

Developing an Extension Program in Aging:
An Historical Perspective

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Case Study

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Abstract

University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension began to develop an education program focused on older adults in 1993. Changing demographics have indicated growing numbers of older adults in our state and needs assessments have consistently indicated the needs of this group and those who care for them as a priority. This article provides an historical overview of the development of this program by describing activities, partnerships, supplemental grants and technology used to support the program. Key informant interviews and examination of past documents such as plans of work provided the methodology for this retrospective examination of the development of this program.

Developing an Extension Program in Aging: An Historical Perspective

Situation Statement

The aging of the baby boomers has been discussed and written about for decades. Yet, the reality of how individuals, families and communities will respond to and cope with the needs of this group as they age is just beginning to shape Extension's educational programs. Universities, especially land-grant universities and the Cooperative Extension Service, are responding to census data that project the population age 85 and over could grow from 5.3 million in 2006 to nearly 21 million in 2050 (Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics, 2008).

Rural communities, with a higher proportion of older adults than urban centers, will struggle to support this aging population. Rural communities face a declining population, fewer people of working age and a decreasing tax base to assist families who assume caregiving responsibilities. Families have been and will continue to be the foundation of our nation's long-term care system with approximately 44.4 million caregivers over age 18 providing unpaid care to a family member over 18 years of age. Caregiving is a national challenge that affects one in five households, and this number is increasing annually. (National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP, 2005).

In the early 1980s, a small group of Extension specialists and educators began to address the need to educate the aging population, especially family caregivers. A 2002 national survey of Cooperative Extension statewide units found that nine states employed gerontology specialists and an additional eight had staff or a team who worked on gerontology-related projects or some type of relationship with a campus department or center that provided gerontology support (Nichols & Howard, 2002).

In 2004, Dr. Caroline Crocoll was named National Program Leader for Family Science at the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES). In this capacity, she led national research and Extension efforts in family issues across the lifespan. Through her expertise in aging issues and growing awareness of Extension's critical role in aging, she worked with specialists in the land-grant university system to document Extension aging programs across the country. During this process, Dr. Crocoll also documented a gap in expertise nationwide in gerontology or aging specialists in Extension. In 2005 she conducted a survey of Extension Family Life and Human Development specialists and found that aging was one of the top three areas of expertise needed in the system among six priority programming areas. Further, aging and family caregiving were identified as two of the 12 "hot topics" in human development programming. In 2006, recognizing the need for Extension to address aging and family caregiving issues, CSREES proposed a Current Research Information Systems (CRIS) Knowledge Area of Adult Development and Aging. At that time there were 15 Extension specialists in the United States providing national leadership and education on aging issues.

With the needs of older adults in Wisconsin becoming more evident as far back as the early 1990s, the Wisconsin Cooperative Extension program responded. In 1993, Wisconsin added a half-time specialist position with the expectation that a statewide aging program would be developed to meet the needs of Wisconsin's aging population. At that time a few county educators were programming in family caregiving and aging topics because of county demographics and needs within their county. They searched out programs, sometimes creating

their own resources without specialist support or using materials from other states. A full-time commitment was made to the specialist position in 1994.

Objectives

This information paper summarizes the 15-year history of Wisconsin's aging program. This case study will review the development of the initiative, factors that have supported its growth, and will provide recommendations for the future of Extension programs responding to the needs of an aging population. These lessons learned are summarized in the attached Summary of Wisconsin's Aging Program Development, 1993-2009 (Appendix A).

Methodology

This case study includes the following:

- Analysis of previous state team plans of work (1993-2008) documenting for each year major program activities, technology used to deliver programs and identification of state and national partners.
- Interviews with Wisconsin's current and former program directors, national program leader, and several early adopters among county educators (Appendix B.) These individuals were identified as those most closely associated with early development of the program, knowledge of the historical context, and other political and environmental factors.

Wisconsin's program specialist in aging and another Family Living program specialist in program development and evaluation collaborated to conduct these interviews and gather the data that tell the story of Wisconsin's dedication to education in the aging area.

Results and Findings

Analysis of Wisconsin's Aging Program from 1993-2008

As far back as 1993, Family Living statewide team plans of work identified key programming components of an aging program, including providing educational programs, partnerships, and the use of technology (See Appendix A. for details).

