Kristin Peterson

My name is Kristi Peterson and I am very excited to be a part of the UW-Extension team. I am a graduate of the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire with a degree in Business Management. I have nearly four years of experience in Finance and am eager to learn more. My husband and two children live in Fall Creek and love to go camping, fishing and being outdoors.

Do you ever wonder, how does UW—Extension work?

The purpose of this 2016 annual report is to provide a glimpse into the variety services we provide in the community and with other state partners as we strive to get research-based information into the hands of the people. To view the full 2016 Annual Report see the link below!

counties.uwex.edu/eauclaire/files/2017/03/2016-Annual-Report-Eau-Claire-CountyFINAL.pdf
The Teaching Garden Provides Multiple Benefits

By Erin LaFaive, Horticulture Agent

In 2015, I created an on-site teaching garden around two sides of the office building, motivated by the need to have a setting to show, rather than tell, learners about horticulture issues. The general public asks for Eau Claire County UW – Extension’s assistance with garden problems at approximately 1,000 inquiries per year and local media regularly seeks information on pertinent seasonal garden topics.

The teaching garden focuses on space saving techniques and inexpensive gardening methods. One in eight residents and one in five children in Eau Claire County report being food insecure. Having the ability to grow nutritious food can help reduce food insecurity. Furthermore, gardening provides an opportunity to incorporate healthy lifestyle choices into everyday life by exercising in the garden and reducing stress. The FoodWIse Educators use the garden produce to supplement their supply budget. They teach limited income households how to prepare nutritious meals and snacks and stretch food dollars.

In addition, I write for local publications and periodically for the state-wide magazine, “Wisconsin Gardening”, and host a show with Chippewa Valley Community Television, “Keeping it Green”. It’s vital to these media sources to have high quality pictures with legal rights to use them. I can capture photos of pest problems as they make themselves known in the season. This real-time information helps me tailor my media presence with pertinent information. The time to take photos and observe seasonal garden issues doesn’t take me away from public walk-in and phone questions which are frequent during the garden season, in fact, many times they find me in the garden and I can demonstrate a solution in-person.

In 2016, interpretive signs were added with the intent to provide information when the office is closed. Attendees can provide feedback about their experience through the use of a QR code and accompanying web address listed on the sign linking people to a Qualtrics survey.

The teaching garden is showcasing foods used by various cultures. The Hidatsa Native American Indian tribe was represented with a Hidatsa shield bean and Arikara corn variety. An herb known as Shiso was planted which is known for its use in Asian dishes. These plants stimulate conversation with people and they comment that these plants have interesting stories as well as wanting to try growing the newly discovered plants.

Many people in the neighborhood came into the office and commented that the garden beautified the area. Even in the little town of Altoona, our office building is located at a well-trafficked intersection with the teaching garden in full view on two sides of the building.

The Master Gardener Volunteers provided many hours of construction, planting, weeding, and watering. This garden is a great location for teaching new Master Gardener Volunteers as the training takes place at the Eau Claire County Extension office.

Teen Garden Program was implemented in 2017 in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club which resulted in 30 youth teaching contacts. Over 200 people have been educated in the teaching gardens. Countless self-guided tours take place outside of business hours. Many people comment that being able to see the gardening techniques in person allows them to replicate it at their own home.

Come check out the Teaching Garden!
4-H Youth Gain Life Skills through Record Book/Interview Process

By Sara Novotny, 4-H Youth Development

4-H youth in Eau Claire County have many opportunities for earning awards and trips to commemorate their 4-H participation and expand their experiences through 4-H in Wisconsin and nationwide. Throughout recent years, the process has been adapted to best develop skill sets in youth while awarding trips and accolades in the 4-H program.

In 2014 and 2015, changes were made to the process that moved from youth completing a record book and filling out repetitive forms to completing a record book and turning in a resume, cover letter, and references. Youth and adults spoke in favor of eliminating duplicative processes and adding useful documents that youth could use in their future. Youth also were required to complete two interviews if they wanted awards and trips. (Based on a presentation made by youth from the Older Youth Council (OYC) Members to the adult leadership of the 4-H Youth Development program) the change in policy was made to complete one interview for both awards and trips, and forms to complete to nominate youth were simplified to encourage more youth nominations. From 2014 to 2016, there was a 64% increase in youth interviewing for trips and awards!

