



NEWS FROM EXTENSION

UW-MADISON DIVISION OF EXTENSION MANITOWOC COUNTY



APRIL 2025

National Volunteer Week Salutes 4-H Volunteers in Manitowoc County

By: Katrina Pionek

4-H Educator



UW Madison Division of Extension — Manitowoc County is proud to celebrate Volunteer Appreciation Week, April 20-26, 2025, a time to honor the devoted individuals who generously give their time and talent to support Manitowoc County 4-H. Manitowoc County 4-H relies heavily on volunteers in the 4-H program. This year, 71 volunteers have served as 4-H club leaders, project leaders, 4-H coaches and various other volunteer roles.

4-H Volunteers are truly integral for creating intentional and positive experiences for youth statewide. Their volunteer efforts enable youth to improve decision making skills, build leadership skills and help prepare youth to be ready for future careers. 4-H Volunteers are essential to helping youth find their spark.

According to the 2024 North Central Region Volunteer Impact Study, Wisconsin 4-H Volunteers spend an average of nine hours per week supporting local 4-H experiences. Examples of their efforts include organizing 4-H club meetings, leading 4-H project experiences, leading a community service project, preparing youth for a judging contest and many other tasks. The work of Wisconsin 4-H Volunteers is continuous. Every day a volunteer is ensuring 4-H experiences are available to youth in Manitowoc County. These experiences are essential not only to youth experiencing positive relationships with a caring adult, but also to making communities stronger.

To become a 4-H Volunteer and help youth thrive, contact Katrina Pionek at the Manitowoc County Extension Office at 920-683-4172 or kmpionek@wisc.edu

It's Spring-Which means Dairy Judging is starting!

By: Angie Ulness

Agricultural Educator



A Legacy That Runs in My Blood

Dairy judging has been a part of my life for over two decades, and I don't see that changing anytime soon. As a coach, a mother, and a passionate dairy advocate, I'm honored to pass that legacy on to the next generation. 10% of my role with the Division of Extension, is the Dairy Youth Specialist position in the State as well as Manitowoc County Ag Educator.

A Life Steeped in Dairy Judging

I grew up on a dairy farm in Door County, Wisconsin, the daughter of Bill & Clarice Brey. As a young girl, I had some reservations about attending the University of Wisconsin-Madison. I worried I might get lost in such a big university setting. But once I got there, I quickly found my place-through dairy judging. I always knew I wanted to be part of the dairy judging team at Madison. I idolized Dave Dickson, the former dairy science professor and judging coach at UW-Madison, and that inspired me to get involved. Dairy judging truly solidified my connection to the university and became an essential part of my college experience. During my time at UW-Madison, I joined the Badger Dairy Club, the Association for Women in Agriculture, and participated in American Dairy Science Association trips. I also gained valuable experience through internships. Looking back, my college years were incredible. They opened up so many doors for me, and I'm thankful for the opportunities they gave me.

Building Our Farm and Growing Our Family

Two years after graduating, Mark (my husband, and also a UW-Madison dairy science grad) and I were married, and we bought into the Ulness family farm near Valders. Together, we milk about 75 registered Holsteins. Our farm has been recognized with awards like the 2008 Distinguished Holstein Breeders award and the 2017 National Outstanding Young Farmers contest, but dairy judging has always been a central part of my life, even after starting the farm. I began coaching dairy judging right out of college. My first 4-H team in Door County went on to win the National 4-H Dairy Judging contest in 2002. Now, I co-coach the Manitowoc County team alongside Paul Siemers, the operations manager at Siemers Holsteins. We have led five teams to the national contests--three in the past decade. Every time we head to the national contest, I'm filled with pride.

[Read on...](#)

