



**Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
WASHINGTON COUNTY



# **ANNUAL REPORT**

## **2023**

Presented in Spring 2024

**University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension Washington County**

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# WASHINGTON COUNTY EXTENSION: CHANGING LIVES AND COMMUNITIES

## WE ARE THE WISCONSIN IDEA

UW-Madison Extension's outreach creates key connection points for families, communities, businesses, non-profit organizations, government, and more. We support local volunteers and leaders to take action and serve as role models in their communities, and we make sure Wisconsinites have the latest research, best practices, and educational opportunities.

## THE WISCONSIN IDEA IN ACTION:

### PROMOTING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

The Human Development & Relationships program provides the tools Wisconsinites need to thrive as well-rounded, capable individuals and families. We support families in caring for each other in ways that promote growth and understanding. Our programs promote aging-friendly communities, coach effective parents and help families put technology, mindfulness and financial awareness to use.

### BUILDING CAPACITY IN COMMUNITIES

The Extension Community Development program provides educational programming to assist leaders, communities, and organizations realize their fullest potential. We work with communities to build the vitality that enhances their quality of life and enriches the lives of their residents. We educate in leadership development, organizational development, community economic development, local government education and much more. In short, the Community Development Institute plants and cultivates the seeds for thriving communities and organizations.

### SUPPORTING WISCONSIN'S AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

Supporting Wisconsin's agriculture industry: Whether on the farm or in the field, we're on the front lines of modern agriculture, helping producers build stronger and more productive food systems. From managing livestock to crops to strategic financial planning for farms, our educators and researchers help solve challenges that Wisconsin producers face.

### SUPPORTING POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The Extension Positive Youth Development program prepares the youth of today to become the effective, empathetic adults of tomorrow. Our research-based youth enrichment programs build youth and adult capacity and partnerships that help both sides grow. 4-H clubs, camps and afterschool programs give young people the hands-on experiences they need to develop an understanding of themselves and the world.

In 2023 Washington County  
Extension Educators



worked with

**94**  
Partners



facilitated

**178**  
Programs



educated

**6,461**  
Contacts



coordinated

**244**  
Volunteers

# Extension Strategic Goals 2023–2028



Committed to improvement: Our 2023-2028 Strategic Goals are informed by our partners, participants, faculty, and staff to ensure we're providing needed, efficient services to all of Wisconsin.



### Connecting People and Catalyzing Relationships

- Authentically connect with communities and partners to develop a shared commitment to our work together
- Authentically connect with communities and partners to identify opportunities and priorities
- Communicate the value of Extension



### Supporting Our People

- Invest in career development and employee well-being
- Create clear and mindful communications
- Develop a mutual understanding of policy
- Align operations systems to support Extension outreach goals



### Fostering Growth

- Build our capacity to do our work through funding, positions, and resources
- Invest in innovation and build structures to support and align cross-programmatic work and address emerging issues



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# AGRICULTURE CROPS

UW Madison Division of Extension Regional Crops Educator Liz Gartman joined the Washington County team in May 2023. Liz engaged in a needs assessment in the region (Washington, Sheboygan, Ozaukee & Fond du Lac counties) by connecting to potential partners including agriculture producers, county land and water departments, government agency staff including NRCS and FSA, ag lenders, animal nutritionists, crop consultants, and non-profit groups engaged in soil health and water quality. She has also built relationships with the producer-led watershed groups and forage councils who focus on crop production in the region. This assessment allowed Liz to gain an understanding of the challenges facing these crop growers and will inform future programming.



Liz has established a partnership with the Cedar Creek Farmers producer led group and planned a Regional Ag Day at the Washington Co. Fair Park that will be held on February 29, 2024. A collaboration between Extension and the group will give producers a chance to share what is working on their farm combined with research backed solutions provided by Extension educators.

