



Human Development and Relationships



Tierany Rugg
HDR Educator
100% Appointment

StrongBodies

The Winter 2026 StrongBodies session at NWTC in Aurora began 1/5/26 and will run until 2/25/26
38 Participants registered.

Looking Ahead to 2026

- Recruit one additional volunteer.
- Expand class offerings from two sessions to four sessions.

Professional Training Day – Tierany Rugg & Maria Bournoville

Extension Staff planned a professional training day designed to strengthen the Florence County Health Department. This professional training day aimed to enhance the Florence County Health Department staff members' understanding of communication and team by combining interactive activities and discussions on being a communication champion with a collaborative holiday project. Participants developed self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills while working together. The targeted outcome was improved personal and team communication, which will result in a stronger and more effective team. **5 Participants**



Triple P Statewide (Reducing Family Conflict)

Teen Triple P – Reducing Family Conflict is an evidence-based parenting program for parents of teenagers experiencing frequent conflict, communication challenges, or heightened tension at home. HDR Educator taught this program in a statewide virtual class, supporting parents in developing practical strategies to manage conflict calmly, strengthen family relationships, and promote positive teen behavior through consistent, supportive parenting.

12 Participants

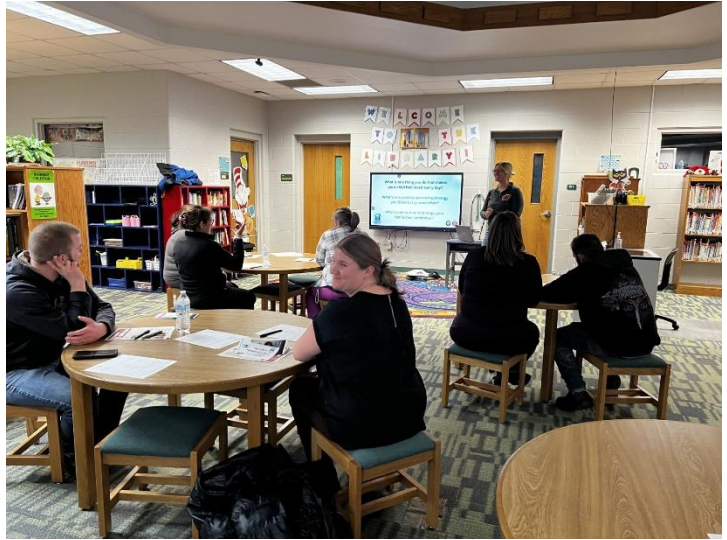
Raising WI Children – Speaking your Child's Love Language

is a parent education program focused on helping caregivers understand and respond to their child's emotional needs through the Five Love Languages framework. Florence County HDR Educator facilitated this program for **37 participants**, supporting parents in strengthening connections, improving communication, and building more positive, nurturing relationships with their children.

Family Check Up

The Florence County School District identified a need to support families in strengthening parenting skills and family management practices to improve children's social, emotional, and academic outcomes. In response, UW–Madison Extension partnered with the district to implement the Family Check-Up (FCU) program, an evidence-based, family-centered intervention aimed at promoting positive family functioning and preventing problem behaviors and mental health concerns. Outreach efforts included FCU promotions and family sign-ups during Parent-Teacher Conferences, followed by a Family Check-Up Information Dinner in December, which brought together **7 families** for a shared, family-style meal and a structured program overview.

23 Active Participants



Just in Time Parenting

Coordinated the monthly e-newsletter (Just in Time Parenting) for parents/caregivers of 0-5 year olds which provides age-paced developmental and parenting information. The goal is to improve parents' knowledge, increase positive parent-child interaction, and support children's well-being. **9 Newsletters**

WRIC Outdoor Education

The HDR Educator helps coordinator and facilitate monthly outdoor education events for families and nature enthusiasts, where participants engage in hands-on activities such as wildlife habitat creation, survival skills workshops, and environmental stewardship programs to foster a deeper connection with nature, promote sustainable practices, and encourage community involvement in conservation efforts.

