

## Mission Statement

The Purpose to which we commit...

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

## Introduction

Fond du Lac County UW-Extension works with individuals of all ages, local organizations, families, and businesses. We teach at farms, schools, and public meetings. Funded by the county, state, and federal governments, we empower area residents to make better, more informed decisions and become more self-sufficient in their lives. We serve area residents knowing they will learn and give back to the community. Thank you for your support which has allowed us to accomplish the 2013 impacts detailed in this report. We look forward to another year of working together.

## Preserving Foods Safely for Healthy Eating Year-Round

135 Fond du Lac County residents were taught up-to-date, research-based information on safe, quality food preservation. This information was provided through the following programming:

- **Food Preservation Workshops.** Six workshops were offered throughout the beginning of June to the end of August. The topics included: making jams/jellies, canning fruits and vegetables, canning tomatoes

- **The Wisconsin Safe Food Preservation Series**, by Barbara Ingham (UW-Extension food safety specialist.) This series is available at the main UW-Extension office year-round and includes basic canning information and recipes on: making jams & jellies, canning salsa safely, homemade pickles and relishes, tomatoes: tart & tasty, canning fruits safely, canning vegetables safely, canning meat safely, and

**"I plan to share this information with children, grandchildren and friends. I purchased the recipe books for my family members."** - Sue

and salsa, making pickles, drying foods and successfully storing garden produce. Although the peak of the food preservation season has ended, workshops will continue through the rest of the year. Future sessions include, but are not limited to: preserving meat, food safety during the holidays, and planning a successful gardening year.

- **Dial Gauge Canner Testing:** The UW-Extension office has a master dial gauge that tests dial gauge canners for accuracy.

freezing fruits and vegetables. These publications are sold at the main office of the UW-Extension desk year-round.

- **Phone, email, mail and in person assistance** to answer community members' food preservation/food safety questions.

Of those that participated in an evaluation of the food preservation programming, 81% said that they either "agree" or "strongly agree" with the following statement: *I will contact the UW-Extension office if I have questions about safely preserving food at home.*



**"I anticipate that I will now be preserving jams and jellies in the future. I purchased the books to share with others."** - Tracy

## Introducing 4-H to Latino Youth & Families

Hispanic youth comprise one of the fastest growing groups in Fond du Lac County. This dramatic growth trend of the last ten years is prompting UW-Extension to better extend its educational programs to this unique and burgeoning demographic.

Since April 2012, UW-Extension staff have been designing and performing direct programming for approximately 24 Latino youth at Sacred Heart School. An essential objective of this work with Latino youth and families has been to introduce them to 4-H in a way that responds to their cultural traditions, beliefs, and values. Educational activities have emphasized life skills such as healthy lifestyle choices, cooperation, communication, social skills, sharing, and teamwork.

After months of educational programming, Latino parents are beginning to demonstrate a better understanding of 4-H, and youth are beginning to identify with 4-H.



**"I learned about life skills and why they are important"**

- Latino Youth Participant



A poster designed and hand painted by Latino youth displaying "Jóvenes Soñadores (Young Dreamers)" the name they chose for their 4-H club.

## Teens Plan and Travel to Learn about Community Service



4-H members made 18 pans of bars and delivered them to soldiers at Fort Knox KY

**"Sometimes, you have to do things that you're not comfortable with and take a deep breath and do it. You can either step back and stay afraid, or you can jump into excitement."** - Emilie Kamphuis, Brandon Tanagers 4-H

Older 4-H teens expressed interest in wanting a new leadership experience and together developed a program called New Horizons culminating in a week long experience in Kentucky. Youth applied and were interviewed for this community service opportunity. The program, for members in grades 8-12 had goals of leadership and skill development, community service, and understanding of others. From November 2012 to June 2013, ten youth and 2 adults held planning meetings. During these sessions youth set agendas, facilitated discussion, took minutes, led icebreakers, and developed an agreement of how to work together.

This cooperation resulted in decisions about where to travel, how to get there, where to stay, what service projects to do, how to connect with local groups, and what educational stops to make during the week. They also decided what funds would be needed, and how to raise them, including writing grants.

While in Kentucky, youth did two days of service projects with a church and soldiers and had leadership training with local 4-H teens. As a result of this experience, youth increased their understanding of the impact of service efforts. Youth experienced working with a diverse group with one youth saying he learned to use each other's different strengths so the team can be strong. Evaluations indicated all participants developed skills in planning and organizing, responsibility, cooperation, decision-making, and communication.

