



# NEWS FROM EXTENSION

UW-MADISON DIVISION OF EXTENSION WOOD COUNTY



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## **Nutrition for Healthy Aging - Successful Pilot Series in Wood County!**

**by Hannah Wendels, FoodWise Nutrition Educator**

FoodWise Nutrition Educator, Hannah, kicked off the year with a new series of nutrition education lessons. This series, Nutrition for Healthy Aging, saw such success in Wisconsin Rapids that it is planned for a pilot lesson with a new partner in Marshfield!

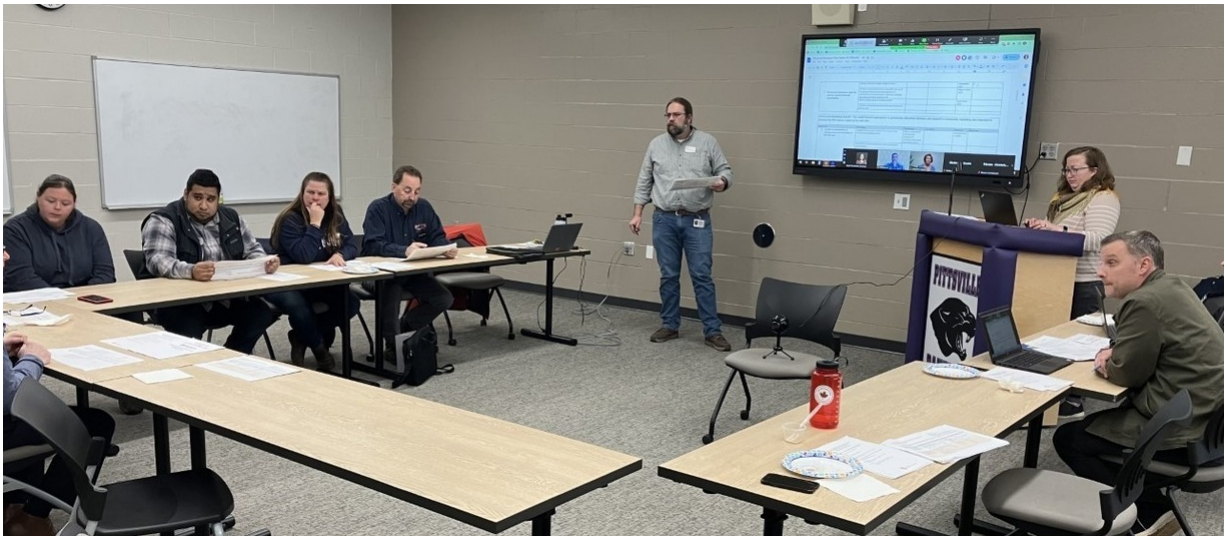
Last fall, I worked with our partner, the South Wood County YMCA, to plan for a 6-week series of nutrition education lessons that focused on nutrition for older adults. We decided that we would promote the class all winter long and start the series in January 2023. Within just a few weeks of promoting the class, registration filled up to capacity - which is 20 participants!

The evidence-based curriculum that Nutrition for Healthy Aging uses is designed for use in places that older adults congregate. Whether it is a local YMCA or other health center, a senior housing site, or a senior community center, this series compliments our community and the many places that Wood County has available for older adults to socialize and convene. Each week a different topic is covered. When this curriculum was designed, the topics were chosen for older adults by older adults. This ensures that the topics are relevant and of interest to the target population. The topics include Whole Grain Benefits/How to Identify Them, Snacking Tips for Seniors, Planning/Making Heart Healthy Meals for 1 or 2, Cooking and Seasoning with Herbs, Sources of Sodium, and Dietary Fat.