Workshop Topics

Musky Fishing: Efficiency on the Water (12/4) **28 participants**

Trout with Greg Matzke (1/27)

Maple Syrup Production with Fred Hedmark & Ernie Dagastino (2/17)

Trout Fishing the Wild Rivers with Chris Collier (4/14)

Northwoods Foraging: Eat your Weedies with Maragret Gerhard (5/19)

Financial Education

Financial Coaching is a free service available to Wisconsin residents. St. Vincent De Paul refers clients to Financial Coaching at UW Madison Division of Extension. Clients meet one-on-one with the HDR Educator, who helps create a money management plan based on their priorities. A typical client will attend 4 one-hour sessions. **1 Participant**

Other Educational Programs, Professional Development & Program Administration

- Statewide Virtual Program Promotion (**Friday Folders- 225**)
- Mental Health and Wellness Considerations with Native American Individuals (4 CEU)
- StrongBodies Volunteer Management
- WRIC (Wild River Interpretive Center) Board Meetings
- Opioid Settlement Taskforce (OST) Meetings
- Midpoint Evaluations
- AODA & Mental Health Coalition (Monthly/Ongoing)
- Program Manager (Family Engagement and Relationships) Check-In
- FER (Family Engagement & Relationships) Monthly Meeting and Regional Meeting (Virtual)
- HDRI (Human Development & Relationships Institute) Monthly Meetings
- Completed Monthly Planning & Reporting
- Vacation Time over Holidays

4-H - Positive Youth Development



Maria Bournoville - 4-H Educator
100% Appointment



Career Day

The 4-H Educator collaborated with the Health Department and Florence High School to coordinate a Career Day for high school students. Sixteen local businesses and organizations participated, offering presentations on a wide range of career paths. The career areas were selected based on results from a student interest survey conducted by the 4-H Educator. Over the course of two hours, 116 students, who signed up in advance, were able to explore four

different career sessions aligned with their interests. **116 Students, 16 Presenters**

Question, Refer, Persuade (QPR) Suicide Prevention Class

Sidnie from the Health Department and the 4-H Educator co-facilitated a QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) suicide-prevention training for Florence Middle and High School students. The session introduced students to practical skills for recognizing when someone may be struggling, offering supportive responses, and connecting them to appropriate help. The training focused on building awareness, strengthening help-seeking behaviors, and empowering students to look out for one another in ways that promote safety and well-being. **10 participants**



4-H Cloverbud Club



4-H Cloverbud Club meets once a month on the third Tuesday of the month. The goal is to introduce youth in K-2 grade to 4-H and provide an opportunity for them to explore their sparks and provide a sense of belonging. In November students focused on learning about generosity, in partnership with the girl scout troop we made Christmas cards for all Florence County home-delivered meal participants and in December we made ornaments and cookies to share with our loved ones. **16 Cloverbud Students 5 Parents/Grandparents & 5 Siblings**

4-H Big Shooters Club

The 4-H Big Shooters meet on the 1st Sunday of each month and continue to be a GREAT group. Some of them are attending the 4-H Gambler Hockey game this weekend. All volunteers have completed their enrollment process, and the club is fully chartered. **11 participants, 7 Adult Volunteers**

TORPEDOs

A classroom club for high school students (TORPEDO: Together Our Responsibility Publicly Embraces Dedication and Opportunity) where youth learn life skills through community engagement and service and give back to the Florence Community. Members participate in monthly meetings and volunteer for at least one activity or event. The 4-H Educator provides ongoing leadership, mentoring and support for the TORPEDO Club. **40 TORPEDO Members**



ADRC Bingo: At the Aging and Disability Resource Center meal site, older adults and high school TORPEDO members came together to share lunch and build meaningful connections across generations. Following the meal, TORPEDO members led a fun group BINGO game, complete with prizes they purchased to make the experience extra special. The event fostered joy and community spirit, giving older adults and youth the chance to engage, laugh, and celebrate the holiday season together. Everyone had a wonderful time and expressed excitement about continuing this intergenerational tradition again next holiday season. **4 TORPEDO Members 12 Meal Site Participants**

Christmas in Florence: The 4-H high school TORPEDO club planned and implemented four crafts and activities (paint snow filled clear ornaments, wreath ornament made from pipe cleaners, scavenger hunt bingo/raffle and reindeer food making station) for younger students at the Christmas in Florence community event to foster a sense of community and engage with the younger generation. This initiative aimed to provide a fun experience for children while promoting the club's values of leadership, service, and creativity. Additionally, it was an opportunity for the high school members to demonstrate their organizational skills and give back to their community during the holiday season.