Wisconsin's Educational Programs

Programs offered by Wisconsin Cooperative Extension fell into four categories:

- Adaptation of existing programs. Wisconsin adopted a strategy of adapting programs from other states by including information and resources specific to Wisconsin. Examples included the University of Illinois Extension's "Caregiving Relationships: For People Who Care for Adults" curriculum to make it specific to Wisconsin by including local resources or expanding existing programs. Other examples included developing financial fact sheets on Wisconsin-specific laws for the Minnesota curriculum, "Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate?" and the Virginia curriculum, "What Every Adult Child Should Know: Protecting Your Retirement."
- Development of programs specifically for Wisconsin. These included satellite programs such as "Coping with Alzheimer's: You are Not Alone" and the creation of the *Senior Communiqué* (a monthly news release series focused on issues related to older adults) for county staff that could then be used locally in aging newsletters or as media releases. Another example was the development of a county caregiver fact sheet series into a statewide publication.

- Creation of programs through national partnerships with Wisconsin's leadership. Three satellite programs were developed ("Coping with Alzheimer's: Challenging Behaviors," "Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Legal and Policy Issues" and "Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Implications for Professionals and Agencies"). A pilot of the "Prepare to Care" curriculum was conducted in partnership with AARP and the states of North Carolina, New York and Oregon. The creation of the eXtension Family Caregiving Community of Practice was another example.
- Hosting of programs offered by other organizations that could also be utilized in counties. The Hospice Foundation of America's annual satellite program called "Living with Grief" or "Powerful Tools for Caregivers" curriculum offered by Legacy, Inc. were examples.

A concentrated effort to ease the time commitment for program implementation requirements made it easier for county educators to provide the program opportunity regardless of their primary education focus area. For example, the Hospice satellite program offered marketing tools and a facilitator guide with specific instructions on how to offer the program locally. This required little preparation time yet enabled local constituents to participate in a quality program with national experts.

Partnerships

Partnerships have been the foundation of Wisconsin's programming efforts, and most programs have been implemented through collaboration with national and/or state partners. These relationships have provided additional expertise, staffing, and funding. These partners have also served on advisory committees, provided feedback on statewide educational resources and participated as key collaborators in creating coalitions such as the Wisconsin Alliance for Family Caregivers and the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Partnership of Wisconsin. Another example of a partnership was working with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in translating the caregiver identity change theory into practice.

Technology

Technology was used to expand access to programs and help individuals who implemented UW-Extension programs. Trained class leaders could access training materials (evaluations, marketing materials, and class teaching tips) or educational resources for caregivers they supported via the website. Technology also enabled some fact sheets to contain county-specific data, including a PowerPoint presentation that told the "caregiver story" for their county. As of this writing, two titles related to aging have been created as part of the Wisconsin Families – Issues and Demographics series. Those titles include Family Caregiving and Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, available at <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/demographics/>. Additionally, the Grandparenting Today web site <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/grandparent/> was created to house information for professionals working with relative caregivers or grandparents raising grandchildren so they could access statewide legal information (developed by AARP), locate county support groups (updated by the Dane County Agency on Aging) or access additional educational resources such as the GRAND Resource guide and educational fact sheets (developed by UWEX). <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/grandparent/grand/index.cfm>

Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews focused on gaining the perspectives of individuals involved in shaping Wisconsin's aging program and the key elements of its development. More information about the key informant interviews is found in Appendix B. Several themes became evident from the interviews, including the importance of identifying a programmatic niche, the crucial role of a state specialist, the need for partnerships and building internal programming capacity.

Identifying a programmatic niche

All interviewees mentioned recognition of the changing demographics and identification of needs in communities related to aging as key factors in developing Wisconsin's aging program. In addition, it was critical to identify the most appropriate role for Extension and distinguish that role from other agencies. Use of a thorough and intentional process that included needs assessment, recognition of existing programs and resources, as well as identification of programming gaps was the key strategy in this part of the program's development. Wisconsin's program niche has been to position the aging process with a lifelong and family systems perspective as opposed to an individual human development issue. This approach was affirmed by one of the county based educators who said, "What I so appreciate about Wisconsin Extension is that aging programs fit into the larger aspect of family life. Extension employees bring this to the picture. We bring lots of good skills but also the perspective on the whole family."

Crucial role of a state specialist

Both county educators and administrators participating in these interviews emphasized the importance of having a state specialist focused on aging programs. This included the ability to foster relationships at the state and national level, and the commitment to building others' knowledge of aging issues, both internally and with external partners. Through the delivery of educational programs for internal and external audiences, people with similar interests were brought together. This helped advance the understanding of the need for aging programming.

Need for Partnerships.

