



EMPOWERING YOUTH TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL, WORKING AND LEARNING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CARING ADULTS



PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES, AND TEACHING SAFE AND PROPER GARDENING PRACTICES FOR A BEAUTIFUL AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT



CREATING STRONG, HEALTHY FAMILIES THAT SERVE AS THE FOUNDATION FOR COMMUNITY LIFE

# UW Extension

## Cooperative Extension

14200 WASHINGTON AVENUE  
STURTEVANT, WI 53177  
PHONE: (262) 886-8460 TTY: RELAY 711  
FAX: (262) 886-8489

<http://racine.uwex.edu>

## RACINE COUNTY 2009 ANNUAL REPORT



# Community *Focus*

In 2009, University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension educators and staff worked to provide responsive, research-based educational programs throughout Racine County. Some local efforts to make the University of Wisconsin accessible to diverse learners include:

- ⇒ Utilization of a variety of learning aids, such as simultaneous interpretation equipment and the translation of print materials into Spanish for workshops, particularly for parenting and agriculture-related topics.
- ⇒ Continued development of Green Works, an innovative horticulture vocational training skills program designed to address chronic unemployment of individuals with developmental disabilities.
- ⇒ Translation of "Parenting the First Year" Newsletters into Spanish, which is used not only to provide information and education to new parents, but also as a tool to build literacy in English language learners.
- ⇒ Outreach to incarcerated audiences, including gardening workshops conducted by Master Gardener volunteers at the Racine Youthful Offender Facility and Southern Oaks; and Racine/Kenosha Nutrition Education programming at Southern Oaks and the Ellsworth Correctional Facility
- ⇒ Partnering with Racine County Workforce Development and other county agencies to implement the E3 (Employ, Enrich, Engage) program for youth workers, specifically providing work sites for young adults in Burlington and at the new Urban Teaching Garden in Racine.



*Racine County early education workshop participants learn by using Simultaneous Interpretation Equipment with assistance from UW-Extension Educator Nelly Martinez.*

## FUNDING EXTENSION EFFORTS

UW System 41%

County 24%



Program Revenue 8%

Federal 27%

The shared investment between the University of Wisconsin System, the Federal Government and the County of Racine has established an infrastructure which brings university educators into contact with county residents where they live and work. This collaboration also leverages volunteers, grants, expertise from university specialists and additional funding for local initiatives. In addition to the core investment, **educators obtained direct funding valued at \$409,166 for local programs.** Of this amount, the Racine/Kenosha Nutrition Education Program attracted 297,037 in additional federal funds due to local partners providing in-kind match. Additional grants and donations totaled \$112,129.

# 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

**Tracy Strother**  
4-H Youth Development  
Educator

**Linda Lueder**  
4-H Youth Development  
Program Assistant

**Lucina Dura**  
AmeriCorps\*VISTA

**Richelle Kastenson**  
Summer 4-H Intern

## 2,098 Educational Contacts



## CLUBS

- All4One 4-H  
Franksville
- Burlington Back 40  
Burlington
- Caldwell Busy Bees  
Mukwonago
- Clever Clovers  
Racine
- Clover View  
Waterford
- Country View  
Waterford
- Crazy4Clovers  
Yorkville
- Franksville Rocking Horse  
Franksville
- Kan-Do  
Kansasville
- Norway 4-H  
Wind Lake
- Raymond 4-H  
Raymond
- Raymond Trail Blazers  
Franksville
- Rising Stars  
Union Grove
- Sturtevant 4-H  
Sturtevant
- Sunnyside 4-H  
Kansasville
- Tucker 4-H  
Racine
- Yorkville 4-H  
Yorkville

## 4-H Adventure Camp

Adventure camp is one of the few opportunities offered in Racine County exclusively for middle school 4-H youth. In its second year, the 2009 Summer Adventure Camp filled to its capacity of 30 youth—nine from Kenosha County and 21 from Racine County. Racine and Kenosha County Educators and teen leaders worked together to build upon the previous year's successful summer initiative, with the goals of the 2009 program being: to increase teamwork skills; to improve communication skills; and to increase their sense of belonging among youth in sixth through eighth grades.

Over the course of three days and two nights at Camp Upham Woods near Wisconsin Dells, campers slept in tents, survived a thunderstorm, made new friends, challenged themselves on Peanut Butter Mountain (a low ropes course designed to build communication and trust), and improved their outdoor skills on a half-day canoe trip while exploring caves on Blackhawk Island.

At the end of the program, youth were asked what was gained from the experience, and the



Youth working together at Adventure Camp

most popular response was “teamwork”. Other responses included: “strengthening friendships” and “meeting new people.”

Participants also indicated that through their camping experience they learned better teamwork skills as well as new communication skills for working out their differences.

