Greetings, I am Chris Viau, the new Area Extension Director for Area 10, serving Outagamie, Calumet, Waupaca and Winnebago Counties. As the Area Extension Director I support Extension staff to continue the story of learners and teachers through Extension programs. My role is to provide leadership and management of administrative and staff resources allowing Extension educators to focus on bringing educational programs to the citizens of our communities.

You will notice that there are some color and logo changes that have been made to align with our transition to our new administrative home at UW-Madison. While our colors have changed there is no change in our focus and educational mission. Our work in Extension is done by leveraging volunteers, building partnerships, and bringing the research of the university to the people of the county through our outreach education.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about our Extension story for 2018. We look forward to you being part of the 2019 chapter!

Chris Viau
Area Extension Director
The Outagamie County Master Gardener Association (OCMGA) started in 1999. Over 530 people have been trained since that time, and there are currently 112 certified OCMGA Volunteers for 2019. In 2018 Volunteers reported over 8,700 hours of community service, worth a value of over $209,196.

The OCMGA grew a 50’ x 50’ garden at the Timber Rattlers stadium, as a part of the “Grow a Row for St. Joe’s” campaign, where over 400 pounds of produce grown was donated to St. Joe’s Food Pantry in Appleton.

OCMGA Level 1 students planned, planted, and maintained flower and vegetable gardens at the Extension Outagamie County office. This led to over 45 pounds of produce donated to Homeless Connections in Appleton, an organization dedicated to ending homelessness.

Country Apples Home and Community Education Association members made and donated 1,531 lap quilts and 232 large quilts since the club started. The batting for the quilts was purchased with donations from the Black Creek Advancement Association and Thrivent Financial.

Over the past twenty-one years, Outagamie County Home and Community Education Association has used the Wisconsin Bookworms program to give out 41,640 new Scholastic books to over 6,000 Head Start children in our county. Each year 10 volunteer readers have given over 165 hours to read to 330 children in 17 classrooms, giving every child that book to take home to their family. The donations of many service organizations, foundations and memorials have made it possible to promote literacy in the low-income families of our county.

4-H volunteer hours were collected from 227 adult and 589 youth. Adult volunteers support our programs by assisting the youth members during meetings, projects, trips and other events. All of our volunteer hours, from both adult and youth, are what make up every 4-H program. Adult volunteers support the mental, emotional, physical, and educational growth of our youth. They empower them to reach their full potential in everything they do and encourage them to look for ways to improve the world they are living in, mostly through leadership opportunities and community service.
Information was given to consumers who inquired about the Extension guidelines for pressure canning meats and vegetables, freezing fruits and vegetables and pickling a variety of vegetables. In addition, a workshop was held at Whistler’s Knoll in Hortonville on the Basics of Food Preservation.

Our FoodWIse education programs were able to extend training to refugees on the concepts of nutrition, meal planning and food safety. Bi-monthly classes were held at Forward Service. Topics in 2018 included Food Safety & Storage, Variety and Beverages.

The Youth and Family Educator taught Rent Smart Courses on an approximate bi-monthly basis giving families and individuals the education and tools they need to gain and maintain affordable housing.

Over 35 local farmers and agribusiness professionals met for the 2018 Milk Quality Farm Barn Meeting, offered jointly by Fox Valley Technical College and Extension Outagamie County. Through speakers and farm tours, participants received advice on practices they could add to their operations to gain profitability.

The need to reduce the spreading of herbicide resistant weeds from field to field prompted the Crops, Soils and Horticulture Agent, a member of the North Central Agricultural and Natural Resources Cropping Academy, to research and present findings to Extension Educators nationwide, giving them the information they need to educate farmers in their states.

The Family Living Educator conducted the annual Civil Rights training for county employees working in departments that receive federal funding. Twenty workshops were held September through November and involved over 400 county employees. The workshop included a review of Civil Rights legislation, policies and discussion of improvements respective departments could make to better serve the public.

Agriculture and Horticulture educators taught food production during the annual Conservation Field Days sponsored by the Land Conservation Department. This is a three day event with over 350 fifth and sixth grade students from area schools in attendance.

Taking Care of You is a four part class taught by our Family Living Educators to help participants manage life’s challenges in healthy ways. Classes were taught at various locations throughout the year.
The Hortonville Senior Activities Committee sponsored a Senior Autumn Fest featuring the Outagamie County Veteran’s Services Director and the new Chief of Police for the Village. The event also featured a community resource fair. This is the fourth year that Extension Outagamie County has taken the lead in planning the event with community partners.

Extension Outagamie County and the Wisconsin Beef Council worked together with various auction markets to hold in-person Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) certification workshops for producers who are not able to get certified online. By participating in BQA and adopting BQA production practices, farmers helped answer the call from consumers to produce safe beef raised in a humane manner.

Children Caught in the Middle, a monthly co-parenting class, continues to be co-taught with the Family Court Services Mediators. In 2018 we had 383 parents participate in the program with an impact on 312 children.

Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA) is a quality assurance program for youth. The program focused on food safety, animal well-being and character awareness for youth producing and/or showing livestock. Extension Outagamie County offers in-person YQCA workshops and has reached over 150 youth.

A partnership between Extension Outagamie County and Hortonville Area School District educated students about local farms and the agricultural impact on the community. A group of 30 students was invited to spend an afternoon with area farmers. By raising the awareness of agriculture in the community, we strive to gain appreciation of the value of farmland, its uses, and why we need to protect farmland for our future generations.

Fox Cities Money Smart Week hosted a variety of events in April. The activities included an event for children at The Building for Kids with 975 in attendance. During the course of the week workshops were held for adults on topics that included money management, investments and retirement planning.
Extension Outagamie County

Staff

Amy Beck    Office Assistant
Joan Behle    Office Assistant
Kaitlin Bricco    Horticulture Assistant
Karen Dickrell    Family Living Educator
Christi Gabrilska    FoodWise Nutrition Coordinator*
Sarah Grotjan    Agriculture Extension Educator
Vicki Handschke    Office Assistant
Kevin Jarek    Crops, Soils, and Horticulture Agent
Mia Ljung    Community Development Educator
Ina Montgomery    Program Assistant
Hannah Phillips    FoodWise Healthy Communities Coordinator*
Alicia Schroeder-Haag    4-H Program Coordinator
Chris Viau    Area Extension Director*
MaryBeth Wohlrabe    Positive Youth Development Educator
Becky Zoglman    Education & Communication Specialist

*Serves Calumet, Outagamie, Waupaca and Winnebago Counties

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Craig Moser    County Executive Administrator
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Joy Hagen    County Board Vice Chair

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BJ O’Connor-Schevers    Member
Debbie VanderHeiden    Member

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