

# WISCONSIN COUNTIES



4-H CENTENNIAL  
**100 YEARS  
OF GROWING  
WISCONSIN LEADERS**  
4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



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# 4-H CENTENNIAL 100 YEARS OF GROWING WISCONSIN LEADERS 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



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## The Pioneers of Wisconsin 4-H

*-Ginny Hall, Mary Kaye Merwin and Mary Wise, UW-Extension*

One hundred years ago, the University of Wisconsin-Extension youth programs became Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development. The first 4-H club had seven members and one adult leader; since then, Wisconsin 4-H and other UW-Extension youth programs have expanded to include 349,473 young people and 17,761 adult volunteers around the state. Today's 4-H owes its success to thousands of dedicated county 4-H educators and volunteers, and a small group of pioneers who laid the groundwork for 4-H to become the strong, respected program it is today.



Ransom Asa Moore came to Madison in 1895 to begin the Short Course in the University of Wisconsin-Madison College of Agriculture to

*Ransom Asa Moore, also known as the "Father of Wisconsin 4-H," Ransom Moore created the boys' and girls' corn clubs that grew into today's 4-H program.*

expand the knowledge and practices of farmers. Raised on a farm in Kewaunee County, Moore attended the Oshkosh Normal School and served as the Kewaunee County Superintendent of Schools and the President of the Kewaunee County Fair and Agricultural Society. As a means to expand farming practices, Moore distributed seeds to children through the schools and started corn-growing contests at county fairs. By 1910, he had established contests in 45 counties with \$16,000 offered in prizes.

*continues on page 10*



Left: Young people stand outside in back of piles of the fruits of an autumn harvest. C. 1920-1929 UW-Madison Archives. Right: A group of delegates spell out "W 4-H" during the 1933 State 4-H Club Week on the UW-Madison campus. In 2014, more than 500 youth from around the state will come to Madison for the 94th annual Wisconsin 4-H & Youth Conference. UW-Madison Archives.



4-H is a bond that I share with my family and my community, which exemplifies the values of rural life that have made me who I am today. 4-H participation and leadership passed through my family, from my father and his siblings in the 1940s to my daughter just beginning her Cloverbud experiences now, with my experience as Wood County 4-H ambassador, junior leader and Upham Woods junior camp director in between. The agricultural and social experiences provided me skills and connection to the community that I love and that I use serving as a state legislator.

*Amy Sue Vruwink, Wisconsin State Assembly representative, 70th Assembly District*

## 4-H Families Through the Generations

*—Christina Rencontre, 4-H Communication Arts Specialist and Program Liaison*

Research shows that the structured learning, encouragement and adult mentoring that young people receive through their involvement in 4-H makes a difference. The advantages of 4-H participation include better grades, higher levels of academic competence and higher levels of engagement at school. In addition, youth involved in 4-H are more civically minded and make more civic contributions to their communities. As we begin the 100th year of 4-H in Wisconsin, families from Marathon, Winnebago, Columbia and Shawano Counties describe the benefits of their involvement in the University of Wisconsin-Extension 4-H Youth Development through multiple generations.

Gerald Voigt grew up in Marathon County as part of what is now a four-generation 4-H family. Voigt was a member of the Naugart Free For All 4-H Club from 1954 until 1963. Voigt's mother was the general club leader at the time. Later, as a 4-H alumnus, Voigt took over for his mother and led the Naugart club for another 10 years. A year later, when his daughter

was old enough to join, Voigt took on the leadership of the Hamburg Happy Hearts and has been their general leader for the past 35 years. Initially Voigt's daughter, nieces and nephews were in the Hamburg club, and later his grandson Fletcher and granddaughter Mackenzie joined. His wife, Geraldine—also a former Naugart 4-H member—is also involved, and leads Cloverbuds as does Voigt's daughter.

Voigt felt it was important that his family be involved in 4-H because of

*continues on page 14*



## The Changing Face of Wisconsin 4-H

—Jacquelyn Askins, University of Wisconsin-Extension Public Information Specialist

As Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development looks to the future, new 4-H efforts around the state are expanding to address demographic shifts, health concerns and technological gaps, supporting Wisconsin 4-H and other University of Wisconsin-Extension youth programs as they move forward for the next 100 years.