**"I stepped out of my comfort zone and experienced something I would have never done if I didn't go to Kentucky."** - Emily Franke, Green Valley 4-H

## Youth Learn the Value of Community Volunteering

Nineteen middle school youth participated in Youth in Action Leadership Week to become familiar with important issues in their community as well as the organizations that exist to address them. One activity engaged youth in preparing a meal for residents of the Solutions Center, the only homeless and domestic abuse shelter in Fond du Lac. Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program (WNEP) staff partnered with the Solutions Center to offer this service opportunity. Another project connected youth with elderly clients of the All About Life Rehabilitation Center, many of whom have limited social interaction in their daily lives.

Youth participating in the experience expressed a greater ethical obligation to volunteer after learning about the people in their community who are struggling with homelessness and domestic abuse. In evaluations, all 19 reported that their volunteering experience had been positive. Eighteen affirmed that they would like to volunteer at a similar service site in the future. This annual program is a collaboration among the Volunteer Center of Fond du Lac County, UW-Extension, the Boys and Girls Club, and the Fond du Lac Public Library.

After participating in Youth in Action Leadership Week, volunteers commented that they had learned:

- “The Solutions Center is really important and should be supported.”
- “Making people smile makes me smile.”
- “Volunteering is helping the community.”



## Improving Access and Productivity in Community Gardens

For many years, UW-Extension has managed the Community Gardens located at the corner of Grove Street and Pioneer Road (East Frontage Road along Hwy 41). Garden plot sizes include 20 x 20 feet (\$20), 20 x 40 feet (\$25), 20 x 80 feet (\$35). Cost covers initial plot tilling, soil amendments and water. Gardeners provide the tools, seeds, and labor. A demonstration area on site helps the inexperienced gardener get ideas.

This year, UW-Extension responded to the community gardeners' need for a better watering infrastructure at the gardens. Plans are underway for a new garden water system running along the north edge of the garden area.

To better serve the numerous Spanish-speaking gardeners, a Spanish translation for both the registration form and the garden rules has been completed. This will make it easier for gardeners to understand the guidelines.

As in past years, Fond du Lac Co. Master Gardener Volunteers completed the final harvest and delivered all produce to local food pantries.



## Youth Grow and Cook Healthy Produce

Throughout the spring and summer, 50 children from the Boys and Girls Club attended UW-Extension's Junior Master Gardener program. With the help of several Master Gardener Volunteers, youth planned, planted, cared for and harvested vegetables throughout the growing

season. Participants also took a field trip to the herb garden at Free Spirit Riders and Produce with a Purpose Farm. For community service, the children picked flowers from their garden and made arrangements for nursing home table center pieces, delivered extra produce to

**"I learned that gardening is hard work."** - Lisa

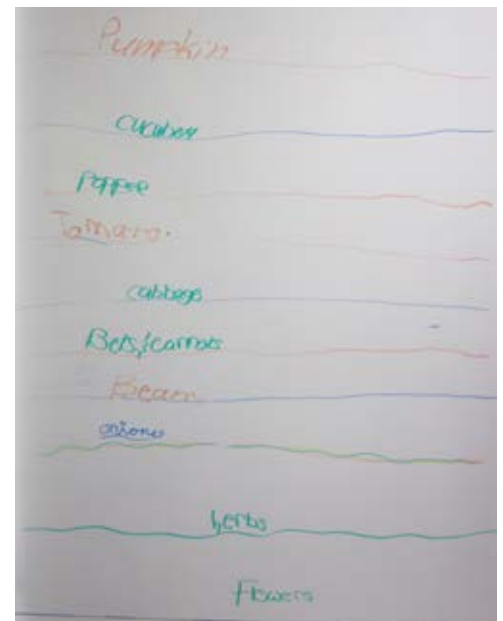


local food pantries, and cooked a healthy meal for their families. The program culminated with a Harvest Celebration meal at which each youth received a cookbook of healthy recipes and a certificate of completion.

The Junior Master Gardener (JMG) program, a collaborative effort between the Master Gardener program and the Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program (WNEP), is a youth gardening program for children ages 8 to 19 years old in Fond du Lac County.



