For 100 years, UW-Extension has provided value to the public through education, unbiased research, and local partnerships, helping individuals, families and communities meet their needs and tackle tough issues. Since 1923, Winnebago County UW-Extension educators have helped grow strong communities, families, farms and organizations that are resilient and better able to meet challenges.

We serve the diverse population of approximately 167,000 rural, suburban and urban residents of the county. From youth development programs in the heart of Neenah, Menasha and Oshkosh to farm business counseling in the rural corners of the county, UW-Extension educators meet the educational needs of all people.

We leverage dollars to address community issues, work with a large variety of community partners, and train and empower citizen volunteers to augment our work and expand our impact in the community.

We hope you enjoy reading our 2012 Annual Report. This report is but a sampling of the variety of unique and ongoing programs that we do in UW-Extension. You are welcome to contact us for more information about our programs, community information, volunteer opportunities, or how we can help at any time.

UW-Extension celebrates 100 years!

E.L Luther, the first Extension Educator, in Oneida County, using his Triumph motorcycle to get around the county.
Growing leaders and future leaders

Leadership skills and practice are essential for youth and adults alike. UW-Extension develops leadership skills in several areas in Winnebago County, including Master Gardeners, 4-H youth and adult leaders, Master Food Preservers, Home and Community Education (HCE) leaders, as well as building future leaders through Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) and Agriculture literacy programs.

There are 108 Master Gardeners who participate in annual training, perform community service hours, and support the UW-Extension horticulture program by volunteering to answer horticulture questions during peak seasons. In 2012, our Master Gardener volunteers provided 8,979 hours of community service in Winnebago County.

Master Food Preservers assist Family Living educators in presenting classes and responding to calls. Each month over 20 HCE members work with Head Start children to improve literacy skills through the Bookworms™ program. Our 4-H Youth Development program provides leadership training to youth and adult leaders. In 2012-2013, the focus of training is “Youth Leadership.” Youth leaders may serve as club officers, camp counselors, or simply helping younger youth at a project meeting. Forty-two adults and youth from 21 clubs attended the leadership training, with eighteen (18) of them being new to the training.

Current trends show that the largest growing career fields are those involving science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) knowledge and skills. Sixteen of the 30 fastest growing occupations require proficiency in science and mathematics. In Winnebago County, our 4-H Youth Development program worked with several partners to host National Youth Science Day (NYSD) Eco-Bot Challenge, and Lego Robotics activities. Forty youth participated in NYSD. Of these, 23 were 4-H members and 17 were new to UW-Extension youth programming. These young scientists created their own Eco-Bots as they learned what robots can do through human programming and problem-solving.

In addition to the need for STEM skills, much of the U.S. population has no idea where their food comes from. To build agricultural literacy, Winnebago Youth Development staff created programs, such as Ag in the Classroom for afterschool programs, and the Dairy Quiz Bowl. These programs are new to UW-Extension in 2012, and were successful in reaching urban and diverse youth audiences.

Supporting people in difficult times

For over 10 years, UW-Extension has been supporting the Grandparent Support Network through its Grandparents Raising Grandchildren program. One in 10 grandparents find that they are the primary care and providers for their grandchildren in Winnebago County, putting financial strain and stress on families.

UW-Extension provides leadership support to monthly support group meetings, newsletters and educational materials to support families.

The Oshkosh Area Community Pantry (OACP) has seen a steady rise in people served, and pounds of food distributed, which reflects that meeting basic food needs is increasingly difficult for people in Winnebago County. UW-Extension has been a partner with OACP for a number of years, providing organizational support to its Board of Directors, providing volunteer income tax assistance on site, and nutrition education on site. 2012 marked the second year of “Backpacks 4 Kids” which...
Building capacity of volunteers and professionals

UW-Extension builds the capacity of volunteers and professionals to serve the many needs of residents in Winnebago County. Throughout 2012, UW-Extension educators provided organizational development support through teaching, coaching and facilitating strategic planning and decision-making processes for 10 local non-profit organizations and collaborations, including Clarity Care, Oshkosh Area Community Pantry, and the Winnebago County Health Department.