### Multicultural programming promotes belonging

In Fond du Lac County, the Hispanic population more than doubled between 2000 and 2010, which inspired the county UW-Extension office to hire Carmelo Dávila as a Bilingual 4-H Youth Development Assistant. Dávila established a Hispanic 4-H group in Fond du Lac County; the group of about 20 youth focuses on fun and engaging ways to learn vital life skills.

Dávila says the youth decide how to structure their meeting time, so it may not look exactly like a traditional community club.

“We wanted to start the club with culturally relevant programming that’s more informal and comfortable,” he says. “And as these youth and their families become more comfortable with 4-H, we think they’ll be more likely to join one of the many traditional community clubs in Fond du Lac.”

#### ABOVE PHOTOS:

Top left: Learning how to prepare traditional foods is key to the Bad River Food Sovereignty Program. Top right: Healthy food options counted as a positive piece of the Iowa County Photovoice Mapping Project. Bottom left: Bad River elders reconnect tribal youth to traditional skills like harvesting wild rice. Bottom right: Many lessons in the Bad River Food Sovereignty program start with identifying the right materials. Youth learn how to identify maple trees for syrup.



Left: Tech Wizards gives youth an opportunity to connect with positive role models and showcase new technology skills. The Knatural Knights Tech Wizards team from Starbuck Middle School in Racine demonstrates their robot's moves at the FIRST Lego League Tournament. Above left: The 4-H Tech Wizards formal mentorship model thrives on small-group mentoring and strong youth-adult partnerships. Above right: Exploration and creative problem-solving is an important part of 4-H Tech Wizards and other STEM programming.



The 4-H program in Milwaukee County is important because it provides young people with programs and opportunities to explore their community while learning life skills. In Milwaukee County, 4-H also offers the 4-H SySTEMatics Program, which enriches young people in the pursuit of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers. I felt so strongly about the importance of this program that I requested \$50,000 in the 2014 county budget – and, with the help of the county board, obtained the funding. The 4-H SySTEMatics program will be expanded to the north side of Milwaukee County to open in three schools, targeting 100 middle schoolers. SySTEMatics, a certificate-based program, is offered in students' own schools and increases STEM competencies. STEM is important for the future of Milwaukee County, to help increase the number of STEM careers pursued here.

Willie Johnson, Jr., Milwaukee County supervisor and Wisconsin Counties Association vice president

Working with new populations is important to keep 4-H programs around the state growing and expanding into the future. Dávila sees demographic change as a great opportunity to promote cultural understanding and help young people become better citizens of the world. “The cultural exchange we’ll get as more Hispanic families with new histories and experiences join 4-H will enrich the Fond du Lac community and give young people an opportunity to learn how to better relate to people of different backgrounds,” he says.

### **Gaining independence by reconnecting to traditions**

Often, communities also benefit from reconnecting people with their own heritage. Two years ago, the Bad River Chippewa tribe in Ashland County worked with UW-Extension 4-H to apply for a federal grant to address the growing problem of obesity and juvenile diabetes on the reservation. The resulting Bad River Food Sovereignty program reconnects tribal youth

to traditional diets and harvesting activities, exploring how traditional food systems relate to overall health.

Bad River 4-H Youth Development Coordinator Jeremy McClain worked with existing tribal youth programs to develop a range of traditional harvest activities that engage young people and tribal elders. “Knowledge is often passed from elders to younger adults to youth,” McClain says. “I wanted to bring in elders to be the mentors and teachers, and give the young people an

*continues on page 18*



1: Wakelin McNeel explaining how homets live to students at Marquette School in Madison. ca. 1935-1950. UW-Madison Archives. 2: A parade of young 4-H members walk down State Street to the Capitol Square in Madison, carrying signs that indicate their places of residence. C. 1950. UW-Madison Archives. 3: Mae Hatch was the first volunteer 4-H leader in Wisconsin; she led the Linn 4-H Club in Walworth County. 4: Wakelin McNeel (standing, far right) with other Wisconsin 4-H administrative personnel at Chitek 4-H Camp, 1947. 5: Kenosha County 4-H'ers and the Kenosha County 4-H educator set up a vegetable stand for their gardening project in 1964. Community garden projects were very popular around Wisconsin 4-H in 2013. 6: Thomas Bewick: Thomas L. Bewick was the first Wisconsin State 4-H Program Leader. 7: Wakelin McNeel escorts the 1930 Wisconsin delegates to National 4-H Camp in Washington, D.C. 8: Elizabeth and Caroline Upham are awarded the Friends of 4-H plaque in 1941 after donating land for the Upham Woods Outdoor Learning Center.

