



Extension Waukesha County

# 2025 spotlight

## Extension Waukesha County Impact Highlights of 2025

**POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT:** In 2025, Extension Waukesha County's Positive Youth Development/4-H programs served 889 youth and their families through 10 community-based clubs, five school-based clubs, over 60 project-based groups, and summer camp. Nearly 140 adult volunteers were engaged as volunteer leaders. One highlight of the year was the launch of a new youth leadership initiative designed to empower young people across the County. This youth-led group focuses on developing leadership and communication skills while providing hands-on experience in creating, planning, and leading 4-H events. Waukesha County youth collaborate with peers, adult advisors and Extension Educators to share ideas, build confidence, and make meaningful contributions. Members of the Youth Leadership Group are building a strong, county-wide community group where youth voices are heard and leadership is grown.

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:** Community Development Educators led workshops and surveys to capture vital public and participant input regarding the combination of the three existing Waukesha Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas (NRSA) into one expanded NRSA. This engagement ensured the expansion addressed real neighborhood needs, such as housing rehabilitation and childcare. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has approved the new "Prairieville NRSA" boundaries in Waukesha County. By consolidating the three NRSAs and expanding reach, Waukesha County can save administration costs by increasing administrative efficiency and eliminating funding caps, allowing for more intensive social services and facilitating impactful community reinvestment.

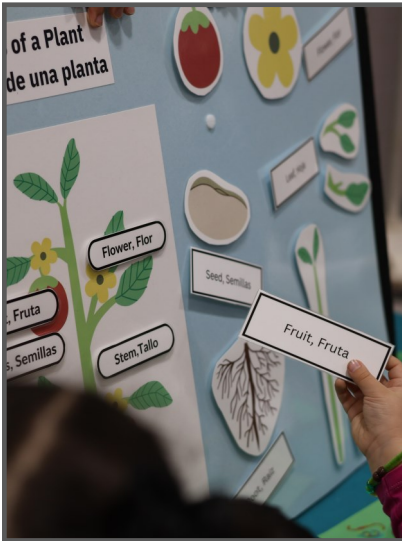
**HORTICULTURE:** Horticulture professionals participated in the annual industry-focused Landscape and Grounds Maintenance Short Course to learn science-based information to assist them in increasing economic and environmental sustainability. Speakers included experts from UW-Madison Extension and across the Midwest. The review of the 2024 turf insect and disease trends had the highest attendance with 253 participants. The average weekly attendance for the four week Short Course was 228 with 771 continuing education units issued to participants to maintain their industry certifications. Eighty-one percent of participants were private sector employees and 19 percent were local city and county government employees.

**NUTRITION:** Waukesha County FoodWise educators engaged with three parent groups in series of nine Eating Smart and Being Active (ESBA) lessons at Life's Connection clinics in Waukesha and Mukwonago. Parents and children participated in the food tasting portion of lessons together, trying healthy recipes like butternut squash mac, apple salad, tuna melts, zesty bean dip, and veggie quesadillas. Parents were excited to have new ideas for using familiar foods and food pantry items. Pre/post surveys showed 100% of participants improved diet quality and physical activity. One parent reported making veggie quesadillas multiple times for her kids, eating more fruit, and being more active, which improved her back pain. Another reported that she now uses some of the money-saving ideas discussed when shopping. Overall, evaluations have shown ESBA provides practical skills and health benefits for families.



At the WIC Fit Families parent night in March, parents learned about "The Family Kitchen" and prepared healthy recipes with their kids.

Extension staff builds strong communities by engaging adults & youth in life-long learning, developing economic opportunity, and extending leadership capacity through educational programs and Extension-trained volunteers.



Students at Hawthorne Elementary experienced their first Farm to School Job Fair where they explored everything from plants to livestock feed.

*"Real Colors has given our teams a shared language that translates directly into better service, fewer conflicts, and a safer, more collaborative workplace. The training is short, practical, and integrates the greatest value through daily application. I have seen direct operational benefits in service delivery, collaboration, and employee engagement since integrating this training into our daily work. Misunderstandings are often de-escalated before they require managerial intervention."*

Departmental Executive Assistant, Waukesha County Health & Human Services

*"Well planned and organized; speakers were very knowledgeable and personable. Kept my interest and attention."*

Landscape and Grounds Maintenance Short Course Participant



The Plan Commission Fundamentals Workshop engaged 88 local officials.



Over 200 green industry professionals learned about invasive species plant identification and management at the Urban Forestry Workshop.

*"My son enjoyed one of his classes so much that he has considered pursuing an education pathway related to food science and nutrition... in our house, both [my kids] show an interest in reading food packaging labels, food preparation, and cooking—I'm happy to encourage them both and am thankful for your class."*

Middle School Small Bites Participant Parent

*"My family appreciates everything that 4-H and Emerging Leaders does for my child. My child has come so far, you have built her confidence, and she has grown to be a strong young lady because of you all and the amazing work you do."*

Emerging Leaders Program Parent



Positive Youth Development / 4-H Youth from Waukesha, Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha County attended the Wisconsin Herd Basketball game in Oshkosh.

A special thank you to our 2025 sponsors of Extension Waukesha County 4-H Kids Zone and 4-H Summer Camp: Blain's Farm & Fleet, Woodman's Markets, Kwik Trip, Keena & Associates, Novonesis, Waukesha State Bank, Eaton, Summit Credit Union, Core Creative, and MWR Painting LLC.