communities, so that they can develop essential communication, marketing, and media skills while making a positive impact in their local areas.

Organizing a project learning day, Clover University, for youth in grades 6th-13th in collaboration with volunteers and Area 6 4-H staff. The goal is to provide hands-on learning experiences in various project

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areas, where participants will gain new skills and knowledge. Through this event, youth will develop practical abilities, foster a love for project learning, and build confidence in their capabilities, contributing to their overall personal growth and future success.

Delivery and continued planning of a series of Cloverbud Project Club Programs for K-2nd grade participants, where youth will engage with peers in Chippewa County. Studies show that youth introduced to programs early on are more likely to participate in science, technology, and engineering programs, and make healthy choices later in their journey. Total Reach: 20 youth

A multi-month camp counselor training for youth in 8th-13th grade, with volunteers, where participants learned leadership skills, team-building techniques, and effective communication strategies. Through this program, participants developed confidence, responsibility, and the ability to mentor younger campers, preparing them for future leadership roles and fostering a sense of community.

## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:

The New Auburn 2nd Grade Classroom Club was created to address the lack of transportation and financial means for some youth to participate in extracurricular activities. This bi-weekly program, supported by an AmeriCorps Member, brings enriching 4-H educational opportunities directly to 21 second graders at their school. By collaborating with local community partners, the program offers diverse, hands-on activities and skill-building exercises, fostering a sense of community and belonging.

The initiative has successfully improved students' teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills, positively impacting their attitudes towards learning and overall school performance. Looking ahead, the goal is to expand the program and build strong community partnerships to ensure sustainability and reach more students.





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## Value Added Programming

*Investment in Chippewa Extension brings additional resources.*

*A 6-week program, WeCOPE, for adults where participants learn 11 self-care and coping skills. The goal of this effort is to improve skills to manage stress, improve coping, increase positive emotions, and improve mental health. Total Reach: 24 participants (Margo Dieck, Luisa Gerasimo)*

## Area Extension Director

*Kristen Bruder | Chippewa, Eau Claire and Dunn Counties*



*The role of the AED is like that of the department head in the county. If you have ideas, thoughts, or want to chat about Extension please reach out! Below is a brief overview of the role of AEDs:*

*Extension fully invests in Area Extension Directors (AEDs) who oversee an area. These administrative positions are responsible for partnership management, staff development, financial management and program coordination.*

*Through the many interactions the AED has with county partners and local educators, the AED develops a solid understanding of the local needs and county priorities and helps to align Extension educational programs to ensure the programs address county needs. Educators also communicate local needs to their programmatic Institutes which collectively identify opportunities to address statewide needs.*



**STATEMENT OF EXPLANATION  
DISCUSSION ON MEETING FORMAT - KARI IVES**

5.3

Committee Chair Ives would like to discuss changing the format of the meeting to include more experiences, examples, stories, etc.