## The Pioneers of Wisconsin 4-H (cont from page 6)

By 1914, 30 different agricultural contests were held in 57 different counties through rural schools.

The enactment of the federal Smith-Lever legislation in 1914 provided funding for land grant universities around the country to create the Cooperative Extension Service. The University of Wisconsin-Extension became the delivery system for sharing agriculture and home economics research and state-level boys' and girls' club work from the university with farm families across the state.

After the passage of the Smith-Lever Act, Moore recruited help for his youth clubs from a promising young agronomist, Thomas L. Bewick. On October 1, 1914,

Bewick was hired as the State 4-H Leader and he served in that capacity until 1947. During that same year, Elizabeth B. Kelley was hired as the first State Leader in Home Economics. She was instrumental in visiting counties to assist with the establishment of 4-H canning and sewing projects during the early years of 4-H.

Just weeks after he was hired, Bewick traveled to the home of Mrs. Mae Hatch of Linn Township in Walworth County to speak with four boys and three girls who agreed that evening to form the first official 4-H Club in Wisconsin.

Bewick organized the first statewide corn contest at the Wisconsin State Fair in 1915. By that time, 20,000 boys and



In 2014, Dodge County in partnership with UW-Extension is proud to continue its support of 4-H. Dodge County has a strong agricultural tradition. 4-H mirrors and proudly honors that tradition. Today, with 24 clubs and a combined enrollment of over 800 youth members and adult volunteer leaders, 4-H continues to provide the opportunity for our youth -- whether from the rural or urban reaches of the county -- to interact and learn from each other.

Dodge County 4-H members are active in our communities volunteering their time and talents in a variety of ways, from after school programs to nursing home visits. In 2013, Dodge County 4-H & Youth Development reached an additional 5,000 youth through non-traditional programming, such as school enrichment, community outreach events and summer day camps. An annual highlight for 4-H is the Dodge County Fair held each August, where members have the opportunity to demonstrate and exhibit projects as part of their learning experience. Dodge County 4-H continues to provide an opportunity for our youth to develop life skills and acquire experiences that will follow them throughout their adult lives."

*James Mielke, Dodge County administrator*



*Above: The historical marker declaring the Linn 4-H Club the first club in Wisconsin is unveiled in Lake Geneva, 1970. Below: Whether working with permanent or digital media, 4-H Arts & Communications projects have provided 4-H'ers with a path for exploration and expression.*

girls were members of Wisconsin 4-H clubs and enrolled in corn, potato and alfalfa projects. In the early 1920s, Bewick emphasized achievement in these newly formed clubs by providing a 4-H enrollment pin for new members and a second pin to those who finished their projects and submitted a record book. Bewick eventually served on a national committee that selected the 4-H Clover, still used today, as the National 4-H emblem.

Mrs. Mae Hatch organized and provided volunteer leadership to the first 4-H club in Wisconsin, from 1914 through 1932. Mrs. Hatch was a very active member of the community, serving as the Town of Linn Treasurer for 22 years. She was a charter member of several local clubs, and dedicated herself to supporting the area young

people as the volunteer leader of the Linn 4-H Club. Eventually the role moved to her daughter, Helen Hatch Robinson in 1932.

The history of Wisconsin 4-H would be incomplete without mentioning the Upham Woods Outdoor Learning Center. On August 22, 1941 Caroline and Elizabeth Upham donated 310 acres of land in Wisconsin Dells, including Blackhawk Island, to the University of Wisconsin-Madison to create an outdoor laboratory and camp where youth from Wisconsin could learn about the conservation, preservation and beauty of nature.

