



Agriculture



If it happens on a farm or in a field, the Extension Institute of Agriculture works with you to achieve better results. Our innovative dairy management programs range from genetics to farm and business management. Extension researchers work hand-in-hand with row crop, forage and fresh produce growers to provide best practices for every aspect of the growing phase. We also advise communities on using sustainable practices to create inviting spaces free from invasive species.

Dairy | Manuel Peña, Regional Dairy Educator

A train the trainer safety toolbox program for farm operations, safety consultants, educators, and instructors where they find materials to lead or support agricultural safety training by following an interactive guide and adult-learning principles to encourage participation, ownership, and responsibility, while encouraging a Safety Culture. (Manuel Pena)

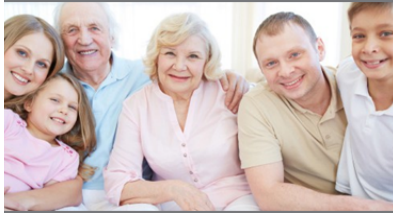
- This program was developed in response to feedback from dairy producers who expressed a need for practical, on-farm training to reduce injuries and accidents and maximize animal performance. In response, we designed this effort to deliver targeted, farm-based education focused on real-world scenarios and immediate application, with the goal of improving worker safety, animal welfare and profitability. The bilingual Forward Farm Safety Toolbox is based on solid research and is designed to help agricultural operations create a strong safety culture. This foundation supports long-lasting behavior changes and ongoing leadership support for safety. The toolbox includes a hands-on training tools that helps farms, consultants, and instructors lead training sessions using a 20-40-40 model: 20% learning, 40% exploring, and 40% solving. This approach makes safety training more interactive than traditional presentations. Using adult-learning principles, it encourages participants to take ownership and responsibility. The added learning materials further support a workplace where safe behaviors become part of everyday farm life. This whole approach was tested on a pilot session to get feedback from the people who would be using it. Through pilot testing with farmers, participants reported improved understanding of workplace risks and identified specific changes they could implement immediately, such as safer animal handling, and tractor safety practices and clearer communication protocols among employees. Feedback from the pilot also helped refine the training to better align with different farm conditions, increasing its relevance and usability. This work contributes to broader societal goals by promoting safer agricultural workplaces, reducing the risk of injury, and supporting the well-being of farm employees.



"I will use it to train my workers" - Fond du Lac Farm Managers



Community Development



Community Development 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, food systems, 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.

Kirtis Orendorff, Community Development Educator

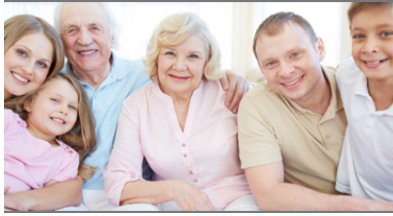
Kirtis Orendorff has continued outreach efforts throughout Sheboygan County since starting his role in March 2026, including attending 10 commission and board meetings among various municipalities. Attendance of these meetings has allowed Kirtis to network with the local government officials he will be working with in the future, as well as be available for technical assistance when the need arises. For example, Kirtis has provided assistance to the village of Howards Grove in developing their public input survey for their upcoming 2027 Comprehensive Plan update.

With assistance from PYD, Kirtis is helping to organize a Community Needs Forum for Sheboygan County. The goal of this forum is to gather officials from the 28 different municipalities as well as county officials to understand what pressing issues the county is facing as a whole in the sphere of local government. With this information, Kirtis can start developing programming, materials, and research to best benefit the municipalities in the county.

Kirtis has also had the opportunity to meet with many other Extension educators across the state through one on one meetings as well as through networking events such as the JCEP Annual Conference in Eau Claire. This outreach has empowered Kirtis to reach out to the network of knowledgeable professionals to better understand how to best leverage this position for the betterment of communities within the county.



Human Development and Relationships



The Extension Institute of Human Development & Relationships 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.

Truong Tran, Human Development & Relationship Educator

A monthly parenting program for fathers where participants learn skills to build their children's social and emotional learning. This series is designed to improve understanding of positive parenting practices, while providing social connections for fathers and father figures. (Pattie Carroll, Adam Trunzo, Amanda Griswold, Beverly Doll, Bob Wiegel, Heidi Ungrodt, Luisa Gerasimo, Mary Campbell Wood, Renee Koenig, Truong Tran)

- Despite recent advances in research on fathers' roles and unique contributions within families, fathers remain underserved in family-based programming (Panter-Brick et al., 2014). This is due to barriers originating from community partners, cultural norms, legal structures, and fathers' abilities or desires to participate. Yet, fathers' contributions to child and family well-being are critical. Children with more engaged fathers exhibit higher academic achievement, better psychological outcomes, and fewer challenging or delinquent behaviors (e.g., Allen and Lo, 2012; Lee and Schoppe-Sullivan, 2017). Fathers' engagement is particularly vital for vulnerable children, such as those from single-parent and low-income households (e.g., Choi and Pyun, 2014). After data analysis from a statewide fatherhood needs assessment, extension faculty, specialists and educators learned that fathers are interested in direct parenting education and opportunities to connect with and learn from other fathers. As a response a team created the Focus on Fathers parenting program.