The extreme dry weather in the Summer 2023 allowed Extension to provide real time management support to crop producers via a variety of options. Liz drew together weekly crop management e-mail updates that provided upcoming program information, crop management recommendations, local corn silage dry down results and timely harvest tips. This effort will continue in 2024 with the development of a Regional Ag Newsletter. Liz has also been engaged with the statewide webinar series (Badger Crop Connect & Focus on Forage) and is a key member of the team updating forage fact sheets to better support producers focused on making high quality dairy feed. Writing popular press articles, topic hub posts and engaging in media interviews are all ways Liz can share her programming and UW research with producers in the region and across the state.



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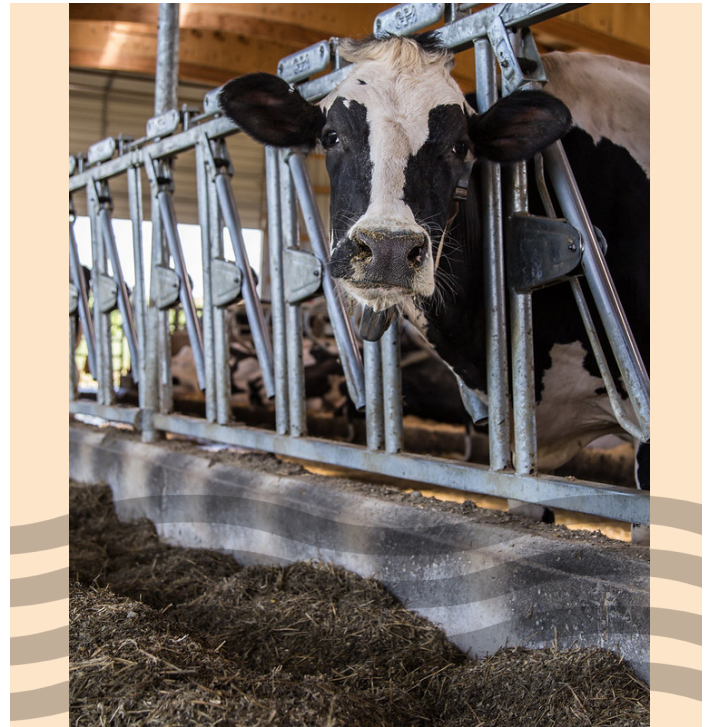
# AGRICULTURE

## DAIRY

Producing food to feed the world is facing unprecedented challenges. From the lingering impacts of the COVID pandemic to the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect the environment, immediate action is needed to build a resilient food system. Dairy farmers recognize they have a responsibility to support a safe, wholesome food product for the consumer.

Dairy farmers care for their land, and are working toward the US Dairy Net Zero Initiative, to achieve greenhouse gas neutrality by 2050. Key areas of focus are feed production, feed efficiency (enteric methane), manure processing and handling, and energy. Many practices on the farm, especially regarding animal care can have an impact directly and indirectly on greenhouse gas emissions.

Regional Extension Dairy Educator Tina Kohlman's outreach efforts in 2023 focused on helping farmers, employees, and agribusiness professionals learn the latest research and best management practices related to feed efficiency and manure handling and processes as a way to reduce the cow's methane contribution to the environment. Kohlman helped to develop, organize, and present the bi-annual Midwest Manure Summit, which focused on innovative manure handling processes including recycling nutrients, renewable energy credits, biogas, and reducing manure emissions during agitation and processing. From a feed efficiency perspective, Kohlman presented to individuals how a cow's diet can impact not only the amount of methane produced in her rumen during digestion, but how to balance reduction of methane while maintaining production. Webinars were hosted focusing on reducing heat stress on cows and calves while maximizing energy efficiency. Factsheets, popular press articles, and radio interviews were developed to share resources related to reducing animal stress through proper animal care, and transportation of animals thus improving feed efficiency. Each of these resources are available for our farm families, employees, and agribusiness community through our UW-Madison Extension Dairy Topic Hub at <http://dairy.extension.wisc.edu>.



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# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Extension Community Development Educator Paul Roback responds to requests for assistance from local communities and organizations who want to enhance local decision-making and respond to new challenges and opportunities. Programs are designed and delivered to meet these locally identified needs. The following is a brief overview of 2023 programs.



