



## Community Development

Addison Vang | *Community Development Educator*

The biggest highlight would be the HMong Economic Advancement Research Equity (HERE) conference that was held in Eau Claire at the Pablo Confluence. This was one of the very first conferences dedicated to focusing on the HMoob (Hmong) in the State of Wisconsin. The speakers and keynotes were great and had a lot of positive feedback from attendees. People came from all over the state including Dunn County, and Minnesota, from different fields such as education to local startups.

As part of the HERE Conference there was also a Little Mekong Night Market. The market showcased HMoob and people of color craft makers and food vendors. Vendors came from all over the state and Minnesota. The event was very well received by both vendors and the public. Many vendors indicated it was their first time selling in the Chippewa Valley. There was one vendor specially that came from Dunn County who was a first year food truck. He indicated that the event really helped him build his customer base due to the attendance numbers.

The Community Food Systems Program has been organizing a 2-day virtual summit for Wisconsin food entrepreneurs called the 2022 Food Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Development or FEED Summit. It will be held virtually on November 14th and 15th, from 10 am to 4 pm. This is exciting because last year the program had to be postponed due to staffing. Early registration is \$45 and \$65 thereafter. There are also scholarships available for those who need it. To register click on the following link: [FEED Summit 2022 – Community Food Systems \(wisc.edu\)](#).

I have been planning a Grant Writing Basics Virtual Workshop for Tuesday October 18th. It is free for all. This has been a great program as I have been able to collaborate with other Extension educators to develop and present the workshop with. The interest has been great and we are in the process of adding another workshop to accommodate more people. Registration is closed for October 18th and a November workshop has not yet been determined.

I have been in the process of organizing a HMoob farmers focus group to better understand their needs and introduce Extension to them. They have been farming for 30 plus years but most have never utilized Extension resources. This local effort also aligns with the statewide Extension effort to support HMoob farmers.

- Co-Chaired and organized an entrepreneurial night market event showcasing a majority of HMoob and BiPOC makers and food vendors in Eau Claire in conjunction with the HMong Economic Advancement Research Equity (HERE) Conference. The goal was to promote primarily HMoob but included other BiPOC makers and food vendors to the community.
- Planning for a basic grant proposal workshop for local government, businesses, and organization members and staff. The goal of this effort is for people to learn how to find and apply for grants, so that they can carry out the activities for their organization, business, or government unit.
- Planning a statewide conference to support a Hmong economic development summit. The goal is to build a network of underrepresented entrepreneurs and business owners to learn and support one another.

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## Horticulture

Margaret Murphy | *Horticulture Outreach Specialist*

*Growing and Caring for Plants in Wisconsin: Foundations in Gardening* course is full with over 500 registrants. I am again a lab instructor for the optional labs offered in this course. My first lab was September 29 covering reading pesticide labels and interpreting soil test results. My lab section has 27 participants.

In my continued work with Lake Wissota State Park on a new native rain garden, we will be working on brochures with more information on native plants for pollinators and rain gardens. Information used in these brochures can be shared with the public to encourage landscaping in sustainable ways.

Our garden mini webinars are set for October. The theme is 'Fall into Winter Gardening' and includes:

- Tips for Getting Landscape Plants Ready for Winter - Thursday, October 13, 12:00 p.m.
- Protecting Young Trees from Animal and Other Damage Over Winter - Thursday, October 20, 12:00 p.m.



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UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
DUNN COUNTY

# September 2022 Report

- Maintaining Your Festive Houseplants - Thursday, October 27, 12:00 p.m.

Mini webinars are free. Visit <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/> for more information and to register or view the recording.

The 6-week garden programs I do in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club and FoodWise at the Chippewa Falls Community Garden and River Heights Elementary in Dunn County have finished for the season. An end of program survey resulted in 52% stating that their favorite thing about garden club was learning how to garden (planting, weeding, watering & harvesting); 40% stated that they liked the food tasting best and a few (8%) said they liked everything! According to the Boys & Girls program director in Dunn County, the kids want a garden club again in 2023!

Horticulture inquiries keep me busy. Current questions are on fruit, fall garden clean up, unsuccessful garden crops, diseases, soil testing, lawns, weeds and invasives. Note: fall is a good time to get soil tested.

I am currently serving on the Search & Screen Committee for the Master Gardener Coordinator position. Unfortunately, the first search did not result in a hire. We will begin interviews after the position closes on October 10.