The importance of reaching out to potential local and state partners cannot be overstated as relationship building was essential at all levels. Dr. Crocoll noted that Extension aging programs in the early 1990s began with partnerships with youth development groups and focused on intergenerational programming. Other states then came together to develop a satellite program funded through Children, Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR) on grandparents raising grandchildren. Currently there are multiple partnership programs for older adults including family caregiving. With the funding of the National Family Caregiver Support Program, the Aging network (the Administration on Aging, state units on aging, and area agencies on aging) recognized the need to keep family caregivers healthy through the provision of supports such as respite and education resulting in an opportunity for Extension to partner with other federal agencies.

The state and local partnerships identified in Appendix A give evidence of the important role these relationships played in building capacity, both internal to Extension and externally with many agency partners. This capacity to deliver education programs and other supports to aging individuals and their caregivers would not have been possible without those partnerships.

Building Internal Programming Capacity.

Funding was and continues to be a critical issue for program development in all content areas. Former State Program Leader Ellen Fitzsimmons reported that many states recognized the need for aging programming but did not have funding for staff. Dr. Crocoll highlighted the success Wisconsin had in identifying strategic partnerships to help with the work and the grants to support programs.

County educators reported that the opportunity to co-teach with the state specialist was also a valued experience of the program. This sharing of the “limelight” between the state specialist and county-based educator has been a positive factor in developing internal capacity and increased credibility at the local level. Current UW-Extension Family Living Program Director Laurie Boyce articulated how essential it was to Wisconsin’s program that workgroups with county and state expertise worked together in developing aging programs.

Summary and Implications for Extension

Wisconsin’s program must be understood within the context of the political, economic and demographics environment at the time of its conception. The lessons to be learned from the Wisconsin experience for other states wishing to build capacity for aging programming are rich, multi-dimensional, and grounded in a successful history.

1. The importance of having a specialist focused on aging issues has been clearly articulated in this case study. Opportunities for regional or multi-state sharing of a specialist may be appropriate for today’s funding environments and may be an acceptable alternative with adequate use of technology. Developing multi-state programs and partnerships that offer complements to each other in terms of expertise and content is a recommendation. This would create a national array of education programs related to aging issues. A specialist can provide a key connection from research to practice by making linkages between university researchers/teaching faculty and the county Extension educators.
2. The importance of building relationships at all levels is crucial. This includes the local programming delivery, state interagency and legislative relationships, and national networking among state specialists, researchers and others.
3. Identifying the most appropriate niche for Extension sets the stage for successful programming in the larger context of the aging network. Utilizing a thorough and intentional process that includes needs assessment, recognition of existing programs and resources, and programming gaps will help Extension accomplish this task.
4. Professional development for all interested colleagues is critical. This should include curriculum training, understanding of research foundations, conferences, and co-teaching. Quality products in curricula and resources facilitated by well-trained and insightful Extension educators are all important to the success of the programs. Training of others in the aging network may be appropriate as a strategy to build capacity within the state. These partnerships have been part of the strong foundation in Wisconsin and continue to help meet the needs of the aging population.
5. Extension’s challenge is to find ways to build on our past history of providing in-depth learning opportunities that address local aging needs while also embracing technology to create awareness and deliver local aging programs. As Dr. Crocoll stated, “Beyond Extension—aging is truly a global issue with lots of opportunity

- through technology to reach people around the world with Extension through eXtension¹.”
6. Funding to support capacity building of Extension staff and to pay for resources (curricula, web site development, training, etc.) is essential. Staff, resources and training will be required for Extension’s aging programs to continue to be recognized as a quality educational resource on aging issues within the state.

These recommendations build on valuable lessons learned from Wisconsin’s experience of developing an aging program and should assist other state Extension programs as they examine ways to establish an aging program or program focus that addresses the needs of older adults in their state. Likewise the future of Wisconsin’s high quality aging program depends on remembering these lessons learned and keeping a strong vision for continuing to build on these strengths and meet additional challenges as they arise.

¹ eXtension is an Internet-based collaborative environment where Land Grant University content providers exchange objective, research-based knowledge to solve real challenges in real time. <http://about.extension.org>

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Year	Activities	Partners-only new partnerships developed that year	Grants Received to support program	Technology Used to support programs
1993 (50%-state specialist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained colleagues on SOS for Caregiving (Senior Series) curriculum program • Wrote Elder Care publication series • Started Senior Communiqué on-going monthly news release • Formed Statewide Extension advisory committee to guide development of Cooperative Extension's Aging Program • Established monthly news release on older adult issues called the Senior Communiqué 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DHFS (Department of Health & Family Services) Bureau on Aging • Alzheimer's Chapter network • University hospital & Clinics 		
1994 (50%-state specialist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aired Coping With Alzheimer's: You Are Not Alone satellite program; translated into Russian • Convened Wisconsin Intergenerational Program (WIN) conference • Conducted Calumet County Dependent Care survey • Worked with state partners to help develop the Wisconsin Alzheimer's Institute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jewish Family Services in Milwaukee • Wisconsin Geriatric Education Center • Wisconsin Intergenerational Network • Wisconsin Alzheimer's Institute 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satellite video conference and web site
1995 (100% state specialist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Began working on development of grandparents raising grandchildren programs • Aired Coping with Alzheimer's: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satellite video conference and web site

