



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
MARATHON COUNTY

March 2023 Report

*We teach, learn, lead, and serve,
connecting people with the University of Wisconsin, and engaging with
them in transforming lives and communities.*

4-H – Positive Youth Development

Holly Luerksen, 4-H Program Educator

Jasmine Carbajal, 4-H Associate Educator

Marathon County 4-H celebrates 2023 AmeriCorp Week. Our AmeriCorp/4-H Program Assistants, Jade Betts and Kate Loucks visited the Capitol in Madison on March 15, 2023. The visit was part of a celebration of the service they have done with Wisconsin AmeriCorps program. Part of the experience included visits to Congressional men and women to advocate about how much we appreciate their support with AmeriCorps. Several years ago, Congress passed a law that the education award we receive for our service cannot be taxed. This has been a benefit for our AmeriCorp members when it comes to paying off school debt. We are grateful to be part of an AmeriCorps program and support two members. Jade and Kate enjoyed talking to the members of Congress about what AmeriCorps helps our local programs achieve through host sites like Marathon County 4-H/Extension.



- H2N (Hmong Hispanic Communication Network) invited Marathon County Extension to participate in a health fair at a local church in Abbotsford, WI to help increase the Latinx community's knowledge about resources around them. FoodWise nutrition educator, Thalia Mauer, and 4-H educator, Jasmine Carbajal, provided information on upcoming events like nutrition classes and Juntos programming as well as provided families with calendars with healthy meal recipes. Jasmine led straw rockets with 10 youth at the event and was able to connect with Latinx community members and possibly secure a location for a future Juntos program. Thalia was also able to collect information on families interested in nutrition or exercise classes in the future. Overall, the event had around 300 adults and about 50 adults stopped by the Extension table and received information about Extension services in the area.

Agriculture

Heather Schlessler, Dairy Agent

- A live, on-line meeting series, for farmers and dairy industry professionals, where participants learned the latest research and applications regarding automated milking systems economics, foot health, and milk quality. The goal of this effort was to increase knowledge of the latest UW-Madison research on automatic milking systems, and how farmers can implement changes to management practices to help their farms become more profitable. An event for farm women, where participants learned about strategic thinking/ diversification ideas. This effort is designed to educate farm women about other business opportunities for their farm, so they can be sustainable.

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- A research-based educational article for dairy farmers, and agri-business professionals, where participants will learn about current ventilation recommendations for dairy cattle, resources for identifying the most energy efficient fans for their facilities, and how proper ventilation and fan selection can help improve Dairy's carbon footprint.

FoodWise

Mallory McGivern, FoodWise Administrator
Gaonou Thao, FoodWise Educator

- Taught a monthly nutrition education series for Hmong women participating in a domestic abuse support group where participants taste new foods and learn healthy ways to prepare them. The purpose of this program is to improve the quality of their families' diet and increase their ability to manage their food resources.
- Served as leadership for Marathon County Hunger Coalition, where the local United Way coalition works toward increasing fresh fruits and vegetable donations to food pantries and low-income families through gleaning, pantry partnership and fresh produce purchases.
- 8-week series of strength training sessions (StrongBodies), where older adults also receive nutrition and health education. Participants engage in regular strength training exercises to improve muscle strength, balance, and flexibility so they can stay healthy and socially connected.
- Taught a monthly nutrition education series offered to SNAP-eligible residents, where participants learn healthy lifestyle choices, food preparation, food safety, food resource management and physical activity. The goal of the series is to improve healthy eating and physical activity habits for Marathon County residents – this class was about cooking healthy for 1 or 2. One participant said, "We tried foods that I had not ever eaten before. She showed how to cook things I would not have put together on my own – but were good."

Horticulture

Janell Wehr, Horticulture Educator

Awesome Orchids - Lifelong learning is beneficial for Marathon County's aging population because it supports overall cognitive function, sense of accomplishment and personal growth, positive social engagement that combats social isolation (common in older adults) and develops technology skills. In "Awesome Orchids", 15 participants from The Landing, a community for adults over 55, learned how to provide the conditions in which orchids need to thrive indoors including: Water, Fertilizer, Light, Temperature, and Reflowering requirements.

- A presentation for the general public (Garden Dreams symposium) where participants learned about herbaceous ornamentals, their uses in the landscape, and how to incorporate them so they thrive in personal landscapes. The goal of this effort was to empower individuals by increasing awareness and knowledge of resources to address environmental contamination and pollution.
- A community of practice for horticulture educators where we explore strategies and resources to expand horticulture education and outreach to underrepresented audiences. The goal of participating in this group is to



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dig into ways we can locally continue to grow and enhance our horticulture programs to reach more diverse audiences.

- Planning for the creation of a repository of existing horticultural resources in multiple languages for home/community gardeners of all abilities. The goal of this effort is to make this repository accessible on the Horticulture Topic Hub.
- Developing informal learning communities utilizing the Horticulture Program's social media for all Wisconsin gardeners, including underserved populations. The goal of this effort is to provide accurate, practical and up-to-date information to the public primarily through the topic hub in order to bolster educational outreach efforts in support of addressing the Horticulture Program objectives.

Natural Resources

Kris Tiles, NRI Program Manager

Anna James, Regional Natural Resources Educator

- A hybrid event for farmers, conservation professionals, agriculture industry professionals, watershed groups, and concerned citizens where they learn about new conservation practices and how to implement them in an agricultural setting. The goal of is to encourage profitable farming by building resiliency, diversifying farming operations, reducing inputs, and increasing farmers' return on investment.
- An in-person workshop for foresters and other natural resources professionals where participants learned about managing forests for maple syrup production. The goals of this workshop are to increase the ability of foresters to successfully manage woodlands to maximize maple sap production, meet the landowners goals, and do so in a way to maintain the long-term sustainability of the forest resources.



Upcoming Programs

- **4-H Programming** – Information at marathon.extension.wisc.edu/projects/programs/
- **StrongBodies** – StrongBodies Spring 2023 Session – Register at <https://go.wisc.edu/71ptii>
- **Horticultural Programs** – Information at <https://marathon.extension.wisc.edu/horticulture/programs/>
- **FoodWise Healthy Eating Series** – For SNAP eligible residents. Register at <https://marathon.extension.wisc.edu/foodwise-program/>.

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