- Planning for a statewide webinar series for consumer horticulture audiences where participants will learn about pollinator decline, climate change and environmental contamination and pollution. The goal of this effort is to increase adoption of horticultural practices addressing identified environmental issues in Wisconsin.
- Four sections of an online Lab component for the 2022 Foundations in Gardening (previously Foundations in Horticulture) course where participants from the Foundations in Gardening course (home gardeners) apply what they learned from the Foundations course through interactive activities. This effort is designed to encourage best horticultural practices in Wisconsin for better environmental outcomes.
- An online course for consumer audiences (home gardeners) where participants learned fundamental knowledge of Wisconsin horticulture with an emphasis in Integrated Pest Management. The goal is to increase decision-making and problem-solving skills, improve the productivity / health of gardens and landscapes, and to implement gardening practices that have a positive impact on the environment.

## Health and Well-Being

Sandy Tarter | *FoodWise Coordinator*

Joy Weisner | *FoodWise Educator*

Jael Wolf | *FoodWise Educator*

Vacant | *FoodWise Educator*

**FY22/23-**As our FY22 closes out September 30, 2022, Sandy is working on end of year reporting and sending our FY23 agreements to all our area partners. Educators Jael and Joy completed their series with Bridge to Hope including nutrition, planning meals, food budgets, and tastings. They are also wrapping up FY22 data entry, completing success stories, and planning fall events.

**Health Dunn Right Chronic Disease Prevention Action Team (CDPAT):** Sandy has been Co-Chair of this team for several years and will step down from this position in October. She will continue to work on the team's initiatives including the following:

**Diabetes Prevention Month-November:** the team is collaborating with the Regional Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), along with additional hours from UW Stout Practicum Students, to provide the Pre-Diabetes Risk Assessment in our community and educate individuals on what the DPP provides while supporting their registration if interested.

**Goodbye to Nancy Fastner...**We are in deep gratitude for Nancy's 9-year dedication to FoodWise and our families of Chippewa and Dunn Counties. She will be missed and we wish her all the best in retirement.

**Retirement note from Nancy:** *It is bittersweet to announce that I am retiring officially on October 10, 2022, with my last day in office on Sept 6. I have been truly blessed to work with such a great team of specialists and county partners. I have learned so much along the way and have been fortunate to be able to reach so many low-income participants. I appreciate your support of the FoodWise Program. I expect the new FoodWise Nutrition Educator will continue the great work and outreach we have done here in Dunn County.*

*Warmly and Best Health to you all, Nancy Fastner*



- A series of follow-up emails and phone calls to area partners to discuss FY23-24 agreements and collaborations with FoodWise. This effort strengthens local relationships and ensures understanding between partners.
- A collaborative effort with Mayo Health System providers and St. Francesca Resource Center to implement a program that screens for chronic diseases and connects people to healthy food and nutrition education at a food pantry. This program aims to promote healthy eating and active living as action steps to reduce chronic diseases.
- A nutritional education lesson for women in transitional housing where they learned about meal planning and food shopping tips. The goal of this effort is to help participants make healthy food choices on a limited budget.
- A series of virtual strength training sessions for older adults where they improve strength, balance, and flexibility. This effort helps them to stay healthy and socially connected with other seniors throughout the state.
- Monthly meetings with the Chronic Disease Prevention Action Teams under the Eau Claire Healthy Communities, Health Dunn Right, and Chippewa Health Improvement Partnership coalitions. This effort helps guide the action teams in providing community awareness and activities concerning healthy food access, food security, and increased physical activity for local families.
- Monthly Steering Committee meetings with the executive leadership of the Chippewa Healthy Improvement Partnership and Health Dunn Right during which organizational needs are reviewed and discussed. The purpose of this effort is to help the organization identify a strategic direction in order to more effectively guide its action teams including the Chronic Disease Prevention Action Teams.
- Collaboration with local agencies to create sustainability and promotion of the farmers markets token and match programs. This effort enables FoodShare participants to utilize their benefits in purchasing market foods while supporting increased vendor sales.

## Human Development and Relationships

Luisa Gerasimo | *Human Development and Relationships Educator*

During the month of September, I continued work on the Community Needs Assessment for Dunn County. I met with Stepping Stones, Veterans Service Office, Human Services, Center for Independent Living, and the Health Department. I enjoyed learning what their organizations are working on and more about their needs. We also discussed the programs I am currently working on and a few I may be able to offer soon.

I facilitated several co-parenting classes this month, including my first online one, which was attended by 15 individuals from Barron, Washburn and Dunn counties. I also recorded my first reading sessions at the Dunn County Jail and sent books and recordings out to the children of incarcerated parents, and followed up with information on reading, brain development and emotional support for children.

