



Oneida Extension Educators and Staff made 498 Direct Programming Contacts in the months of January and February; with 412 Adult Contacts and 86 Youth Contacts. Office Administration assisted two Oneida County departments with projects.

Health and Well-Being Educator, Laurel Parins, guest starred on Up North @ 4 (WJFW-12); which has a reach of 8,000-11,000 households per day and 148,000 website views per month.

Oneida Extension made indirect contact with 5,380 viewers through the Extension Oneida County Facebook and the Oneida County 4-H Facebook.

2026 Cumulative Total: 498

Contacts: 412 Adults and 86 Youth

2026 Cumulative Indirect Outreach: 5,380

January & February 2026

Positive Youth Development Oneida County 4-H

Anne Williams, 4-H Educator, .5 FTE

- Facilitated a youth-adult work session focused on practicing American Sign Language vocabulary for use during upcoming club meetings. This ongoing initiative strengthens inclusive communication, supports leadership development, and enhances accessibility across the club.



Youth members in the Northwoods Explorers 4-H Club's sign language education committee teach their peers signs during the January 4-H club gathering.

"The club has allowed our girls to make an impact using their strengths & values - one example being the creation of the sign language committee in order to connect to another club member and bring education & awareness to the rest of the club. And they have met some new friends along the way! We are so incredibly thankful to have this club!"

- Parent of Northwoods Explorers 4-H Club members

"All of my kids LOVE 4-H! They are always excited for the meetings. I love 4-H because I know they are developing leadership skills. Most of all I love the welcoming, kind atmosphere that you provide."

- Parent of Northwoods Explorers 4-H Club members



Members of the Northwoods Explorers 4-H Club's sign language committee teach their peers signs related to Valentine's Day as part of the February club gathering.



- Advanced planning efforts for the Oneida County 4-H Youth Summer Theater Program, serving students entering grades 1–12 from public, private, and homeschool settings. The weeklong program is designed to help youth build confidence, strengthen communication skills, form new friendships, and explore creative expression through the performing arts.
- Supported a youth-led Northwoods Explorers 4-H Club Meeting where members facilitated business, recreation, and hands-on educational activities. This club environment helps youth develop leadership skills, practice group decision-making, and build meaningful relationships with peers and caring adults in a welcoming, supportive atmosphere.
- Provided leadership and administrative support to the Oneida County 4-H Leaders' Association as members reviewed recent events, discussed countywide program planning, explored fundraising opportunities, and managed the association's budget. The association continues to serve as a collaborative forum where volunteers contribute ideas and strengthen 4-H Youth Development efforts across the county.



A third-grade Northwoods Explorers 4-H Club member demonstrates how to safely use a knife to cut a dragon fruit, while also talking about the benefits of trying new foods.



Casey Rustan, Oneida County 4-H volunteer, leads a hands-on activity about beaver ecology to members of the Northwoods Explorers 4-H Club in January.

- Facilitated a planning session for adults working to establish a 4-H robotics chartered group. Participants learned the steps to form a chartered 4-H club, developed the group's mission, vision, and goals, and selected officers. As a result, the emerging club is now equipped with clear structure and leadership to provide high-quality robotics opportunities for area youth.
- Collaborated with the UW–Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences to plan science education opportunities for youth, teens, and families. The goal is to offer hands-on learning experiences at Kemp Natural Resources Station and the Rhinelander Agricultural Research Station, giving participants the chance to explore science in real-world settings while expanding access to UW–Madison resources in our rural region.

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- Maintained regular communication with student representatives in the Oneida County Youth in Governance program while collaborating with county staff and board partners. These efforts ensure that youth remain engaged with their supervisor mentors and continue building the confidence, skills, and relationships needed to participate meaningfully in local government.



"This program helped me open my eyes to how every decision has a big impact throughout the county."

Student representative of the 2025-2026 Oneida County Youth in Governance program members

TOP: Oneida County 4-H member Vella, (second from left) who is a student representative in the Oneida County Youth in Governance Program, participates in the January full Oneida County Board meeting.

RIGHT: Three students from Lakeland Union High School and Rhinelander High School participated in the Oneida County Youth in Governance program in 2025-2026.



- Coordinated an engagement opportunity for Youth in Governance student representatives to attend a full Oneida County Board Meeting, where they reflected on their experiences and shared how they plan to apply what they have learned. This experience deepened their understanding of local government, strengthened communication and leadership skills, and inspired greater civic engagement.

Positive Youth Development

Sharon Krause, Community Youth Development Educator, .5 FTE

- Continued to support the collaboration between Oneida County Teen Court and Native American mentors at Lakeland Union High School. As part of restorative requirements, Teen Court respondents meet with these mentors to build positive relationships, promote accountability, and connect with supportive adults who can guide them throughout their high school careers. This partnership continues to grow and remains an important component of culturally responsive youth development within the community.



From a Native American mentor: I am just emailing to let you know the respondent did meet with me once a week for the last 4 weeks, we also agreed that we will continue to meet weekly to help with whatever they need. Thank you for sending them my way! I love the bond we have made over the past weeks.

Health and Well Being

Laurel Parins, Health & Wellbeing Educator, .73 FTE

- Led and coordinated the *Sit & Be Fit* Exercise Class, which is a gentle exercise class designed to improve strength, flexibility, balance, and overall mobility. Participants enjoy a combination of seated and standing exercises, light strength training, and stretching to support healthy movement for everyday life. This welcoming class is perfect for older adults or anyone looking for a low-impact way to stay active in a supportive community setting. This class serves approximately 25 individuals per week.
- Presented in January and February on NewsWatch 12 for the monthly wellness series with Agnes on Up North at 4. The focus on this series is to provide simple ways to support health and well-being. During the January and February segments, nutritious recipes were shared, easy exercises demonstrated, and evidence based tips were given to help community members stay active, energized, and healthy during the winter months.