Each lesson is planned for 1 hour and 15 minutes. The first 45 minutes include discussion about each topic, questions that engage the participants, and always include an activity around the main message. For the remainder of the class, there is a food demonstration and a taste-test! Which is everyone's favorite part - food! I chose 6 different recipes to demonstrate that go along with each lesson topic. The South Wood County YMCA has a beautiful teaching kitchen that I was able to utilize when demonstrating each recipe. It allowed for everyone in the class to watch simple and cost-friendly recipes be prepared. Following each recipe demonstration, everyone in the class was able to try whatever recipe I made that week. The recipes chosen for this series in order of the topics were Overnight Oatmeal, Veggie Dip and a Greens Smoothie, Sweet Potato and Black Bean

Quesadillas, Pico de Gallo with Baked Tortilla Chips, Vegetarian Chili, and finally, Roasted Chickpeas and a Simple Guacamole. The fan favorite amongst the participants was the Vegetarian Chili!

Since I started in my role as a Nutrition Educator with Extension, I have been able to lead the exercise class StrongBodies that focuses on building strength and balance in older adults. Our FoodWise team brought the Stockbox program to Wood County, which provides a free box of supplementary healthy and nutritious foods to low-income seniors every month. I really wanted to start a class that can complement all of that work but with a nutrition education focus. Nutrition for Healthy Aging did just that! Since the class ended in February, I have planned for a pilot lesson of the series with a new partner in Marshfield, Norris Manor Independent Living, at the end of April. Norris Manor offers housing for aging/disabled individuals and is also a site that receives Stockboxes. With this series, we can utilize foods the participants receive in their Stockbox in all of our recipe demonstrations to tie everything together!



## **Building Economic Resilience through Strategic Planning**

**by Kayla Rombalski, Community Development Educator**

In 2020, the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) developed a Regional Recovery Plan. The plan identified five key areas communities need to focus on to thrive. “These foundational pillars include Broadband, Childcare, Housing & Transportation, Workforce & Talent Attraction, and Tourism & Hospitality; each of which are vital components of strong and resilient communities in both the current and future economic landscapes.”

Wood County is no stranger to these topics and continues to develop strategic plans and objectives to move forward on each. There is strong collaboration between public and

private entities and energy to do the work. What follows is a brief summary of two activities:

- **Pittsville Community Economic Analysis for Rural Wisconsin Communities (CEA-RWC)**

In August 2022, Pittsville Area School District applied to and was selected for the CEA-RWC Initiative. This pilot program is in partnership with Extension and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC). A community leadership team of Pittsville Area School District stakeholders has been working with Extension since November to develop a strategic community economic plan. The Pittsville community identified four priorities (Community Marketing, Housing, Entrepreneurship & Economic Development, Community Building & Civic Leadership Development) and is working currently to refine the objectives and actionable items under each.

- **Child Care Task Force**

In June 2022, the Wood County Child Care Task Force was formed after community leaders voiced concerns about the impact of the lack of affordable, high-quality child care options for our area's youngest residents. The Child Care Task Force is made up of 15 stakeholder organizations. Using national, state, and local data and best practices the Task Force identified six strategies to positively impact child care in Wood County. They've presented this Expanding Child Care Access & Affordability Plan to the Wood County ARPA Funds committee. Funds have also been requested from the Legacy Foundation of Central Wisconsin to support 3 of the 6 strategies. Additionally, the Task Force has spearheaded an application to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Dream Up! Child Care Supply-Building Grant Program.

In addition to these specific projects, work is being done to revitalize Wood County's Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI) plan, completed in April 2021. It's exciting to be part of so much forward momentum in Wood County!

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## Upcoming Extension Programs

- **4-H Let's Create: Scrapbooking** | Wednesday, April 19th | 6-7pm
- **Cranberry 2023 Spring Mini-Clinic** | Wednesday, April 19th | 9-11am
- **FOCUS: Financial - Setting Financial Goals** | Tuesday, April 18th | 3-4pm
- **FOCUS: Horticulture - Container Gardening** | Tuesday, May 2nd | 3-4pm
- **FOCUS: Nutrition - Leftovers & Food Safety** | Tuesday, May 9th | 3-4pm
- **Rent Smart** - McMillan Library | May 5th, June 2nd, August 4th | 9:30am-12:30pm
- **Rent Smart** - Everett Roehl Library | May 12th, June 9th, August 11th | 9:30am-12:30pm

• **WI 4-H Area Animal Science Day - Wood County** | June 9th

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