13 TORPEDO Members, 120 Youth & their Families



Elementary School Christmas Concert: Eight TORPEDO members played a pivotal role in the success of the elementary school Christmas music concert by taking on various responsibilities. They assisted with speaking parts, distributed instruments and props, managed and organized students, and ensured everything ran smoothly behind the scenes. Their efforts included prepping students for their performances and handling the clean-up afterward, showcasing their leadership, organizational skills, and community spirit. **8 TORPEDO Members**



Vending Machine: TORPEDO members follow the USDA smart snack criteria to order healthy snacks for the school vending machine. Members order food through the school and Amazon and then stock the vending machine weekly to provide smart snack options to middle and high school students. 4-H Educator provides training and assists and supervising purchasing. **2 TORPEDO Members**

Weekend Backpack Food Program: The Backpack Food Program provides free non-perishable, easy-to-prepare food for children in elementary school to high school to help them to avoid hunger over the weekend from food insecurity. TORPEDO students are actively engaged in this community project to help fight hunger in Florence. TORPEDO students learn about food insecurity, confidentiality, and food ordering to support the Weekend Backpack Food Program. TORPEDO students assemble and distribute 35 food bags a week.

30 participants 3 TORPEDO Members

Bobcat Buddies: Bobcat Buddies is developed and organized by the 4-H Educator. The program fosters positive relationships between middle and high school TORPEDO members and elementary students who benefit from having a consistent, caring role model. The program promotes social-emotional growth, leadership development, and a sense of belonging for both mentors and mentees. The program has grown tremendously. The 4-H Educator facilitated mentor training and the program is up and successfully running.

21 TORPEDO Members 33 Elementary Students

Food, Fun & Fitness & Outdoor Adventure Programs:

The 4-H Educator has been actively coordinating planning efforts for both the Food, Fun & Fitness (FFF) and Outdoor Adventure (OA) summer programs. Significant progress has been made over the past several weeks:

- **Secured New Funding:** Received a grant from the Dickinson Area Community Foundation to purchase much-needed non-consumable supplies for FFF, strengthening the program's long-term sustainability.
- **School Board Support:** In December, the school board approved absorbing the previous financial loss from Human Services and formally approved both programs for 2026, including authorization to hire staff.
- **Hiring Process Underway:** Collaborated with the school to post all program positions. The application window closed on January 22, and hiring efforts are now in progress.
- **Community Partnerships:** Currently meeting with community partners to secure facilities and ensure program spaces are ready for summer programming.
- **Additional Grant Work:** Partnered with Monica Chartier from the school to submit a grant application to support staffing and supplies for both FFF and OA.

These steps position both programs for a strong and successful summer, with continued collaboration across school, community, and funding partners.

Other Educational Programs, Professional Development & Program Administration

- Serving on the screen and selection committee for the Area 4 AED.
- Write letters of recommendation for scholarships for TORPEDO members.
- Planning and developing the College Discovery Tour.
- Working with new 4-H volunteer to start an Art & Craft club.
- Completed Monthly Planning and Reporting.
- Providing guidance and support to Big Shooters volunteers.
- Participated in 4-H Meetings, including the Northern Region Planning Committee.
- Completed mid-point evaluation for performance.
- Serve on Coordinated Services Team, AODA/MH Coalition.
- Assisted the ADRC with Stock Boxes in November & December.
- Two weeks of vacation over Christmas and New Year's Holiday.



Alyssa Miller – Health & Well-Being Educator
100% Appointment

Welcome Back Alyssa Miller!

On January 5, 2026, Alyssa Miller returned to Extension in a new position as a Health & Well-Being Educator. Alyssa was laid off in October 2025 due to federal funding being eliminated for the FoodWise program. During this layoff period, Alyssa became a licensed substitute teacher and enjoyed teaching at the Elementary, Middle and High School. Alyssa is elated to continue working with the community and school through her new position with UW-Madison Extension!

