



# NEWS FROM EXTENSION

UW-MADISON EXTENSION FOODWISE  
CLARK, MARATHON, PORTAGE & WOOD COUNTIES



FoodWise staff at Kids in the Kitchen at Jefferson Elementary School in Stevens Point, WI

## Food News

Welcome to the quarterly newsletter from FoodWise, a program of UW Madison Division of Extension. Our local FoodWise program is federally funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed). We advance healthy eating habits, active lifestyles and healthy community environments for Wisconsin residents with limited incomes through nutrition education at the individual, community and systems levels. UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work to help make the healthy choice the easy choice in our communities.

## Stockboxes in Wisconsin Rapids

Wood County is entering its third year offering the Stockbox program, which is the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). This local Stockbox program provides individuals 60+ on a limited income with a free monthly box of shelf-stable goods at no cost.

This program is a collaboration of FoodWise, United Way of South Wood & Adams Counties, Hunger Task Force, ADRC of Central Wisconsin, FOCUS Food Pantry, and the Housing Authority of Wisconsin Rapids. **In 2023, we provided 917 individuals with a monthly Stockbox which is about 23,000 - 27,500 pounds of shelf-stable foods!**



Distributions are held drive-thru style at FOCUS Food Pantry on the third Tuesday of each month. Registration is required, and proxy pickups are allowed, which is a key component to ensuring equitable accessibility of the program. The latest [ALICE data](#) reflects that over half (54%) of all senior households in Wood County are struggling financially, more than any other age group, and we hope this program can help meet the needs of our community members when it comes to access to healthy foods.

To learn more, check out the video below on Wisconsin Rapids' local Stockbox program!

**HOW CAN WE HELP?**

United Way 2-1-1 provides free and confidential health and human services information for people in Minnesota. We're here 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to connect you with the resources and information you need.

**NEWS AND UPDATES**

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**2-1-1** You can call to register by dialing 211 from your phone.  
Get Connected. Get Help.™

## Food Security in Clark County

Many Wisconsin families are struggling to make ends meet with the end of the nationwide emergency SNAP allotments and inflated prices at the store. To meet increased demand, food pantries are trying to keep their doors open despite inflation rates, lack of volunteers, and the increase of families that need their support.



Clark County Bilingual Nutrition Educator Thalia Mauer worked with St. Bernard Catholic Church Food Pantry to provide nutrition information at the drive-through food pantry that operates every Thursday from 2-4pm. More than 300 families come from different parts of the county and other neighboring counties to get their box/bags of food every week and the numbers keep increasing.

The FoodWise team serves SNAP-eligible families in Clark County through advancing food and nutrition security efforts in partnership with local health departments and coalitions. We also hope to collaborate with local food pantries to teach their participants about making healthy choices on a budget, decreasing food expenses, developing a food budget, and planning meals. FoodWise is one of many partners working to improve health and reduce food insecurity in Clark County through outreach, collaboration and engagement!



## Virtual StrongBodies

For those who can't attend class in-person, or prefer a virtual option, there is a statewide class!

**Dates:** January 9th - March 28th

**Time:** Tuesdays & Thursdays 9-10:15am

**Sign Up:** [Register Online](#)

# Wausau School District Education

Marathon County Nutrition Educator, Julia Perock recently began teaching in the Wausau School District and started with third graders from Lincoln Elementary school. FoodWise can offer a 5-week series where students discuss MyPlate, the food groups, nutrients, as well as why physical activity is important. Each lesson starts with a review from the week before, a short lesson about the food group of the week, an activity to reinforce the lesson, and it ends with a food sample to get the students excited about trying new foods.



FoodWise educators have a robust curriculum selection, and provide evidence-based nutrition education tailored to each grade level. A favorite lesson focused on fruits and vegetables, where students learned that different colored fruits and vegetables have different nutrients, so it is important to “Eat a Rainbow” of fruits and vegetables each week! Students drew their favorite fruits and vegetables and their drawings were combined to create a giant rainbow that was returned to them the following week. The students were thrilled to see the work they had done and excited to see the rainbow hanging in the hallway outside of the classrooms!



## WI Chili Lunch

The annual Wisconsin Chili Lunch (WCL) supports local food purchasing by encouraging cafeterias to serve a chili dish made with local ingredients. On the third Thursday of each February, cafeterias around the state participate in the WCL by preparing local chili and celebrating Wisconsin

farmers. This event provides a fun way to practice local food procurement and promotion. This year's event took place on Thursday February 22nd and school across the state participated by making chili with local foods. Contact your local FoodWise team to learn more!

## Kids in the Kitchen

Portage County Nutrition Educator, Penny Schmitt, teamed up with Sara Grant, social worker with Stevens Point Schools, to provide a “Kids in the Kitchen” event. Parents attended a short class that focused on best practices when feeding kids and raising a healthy eater. After the class the kids joined their parents and together they prepared a healthy side dish, Three Sister Salad.

The families enjoyed the class, and many parents



were surprised at the willingness of the kids to try new foods. One girl said she never had raw zucchini before, but maybe her taste buds had changes because she loved it! When one of the moms was leaving, she said this class was such a good idea and she and her children learned a lot.



## Connect With Us



Thalia Mauer  
Nutrition Educator  
Clark County.



Julia Perock  
Nutrition Educator  
Marathon County.



Penny Schmitt  
Nutrition Educator  
Portage County.



Hannah Wendels Scott  
Nutrition Educator  
Wood County.



Mallory McGivern  
FoodWise Program  
Administrator



Michelle Van Krey  
Healthy Communities  
Coordinator



**UW-MADISON EXTENSION**

**Statewide Program Resources**  
UW Madison Division of Extension FoodWise

Como empleador que brinda igualdad de oportunidades en empleo y acción afirmativa (EEO/AA, por sus siglas en inglés), la University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension, proporciona igualdad de oportunidades en el empleo y en sus programas, incluyendo los requisitos del Título VI, Título IX, y de la ley federal para personas con discapacidades en los Estados Unidos (ADA, por sus siglas en inglés) y los requisitos de la Section 504 del Rehabilitation Act.

Tus Tswv Hauj Lwm Ntawm (EEO/AA), ntawm lub Tsev Kawm Ntawv Qib Siab (University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension) pab rau kev ncaj nceestxog kev hauj lwm thiab kev pab cuam, xws li nyob rau hauv Title VI, Title IX, thiab ntawm tsab cai Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) yuav tsum kom muaj thiab Feem 504 ntawm the Tsoj Cai Kev Pab Rov Tsim Kho Uas Tau Teev Tseg

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