



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.

The Challenge

In response to the ongoing challenges in reaching SNAP-Ed audiences with direct education during the pandemic, FoodWise increased delivery of indirect education. This included an expanded social media and website presence, local online and print resources, electronic materials and handouts, and pre-recorded videos; all with the overall goal to continue to reach audiences with helpful nutrition information and resources empowering participants to live healthier lives.

Despite the pandemic, **Manistowoc County** FoodWise continued to deliver nutrition education, reaching participants through **Strong Bodies virtual exercise programs, story strolls, newsletter and social media promotions, and recipe cards distributed with pantry foods.**

Community IMPACTS



- Introduced **Virtual** Strong Bodies to help meet exercise needs of older adults staying at home due to the pandemic. Participants could join classes in English or Spanish for free from their homes.
- Shared food safety tips, recipes, and coronavirus information to accompany weekly food distributions at local food pantries.
- Contacted every school food service director in Manitowoc Co. with opportunities to pilot Harvest of the Month, a statewide campaign encouraging kids and families to eat more produce. Colorful materials—free to low income schools—showcasing seasonal, Wisconsin-grown fruits or veggies each month. Students taste, explore and learn.
- Set up story strolls at the Manitowoc Farmers Market & the South 14th Street Community Garden to promote healthy eating and outdoor activity.
- Partnered with Manitowoc Public Library to offer Grab & Go activity bags coupled with a livestreamed series of twisted tales, fairy tales with a nutrition message from the evidence-based *Read for Health* curriculum.

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 urban and rural communities. In **Manistowoc County**, FoodWise partners with **United Way, Salvation Army Food Pantry, Grow it Forward, University of Wisconsin Green Bay's Dietetic Internship Program, First Presbyterian Community Meals, Crusaders of Justicia, Hmong Family Ties, and ADRC of the Lakeshore** to help make the healthy choice the easy choice in our communities.

Greens for Community Meals

First Presbyterian Community Meals and the ADRC-sponsored senior nutrition program Hmong Senior Meals received Flex Farm grow systems from Fork Farms of Appleton, funded by United HealthCare.

Due to COVID, the plan to engage meal participants in the grow process fell through. Rather than leave the Flex Farms empty, FoodWise partnered with volunteers from UW-Green Bay and Master Gardener to get the systems up and running while obeying COVID safety protocols. In this way, the hydroponic grow systems provided fresh salads to the First Presbyterian Community Meal program monthly. Any additional lettuce beyond that needed at the community meals was donated to Salvation Army food pantry.

Access to health fresh greens is a common obstacle.



FoodWise leveraged relationships to reduce barriers. We contacted existing community service organizations to support our hydroponic grow systems. In this way, we brought fresh, local produce directly to those in need.

The team was invited to present their project at the National Health Outreach Conference in spring 2021. Our next step is to find new grow tower volunteers so as to continue to use Flex Farms.

Introducing: Story Strolls!

Every year, Monroe Elementary Kindergarten teacher Gwen Filer plants carrots at the community garden for the children to enjoy in September. Coincidentally, she has always reads *The Carrot Seed*, which happens to be a story featured in FoodWise Harvest of the Month materials as well. Our gardening partner at Grow it Forward's South 14th St. Community Garden, AmeriCorps volunteer Deena Larson, clued us in. When the students came to harvest their carrots in September, we had a surprise Story Stroll waiting for them.

A Story Stroll is an outdoor activity to promote literacy and physical activity.

A Story Stroll project starts by taking the book apart. Each page goes on a separate sign. Signs are posted along a pathway. Children walk from page to page and read the story.

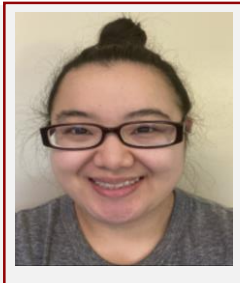


Intern Nellie Brown reads aloud to Monroe Kindergartners

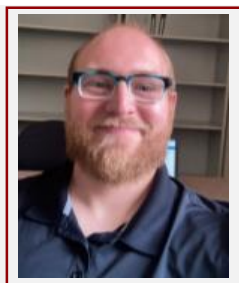
UWGB dietetic intern Eleanor Brown and FoodWise nutrition educator Jace Purdy led the students around the display, reading the story aloud and helping children dig the orange carrots Mrs. Filer had planted AND the purple carrots Ms. Larson had planted. Each child sampled two kinds of carrots that day and took home a Harvest of the Month Carrots postcard. The activity sparked plans for future Story Strolls at the Manitowoc Farmers Market and other community sites.



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