Our Mission

Deliver research-based information to improve the quality of life for families in the areas of agriculture, community, family, and youth development. UW-Extension extends the knowledge and resources of the University of Wisconsin to people where they live and work.

Building resource capacity

Enhancing economic development

Empowering people in their communities

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The Outagamie County Master Gardener Association (OCMGA) currently has 133 active members. This past year, 114 state certified volunteers provided 10,952 hours of support and education to the Fox Cities area; and members of the OCMGA increased their own knowledge by completing an additional 2,760 hours of continuing education.

The Outagamie County Master Food Preservers conducted lunch and learns, special interest workshops and hands-on workshops involving five volunteers and more than 135 people. The hands-on workshops included: Berry Good Night – Making Jam, Pickled Beets, Dilly Beans, Pickled Three Bean Salad and Meats—Oh Deer Not Again! Educational programs were delivered at Secura, New London Public Library, Salvation Army, and the UW-Extension office.

The Outagamie County 4-H Outreach Committee focused on introducing and promoting 4-H programs through community events, promotional fliers, media promotion, and the 4-H Action Center at the county fair. Promotional 4-H yard signs were distributed to 4-H families throughout the county, and they were encouraged to display the signs during the September annual enrollment period through the end of National 4-H Week in October.

Twenty volunteers completed the Master Gardener Basic Training in 2015. The Outagamie County Master Gardener Association (OCMGA) is the lead contributor to the Wisconsin Alfalfa Yield and Persistence Project (WAYP). Since 2007, no other county has collected data from more fields or acreage to support this statewide effort. The biggest take away from the project is that farmers cannot afford to leave an alfalfa field in production past the third full production year. Results from the WAYP study indicate that total dry matter yield falls 25% in the fourth production year suggesting farmers need to consider rotating those fields if they wish to remain economically viable.

The seasonal horticulture educator, a member of the state horticulture team worked to develop professional programs for internal extension staff, updated state garden fact sheets, collected regional data, and developed new information to address recent invasive concerns like jumping worms.

The Outagamie Dairy Promotion Board planned and presented the 2015 Breakfast on the Farm at Wichman Farms. Over 7,000 people enjoyed the large dairy breakfast and ice cream while touring the farm and enjoying family friendly activities. Attendees toured a new free stall barn with four robotic milkers. It was the first time Breakfast on the Farm attendees were able to see cows being milked with robots.

The Outagamie Caregiver Coalition completed a strategic planning process, facilitated by UW-Extension. The process identified guiding principles and goals consistent with the mission and vision of the Outagamie County Caregiver Coalition. Members note that meeting efficiency has improved due to better meeting structure as a result of the planning process.
EMPOWERING PEOPLE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

• The 4-H Youth and Family Development Coordinator worked with four volunteer mentors to support the Outagamie County 4-H Youth Leaders Association. Seventy-eight youth enrolled in the youth leadership project and completed community service projects including: playing bingo with residents at Brewster Village, garbage pick up at Black Otter Lake in Hortonville, and assisting at an Operation Military Kids event.

• 2015 marked the 40th annual Joy Conference with over 550 participants at the event. Child care providers earned registry hours for continuing education. The three keynote speakers sparked participants’ creativity of finding joy within and celebrating personal goals and family resiliency.

• The UW-Extension office in cooperation with the Outagamie County Master Gardener Association provided education and outreach to 1,567 individuals who sought help with their horticultural inquiries during the 2015 growing season. Questions and concerns from homeowners and horticultural professionals were answered in the form of phone calls, emails, walk-ins, and site visits.

• UW-Extension welcomed 534 Outagamie County parents at the co-parenting evaluation project which was conducted in 23 counties in the state. Outagamie County had the highest participation response rate in the state. A high number of parents indicated they will not ask their child to deliver messages to the other co-parent and will avoid raising their voice with the other parent when in front of children.

• A Caregiver Cafe pilot project was offered at six sites in the fall of 2015 reaching more than 65 family caregivers and professionals. The program plans to expand to other communities in 2016 with a three part model.

• The 2nd Annual Bacon Contest, held on October 31, welcomed 14 youth. Three different educational sessions were taught by a state meat inspector, county agent, and local meat shop employees. Sessions covered the following topics: What pigs eat affects how pork tastes; How to process pork bellies; Curing and smoking of pork products. Attendees sampled four different bacon flavors submitted by the youth and voted for their favorite flavors. The three sessions received high evaluations from the youth for their new and valuable skills in food safety, product tasting, and quality management.

2015 Spring into Leadership: Developing Leadership Capacity in Partner Organizations

• In responding to constituent needs assessments, educators at UW-Extension Outagamie designed and presented a three part leadership series to help partner organizations develop youth and adult leadership capacities. The sessions were open to youth and adult volunteers serving in leadership positions in area organizations, or those aspiring to step into leadership roles in the future. The 2015 Spring into Leadership series was designed to give participants the resources and tools to develop a personal vision for leading themselves and others, and to help partner organizations achieve priorities. Post-session evaluations showed participants expanded their overall knowledge of leadership practices and the skill sets to improve themselves and their partner organizations.

• An unintended outcome revealed the collaborative strength of the County Extension staff who worked across program areas to help develop leadership in those constituent groups most closely allied with UW-Extension.

Total Leadership Series Participants = 43

Category of Participants
4-H 46%
HCE 12%
Master Gardeners & Food Preservers 12%
Community Organizations 12%
County Fair Association 9%
Local Government 9%
2015 Staff

Agents | Educators | Coordinators

Wendy Beyer  Nutrition Coordinator*
Karen Dickrell  Family Living Educator and Department Head
Evan Groth  Nutrition Educator*
Kevin Jarek  Crops, Soils, and Horticulture Agent
Anne Donnellan  Seasonal Horticulture Assistant
Zen Miller  Dairy and Livestock Agent
Casey Plamann  4-H Youth Development Educator
James Resick  Community Development Educator
MaryBeth Seib  4-H Youth and Family Program Coordinator
Kristine Soper  Nutrition Educator*

* Serves Calumet, Outagamie, and Winnebago Counties

Extension Education Committee

Dan Rettler  Chair
Keith Suprise  Vice Chair
Daniel Melchert  Secretary
Debbie VanderHeiden  Member
Leroy Van Asten  Member

Support Staff

Joan Behle  Office Assistant
Jean DiPetro  Agriculture  Retired 6-15-15
Terry Hampton  Office Assistant
Vicki Handschke  Office Assistant
Shari Peterson  Program Assistant
Mary Lou Senf  Administrative | Family Living  Retired 6-15-15

County Administration

Thomas Nelson  County Executive
Craig Moser  County Executive Administrator
Helen Nagler  County Board Chair

2015 Program Accomplishments

15,675 Consultations, Telephone Calls, Office | Residence Conferences
1,262 Educational Meetings Held
32,991 Meeting Attendance
3,074 Instructional Letters
12,612 Letters Distributed
48 Newsletters Prepared
13,608 Newsletters Distributed
90 News Releases
20,032 Publications Distributed
56 Radio Programs
190 Teleconferences
34 TV Shows | Spots
156 Blog | Website Posts

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