Elizabeth Upham Davis was born in Milwaukee in 1890. Having been educated at Downer College from 1908 to 1912, Davis became one of America's pioneers



in occupational therapy. Hired as a professor at Downer College in 1914, Davis grasped the potentials of occupational therapy as a therapeutic aid in the general field of rehabilitation.

Elizabeth's sister, Caroline Upham Keene, gladly joined her sister in donating Upham Woods in August of 1941. Caroline was born and raised in Milwaukee. In her youth, she developed a deep interest in the beauties and forces of nature that converged on Blackhawk Island, the family's summer home, which would become the Upham Woods Outdoor Learning Center.

Wakelin McNeel, a far-sighted faculty member of the UW-Madison College of Agriculture and Life Sciences,

approached Elizabeth Upham when he heard that she and her sister were looking to donate their recently inherited property. Wakelin McNeel, also known as "Ranger Mac," was a leader in Wisconsin 4-H and a pioneer of the school-forest movement in the state of Wisconsin, and he recognized the priceless educational value of the Upham property.

The deed of gift from the Upham sisters is incredible, not only because of the amount of land donated, but also because of the mandates stated in the deed. In addition to outlining acceptable and unacceptable uses for the site, the deed stipulated ecological and conservation mandates for the site, which was an incredibly far-sighted and





Opposite: The Wisconsin Interstate Championship Team demonstrates dyeing clothes at the Interstate Fair in Sioux City, IA. 1919. UW-Madison Archives. Above: The Clever Clovers 4-H Club in Jefferson County hosts an ice cream social to celebrate June Dairy Month in 1964.

almost unheard-of stipulation in 1941. Today, more than 9,000 annual visitors to Upham Woods can reconnect with nature the way the Upham sisters envisioned.

In addition to arranging the deed of gift for Upham Woods in 1941, McNeel sought alternate outlets for his zeal for conservation. He inspired thousands of junior conservationists with his weekly program “Afield with Ranger Mac,” which ran on Wisconsin Public Radio from 1933 to 1954. In 1944, McNeel was appointed as the

Wisconsin 4-H State Program Leader; he retired from the University of Wisconsin in 1950. Wakelin McNeel passed away on July 26, 1958 at the age of 74.

As Wisconsin 4-H begins its 100th year, we recognize the work of these early pioneers in creating a foundation for youth development for yesterday, today and tomorrow.

For more information about the history of Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development, visit <http://blogs.ces.uwex.edu/4hcentennial/history>. 📖



*At the 1937 Wisconsin State Fair, a group of girls who are 4-H members pose in the clothes they made as part of their club activities. 1937.*

## 4-H Families Through the Generations (cont. from page 7)

the lessons he carried away from his 4-H experience. “I think it teaches different skills that you need,” he says. “You get into things where you show your stuff and it doesn’t always come out right... it helps you get going when you have other challenges in life.”

Voigt was awarded a 45-year pin for his work in 4-H and in the same evening he was also awarded the C.J. McAleavy Award, which is presented to the 4-H leader who exemplifies the ideals and traditions of C.J. McAleavy’s dedication to the Marathon County 4-H Programs. Voigt’s motto may well be, “4-H Forever!” which is what he told the audience the night he received the awards.

Andy and Nancy Irving of Winnebago County are part of a three-generation 4-H family, which includes

Andy’s mom, Andy and his wife Nancy, and their children, Ben, Nate and David. The Irvings were both 4-H organizational club leaders, as well as project leaders and continue to be active in 4-H, with Nancy currently serving on the 4-H Leaders’ Association Board of Directors. Ben and David Irving are active in helping the 4-H Food Stand Committee to implement the square register system with iPad, which allows for more efficient ordering, providing a more real-life experience for youth.

Ben Irving describes joining 4-H as a Cloverbud at the encouragement of his parents and older brother, who were also involved in the program. During his time as a 4-H member, Ben completed many different projects: woodworking, photography, electricity, small motors



*A maple tree is planted in the 4-H Club Knoll on the UW-Madison campus to honor Ransom Asa Moore, the founder of Wisconsin 4-H. June 1941.*

Happy 100th birthday, 4-H! The opportunities for personal development you have provided to the youth of Northeast Wisconsin over the last century are beyond compare. You have cultivated generations of leaders with an enthusiasm for service to others and a desire to build strong, vibrant communities. I have seen the positive impact you have had on my own family, in my community, throughout Calumet County, within the great state of Wisconsin, across the country and around the world. I can't begin to thank you for all you have done, but I do look forward to the amazing work you will do for many years to come. You are truly a timeless classic.

