



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
BARRON COUNTY



Healthy Choices, Healthy Lives



FoodWise is federally funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). We advance healthy eating habits, active lifestyles and healthy community environments for Wisconsin residents with limited incomes through nutrition education at the individual, community and systems levels.

The Challenge

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the food security of **Barron County** residents due to income and job loss, as well as significant changes in local, regional, and national food systems. Based on increases in **Barron County** residents participating in FoodShare and federal Pandemic EBT benefits, we see a greater need for members of our community in accessing food that is healthy, safe, and affordable. FoodWise educators support our community by providing education on how families can stretch their food dollars in these difficult times and continue to put healthy meals on the table in their homes.

Barron County has seen a **16% increase in Food Share participation** (including adults and children) from prior to the pandemic.



Based on comparison of FoodShare participation in February, 2020 and September, 2020. Data from Wisconsin Department of Health & Human Services.

Community IMPACTS

Barron Community Garden



- In response to the Covid-19 Pandemic, a priority was to remain in strong communication with county food pantries, connecting them to area pantry conversations to allow for resource sharing, and to answer questions that pertained to their needs and situations.
- Remained in contact with our Direct Education partners, mainly schools, as they navigated and developed new procedures for education delivery, dependent on their current situation of in-school or virtual.
- Transitioned direct education programming to virtual lessons. Direct Ed programming via virtual delivery has proven to be successful and can meet the needs of the various county partners. Communication and cooperation are the keys!
- The Barron Community Garden survived the pandemic by following the CDC guidelines as well as being an outside venue where people could work alone or distance themselves from others. The contributions made to the Barron Food Pantry were valued by the visitors to the pantry to fulfill their food shortages and meet nutritional needs.

ACHIEVING MORE TOGETHER



UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work – on the farm, in schools and throughout urban and rural communities. In **Barron County**, FoodWise partners with schools, Barron County Developmental Services, WIC, Head Start, County Food Pantries and Workforce Resource to help make the healthy choice the easy choice in our communities.

FoodWise In-School Nutrition Education Goes Virtual

COVID-19, as everyone knows, has disrupted life as it was. Education is valuable in changing the habits and mindset of individuals of all ages. Implementation and repetitive **nutrition education** is shown to be valuable with children of young ages in changing their habits and mindset about eating healthy. Education needs to continue, pandemic or not!

With the disruption of In-School education, directional change happened rapidly with the learning of and transferring to, virtual education. Learning skills for curriculum development with various virtual platform delivery models was the forefront quest for Nutrition Educators. Students and educators alike, are discovering this new educational technology for teaching & learning.



Through nutrition education, students have the opportunity to taste samples of vegetables and fruits.

Students showed a change in healthier eating after having nutrition education (pre COVID-19). A pre/post survey showed:

- An increase in daily fruit consumption everyday or most days on an average of 25-35%.
- An increase in daily vegetable consumption everyday or most days on an average of 15-30%.
- An increase of choosing a healthy snack everyday by 18-50%.

Local Garden Increases Access to Fresh Fruits & Vegetables

Personal gardening to obtain more produce or increasing one's access to fresh vegetables/fruits at a food pantry are positive moves toward better food security for those in poverty. Therefore, projects that involve community gardens and food pantries, create positive changes for communities and their citizens who are experiencing poverty.

FoodWise is working in Barron County to bring about change in people's access to fresh vegetables/fruits that are grown at the community garden. The *Barron Community Garden* is in its 5th year and donates produce to the Barron Cupboard & Closet Food Pantry, the Barron County Senior Nutrition Program, as well as providing for the families who garden their own plots.

“Growing our own fresh food is so important to us. We couldn't do without it!” –BCG Gardener

FoodWise partners with the Barron Co. Developmental Services, Inc. and Master Gardeners to provide and organize the garden for the community. BCG plot rental gardeners grow their own fresh produce, as well as contribute their excess produce to the Community Plots for donation to the food pantry and Senior Nutrition program. The Community Plots, along with the gardeners' donations donated 380 lbs. of fresh produce to the community this year!



Garden plots flourish with fresh vegetables & fruits for the Gardeners, Seniors and Food Pantry Patrons.



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