Each summer, the Racine County 4-H program also offers a Day Camp for 4-H youth in kindergarten through third grades and Base Camp for youth in grades 3-5.

## 4-H Summer Road Show



4-H Intern Richelle Kastenson providing environmental education in Burlington

In 2009, the Racine County 4-H Leaders Association supported a summer intern, Richelle Kastenson, a previous Racine County 4-H member. This position was designed to reach underserved audiences and open opportunities for youth programming in urban neighborhoods.

Under the guidance of Linda Lueder, Richelle identified and implemented meaningful hands-on activities for youth around the themes of agriculture, food and nutrition, and environmental awareness. Kastenson also teamed up with Kenosha County Summer VISTA members to teach youth in Racine and Kenosha counties about science through activities involving robots, cars, and rockets.

This internship promoted 4-H in urban areas throughout the summer at several locations, including schools, libraries, child care sites, and churches. Several activities were also offered during the Racine County Fair to encourage youth to learn about 4-H.

In total, over 500 underrepresented youth were engaged through the summer urban outreach efforts.

# AGRICULTURE

## *Training young farmers in safe agricultural practices*

Agriculture is one of the most dangerous occupations in the country, and operators between the ages of 10-14 are more likely than any other age group to have a tractor-related accident.

The Racine/Kenosha/Walworth Tractor Safety program attempts to address issues of farmstead safety with increasing urbanization, and to certify youth under the age of 16 to drive farm equipment on public roads according to state law. Principles presented include tractor and equipment safety, livestock handling safety, basic first aid, health concerns on the farm, and fire safety.

In order for the tractor safety program to be of value for youth participants—especially those who have limited driving experience—a tractor-driving component is also crucial. The workshop includes 12 hours of driving and 12 hours of classroom activities.

A partnership with area farm implement dealerships provides tractors and equipment for hands-on development of operating skills, and Case New Holland donates employee time to help youth learn equipment safety first hand.



Youth participant in Tractor Safety Program

**Rose Skora**  
*Agriculture Educator*

**Carol Reed**  
*Agriculture Assistant*

### **419 Educational Contacts**

**“I was not convinced that this class was worth the time commitment. My son has participated in a variety of safety courses including gun safety, ATV safety and others. This class was by far the best safety class my son has ever participated in and well worth our time.”**

**PARENT,  
RACINE/KENOSHA/WALWORTH  
TRACTOR SAFETY PROGRAM**

# HORTICULTURE

## *Breaking new ground in green industry skills training*

Green Works is an innovative green industry vocational training and employment program for adults with developmental disabilities piloted in 2005 by UW-Extension and continued through 2009.

Administered by Horticulture Educator, Dr. Patti Nagai, Green Works responds to the need for novel approaches to chronic unemployment of adults with developmental disabilities. Master Gardener Volunteer Meryl Strichartz proposed the training program in response to a need for day services expressed by parents of adults with disabilities at county budget discussions. MG Volunteers also play an integral role in the program, participating in greenhouse training, attending classes to learn more about adults with disabilities and attending training sessions to learn how to job coach. Job coach volunteers assist each Green Works graduate during their volunteer work and when they begin employment in local green industry jobs.

In 2009, certificates of achievement were awarded to six adults with developmental

disabilities who completed the 12-week Green Works Training Program, which included 36 hours of plant care training and 36 hours of employment skills training. Ideas of entrepreneurship and self-employment were introduced as each participant developed a business plan. Participants presented their plans to parents, grandparents, friends and MG Volunteers at their graduation ceremony. Two graduates were employed through a new partnership with Racine County Public Works, while others chose employment in non-green industry fields.

In 2009, Green Works partnered with Custom Employment Solutions to develop customized integrated employment opportunities for its participants. Green Works is so unique in its approach that Patti Nagai and Meryl Strichartz were invited to present at the 2009 National Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE) Conference.

**Patti Nagai**  
*Horticulture Educator*

**Meryl Strichartz**  
*Horticulture Assistant*

### **6,094 Educational Contacts**



2009 Green Works graduates



*Dr Nagai receives award from UW-Extension Chancellor David Wilson for Outstanding Achievement.*

**“Racine County Public Works was pleased to partner with the Green Works program in 2009. At the Ives Grove Complex and Ridgewood Care Center, the planting beds the Green Workers' maintained were beautiful. The Green Works participants provided the talent and dedication necessary to bring out the best in our garden areas! We definitely want to continue and expand this program.”**

**DAVE PROTT, DIRECTOR  
RACINE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

# FAMILY LIVING

## Bev Baker

Family Living Educator and  
Department Head

## Barbara Stoffel-Emde

Family & Community Educator

## Tina Ginner

Early Care & Education  
Training Coordinator

## Nelly Martinez

Bilingual Family Projects  
Facilitator

### 2,314 Educational Contacts

Racine County UW-Extension Family Living partners with Workforce Development Center to provide nutrition education, youth development, workshops, focus groups, the Family Resource Directory, and Quick List: Resources for Families.