Botvin LifeSkills Training

The HWB Educator has been trained in the Botvin LifeSkills Training (LST) for grades 3, 4 and 5. The educator will be in the Elementary, Middle & High School teaching students the Botvin LifeSkills Training (LST) curriculum during this school year and next school year, with the goal of having ongoing LST programming. She started teaching the Botvin LST to the 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders the week of January 19th.

The Botvin LST is an 8-week, evidence-based program that teaches:

- Drug Resistance Skills, including Smoking Information, Advertising, and Assertiveness
- Personal Self-Management, including Self-Esteem, Decision-Making, and Dealing with Stress
- General Social Skills, including Communication Skills and Social Skills

Intended outreach: **88 Elementary Students (Grades 3, 4, and 5) bi-weekly**

Food, Fun & Fitness Program

The HWB Educator will be teaching at the Food, Fun & Fitness Program during the summer at the Florence Elementary and Aurora NWTC locations. Even though summer is a ways off, lesson planning will begin soon!!

Other Educational Programs, Professional Development & Program Administration

- Newly hired and currently going through the onboarding process. This includes regular, ongoing meetings with our AED, Program Manager, other Extension Educators, and community partners. This also includes seeking out information, resources, and programming that will help reduce identified gaps in our community.
- HWB Educator is registered for the Raising WI Children Conference on February 4th. This conference is a free, virtual event. This year's theme is Helping Children Thrive When Life Gets Tough.
- In April, HWB Educator will be trained to lead StrongBodies. The goal is to build on current Florence County StrongBodies Program; leading at least one new class in a different part of the county in 2026.

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

Tierany Rugg
Human Development & Relationships
Educator
Tierany.rugg@wisc.edu
(715) 528-4480 Ext. 5

Maria Bournoville
4-H Educator
Maria.bournoville@wisc.edu
(715) 528-4480 Ext. 3

Alyssa Miller
Health & Wellbeing Educator
Alyssa.miller@wisc.edu
(715) 528-4480 Ext. 4

Jane Lindow
Office Manager
Jane.lindow@wisc.edu
(715) 528-4480 Ext. 1

Amber Rehberg
Area Extension Director
Amber.rehberg@wisc.edu
(715) 784-1540

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

MH/AODA Coalition

All educators are members of the Florence County Mental Health/Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Coalition. Tierany and Alyssa attended the January meeting. Tierany will be facilitating the next meeting in April. Alyssa is exploring options within the coalition to promote behavioral health, including teaching the Botvin LST Program to a wider range of grades and parents, exploring the Teen Court Program, and assisting with the Keep It Real Program.

Florence County Stock Boxes

Extension Staff helped with Stock Box Distribution in December. January date was cancelled due to weather. The re-scheduled date was cancelled due to extremely cold. Ultimately, ADRC decided to not hold distribution in January, and will distribute two boxes on February 10th. Moving forward our NEW Health and Well-Being Educator will be assisting with monthly distribution, including providing indirect educational materials on healthy eating and active living. Intended approximate outreach: **124 Boxes distributed monthly**

Amber Rehberg – Area Extension Director
Florence, Forest, Vilas, Price, Taylor, Lincoln, Langlade, Oneida, Forest
County Potawatomi and Lac du Flambeau

Florence County Administrator Meetings

Over the past year, the Area Extension Director has provided leadership for the Florence County Administrators' bi-monthly meetings. In this role, the Director collaborated with county administrators to develop agendas, offer brief professional development opportunities, and facilitate effective discussions. In addition to strengthening communication across departments, the Director helped foster a positive, solution-focused environment that supported collaborative problem-solving and decision-making. Responsibility for coordinating and leading these meetings will transition to the ADRC Administrator beginning in 2026.

NEW Area 4 Extension Director

The hiring process for the new Area 4 Extension Director is underway through a formal Search and Screen Committee. Both the 4-H Educator and the current Area Extension Director are serving as committee members, contributing their knowledge of local needs, program priorities, and community partnerships. The position will play a key leadership role in supporting Extension work across Florence, Forest, and Vilas Counties. In addition, the new Director will work closely with tribal communities and serve as a tribal liaison, strengthening relationships, supporting culturally responsive programming, and ensuring that Extension efforts align with community-identified priorities.