**"My favorite thing was eating the plants."** - Brad



**"I learned how to eat different foods, like cabbage, dill, broccoli and swiss chard."** - Kaliya

## Becoming a Smarter Renter

The largest monthly expenses families have are related to housing costs. Over 28% of housing are rental units in Fond du Lac County, and the median rent in 11,307 occupied units is \$674.00 per month. Rent Smart training provides practical skills to help people look for, acquire and keep rental housing, emphasizing tenant and landlord responsibilities and the advantages gained from viewing the landlord-tenant relationship as mutually beneficial.

This year, 105 individuals participated in Rent Smart trainings. Fond du Lac Housing Authority, Legal Action, and Fair Housing of Northeast Wisconsin

**“I learned how to find a place to live, how to budget properly and know my and the landlords rights.”**

- Rent Smart Participant

**“I learned how important communication is with your landlord.”** - Rent Smart Participant

**“I heard [Rent Smart] was a very helpful workshop for people like me who have had an eviction and other issues, that’s why I came.”** - Rent Smart Participant

agencies were featured speakers at each training. Rent Smart training participants reported an increased understanding of how landlords review credit reports, how to calculate income and expenses in order to estimate how much rent is affordable, and the importance of completing a rental condition checklist when renting an apartment. Participants also noted an increased confidence in identifying important provisions in a rental agreement. Since 2005, 1002 individuals have received the Rent Smart Certificate of Completion for attending the 6 hour training.



## “Going Solo” in Business



**“This has been a real stretch for me... I appreciate everyone making me think totally differently.”** - Pat

**“[This class is] giving me a lot of resources that are free...this was a really good starting point. I’m really glad I came.”** - Tanisha

Starting a business can be both appealing and challenging. This year, 14 hopeful entrepreneurs learned the basics of starting a business during the five-week “Going Solo” workshop series. Each week participants shared business ideas with each other, practiced key business skills, and met experts from the Fond du Lac County Economic Development Corporation, ADVOCAP, UW-Oshkosh Small Business Development Center, and Moraine Park Technical College who can assist them further.

Participants, most of whom were African-American, Latino, and women, reported that the course increased their motivation to continue their business planning, their awareness of local organizations and resources, and their confidence in receiving quality information from these organizations. UW-Extension will follow up with participants in coming months to monitor their progress and offer another workshop series in 2014.

## Calculating the Costs of Raising Heifers

The cost of raising heifers as replacements for adult milking cows represents 20 to 25 percent of the total cost of milk production. It is a major component in making a dairy operation profitable, yet sometimes is neglected as a profit center for the farm since no direct income is generated by the replacement herd. Since 1998, UW-Extension has periodically surveyed Wisconsin farms to determine the costs associated with raising calves and heifers and to benchmark labor efficiencies.

Thirty-four herds were surveyed for the 2013 Intuitive Cost of Production in Raising Dairy Replacements report. Three were located in Fond du Lac County. The field survey indicated the cost to raise a calf from birth to the time she moved to group housing (average 68.6 days) was \$376, or \$5.34 per day. For heifers (time moved to group housing to freshening or returned to producer), the cost was \$3.04 per heifer per day.

The field survey serves as a guide or benchmark for heifer growers and

**“...I had a meeting this morning with (the producer) and their nutritionist. They didn’t dispute any numbers or have any other recommendations to lower costs per day. We agreed upon \$2.75 per head per day but instead of raising all their heifers, they will be cutting back to only the number they need. I will be better off raising only 200 heifers at \$2.75 than I would have been at 270 heifers at \$2.05. The meeting went well and all agreed that the costs were high but all justified. I wanted to thank you again for all your time and help with this matter.”**

– Heifer grower

producers in Wisconsin as they determine their cost of production or look for areas to refine costs.

For more information regarding the 2013 ICPA Project, please visit <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/heifermgmt/>.