Due to the elimination of one of the interviews, the OYC officers determined there to be a need to help better prepare youth for their record book interviews. The youth officer team noted that upcoming, younger youth needed more instruction on the new process and support in preparing themselves for their interviews. They worked with the 4-H Youth Development Agent and their adult advisors to craft an interview workshop that they themselves led. They worked directly with younger youth on various parts of the interview, from handshakes to presenting the record book to proper dress. At the end of the workshop, they utilized community leaders who work in Human Resources to do mock interviews. Again for 2016, there was an increase in youth applying for trips and awards, and youth noted that they felt “comfortable” and “prepared” for their interviews, and one stated that “creating and updating a resume” has helped her in other aspects of her life.
Eau Claire County Receives Bid for The 2020 Wisconsin Farm Technology Days Show
By Mark Hagedorn, Agriculture Agent

Eau Claire (WQOW) -- Eau Claire County is set to host Wisconsin's largest agricultural show, Farm Technology Days, in year 2020.

The last time Eau Claire county hosted was in 1992 at a farm near Augusta. After speaking one-on-one with producers and agriculture business providers, working within a the UW-Extension Education Committee and putting together a resolution that was passed by the Eau Claire County Board, the state board officially offered the event to Eau Claire County on Wednesday.

"We are very enthusiastic about extending the offer to us, and we accepted," said Mark Hagedorn, Eau Claire County UW-Extension agriculture agent.

Hagedorn said the county will provide $20,000 in seed money to help put the show together, which will be repaid after the event. The economic impact is expected to be between $1.2 and $1.8 million as visitors will spend money at hotels, restaurants and more. Hagedorn said youth and non-profit organizations can also benefit financially from services provided during the show.

Recent FoodWIse Efforts

New FitWIse Program Builds Health Through Strength Training Program

FoodWIse staff were certified to teach FitWIse, a 10 week (twice a week) evidence-based strength training program to help adults of limited income achieve better health and fitness. FitWIse helps build strength, balance and flexibility and improve bone density and falls prevention.

ECC FitWIse held its first program at Sessions Street Apartments with eight clients. The pre and post assessments, designed to measure strength, flexibility, and overall fitness showed all of the participants improved in the majority of the six areas tested. Participants stated that they felt stronger and in general were inspired to get additional physical activity. Three participants plan to attend the next FitWIse program scheduled at St John’s Apartments starting in April. As a result of FitWIse participation, clients are more likely to be able to remain independent in their homes longer.
This was the fourth year of the elementary school-aged Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Day Camp, but for 2016, the format was changed to expand programming. Dunn, Chippewa, and Eau Claire Counties partnered with UW-Eau Claire and Blugold Beginnings to offer the experience to a larger group with varied staff teaching sessions. In previous years, camp was limited to only 30 participants because only three adults (UW Extension Agents/Educators) were facilitating.

Camp was expanded in 2016, with 73 youth, 15 Blugold Beginning mentors, four UW-EC volunteers, and even one professor participating and/or teaching. Sessions were then able to expand to food science, robotics, chemistry, and engineering. Data collected from campers who participated in this year’s new format indicated an increased interest in STEM and an increase in comprehension of science in everyday life. In the four topics covered in 2016, youth noted anywhere from a 33% to 42% increase in understanding after participating in camp. Furthermore, the youth noted ways they can share the skills in their 4-H clubs or at home with their siblings or friends. This project was possible through financial and in-kind support from UW-Eau Claire, UW-Eau Claire Blugold Beginnings, the 4-H Leaders Associations in each 4-H program, and Northwestern Bank. Additionally, financial support garnered through Eau Claire County’s Generous Juror Program in 2015 assisted in purchasing twenty Lego Mindstorm Robots and corresponding laptops, which are used in 4-H programming across Eau Claire County.
FoodWIse—New name for Wisconsin Nutrition Educational Program
By Nancy Coffey, FoodWIse Nutrition Coordinator

FoodWIse, formerly known as the Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program, or WNEP, has a long legacy in Eau Claire County. This UWEX program is a federally funded effort that advances healthy eating habits, active lifestyles, and healthy community environments for Wisconsin residents with limited incomes. Nutrition education happens at the individual, community, and systems levels all in an effort to help people lead healthier lives.