Heart Healthy in Manitowoc County

Submitted by: Laura Apfelbeck

FoodWise Nutrition Coordinator

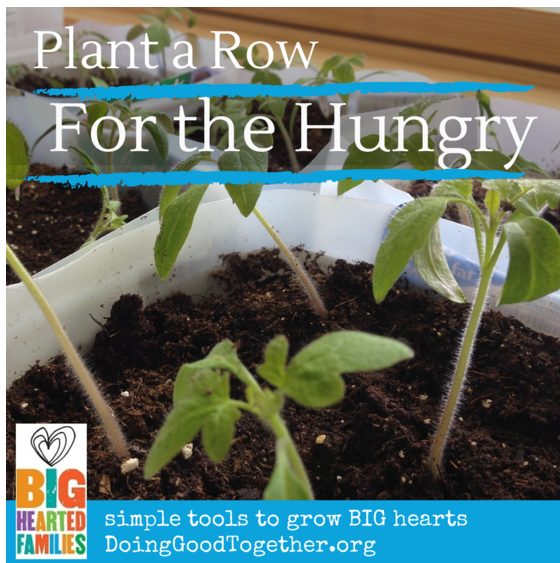
American Heart Association offers a branded version of AmeriCorps called HeartCorps. We have a HeartCorps member serving Manitowoc County, Sue Koeppel. To promote heart health, Sue can lead a blood pressure check at a public library or other public event. She can also teach Hands-Only CPR classes to interested groups of adults or youth. You see her in the photo below set up for blood pressure checks at the Manitowoc Public Library. Sue is also working with local libraries to offer blood pressure kits for free checkout.

Libraries have an opportunity to receive free blood pressure kits through a program

called Libraries With a Heart. Contact Sue to find out more about any of these opportunities, Sue.Koeppe.HeartCorps@heart.org



HeartCorps Member Sue Koeppe offered a blood pressure check at Manitowoc Public Library in December. She has done similar events in Two Rivers, Brillion, Kewaunee, and Algoma.



Many families struggle to put food on the table. In Manitowoc County, 7,566 people (9.3%) rely on federally funded FoodShare benefits to purchase food for themselves and their families. Rural food pantries regularly identify a lack of fresh produce as a problem. With soaring food prices, families are hard pressed to provide nutrient dense foods. None of us can single-handedly solve the problem of community hunger. But each of us can contribute. One way is through Plant a Row for the Hungry. Plant a Row simply means planting an extra row of whatever you already grow in your garden and donating that extra garden produce to

your local food pantry. Gardening gets you outside in the sun and doing good things for your neighbors. You can garden by yourself or with your club or organization. You'll find a toolkit with detailed information here: <https://www.doinggoodtogether.org/projects/plant-a-row>

Looking for a local food pantry that will accept home grown produce? Contact your local food pantry for details about what they need most and when to drop off produce:

- To donate produce to Grow it Forward Community Food Center, contact Amber Daugs at 920-645-9467 or amber@grow54220.com
- To donate produce to Peters Pantry, contact Tracy Minehan, 920-682-6989 or peterspantryinc@gmail.com
- To donate produce to Salvation Army Food Pantry, contact Samantha Tamayo at 920-684-7117 or Samantha.Tamayo@usc.salvationarmy.org
- Let's get growing! We would love to help you with your initiative. FoodWise can connect you with a food pantry manager nearby and plan ways to celebrate your

County Health Data Available!

By: Cath Tease

Health & Well-Being Educator



The University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute has created a new model of health. It helps us better understand the forces behind the community conditions we see and how they're contributing to how long and well people live.

The 2025 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps (CHR&R) Annual Data Release is now live!

This year's release introduces a new model of health, updated data for over 80 health-related measures, and resources to support data-informed action in communities.

Key Highlights:

- **New Model of Health**-Examines how power and societal rules shape health outcomes.
- **Updated County Data**- Explore measures related to housing, income, education and more.
- **New Resources & Strategies**-Find tools to support community health initiatives.

Watch a [2-minute video on the model](#) to explore how we can work together, build power for health and equity, and create conditions so that everyone can thrive. The 2025 Health Rankings data for Manitowoc County can be explored on the [County Health Rankings & Roadmaps website](#). This resource provides detailed insights into the health status of Manitowoc County, including factors like health behaviors, clinical care, and social determinants of health. Let me know if you'd like help navigating the data or understanding specific metrics.

Extension Manitowoc County Staff

Jayna Hintz, Extension Director, jayna.hintz@wisc.edu

Katrina Pionek, 4-H Educator, kmpionek@wisc.edu

Angie Ulness, Agricultural Educator, angie.ulness@wisc.edu

Laura Apfelbeck, FoodWise Nutrition Coordinator

laura.apfelbeck@wisc.edu

Cath Tease, Health & Well Being Educator, cath.tease@wisc.edu

Jace Purdy, FoodWise Nutrition Educator, jnpurdy@wisc.edu

Chiara Boss, Program Assistant, chiara.boss@wisc.edu

JeriLynn Zutz, Program Assistant, jerilynn.zutz@wisc.edu

Website: <https://manitowoc.extension.wisc.edu/>

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