



### 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



*Positive Youth Development prepares the youth of today to become the effective, empathetic adults of tomorrow. Our research-based youth enrichment programs like teens in governance build youth and adult capacity and partnerships that help both sides grow. 4-H clubs, camps and after-school programs give young people the hands-on experiences they need to develop an understanding of themselves and the world.*

#### *Abi Quinlan, 4-H Program Educator*

An officer leadership training for youth members, where participants explored foundational responsibilities of club leadership roles, practiced real-time decision making, and strengthened their ability to guide positive group dynamics. Through this effort, youth gained confidence in leading meetings, communicating expectations, and supporting their peers, which helps build stronger clubs and develops emerging leaders who are ready to contribute in meaningful ways. Building leadership skills in young people, supporting their confidence to take on officer roles, and strengthening club environments that encourage responsibility and teamwork throughout the county was deemed a necessary action item from the needs assessment performed by Abi Quinlan, 4-H Educator.

Abi Quinlan connected with club leaders and youth members to understand how new officers were adjusting to their roles this fall. Through these conversations, it became clear that many young officers were stepping into responsibilities without prior experience in running meetings, communicating expectations, or guiding their peers. Clubs and youth expressed a need for focused support to help officers feel more prepared and confident as they began the program year. In response to the needs identified, a foundational leadership training was delivered that offered youth officers a structured space to learn and practice key skills. The session introduced the core responsibilities of each officer role, walked participants through effective meeting practices, and included hands-on activities where they could test decision-making strategies and practice leading group discussions. Youth engaged in reflection, peer collaboration, and real-time problem solving to strengthen their confidence and readiness for the year ahead. This approach supported clubs by equipping their officers with tools they can apply immediately, creating a stronger foundation for positive club experiences throughout the program year. Evaluation results showed that the training provided a strong and supportive learning environment for participants. All youth reported that they listened to others' ideas, shared their views respectfully, felt safe in the group, and contributed to decision making. Youth also demonstrated notable growth in their leadership abilities, with 86.7 percent saying they tried something new, improved their skills in leading meetings, and learned more about leadership than they knew before. Collaboration emerged as a major strength of the training, with 93.3 percent stating they worked with others to solve problems, considered different viewpoints, felt comfortable being themselves, and believed leaders treated everyone fairly. Some indicators related to personal interest exploration were more moderate, including 46.7 percent learning what sparked their interest and 53.3 percent feeling excited to share their experience with others. Even so, the overall pattern reflected a program that successfully built confidence, strengthened communication and decision-making skills, and supported positive youth-adult partnerships. These outcomes contributed to stronger club environments and helped prepare young people to participate in their communities with greater confidence, empathy, and a readiness to lead.

*The University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming in compliance with state and federal laws.*



### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



**Community Development** provides educational programming to assist leaders, communities, and organizations realize their fullest potential. We work with communities to build the vitality that enhances their quality of life and enriches the lives of their residents. In short, the Community Development Institute plants and cultivates the seeds for thriving communities and organizations.

#### *Paul Roback, Community Development Educator*

A 3-hour staff development workshop (Real Colors) where Ozaukee County staff increased their ability to recognize their strengths and the strengths of others, build rapport quickly with others, understand how others process information, and modify their communication to connect with others. The workshop is intended to help workplace teams work together more effectively.

Since 2014, Community Development Educator Paul Roback has facilitated Real Colors workshops in response to organizations and local governments expressing a need for staff development in effective communication and team building. These goals align with the outcomes for Real Colors, which is an interactive three-hour workshop that teaches skills to understand human behavior and improve communication with others. Ozaukee County's Highway Commissioner contacted Paul requesting that he provide a Real Colors workshop for Ozaukee County staff. In response, Paul taught a three-hour Real Colors workshop for 18 participants. All participants completed end of session evaluations. From attending the workshop, 100% increased their ability to recognize their strengths and 95% increased their ability to recognize the strengths of others. Additionally, 72% increased their ability to build rapport quickly with others, 83% increased their ability to understand how others process information, and 76% increased their ability to modify their communication to connect with others. Overall, participants evaluated Paul's facilitation of the workshop as a 4.5 on a 5-point Likert Scale (1=poor and 5=excellent). One participant commented they would use workshop information "to see other's strengths and use them to build up my team."



### AGRICULTURE



*If it happens on a farm or in a field, the Extension Institute of Agriculture works with you to achieve better results. Our innovative dairy management programs range from genetics to farm and business management. Extension researchers work hand-in-hand with row crop, forage and fresh produce growers to provide best practices for every aspect of the growing phase. We also advise communities on using sustainable practices to create inviting spaces free from invasive species*

#### **Crops**

*Liz Gartman, Regional Crops Educator*

Planning for a four-session, 2026 Focus on Forage webinar series for livestock producers, forage growers and agriculture consultants. The goal of the series is to provide timely forage management guidance to improve forage quality and meet farm productivity goals.

- Dairy and livestock producers require high quality forages to meet the animal production goals on their farms. Using a quality forage base reduces feed inputs and leads to improved animal health, milk production and growth. There are many opportunities for forage growers to increase forage dry matter production and quality while optimizing input costs, and this series aims to provide research based solutions to these producers.
- The Focus on Forage planning team identified topics and speakers that address the key management challenges and opportunities that exist for forage growers. Ongoing planning will result in four scheduled webinars in February 2026 that will each address a specific topic area related to forage production.

#### **Dairy**

*Manuel Peña, Regional Dairy Educator*

A meeting for dairy farm managers and their workforce to present the progress of the program we are developing for their use to gather their feedback and insights to help finalize and enhance the program's design and effectiveness.

On dairy farms, heavy machinery such as tractors and skid loaders plays a vital role in daily operations, but it also poses significant safety risks. According to the University of Wisconsin Madison's Agricultural Safety & Health Program, tractors have caused the majority of non-highway farm fatalities in Wisconsin recently, and machinery is frequently involved in entanglement, crushing and other serious injuries. We are developing a training toolbox that farms can access at any time to support workforce education. These meetings are designed to gather feedback from farm managers and workers, helping us refine the program to ensure it's practical, effective, and tailored to the needs of those who will use it.



# Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
OZAUKEE COUNTY

## DECEMBER 2025 REPORT

We teach, learn, lead and serve, connecting people with the University of Wisconsin, and engaging with them in transforming lives and communities.

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