*Representative Alvin Ott, Wisconsin State Assembly,  
3rd Assembly District*



and Winter Leadership Camp. Ben credits working on projects and presenting them for judging for building up his life skills; in addition, the experiences provided him with a sense of accomplishment. And the record-keeping and time-management skills he learned in 4-H serve him very well now as a student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Medicine and Public Health.

Bob Hagenow of Columbia County is part of a four-generation 4-H family and was originally involved in 4-H as a youth in Brown and Manitowoc Counties. Hagenow's grandfather Christopher was a general leader in Manitowoc County in the 1940s and his dad, Carl and aunt Marlene Seimers were also involved in 4-H as volunteers and hosts since the 1950s. Hagenow's sisters,

Carla Gunst of Waupaca, the editor of the *Wisconsin State Farmer*, and Amy Ryan of Fond du Lac, an award-winning Holstein farmer with her husband Chad, were both involved in 4-H during the '80s and '90s. Hagenow's daughters, Ashley and Sara, are current 4-H members involved in dairy judging, as well as horse, rabbit, foods and nutrition and photography projects.

Hagenow says that many 4-H lessons have stuck with him over the years, including the ability to work in teams, setting and meeting goals, project management, how to follow-up with people and projects, confidence in speaking in front of groups and much, much more. He thought his daughters would also find 4-H's life lessons valuable. Hagenow also noted that 4-H has been a very

## CARTOON *by Christian O'Connell*



***“It’s not my Mom’s 4-H anymore!”***

big part of his family’s life and has directly influenced their agriculture-related careers.

Tom and Betty Brunner of Shawano County are part of a three-generation 4-H family and met each other in 4-H. Betty’s mother helped start and lead a 4-H group. When Tom and Betty got married they became co-leaders of the A-Z 4-H Club; Tom led for 35 years and Betty for 39. During that time they served on Key and County committees, chaperoned for exchange trips to different states and served as hosts for international exchanges. Tom led dairy judging and Betty led dog obedience. The couple had four children: three boys and a girl who were all involved in 4-H. Their daughter, Terri is now the 4-H Program Assistant in Shawano County.

When asked how things have changed in 4-H since the late 1940s, the Brunners talked about the move from rural

to urban, as rural populations have declined. According to the couple, food preservation and sewing projects have gone down, but there are increases in craft projects and new projects such as rocketry, shooting sports and self-determined. Terri’s experience in 4-H imparted lessons she continues to use today in her work with Shawano County 4-H members.

“Training my little Pom taught me patience, tolerance and that sometimes no matter how much you work and how prepared you are, you will fail,” she says. “But, sometimes failure is the better teacher. Today as I work with our 4-H’ers, I am continually reminding them it’s not always about blue ribbons, but the lessons learned to help them become blue ribbon kids!”

To learn more about opportunities in Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development, visit <http://4h.uwex.edu>.

# CURRENT 4-H PROGRAMS



1: Delivering 4-H programs around the state would be impossible without the help of more than 17,000 dedicated adult volunteers. The typical 4-H volunteer gives hundreds of hours per year to the program. 2: In addition to the basic project lessons, youth learn public speaking and communication skills through demonstration requirements. 3: 4-H animal science programs teach responsibility and accountability. In addition to large animals like beef, swine, horses and dairy, many small animal projects like rabbits and dogs are available for young people in suburban and urban environments. 4: 4-H is the source of many lifelong friendships and provides a sense of belonging that is important for positive youth development. 5: Wisconsin 4-H clubs conduct an average of five service activities per year, per club, including cleaning up parks, organizing food drives, making blankets and more. 4-H clubs maintain more than 330 miles of Wisconsin roadside through the Adopt-A-Highway program.