- A program for justice-involved families 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.
- A community needs assessment of dozens of county partners and local service organizations. The goal of this assessment is to identify local problems, root causes, local conditions, and appropriate educational support to be offered by the Human Development and Relationships Educator.

*"I was able to stay in touch with my child and feel and be a part of her life. I'm excited to see what my daughter thinks and I feel more connected to her."*  
-Making Reading Memories Participant

## Positive Youth Development

The hiring process for the 4-H Program Educator position is ongoing. For information on Extension's 4-H Program, visit <https://4h.extension.wisc.edu/>.

- A 4-H camp experience for youth grades 5-8 where campers learned about different categories of "art". Through this, campers gained independence, practiced making new friendships, and tried a variety of activities to build their confidence and make relationships across seven county's 4-H programs.



## Natural Resources

Dan Zerr | *Regional Natural Resource Educator*

- Technical assistance for a partnership group (Rain to Rivers) which raises awareness and encourages action to reduce stormwater impacts. The goal of this effort is to increase storm water management awareness and implementation.
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## Agriculture

Katie Wantoch | *Professor of Practice and Statewide Farm Management Outreach Specialist*

- A monthly column in WI Agriculturist magazine for farmers and ag professionals, where readers learn about farm management and available Extension resources. The purpose of this effort is to improve farm business decision-making.
  - A podcast series, AgriVision, for farmers and ag professionals, where UW Extension educators answer Farm Management questions and share knowledge and expertise on how farmers can improve their farm management skills.
  - Planning for a survey of QuickBooks users in collaboration with other educators that are part of the North Central Extension Risk Management Education grant. The goal of this effort is to identify what areas of training are needed in QuickBooks, so those producers can have a better financial understanding of their farming operations.
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## Support

Michelle Bachand | *Support Specialist*

This month I worked on a variety of activities, some of which include:

- Kicking off the new 4-H year; approving enrollments, communicating with volunteers about new required training, and assisting club and project leaders with the 4-H Online system.
  - Reviewing the 4-H Annual Financial Reports that are required of 4-H chartered clubs and groups as they are submitted and following up with club leaders that missed the September 1 deadline.
  - Collaborating with the 4-H Educator in Chippewa County to complete the IRS 990 reporting for 4-H clubs and groups.
  - Creating and distributing the September Clover Courier.
  - Assisting the 4-H Plat Book Committee with the 2022 Plat Book; advertising the new edition and processing sales.
  - Managing registrations, collecting payments, ordering supplies, and printing camper health forms for 4-H Arts Camp at Kamp Kenwood for youth across seven counties.
  - Working with a 4-H Volunteer on a marketing project to distribute 4-H flyers in the local elementary schools for National 4-H Month in October.
  - Coordinating the 4-H record book/fall award process; hosting the record book judging volunteers for an evening session, compiling record book winners and club award orders, ordering award supplies, creating certificates, and organizing awards for distribution to clubs.
  - Connecting with the Menomonie Chamber of Commerce Tourism Director about potentially transitioning the Barn Quilt trail to their site.
  - Creating and updating programming materials for the Educators.
  - Various website and social media updates.
  - Connecting with the new support colleague in the Chippewa County Extension office to offer advice and assistance as she learns her new role.
  - Working with our new AED to ensure a smooth transition!
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# September 2022 Report

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## Area Extension Director

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

Hello! I am very excited to begin my work as the Area Extension Director in Dunn, Chippewa, and Eau Claire counties! I officially started this role on September 1, however, I am serving as an interim director in the position I am vacating (Pierce, Polk, St. Croix). A little over five years ago, I left my position as the Family Living Educator for Dunn Extension after serving in that role for over 10 years. I am excited to be “coming home” to Dunn in this new capacity. A little bit of information about the AED role:

- They are completely funded by UW-Madison Division of Extension
- They serve as the county Extension Department Budget Officer and Administrative Officer for the counties in their area. Specific signatory authority is agreed to by the county to allow the AED to serve in this capacity.
- They are the hiring authority of Extension staff and serve as the direct supervisor of Extension educators, conducting annual and mid-point performance evaluations with each Extension employee.
- They are responsible for the regular operations of county Extension offices and provide oversight to county staff within the office.
- They support educators and staff who direct Extension volunteers. They engage when volunteer behavior concerns expand beyond coaching or if dismissal of the volunteer is warranted.
- They monitor and manage risk and liability situations that might arise.

Over the coming months, I hope to reach out and meet with county board members, county departments, and partners to learn more about Dunn County, priorities, and Extension’s impact in Dunn County.

Please reach out anytime - I would love to hear from you!