Appointed governmental officials, including local Plan Commissioners, often need educational support in order to perform the duties of their office and serve their residents. Through the Winnebago County Plan Commissioner Network, over 90 volunteer plan commissioners met in 2012 for training and networking.

Similarly, municipal staff in Winnebago County and the Fox Valley built their capacity to implement sustainability strategies in the area by participating in the Sustainable Communities Network, coordinated by UW-Extension.

Other professionals that benefited from UW-Extension’s educational programming in 2012 include the Professional Nutrient Applicator Association of Wisconsin, and tree maintenance professionals. In 2012, over 280 professional appicators participated in Level 1, Level 2 or Custom Manure application training sponsored by UW-Extension.

Similarly, UW-Extension works with Winnebago County communities to help them use their public resources wisely. Often UW-Extension is a partner with others to help achieve more.

Similarly, the Rent Smart Curriculum, aimed at providing first time renters and persons with barriers to obtaining housing with training to be successful tenants, has been shared widely across Wisconsin.

Using public dollars wisely

UW-Extension values public resources, including the funding that supports our work, and the work of our partners. Sharing educational and programmatic resources across counties is one way that UW-Extension stretches local funding, reduces duplication of effort, and works more efficiently.

The Rent Smart Curriculum, aimed at providing first time renters and persons with barriers to obtaining housing with training to be successful tenants, has been shared widely across Wisconsin.

Similarly, in 2012 and 2011, UW-Extension partnered with the County Health Department to prioritize the health needs of county residents and establish workgroups and plans targeting these needs.

In 2012, UW-Extension educators leveraged over $390,000 in specialist support and professional development funds to better serve the residents of Winnebago County.

Grants from the school districts in Winnebago County support the After-School programs offered by the Youth Development staff. Funding for Grandparent Support Group is provided by the Aging Unit of the Winnebago County Human Services Department.

In 2012, UW-Extension educators leveraged over $390,000 in specialist support and professional development funds to better serve the residents of Winnebago County.
Addressing complex public issues

Many issues in Winnebago County are complex, involving many people, with many root cause variables, and having multiple potential solutions. Poverty, water quality, and infrastructure management are critical public issues being faced in Winnebago County.

Addressing poverty and self-sufficiency was the focus of the Winnebago Collaboration Work group in 2012, with the goal of focusing agency collaboration on addressing this critical community issue. UW-Extension worked with the Collaboration Workgroup to develop educational programs that would increase agency awareness of these issues using local municipal data. This group is highly sought after and respected for its work on addressing this issue.

Water quality of the Lake Winnebago System is impacted by a variety of factors related to land use, weather patterns and human usage. UW-Extension provides ongoing support to local organizations, such as the Winnebago Lakes Council, that focus on improving water quality, healthy ecosystems and educating people about the system. In 2012, UW-Extension provided information and organizational support for a lakes public education series on the south end of Lake Winnebago. Additionally, 32 producers were trained in nutrient management planning and 21 farms have developed plans to keep nutrients on the land and out of our waterways. As agriculture modernizes and practices and equipment changes, towns in Winnebago County are experiencing the impact of larger farm equipment on their roads. Peak times of agricultural activities, such as manure hauling and harvesting, can be detrimental to town roads. This, in turn, can be an added expense for local governments. UW-Extension worked with statewide experts to develop guidelines and resources for managing use of large farm equipment on local roads.

Recognized for excellence!

Our Extension Educators are recognized locally, statewide and nationally for their excellent work in their community and beyond.

Kim Miller and Nick Schneider were recognized by the Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council Project Partnership Award for their multi-county arboriculture workshops held in 2012.

Chris Kniep and Kristi Cutts were recognized by National Extension Association of Family Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) with a Housing Outreach Award for their Rent Smart Curriculum development and impact evaluation.