Eau Claire County's 4-H programming has grown into every aspect of our community. Our proven-positive youth development concepts continue to thrive through traditional 4-H clubs and activities. More recently, 4-H community collaborations began to form. An exciting new 4-H partnership with UW-Eau Claire Bluegold Beginnings Mentoring Program is providing a pathway to higher education for kids that feared college was only a dream. Coupled with UW-Extension's 4-H After School Programs, the new effort targets high-risk kids. Bluegold Beginnings college students mentor students in after-school settings and focus on their futures, working with 35 students at four sites. This program extends through high school and ties in with the College Knowledge prep curriculum. I am so pleased that 4-H programs are now reaching new youth audiences with innovative programs. So 'hats off' to the next hundred years of working together to help create the next generation of leaders.

*Colleen Bates, Eau Claire County supervisor and Wisconsin Associated County Extension Committees Board of Directors member*

## The Changing Face of Wisconsin 4-H (cont from page 9)

opportunity to learn hands-on from respected community members about the equipment, location and skills needed to harvest traditional foods." So far, 120 youth and eight tribal elders have participated in the food sovereignty program.

Throughout the year, Bad River youth can learn how to tap for maple sugar, plant and restore gardens, harvest wild rice and press apples into cider. McClain structured the programs so that each year, participants can build on the skills they learned the year before.

"Our wild rice program accommodates first-year participants who need to learn how to make the harvest tools," McClain says. "Second-years will want to go out and harvest wild rice, and third-years who have done the first and second lessons already can harvest more rice, then learn how to cook, package and distribute it."

Every participant gets to enjoy some of the food they helped make or collect, and McClain says next year they will share each harvest with other Bad River community

institutions. The program will also expand to include a fish harvest in 2014, including learning how to make and set nets.

### **Using technology to shape the future**

An innovative 4-H program in Iowa County helps youth connect with their communities in a different way—by using technology to shape the health and future of Iowa County. The Iowa County Photovoice Mapping project asked 10 youth from four communities to take pictures that would answer the question, "What is Healthy?" The groups from each community identified the same themes: Exercise and Being Active; Healthy Food; Going Green; and Safe Environments.

The youth worked with a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Landscape Architecture to map the coordinates of each photo online using GPS tags and brought their findings to their school districts, county boards and 4-H community clubs.

As a result, the 4-H clubs switched to healthier snacks and added ways to be more active during club meetings. Two of the youth shared their photos with the Mineral Point Wellness Committee; they were invited to join the committee and planned the first Activity Night, which used gymnastics, bike rides, weight training and other wellness stations at Mineral Point High School to show community members easy ways to be active in their own neighborhood.

4-H Tech Wizards brings new mentorship model

In addition to connecting youth with new technologies, the 4-H Tech Wizards program, sponsored by a grant from the United States Office

of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, brings a new mentorship model to Wisconsin 4-H. “Formal mentoring has been proven to be the most effective way to support at-risk youth without stable home lives,” says 4-H Youth Development Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Specialist Joanna Skluzacek.

The 90 youth members and 25 adult mentors from four communities around Wisconsin—Kenosha, Milwaukee, Prairie du Chien and Racine—meet weekly in small groups. “The goal of Tech Wizards is to help each participant form a strong relationship with a caring adult,” Skluzacek says. Youth work

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## The Changing Face of Wisconsin 4-H (cont)

together with their mentors to complete robotics and other STEM projects, tour area colleges and compete in robotics rallies year-round.

Evaluations show that adult mentors and youth members take a lot away from their time with 4-H Tech Wizards. "Adults say they've gained technology skills from working with the robotics kits and computers," Skluzacek says. "And a high percentage felt it helped them in their career and workplace." Youth participants value the relationship with their mentors and enjoy using creativity and imagination

in an out-of-school environment.

Wisconsin 4-H Tech Wizards began in January of 2011 and received an additional grant to fund it through January 2015. Skluzacek looks forward to expanding the program to reach about 150 youth and expand to a new community—in 2014, Tech Wizards will add another site for youth in military families at Fort McCoy and the Sparta School District in Monroe County.

To learn more about other new opportunities in Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development, visit <http://4h.uwex.edu>.

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