FoodWIse still teaches direct nutrition education to over 2,000 youth and adult residents annually at schools, after school and summer programs as well as at many government and non-profit agencies. We also partner with community agencies to use policies, systems, and environmental change approaches to improve health. Partnering initiatives FoodWIse staff are involved in are: Market Match Incentive program at the EC Downtown Farmers Market, Food as Medicine Partnership, and the FNV fruit and vegetable grocery store initiative.
Improving Health in our Community
By Brook Berg, Family Living Educator

Eau Claire Healthy Communities is a local coalition, made up of partners from the community, working together to promote the health and well-being of individuals, families and communities of Eau Claire County through collaborative and focused action. The 2016 annual report showcases the work that has been done by the action teams, contributing to the overall health of individuals, families and our community. Please click here to read the report: eauclaire.wi.networkofcare.org/ph.

To showcase the work of the action teams and to learn more about ‘telling your story’, please join us at the annual healthy communities’ celebration. The event will be held on April 27th at 5:30 at CVTC and is open to the public.

When we talk about health, it’s important to understand that health doesn’t just come from clinical care. So many factors contribute to the health of person and of the community. Each year, our county, and counties around the nation are ranked. The newest county health rankings were released at the end of March. You are encouraged to take a look at the rankings at www.countyhealthrankings.org. This is a great resource and opportunity for discussion about how our community is doing in the area of health.

Serving as catalysts for positive change, Family Living provides leadership to ensure that community systems, services and facilities support the healthy functioning of families.
“Keeping it Green” is a gardening show that presents gardening techniques and environmental friendly information to grow your best yard and gardens.


To watch any of the episodes please click the show you want to view below:

**Season 2, Episodes 1-2**
- Shrubbery & Trees
- Moles and Mole!
- Solar Energy
- Teaching Gardens

**Season 1, Episodes 1-7**
- Soil Testing
- Forest Street Gardens
- KarmaPharms
- Getting a Garden Ready for Winter
- Seed Saving
- Learn How to Make Salves
- Seed Starting

To view the video please click the image below!
Suicide remains a significant public health problem in Wisconsin and especially in Eau Claire County. Unfortunately, completed suicides have been on the rise in our community. Results from community and family needs assessments show that mental health continues to be a top priority of community members in the Eau Claire area. About 75% of people in Eau Claire County with mental health conditions receive no treatment at all for their mental illness. Community members have identified the complexity of navigating the mental health system as a major barrier to receiving treatment.

In collaboration with Eau Claire Healthy Communities and the Medical Reserve Corps, UW-Extension has been able to provide trainings, using the QPR (Question-Persuade-Refer) curriculum. As a gatekeeper trainer, Berg has partnered with many organizations, businesses, and schools to offer the training. The QPR training helps people recognize the risk factors and warning signs associated with suicidal ideation and how to offer hope.

What’s uplifting is that the general population is beginning to understand mental health as less an absence of pathology but instead a state of social, emotional and mental well-being which includes the ability to develop relationships and connections with others. In general, our community understands that suicide prevention is necessary and that suicide prevention is everybody’s business. The effects of suicide on a community are immeasurable; therefore continuing to educate and provide resources is an important piece in supporting families in our community.

If you are interested in hosting or attending a QPR training, please contact 715-839-4766.
Seven diverse Family Literacy families attended a six class, *My Plate—A Healthy Food and Money Saving Program*. Children tasted fruits, veggies and new foods. Parents learned about healthy eating and thrifty shopping at the grocery store.

Families indicated an increase in whole fruit and whole grain consumption, as well as increasing the frequency they shopped with a list and compared prices, utilizing unit prices, before buying food. One participant, interviewed three months after program completion, was asked to rate her family’s eating on a scale from 1 to 10. (1-unhealthy to 10-very healthy). Marie (not her real name) said that before the program her rating was 4 because her husband was drinking a lot of pop every day and the children got a lot of candy. Now she rates her family’s eating a 9. Marie said, “We are eating less fat and sugar, in general. My husband is now drinking the traditional boiled water from cooking vegetables instead of pop.” She stated that she had to convince her husband that the messages she was telling him about healthy eating were true and science based, not just her opinion. Her husband is now helping to support the healthy eating messages with the children.

**DAISY LOVES SPINICH—CLICK THE IMAGE BELOW TO WATCH THE VIDEO**
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