Total Reach: 1400 Readers of the ADRC Newsletter; 11,000 households per day and 148,000 website views per month for Up North @ 4 (WJFW-12).



Community Development

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Brittany Beyer, Resource Procurement Specialist, Broadband Team

- **Conference Presentation – Wisconsin Economic Development Association (WEDA) Governors Conference:**

Delivered the presentation “From Broadband to Prosperity: Empowering Wisconsin’s Digital Workforce” at the 2026 WEDA Governors Conference. The session provided elected officials, economic development professionals, and public-sector leaders with strategies to strengthen local digital economies, highlighted examples from Wisconsin communities, and introduced programs that increase access to essential technology for historically disconnected populations.

Office Administration

Jessica Young, Oneida County Extension Office Manager, 1 FTE

Young provided extensive administrative, financial, and programmatic support to multiple Oneida County departments, neighboring counties, and statewide Extension initiatives. Major activities included:

- **Finance Department Support:** Assisted with organizing and mailing tax documents to Oneida County employees.
- **Human Services Department Support:** Assisted with reorganizing office space and transitioning hardcopy files into the NetSmart database. This project will continue throughout 2026, with weekly support provided as capacity allows.
- **Forest County Extension Support:**
 - Assisted with 4HOnline registrations and maintained updated membership rosters.
 - Updated the Forest County Extension website by removing outdated material, adding new content for upcoming events, and ensuring accessibility compliance.
- **Wisconsin 4-H – American Spirit East (ASE):** Supported planning and coordination of the upcoming ASE educational travel experience. Compiled data, notes, files, and calendars into a master planning list; updated program forms, evaluation tools, and the ASE webpage.
- **Extension Specialist Resource Directory:** Conducted research on Extension Research Specialists and local partners to create a county-focused resource directory connecting Oneida County residents with UW–Madison expertise.
- **Lego Robotics Program Reset:** Completed a full reset of program supplies by reorganizing LEGO components, inventorying electronic equipment returned by volunteers, and restructuring the storage area to accommodate program growth.
- **Committee Support:** Took minutes for the CUW Committee and prepared a summary for the County Board newsletter.
- **Website Policy Implementation:** Reviewed recent Extension website policy updates and developed a comprehensive task checklist to ensure all Oneida County Extension webpages align with policy requirements. Made the necessary adjustments.
- **Youth Creative Arts & Communication Expo (April 11, 2026):** Began planning for the annual event by creating a 4HOnline registration form, updating the webpage with photos and accessible content, designing event and registration flyers, creating a Facebook event, updating weekly communication emails with event information, creating registration tracking lists (sign-in sheet, emergency contact information, allergy and



accommodation information, etc.), and submitting information to community calendars and partner organizations.

- **Extension Staff Training:** Provided onboarding support and orientation for a new Price County Staff.
- **Contract and Insurance Coordination:** Submitted contracts to Business Services for approval and coordinated Certificates of Insurance to support program implementation.
- **County Board Refreshment Table:** Organized and prepared refreshments for the February County Board meeting on behalf of Oneida County Youth in Governance (OCYG).
- **Financial Management:** Managed all fiscal operations for the Extension Oneida County office, including accounts payable, purchasing, mileage, accounts receivable, budget tracking, and financial reporting.
- **Resident Services:** Assisted local residents with general inquiries and soil sample processing.
- **4-H Family and Volunteer Support:**
 - Assisted families with online registrations and questions about upcoming 4-H programs.
 - Guided new volunteers through the certification process, including training requirements and background checks.
- **Teen Court Support:** Researched and compiled a directory of youth volunteer opportunities in Oneida County to assist Teen Court panelists when assigning tasks to respondents.
- **Youth Summer Theater Program (July 2026):** Began program planning by creating a 4HOnline registration form, updating webpages and FAQ documents, creating an Eventbrite page for payments, designing flyers, managing registration sheets, creating a Facebook event, updating weekly communication emails with event information, creating registration tracking lists (sign-in sheet, emergency contact information, allergy and accommodation information, etc.), proofreading grant applications, submitting contracts for approval and certificate of insurance, and distributing information through community calendars and partner networks.
- **Youth in Governance (2026–2027):** Updated the website and program handbooks with new information and volunteer requirements in preparation for the next program year.
- **Teen Court (2026–2027):** Updated the online Qualtrics application and website for the upcoming cycle.
- **Educator Support:** Assisted Extension educators with various administrative projects and program-related requests.
- **4-H Lego Robotics Festival:** Supported event preparations by creating certificates, organizing luncheon supplies, and preparing LEGO materials.

Amber Rehberg, Area 3 and 4 Extension Director

The start of the year has been active across both Area 3 and Area 4 as I continue providing leadership and support during this period of transition. Focus remains on maintaining strong communication with staff and county partners while ensuring programming and operations move forward smoothly. Hiring has been a major priority. I am serving on the search committee for the Area 4 Extension Director position, which will support Florence, Forest, Lac du Flambeau, Vilas, and Forest County Potawatomi. Additional hiring efforts include the Forest County Community Development Educator position, which will strengthen local planning and community engagement. Worked with Taylor County, to provide a leadership workshop for department administrators. Mid-Year Reviews were completed for educators; spent time connecting with staff, to better understand their needs, and support their professional growth.