## Washington County

- Facilitated discussions for the Samaritan Ad-Hoc Committee. Compiled a report and presented findings to the County Board.
- Facilitated discussion at an AG Listening Session and developed a report for the County Executive.
- Facilitated the Total Compensation Focus Group and developed a report for the County Executive's Leadership Team.
- Facilitated discussions at several meetings attended by Chief Elected Officials and Fire Chiefs. Compiled notes for the County Executive
- Collaborated with an Extension Specialist to conduct an AG Industry Supply Chain Study. Reported findings to the Chief Community Development Officer
- Co-taught four Real Colors Staff Development Workshops for 63 county employees.



## Nonprofits

- Strategic Planning facilitation for Just Us of Washington County and the West Bend COLUMNS Scholarship Foundation.
- Board development for the LOVE>hate Project.
- Strategic priority setting for the Kewaskum Library Board.
- Mission and Vision development for the Washington County Mental Health Coalition.
- Real Colors Staff Development Workshops for the Albrecht Free Clinic, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Casa Guadalupe Education Center, Germantown Community Coalition, Leadership Germantown, Leadership West Bend, Senior Citizens Activities, and the West Bend Community Memorial Library.

*"Paul always does a great job of getting to the heart of the matter. Real asset to both the non-profits and coalition work."*

- Strategic Planning Participant



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# COMMUNITY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Kelly came onboard in June of 2023. From August through October 2023, she conducted 15 stakeholder interviews with Washington County youth-serving organizations to gain an understanding of the needs of youth in Washington County. The assessment will help create strategies with community partners and research-based programming to more effectively serve the youth.

## Education to Improve Youth's Life Skills and Leadership

Kelly has continued the partnership with the West Bend School District by continuing programming with Fair Park and Green Tree Elementary schools. Kelly began co-teaching with Ron (former CYD) and they delivered educational sessions that enhanced schools' efforts in building citizenship among their students. Interactive presentations of 'Problem Solving Skills' and 'Teamwork' are popular within the school and they see the topics as complementary to the school's educational goals.

*Kelly did an amazing job presenting and leading at our annual kindness retreat. I have gotten such positive feedback on the retreat from both students and adults- it really felt and was a great day!*

- West Bend School Counselor

Fair Park School has requested Kelly to co-coordinate and present at their retreat focusing on leadership skills called 'Kindness Camp'. Green Tree school also coordinated with Kelly and Ron to bring the Kindness Retreat to their 4th graders. Retreats focus on: showcasing Wash. Co. nonprofits; interactive games that teach teamwork; and discussions focusing on community engagement. She has added two follow-up visits later in the school year that reinforce the learning objectives of those retreats. Both schools have asked Kelly for her continued involvement with classroom presentations and Kindness Retreats next year. As a result, Decorah Elementary has also reached out for Kelly to come to present the workshops as well as co-coordinate a kindness retreat next school year.

## Youth/Adult Partnerships & Civic Engagement

Kelly has year-round engagement with Germantown Youth Futures, a non-profit in Germantown. Kelly co-leads the meetings of the Germantown Youth Futures Activities Committee, which includes youth in 6-12 grade in the Germantown School district. Their mission is to plan fun activities for middle and high school students as an alternative to drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. They also try to prevent youth violence, help our youth make informed decisions, and volunteer their time to fundraise for family-friendly, positive activities and programs in the community. This helps build positive youth assets, leadership skills and offers an opportunity to share their unique perspectives and youth voice in planning programs and events.

**Kelly's position is shared between Washington and Fond du Lac Counties.**



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# HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND RELATIONSHIPS

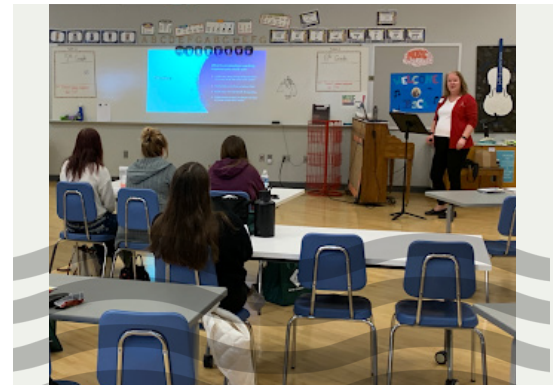
## Re-establishing Washington County Childcare Director Network