Year	Activities	Partners-only new partnerships developed that year	Grants Received to support program	Technology Used to support programs
	Challenging Behavior satellite program			
1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Released the Waukesha County aging impact report • Taught state HCE senior series training • Promoted the annual Living With Grief satellite program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Hospice Foundation • Wisconsin Home and Community Education Organization 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satellite video conference
1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created two Generations Need Each Other educational modules • Created four issues of a statewide caregiving newsletter • Participated in Senior housing network • Created six educational units with videos for older adults on nutrition topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Agencies on Aging 	CYFAR (Children, Youth, and Families at Risk) grant-\$15,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generations Need Each Other modules made available on web
1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aired Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Implications for Professionals satellite program • Started Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Partnership of Wisconsin • Established statewide Managing Life's Transition Planning group to develop a plan on coping with life 		Brookdale Foundation grant-\$10,000 over two years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational materials to support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Implications for Professionals put on web http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/families/grandparenting.cfm

Year	Activities	Partners-only new partnerships developed that year	Grants Received to support program	Technology Used to support programs
	transitions			
1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed GRAND (Grandparents/Relatives Raising and Nurturing Dependent Children) resource guide for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren • Aired Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Implications for professionals and Agencies satellite program • Began repackaging project of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Implications for Professionals with AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) • Started the annual Elderly Nutrition Conference professional development conference • Published Grandparents Rights and Responsibilities: Wisconsin Laws • Developed seven Grandparents Raising Grandchildren fact sheets on different topics 		AARP-\$14,000 DHFS-\$25,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GRAND resource guide web site developed • Satellite program web site
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offered four educational sessions on grandparents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UW-Madison Alumni Office 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone (WisLine) • Developed Grandparenting Today web site to combine various

Year	Activities	Partners-only new partnerships developed that year	Grants Received to support program	Technology Used to support programs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raising grandchildren issues • Conducted grandparents raising grandchildren research projects in Milwaukee, Brown & Winnebago Counties. • Began Grandparents University • Provided Grandparents Raising Grandchildren conference in Milwaukee • Started the Wisconsin Alliance for Family Caregivers • Developed statewide program plan on family caregiving and grandparents raising grandchildren 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple partners in Milwaukee as sponsors of grandparent conference 		<p>grandparents Raising Grandchildren web sites into one http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/grandparent/index.cfm</p>
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained class leaders on the curriculum, Powerful Tools for Caregivers* • Aired Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Legal and Policy Issues satellite program • Started Master Trainer training for Powerful Tools curriculum • Developed trend data on family caregiving for statewide Extension program planning process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National partners offered satellite program • Trained class leaders from Wisconsin numerous agencies & organizations such as AgrAbility of Wisconsin, Interfaith organizations, Alzheimer's Chapter staff 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wisconsin Alliance for Family Caregiver web site developed http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/caregiving/ • Educational materials for satellite program Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Legal and Policy Issues • Established evaluation system for class leaders to input pre and post survey for Powerful Tools curriculum participants

Year	Activities	Partners-only new partnerships developed that year	Grants Received to support program	Technology Used to support programs
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed fact sheet series, Through the Eyes of a Child: Grandparents Raising Grandchildren 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fact sheets on web site along with brief on-line evaluation http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/grandparent/relationships/index.cfm
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted study with board members - Wisconsin Alliance for Family Caregivers collaboration and development of partnership Updated training for Powerful Tools curriculum class leaders Developed family caregiver demographic fact sheet Conducted WHA public television Caregiving Town Hall meeting Conducted study for Helen Bader Foundation on impact of statewide Alzheimer's program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UW-Madison School of Human Ecology Helen Bader Foundation Wisconsin Public Television 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the Eyes of a Child: Grandparents Raising Grandchildren web site that included brief evaluation survey
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trained class leaders on Caregiving Relationships for People Who Care For Adults curriculum * Trained class leaders on the Caregiving Near Life's End curriculum Attempted to revitalize GRG (Grandparents Raising Grandchildren) Partnership of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illinois Cooperative Extension Service Florida SunCoast Hospice State office on aging offices in Michigan, Georgia, Florida and Washington 	Partnership planning grant to support Alliance-\$25,000 Rally Points-\$10,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WisLine trainings for Powerful Tools curriculum class leaders