**"The Racine County Workforce Development Center is committed to providing excellent customer service to job seekers, businesses and taxpayers of Racine County. The focus groups you conducted were useful in helping us evaluate and strengthen our commitment to exceeding customer expectations. This will help us to continue to strive to be the best. Once again thank you and your staff for all of your hard work in with the focus groups."**

**ALONZO PAYNE  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
CENTER**

## *Partnering to provide education for new parents*

Racine County, east of I-94, has one of the highest rates of infant mortality in the State. In an effort to provide research-based information to all families of newborns in this area, in 2008, six family-serving agencies and UW-Extension initiated a partnership to distribute "Parenting the First Year" and "Parenting the 2nd and 3rd Years" newsletters. These newsletters have been proven to be effective in improving early parenting skills and contain information on the physical, intellectual, emotional, and social skills that children develop at each age.

The City of Racine Health Department and Caledonia/Mt. Pleasant Health Department provide the first issue of the newsletter to every family with a newborn east of I-94 in Racine County. An attached postcard invites families to provide their name, address and child's birth date to begin receiving the monthly newsletters either by mail or electronically. In January 2009, the first Spanish issue of "Parenting the First Year" was distributed by Wheaton Franciscan Health Care to all Spanish-speaking families that deliver at their facility.



*Volunteer assembling the Parenting Newsletter*

Since the start of this program, United Way of Racine County and Kiwanis Club-West Racine have provided financial support. In 2009, Alpha Homes, a residential home for adults with disabilities, joined the community effort by volunteering to assemble the first issue of the newsletter.

More than 1,900 families received the first issue of "Parenting the First Year" newsletter in 2009, with 489 families registering to receive the remaining twenty-three issues by mail. The newsletters were also viewed online a total of 487 times, a 375% increase over the 2008 level.

## *Building financial literacy in people of all income levels*

Low to moderate income individuals and families need opportunities to build their financial literacy tools and resources. For the past five years, the Racine Money Conference Planning Team has worked with Asset Builders of America, a non-profit based in Madison, to provide a local annual conference to offer high quality, unbiased financial education to traditionally underserved populations.

The first Racine Money Conference was held in December 2005 at Gateway Technical College with 90 participants. In 2009, there were 345 individuals in attendance, the highest number of participants in a money conference in the state.

One key component of the money conference is the coordination with HALO (Homeless Assistance Leadership Organization) to ensure that homeless shelter residents can attend the conference so they benefit along with the general community

from workshops, resource displays, and credit reports.

This year, financial literacy classes were also available for school-age children, and child care was offered for 2 – 5 year olds. Through a partnership with the Racine Family Literacy Program, three of the workshops were provided bilingually for Spanish-language learners.

Attendance has increased over 280% since the conference's inception, with numerous speakers and volunteers making the event a success. Credit education was popular this year, with 123 participants requesting free credit reports, one-on-one credit reviews, and workshops on credit. 93% of attendees who completed evaluations listed their income as less than \$50,000 per year, with 86% living in a household with net worth of \$50,000 or less, indicating that the Conference is achieving its primary goal – to increase the knowledge of a variety of financial literacy topics.

## *Addressing the housing crisis through education*

Through a partnership between the Homeless Assistance Coalition, Racine City Fair Housing, HALO (Homeless Assistance Leadership Organization), Racine Housing Coalition, and UW-Extension, a series of three Housing Conferences was designed to educate local service providers about housing-related resources, legal issues around foreclosures, evictions, and prevention related to initial contracting, credit management and financial literacy.

On May 14, 2009, "Renting and Home Ownership Challenges in the Current

Economy" reached 48 service providers. Local professionals shared their knowledge through presentations and panel discussions. County Executive William McReynolds and Racine Mayor John Dickert welcomed the participants and emphasized the local importance of the conference.

On October 8, 2009, "Housing Options, Credit and Finance" drew an attendance of 45. The purpose of the conference was to increase participants' knowledge of housing options for the homeless and affordable

housing in Racine County, while understanding rights and protections; explore how credit impacts the consumer; obtain practical tools and resources to share with individuals and families; and improve their ability to

connect people to prevention and intervention resources.

A third housing conference is planned for the fall of 2010. It will focus on landlords and lenders.



*Panel discussion at the Racine County Housing Conference*

## **NUTRITION EDUCATION**

### *Taking baby steps towards a healthier lifestyle*

The UW-Extension Racine/Kenosha Nutrition Education Program (RKNEP) is a two-county collaborative effort coordinated out of Next Generation Now Child Care Center in Racine. They reach participants through a variety of programs.