Carol and Community Development Educator Paul Roback were approached by the CEO of the Kettle Moraine YMCA and the Washington County Economic Support Supervisor to assist in creating an opportunity to discuss observed challenges in the local childcare industry. As a result, a summit for childcare directors in Washington County was convened. Participants identified a long-term goal to improve teacher retention. Retention impacts the availability of spaces for children, which affects parents' ability to work outside of the home. Participants indicated a need for collegial support and an organized space to network.

In response, Carol collaborated with the KMYMCA childcare director, distributing a needs assessment survey to Washington County childcare centers. From the 17 responses, directors indicated a need to support each other in solving challenging problems and to create opportunities to learn from each other. Topics respondents felt would be most beneficial to discuss include licensing rules, continuing education, community resources for families, and staffing issues. The first childcare director meeting was held in August.

## Providing Early Childhood Educator Professional Development

Carol, as chairperson of the Washington County Childcare and Education, coordinated a 4 hour Registry approved Childcare Conference for childcare professionals in March. Over 80 attendees participated in this professional development in West Bend. A 4C for Families consultant provided the opening session on Today's Challenging Behaviors. Participants chose from these breakout session topics: rethinking power and control, positive social and emotional learning in special education, parent meeting plans and emotion coaching taught by Carol.



### Conference quote:

*I learned so much and can't wait to use these strategies in my classroom. Job well done.*

After completing the post-survey (n = 75), 66% of participants felt more confident and 12% felt much more confident in applying strategies for challenging behaviors of children in their classrooms. Participants identified action steps to apply information learned at the conference. For example, "talking through emotions with children" and "identify triggers to deescalate the behavior."

Carol also co-developed the statewide ECE focus group protocol through funding from a Dean's Innovation Grant. Washington County hosted one of five focus groups.



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Ron Jakubisin started as the full-time 4-H Educator on Feb.1, 2023. His primary responsibilities include 4-H club oversight, youth leadership development, adult volunteer oversight for sustainability, growth and training. There are 16 clubs, over 20 countywide projects, the Leaders Association Board and the Trust Fund Advisory Board which fall under the scope of his oversight. In 2023, there were 615 youth enrolled in 4-H and 244 adult volunteers.



Administratively, the chartered clubs, projects and countywide 4-H entities annually turn in an Annual Financial Report which is reviewed by the 4-H Educator and reported to the WI 4-H State Office for IRS reporting purposes. All clubs also turn in a Charter document annually identifying leadership, treasurer, club goals and activities. The 4-H Educator, as the chartering authority, reviews and approves Charters and depending on the individual Club, may provide guidance based on their activities. For example, the 4-H Educator would provide safety policies for a high-risk activity like a roadside clean-up which a club may do as part of their community service.



Some highlights for Ron's 'year one' include visiting the 16 clubs and numerous projects to begin relationship building as well as assessing clubs for youth education and/or volunteer training needs. He engaged regularly in committees such as the Achievement & Recognition Committee, Trust Fund Advisory Board, Leaders Association Board, Camp Planning Committee, & Awards Night Committee. The 4-H

Educator engaged with 4-H youth through camp counselor training, club officer training, 4-H Open House, 'Going to the Fair' workshop, the 4-H Action/Promotion table at the Fair, club visits and attending Fall Forum with the youth/adult delegates from Washington County. Monthly radio interviews on WIBD radio provided an opportunity for the Educator to bring in 4-H youth to highlight their accomplishments and promote membership to 4-H. Outreach efforts include educational sessions this summer at Boys & Girls Club, public libraries, West Bend Farmers Markets, and at Fall open house/parent nights at numerous elementary schools.

*Ron is an exceptional 4-H Educator who communicates effectively with both youth members and adult volunteers. He shows great leadership by researching, facilitating and actively participating in meetings and events.*

- President/Wash Co. 4-H Leaders Association Board



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