

# EXTENSION, MANITOWOC COUNTY NEWSLETTER

## Adult Mental Health First Aide Classes—zoom option

By: Cath Tease

I was recently trained in Adult Mental Health First Aide (AMHFA), a program of the National Council for Behavioral Health and the Missouri Department of Mental Health. We all know that COVID-19 continues to have a major impact on our mental health. The AMHFA course is the initial help given to someone experiencing a mental health problem before appropriate treatment and support are obtained. It may be used in response to a crisis situation, or when a person is developing a mental illness. The aim of the Adult Mental Health First Aide course is to demystify the topic of mental illness, to increase mental health literacy and to decrease stigma. Just like regular first aid, this course does not teach you to be the professional, the therapist, counselor or to diagnose. This course teaches us how to recognize the symptoms of mental health problems, how to offer and provide initial help and how we are so pleased to offer Adult Mental Health First Aide throughout Manitowoc County.



Pictured Above: Adult Mental Health First Aide Graduating October 2020 Class

In 2021 I will begin to co-teach this course. This is an eight hour course that can be taught in one day or two half days within the same week. Yes, it is a time commitment and we anticipate helping non-profits with limited resources offer high quality continuing education to staff and volunteers working with our community.

AMHFA is a science driven course that is offered in over 20 countries.

The University of Madison Extension received a grant to offer this course at no cost in 2021.

To learn more or request the training for your group please contact me at [cath.tease@wisc.edu](mailto:cath.tease@wisc.edu)

## Farmers Market Succeeds Despite Setbacks

By: Laura Apfelbeck

The Manitowoc Farmers Market, crown jewel of downtown Manitowoc, offers shoppers stunning views of the Manitowoc River near the mouth of Lake Michigan. Across the street from the Manitowoc Public Library, 40+ vendors offer fresh produce along with locally produced cheeses, breads, meats, flowers and handcrafted work.

In 2016, Travel Wisconsin called the Manitowoc Farmers Market “one of the fastest growing farmers markets in the state.” But 2020 brought some surprises including the departure of the market manager and, of course, COVID-19. Loss of a market manager often creates a ripple effect in the community. Programming may change, vendors may feel uncertain and leave, and the market may lose the ability to accept food share dollars. FoodShare dollars are “spent” through electronic benefits transfer machines (EBT), devices that are assigned via social security number. If the departing market manager handled EBT, the market may be unable to accept FoodShare dollars until new system is procured, which can take months or years to secure.

In 2020, the Manitowoc Farmers Market experienced a change in market management, and suddenly SNAP-eligible families could not spend their FoodShare dollars and local growers lost income until a new system could be established. New market manager Lauren Philippsen had to scramble to maintain vendor relationships, prepare to open with COVID safety measures in place, work with the City to find sponsorship dollars, and re-establish EBT. Jen Bartz, Manitowoc Community Development Department, reflected, “I had no idea where to start with the Farmers Market. Not only was I new to the city, I was new to farmers markets in general. I asked staff who were previously involved for any assistance and FoodWise was at the top of the list. I knew that EBT and access to fresh produce is important to families, but had no idea how to get started on EBT, promotion, etc.” Bartz said, adding FoodWise was “able to provide me with many great resources and ideas.”



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Families who receive SNAP benefits receive only about \$1.40 per person, per meal. Double dollar programs stretch the family budget, increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables while keeping food dollars in the community. Philippsen said EBT is an important way to “reach people from the community who might not have access or felt it was out of their price range.”

Funded by Aurora Healthcare & BayCare Clinic sponsorships, Manitowoc’s Double Dollar program supports each FoodShare recipient to spend 10 dollars each week and purchase \$20 of fresh produce. Philippsen said that while EBT usage was low this year due to the late season kick-off, those who did use EBT returned every week. She hopes to expand on this promising start and do more to explain the value of EBT to the vendors and to the community. “Launching EBT at the Market was challenging,” Bartz stated, “but the support of FoodWise was extremely helpful. From early on you were able to provide me with so many resources and connected with your counterparts to offer guidance and perspective.” Being able to re-establish EBT allowed the market to serve families and double their food dollars – stretching their budget and incorporating local produce.

Priorities for the future include an information kiosk to share information about how farmers markets work, offer tours, share market events, showcase seasonal produce, and explain how to spend FoodShare dollars at the market. Currently, FoodShare shoppers must first find the market manager. On a busy day, that can be both challenging and stigmatizing. An information kiosk would make it easier to spend dollars from Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (Senior voucher), or Women Infants & Children (WIC) Farmers Market Nutrition Program.

Manitowoc Mayor Justin Nichols added, “The Downtown Farmers Market is a community event and an opportunity for local farmers to offer their product to consumers who want direct access to fresh, local produce. As part of the market, access to all is extremely important and we recognize that there are families in our community who have access to FoodShare benefits. Providing the opportunity to these families to use their benefit at the market is extremely important, and, through the support of generous sponsors we were able to offer the double bucks program.”

### **Fill the Hill with Clovers and Eggs-travaganza!**

**By: Kevin A. Palmer, 4-H Youth Development Educator**



Camp TaPaWingo needs your help! The Fill the Hill with Clovers fundraising campaign’s goal is to fill the sledding hill at camp with clovers by Christmas! The COVID-19 pandemic has created some unique challenges for Camp TaPaWingo. This campaign is a chance for us to come together as a community and support this important resource and ensure it will be there for future generations of youth. You can help now by sponsoring one, two, or ten clovers! Clover donations are \$25/clover, and clovers will be placed on the hill daily. At the end of the campaign, the clovers will be given to 4-H families across the county to display in their yards to show that Manitowoc County is 4-H strong!

Donate here: [https://bit.ly/4-H\\_Clovers](https://bit.ly/4-H_Clovers)



Star Splitters and Liberty Go-Getters 4-H Clubs hosted a Zoom on Monday, December 14 from 6:00—7:00 pm for the Eggs-travaganza. The purpose of the Zoom was to introduce K-12 youth to STEM principles with the focus on egg experiments. The activities are interactive and hands-on. The topics and descriptions of the activities for the four age levels is listed below. All of the sessions are led by youth. A follow-up Zoom will be then be hosted in January to discuss the results of the various egg experiments.

**Cloverbud** - Egg Engineering. Can you build a tower with eggs? Or would you rather catapult an egg against that tower?

**Elementary** - Egg Handling. Imagine holding a raw egg in your hand without a shell, like a squishy ball. How can that be? Come to this 4-H activity to find out and try it!

**Middle** - “Houston, we have an egg problem here.” This experiment will test your engineering skills. Design a capsule to protect a raw egg from cracking on impact by insulating it or slowing it’s decent. With each run, make edits to your capsule to improve your design. Get ready to test your creativity and knowledge, this is going to be egg-citing!

**High School** - You will be assimilated. Can eggs prove osmosis? The activity Experimenting With Osmosis Through Eggs is meant to help show high school students in 4-H how osmosis works. We will begin by creating a naked egg and then placing the egg into water then corn syrup to see how it will react. I hope to see you there!