



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
MANITOWOC COUNTY



Healthy Choices, Healthy Lives



FoodWise is federally funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). 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.

Who We Serve



1,279

Direct Educational Contacts



427

Total Learners



519

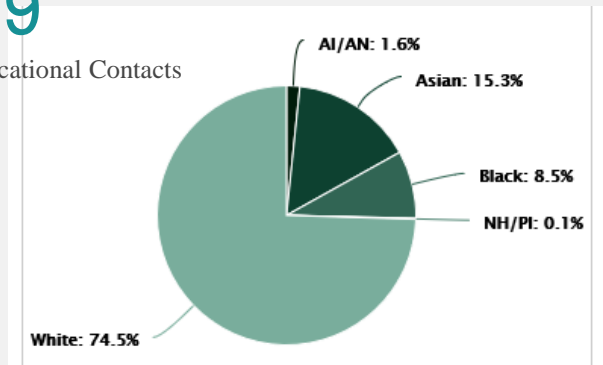
Total Learners

115

Hispanic/Latino

789

Not Hispanic/Latino



Program HIGHLIGHTS

- Helped first graders grow lettuce, spinach, kale, chard, and basil using a grow tower classroom garden
- Taught community activism to teens, empowering them to advocate with their school food service and write a grant so as to include smoothies as a healthy option in their school lunch program.
- Led strength training exercise classes for rural adults with limited income and limited access to physical fitness centers.
- Expanded access to fresh produce at community meal sites by building gardens with community partners.
- Collaborated with partners to provide culturally appropriate senior meals for Hmong elders.

ACHIEVING MORE TOGETHER

UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work – on the farm, in schools and throughout our communities. In Manitowoc County, FoodWise partners with Manitowoc Public Schools, Two Rivers School District, Salvation Army, Peters Pantry, First Presbyterian Community Meals, Painting Pathways Clubhouse, ADRC of the Lakeshore, Catholic Charities, Maribel Community Center, St Peter the Fisherman, Southfield Townhouses, Head Start to help make the healthy choice the easy choice in our communities.



Strong Bodies for All!

Kaila Stencil, Nutrition Educator

Research shows that regular exercise provides many benefits to mature women. Yet only 7% of middle-aged and older women exercise daily.

In fact, regular weight-bearing exercise helps older adults of both genders increase their strength, muscle mass and bone density, and decreases the risk of osteoporosis, diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, depression and obesity. Exercise has also been shown to improve self-confidence, sleep and vitality.

At the beginning of class I had a lot of pain in my shoulder. Since doing the exercises I have found that I don't have as much pain anymore! - Participant Comment

Strong Bodies is an eight-week exercise program for older adults that teaches participants in small groups how to exercise regularly and eat more healthfully. FoodWise hosts these exercise classes at rural community settings where access to exercise facilities is limited.

I like this class because it motivates me to do the exercises. It's more fun as a group. And it's a good way to get out of the house! - Participant Comment

In 2019, FoodWise offered four exercise series in Manitowoc County: at the UW Extension office in Manitowoc County for Hmong women, at Painting Pathways Clubhouse, at Maribel Community Center, and at St. Peter the Fisherman Church in Two Rivers. The long term goal is to identify local participants willing to become trained Strong Bodies leaders themselves.

Hmong Senior Meals

Laura Apfelbeck, County Coordinator

Rural immigrants are more likely than native born to experience poverty and older women are also more likely to be poor. Manitowoc's population is 5% Hmong, but Aging and Disabilities Resource Center of the Lakeshore saw few if any Hmong elders at senior nutrition sites. Surveys indicated food as a barrier to Hmong participation. ADRC contracts with Konops, a traditional food service provider with no Hmong cooks on staff so creating appropriate food proved challenging.

FoodWise partnered with ADRC, Catholic Charities, and Manitowoc Health & Human services to build relationships between chefs and diners. Chefs received recipes and requested more. Hmong elders and agency partners visited the central kitchen, sharing cooking methods, recipes, and laughter.

A wonderful change has emerged. Hmong elders understand that the ADRC is trying to offer Hmong foods, and they express gratitude, even if the authenticity sometimes falls short. Teachable moments arise for FoodWise staff, like comparing nutritional benefits of white vs brown rice or discussing the importance of plant-based proteins.

The National Institute on Aging links social isolation to higher risks for a variety of physical and mental conditions:

Social isolation increases risk for high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, weakened immune system, anxiety, depression, cognitive decline, Alzheimer's disease, and even death (NIA 2019)

Culturally appropriate food brought Hmong elders together at a senior nutrition site for the first time in their 30-year history in Manitowoc, providing opportunities for socialization, nutrition, and education.



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Manitowoc, Kewaunee,
and Door Counties



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