One new program focuses on improving the eating choices and habits of teen mothers. This need was identified at a 2008 Racine Networking Breakfast. Working in partnership with Partners Educating Parenting Students (PEPS), RKNEP Educator Paula Schmidt developed a six-lesson program that incorporated the researched-based publication, *My Child, My Choices: Healthy Eating When You are Pregnant*, label reading, food budgeting, healthy snacks, physical activity, and the importance of eating breakfast.

Since its start at Gateway Technical College under the PEPS program, two more Racine high schools have begun to offer the teen mothers a healthy eating program, and there are plans for a third site soon. 40 girls have increased their knowledge of nutrition, shopping for food and label reading.

Upon completion of the program, participants are presented with certificates of graduation, and asked about any lifestyle changes they have made since receiving the nutrition lessons. One girl said that she now reads labels when she shops for food; another said she gave up fast food. Others have increased their salad consumption and prepared healthy recipes at home. One girl summed it up by saying, "I'm just eating a lot more healthier now."



*Students participating in nutrition program*

**Tonya C. Evans**  
*Nutrition Education Administrator*

**Daniel Halvorsen**  
*Teacher Coordinator*

*Nutrition Educators*

**Cynthia Armstrong**

**Valerie Arnold**

**Rocio Bailey**

**Fabiola Diaz**

**Delace Ruth Dyson**

**Jae Lindemann**

**Paula Schmidt**

*Program Assistants*

**Rebecca Garcia**

**Ladonna Hadley**

**In 2009,  
nutrition educators  
reached  
14,373  
educational contacts  
in Racine County.**

# GROWING TOGETHER/CRECIENDO JUNTOS

## *Reaching out to new audiences*

New residents to Western Racine County comment on the friendly neighbors, quality schools and beautiful parks. But, moving into a rural Wisconsin town can also present challenges; especially for families who speak English as a second language.

With guidance from Jeffrey Lewis, an ethnographer and state specialist for the University of Wisconsin - Extension, local educators, Bev Baker, Racine County Family Living Educator and Maria Alvarez, Youth and Family Community Coordinator conducted interviews and listening sessions with some of the most recent immigrants to Burlington.

Baker and Alvarez learned that Hispanic families value a living in Burlington, but the language barrier can make it difficult to navigate community systems and connect through social networks.

Baker and 4-H Youth Development Educator, Tracy Strother, have worked in conjunction with University specialists and Waushara County UW-Extension educators to help Hispanic families build bridges with the non-Hispanic rural communities in both counties. For example, the Multicultural Arts Club and Reading Friends program held after school at Waller Elementary school helped youth learn a variety of topics, along with building their English reading skills while helping Catholic Central Spanish class students improve their Spanish skills.

These outreach efforts are being supported through the Wisconsin Sustainable Communities initiative with grant funds from the USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture.

**Maria Alvarez**  
Youth and Family Community  
Coordinator



*Maria Alvarez speaking with young Creciento Juntos participant*

## COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

## *Planning cooperatively for Racine County's future*

In 2009, Kristen Lie, Community Planning Educator, finished work with the Department of Planning & Development, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC), and the County Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee to provide educational materials and opportunities for public participation in the county's multi-jurisdictional comprehensive plan.

Racine County completed its multi-jurisdictional comprehensive planning process on October 13, 2009, when the Racine County Board voted unanimously to adopt the plan. This followed the review, recommendation, and adoption of the plan by each of the 17 local plan commissions and government units. As mandated by State law and in accordance with Racine's public participation plan, the adoption procedure included an open house and public hearing in every community and at the County level so that residents could review and comment on the plan before its adoption.

In addition, prior to the plan review process, public informational meetings were held in the City of Racine and the Villages of Waterford and Mt. Pleasant to inform residents and community stakeholders on key planning elements and to gather input on the draft plan.

The Community Planning Educator also worked with SEWRPC and Racine City Development to develop and conduct an online public opinion survey and facilitated a subsequent community session to obtain input for the City's comprehensive plan. Results from the survey and the session helped to guide the City's issues and opportunities element, and were also considered when creating goals for each chapter of the City's plan.

More information on the plan and the plan itself are available on the Smart Growth website:

<http://racine.uwex.edu/cnred/smartgrowth.html>

**Kristen Lie**  
Community Planning Educator

### **228 Educational Contacts**

**"UW-Extension provided an essential education and communications component to help keep residents, local governments, and community stakeholders informed throughout Racine County's three-year multi-jurisdictional comprehensive planning effort."**

**JULIE ANDERSON**  
DIRECTOR OF RACINE COUNTY  
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