## Farmers Benefit from New Alfalfa Data That Improves Yields

Alfalfa serves as a primary forage source for many Wisconsin dairy operations. Until recently, little was known about how alfalfa was performing on Wisconsin farms. Over a seven year period, data collected from the Fond du Lac County

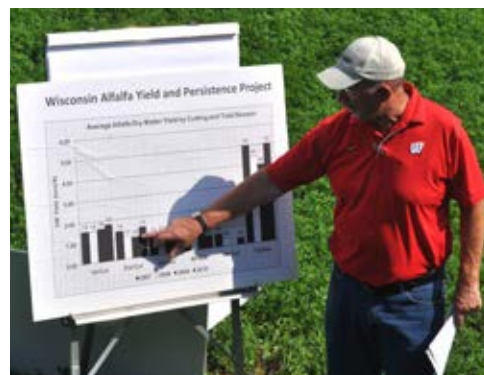
UW-Extension initiated Alfalfa Yield and Persistence Program has proved useful to participating farmers, university researchers, and industry. The data has been used by machinery manufactures, the USDA Farm Service Agency, and the Midwest Forage Association as part of an effort to change the methodology by which USDA survey alfalfa yields are calculated.



**“This is really some useful data for the industry... nice job to Extension!”**

- a prominent Wisconsin dairy nutrition consultant

Since 2007, alfalfa production data has been gathered from 49 different fields scattered across eleven counties. The study objectives were to verify yield and forage quality, and to quantify decreases in productivity of alfalfa fields as they age. At each harvest, weights and forage quality samples are obtained. Production was tracked annually and analyzed for statewide trends.



## New Master Gardeners Digging In

Twelve individuals completed an intense 12 week, 36 hour Master Gardener training on how to successfully grow and maintain vegetables, flowers, landscape plants, trees, turf, and native species. Trainees learned how to diagnose horticultural problems and recommend solutions. Each participant took a written test in order to become active members in the Fond du Lac County Master Gardener Volunteer Association.

The Master Gardener Volunteer Association is a group of committed individuals with a passion for horticulture, education, and public service. Members are required to maintain an annual commitment of 24 hours of community volunteer time and 10 hours of continuing education. They maintain a number of the gardens on the UW-Fond du Lac campus and various gardens in the community. They also work on garden projects at an

increasing number of elementary schools and answer many of the horticultural questions that come into the UW Extension office. Their commitment to the community and UW-Extension resulted in nearly 5000 hours of volunteer service provided in 2013.



**“As a Master Gardener I always get back more than I give, so I guess I’m selfish!”**

## Well Water Sampling Protects Health of Rural Residents

Rural drinking water quality can change frequently and is not usually monitored regularly. Because of this, water quality experts recommend that residents sample well water every year. The Towns of Oakfield, Fond du Lac, and Osceola collaborated with UW-Extension to sample about 150 drinking water wells. Coliform bacteria, nitrate, and arsenic, three of the most common problems, were found minimally or not at all in Fond du Lac and Oakfield. Arsenic was slightly higher than the state average in Osceola but at a safe level. Additionally in Osceola a few wells had nitrates and the herbicide atrazine at a level of some concern, but levels of coliform bacteria were acceptable. Residents at the Q&A session with a groundwater specialist showed strong interest in preserving their water quality and picked up materials on other topics such as emerald ash borer and radon testing.

More information on well water sampling options, a video of how to take a water sample, and the full results of the tests are at <http://fonddulac.uwex.edu>.



Town of Oakfield Clerk Alex Strupp discusses water quality with UW-Extension groundwater specialist Kevin Masarik.



University of Wisconsin-Extension  
Fond du Lac County

### Current Staff

- Carmelo Dávila, *Bilingual 4-H Youth Development Assistant*
- Tina Engelhardt, *Program Assistant*
- Miguel Gonzales, *Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA)*
- Ann Kaiser, *Program Assistant*
- Gloria Kelroy, *Program Assistant*
- Tina Kohlman, *Dairy and Livestock Agent*
- Amanda Miller, *WNEP Coordinator and Family Living Educator*
- Pamela Nelson, *WNEP Educator*
- Noreen O'Brien, *Community, Natural Resource, and Economic Development Educator Special Assignment*
- Patty Percy, *Community Garden Coordinator*
- Mike Rankin, *Crops and Soils Agent*
- Denise Retzleff, *4-H Youth Development Educator and Co-Department Head*
- Kristine Schaeffer, *WNEP Educator*
- Sue Siegesmund, *Program Assistant (retired Dec. 2013)*
- Michelle Tidemann, *Family Living Educator and Co-Department Head*
- Diana Hammer Tscheschlok, *Community, Natural Resource, and Economic Development Educator*
- Sharon Woolhether, *WNEP Educator*