Positive Youth Development



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

4-H | Sarah Feider, 4-H Program Educator

A hands-on garden-based learning project for 4-H youth, where participants planted seeds, and contributed to designing and preparing a themed garden inspired by Harvey Potter’s Balloon Farm to build responsibility, teamwork, and a connection to their community. (Sarah Feider)

- Youth need opportunities to build practical skills and feel connected to their communities through meaningful contributions. This effort responded to that need by creating a hands-on, collaborative project that allows youth to learn, create, and participate in a public-facing community experience. In response to this need, a hands-on, garden-based learning experience was developed for 4-H youth. Youth engaged in planting and caring for seeds in a greenhouse setting, and will participate in painting, preparing, and installing a themed garden space inspired by Harvey Potter’s Balloon Farm, culminating in a public opening event. This effort is helping youth build life skills such as responsibility, teamwork, and communication while engaging in meaningful, hands-on work. By contributing to a public garden space, youth are playing an active role in enhancing community resources, supporting informal education, and demonstrating the broader value of youth contributions to community development.



A 4-H Project Day for youth, ages 5-17, where participants took part in hands-on projects to learn or enhance a skill. (Sarah Feider)

- Many of our leaders and parents have indicated that they do not have the capacity or skill to teach certain projects/skills to their youth. To allow for learning or enhancing new skills, several projects were set up for youth to participate in based upon their interest. Many youth reported positive experiences with the projects they participated in. The project day also allowed older youth to teach younger youth. Of those who were surveyed, 93% of participants indicated their sessions were fun and engaging.



One youth indicated, "I liked this session of Project Day because there were new things for me to try."



A sparks program for Middle School and High School students where students engaged in various activities throughout the school year to practice something new to them. Through this program, students will have greater implications on their intellectual, social, and emotional self. (Sarah Feider)

- The guidance counselor reached out to Sarah to engage the youth at the school in areas that they were not necessarily familiar with. 4-H was a program that was unfamiliar to all students. In this particular school, the rural students do not or cannot participate in after school activities. Sarah Feider, 4-H Program Educator, partnered with the Sheboygan Area School District to bring 4-H and experimental learning to a new audience. Students engaged in activities through centering youth in the community, building belonging, and learning together - 4-H Core Values.



“Sarah, our 4-H representative, comes into our high school and always makes things more fun. She is really cool and nice, and she makes everyone feel comfortable trying new things. My favorite activities we’ve done with Sarah this year were cooking, painting, and wood burning. I liked cooking because we got to make something together and try new foods. Painting was fun because we could be creative and express ourselves. Wood burning was also really interesting and different from anything I’ve done before. Overall, Sarah makes 4-H something I look forward to.”

- 11th grade student

The 4-H program is an outstanding fit for our students and staff, and Sarah’s role in its success cannot be overstated. She serves some of the most underserved students in our district with unwavering dedication, inclusiveness, and compassion. Her ability to connect with students, adapt to their needs, and create enriching learning experiences makes her impact both significant and lasting.

All of the staff and students at CHANGE Academy are truly grateful for Sarah and the 4-H program she brings to our school. Her work makes a meaningful difference in the lives of our students, and we are fortunate to have her as part of our community.

- Mr. Peters

Positive Youth Development | Diana Hammer, Youth Development Educator

Three workshops for teens in custody that taught social emotional skills through choice and fun.

Noticing that only one other group is providing activities for teens in detention, Diana saw an opportunity to bring positive youth development activities to a new audience. She researched educational responses for reducing recidivism among youth in the legal system. Self-efficacy – the sense that a teen can direct their own path and make their own choices – is a key skill, along with self-control, in reducing repeat offenses (Weber et al., 2025)

Diana planned activities that embedded practice in self-efficacy and visited Juvenile Detention three times this month, on days when there was no school.



Six young people chose to participate in the 1.5-hour activities which included paper folding (patience and attention to detail), collages (self-identity), following a recipe to make snacks (attention to detail, cooking as a life skill), and making slime to use as a fiddle toy (following directions in order, emotional regulation). Diana also discussed emotional regulation strategies with the teens, focusing on things they could do while in custody to soothe strong feelings. A theme she emphasized in each interaction was that their current legal situation is not the whole of who they are.

Value Added -*Sheboygan County Community members actively engage in UW -Madison Extension Regional and Statewide Program offerings. Highlights of these programs are shared in this section of the report.*

Natural Resources

Authors: Esther Stewart, Kevin Erb, Maranda Miller

Maps showing the elevation and thickness of the Maquoketa Group aquitard, including its internal layers, across a multi-county area in eastern Wisconsin. Users include regional land use planners, water managers, environmental engineers, researchers, and private citizens interested in the extent and thickness of this important regional aquitard. Provides unbiased information about the region's geology and hydrogeology to inform decision making. (Location type: Geography Served)

Truong Tran <i>Human Development and Relationships Educator</i>	Sarah Feider <i>4-H Youth Educator</i>	Jayna Hintz <i>Area Extension Director</i>
Manuel Peña <i>Regional Dairy Educator</i>	Diana Hammer <i>Positive Youth Development Educator</i>	Emily Lamb <i>Support Staff</i>
Kirtis Orendorff <i>Community Development Educator</i>		Cassi Worster <i>Marketing Specialist</i>

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