Catherine Neiswender was recognized by Epsilon Sigma Phi (ESP) with a Quality of International Extension Service Award for her work in Guyana, South America in 2012.

Chris Kniep was the recipient of the National Extension Association of Family Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) Educator of the Year Award in 2012.

Rene Mehlberg was recognized by UW Colleges and UW-Extension with a 2012 Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Community Engagement for her work with the Wisconsin Youth Leadership Academy.

Our faculty and staff also have continued ongoing excellent programming in Nutrient Management, Rent Smart Training, Organizational Development, Local Government Education, After School Training, Community Gardens, and Nutrition Education.
Supporting people in difficult times, cont.

Continued from page 2...
was introduced to the Pantry by UW-Extension to provide food to hungry children over the weekends when they may not have access to food due to the absence of school-based food programs. Over 600 backpacks of food are created and distributed to kids in Oshkosh and Omro each week.
The 2012 drought was also a challenging time for families in the agriculture business. The UW-Extension agriculture program provided up to date information about the drought and its impacts on agriculture, and recommendations for managing crops during the drought. Information was shared through individual contacts, media releases, newsletters, and weekly crop condition emails to farmers impacted by the drought in Winnebago County.
The Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program collaborates with local partners to implement nutrition education programs for low-income and food stamp eligible populations. This program provides outreach in the tri-county area of Calumet, Outagamie and Winnebago counties. In 2012, nutrition educators made over 11,300 educational contacts to help people choose and prepare healthy, safe, and affordable food for their families.

Teaching life skills

Learning is a lifelong pursuit. UW-Extension provides training and education on many topics that teach life skills, provide targeted training, and help families.

With the growth in home gardening producing a bounty of garden fruits and vegetables, families are rediscovering food preservation as a way to eat healthy and stretch food dollars. UW-Extension provides educational materials and food preservation classes to teach individuals how to preserve food safely and effectively. In Winnebago County over 100 people participated in the 2012 Summer Food Preservation webinars. Additionally, food preservation videos were also aired over Oshkosh Community Media Services reaching a much larger audience of over 40,000 people throughout the summer.
The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) is a program that assists individuals in preparing and filing their tax return. UW-Extension works with several community partners and over 30 volunteers to make the VITA program a success. In 2012, over 200 individuals were assisted with both state and federal tax returns, and over $360,000 in tax returns came back to individuals and families in Winnebago County. Since 2008, individuals saved over $125,000 in preparer fees, and over $1.1 million came back to the community in tax returns.

Sometimes life skills come in the form of needing more information to make informed decisions. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, the average farmer’s age has risen to 57.1 years old. Retirement planning is essential to a sustainable family farm; however, retirement in the traditional sense is very different for farmers compared to the typical workforce. To meet the needs of these farmers, UW-Extension developed a program to help farm families explore financial goals, set targets and plan for farm succession. In 2012, twelve farmers attended “Shifting Gears in Winnebago County”. Pre-workshop evaluation demonstrated none had written financial plans, ten had thought about financial goals but not written them down, and two had not thought about financial goals. This program helped these families make significant decisions that affected their retirement and their families.
Winnebago County Cooperative Extension offices are located in the James P. Coughlin Center, which is part of a larger campus of county based services. Located nearby are Parkview Health Center, Coughlin Community Natural Area, the County Park, and the Sunnyview Expo Center.

The James P. Coughlin Center has several meeting rooms utilized by departments within the building, county committees, and partner agencies as available. The high quality and convenience of the meeting room space put them in high demand. In 2012, we hosted almost 800 meetings, with over 12,800 people in attendance. Approximately 70 different groups utilized the building in 2012.

While many of our educational programs are held throughout the county where people live and work, we also use the James P. Coughlin Center to deliver educational programs through workshops, meetings, and organizational trainings. We also use web and teleconference technology to enhance learning.