Year	Activities	Partners-only new partnerships developed that year	Grants Received to support program	Technology Used to support programs
	<p>Wisconsin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted statewide listening sessions as part of the Alliance's statewide listening session • Facilitated focus groups with caregivers and case managers in Wisconsin, Michigan, Georgia, Florida and Washington on responses to caregiver identity change theory • Started planning for e-conference on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren • Hosted statewide Caregiver Institute • WHA public television airing Forgetting statewide show including a segment on Powerful Tools curriculum outcomes • Began translation process with Dr. Rhonda Montgomery's caregiver identity change process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOPE of Wisconsin • UW-Milwaukee • Wisconsin Public Radio 		
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started two year project with local long term care councils and stakeholders throughout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UW-Milwaukee School of Social Work 	Helen Bader Foundation-\$32,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WisLine trainings for Caregiving Relationships for People Who Care For Adults curriculum class leaders

Year	Activities	Partners-only new partnerships developed that year	Grants Received to support program	Technology Used to support programs
	<p>Wisconsin to gather input into Wisconsin's long-term care re-design process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wisconsin professionals participated in national e-conference on grandparents raising grandchildren which specialist had teaching role. • Developed educational session for a public policy forum on the impact of family caregiving on businesses • Wrote and presented the family caregiving section for the strategic planning process used to gather input for Wisconsin's delegates to the White House Conference on Aging. • Explored with Quad counties potential programming opportunities for family caregivers • Worked with Wisconsin Library Association and offered three sessions for local librarians on programming opportunities for grandparents raising grandchildren • Held listening sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of Wisconsin- Department of Health and Family Services • Wisconsin Library Association 	<p>MetLife Award- \$25,000 to Alliance</p> <p>State of Wisconsin- App \$50,000</p>	

Year	Activities	Partners-only new partnerships developed that year	Grants Received to support program	Technology Used to support programs
	<p>throughout Wisconsin on the needs of family caregivers and professionals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held Statewide Caregiver Institute • Explored potential of joint aging programming between Michigan and Wisconsin • Participated as co-sponsor of Pathways to Financial Security conference 			
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided leadership to development of eXtension** Family Caregiver Community of Practice • Trained class leaders on Elder Care and Work: Finding the Balance* • Redesigned Wisconsin Alliance for Family Caregiving web site • Held sessions held with county staff and numerous community organizations on Caregiver Identity Change Process training 	John Paul Masory of Eldercare, Inc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eXtension-\$68,000 • eXtension-\$15,000 • Southeast Area Agency on Aging, Age Advantage Agency on Aging and AARP to support work of Alliance-\$10,000+ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WisLine trainings for Elder Care and Work: Finding the Balance curriculum class leaders • Alliance web site re-designed
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started two-year pilot Prepare to Care • Statewide Pathways 	Worked with Cooperative Extension staff in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AARP Foundation -\$80,000 	

Year	Activities	Partners-only new partnerships developed that year	Grants Received to support program	Technology Used to support programs
	Conference on financial management topics including caregiving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participated as co-sponsor of Pathways to Financial Security conference 	North Carolina, Oregon and New York AARP Foundation	over 2 years	
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapted the Iowa family caregiver curriculum • Adapted the Virginia family caregiver curriculum What Every Adult Child Should Know: Protecting Your Retirement • Redesigned state team plan of work to "Aging in the Community" with a focus on the impact of aging on Wisconsin communities 			Placed curriculums on web site

*Class leader trainings offered annually

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Through the years the state specialist in aging and county faculty and staff taught numerous family caregiving, intergenerational and grandparents raising grandchildren educational programs. This chart reflects major programs implemented in this time frame with the understanding that programs overlapped and many of the programs are on-going.

Key informant interviews were conducted by a Family Living Program Specialist during October, 2008. The following persons were interviewed via phone or in person to answer the questions listed below.

Interviewees:

- Caroline Crocoll, National Program leader
- Ellen Fitzsimmons, Former Wisconsin Family Living Program Leader
- Laurie Boyce, Current Wisconsin Family Living Program Director
- Faden Fulleylove-Krause, retired Family Living Educator, Calumet County
- Judy Knudsen, Family Living Educator, Brown County
- Kathy Miller, Family Living Educator, Bayfield County

Interview Questions

1. From your perspective, what was essential and key to building Wisconsin's aging programs?
2. What did you see happening in other states at the time we began to develop aging programs?
3. What advice would you have for other states as they work to build capacity to meet the challenges of an aging society?
4. Was there any key success or event that helped to advance the aging programming in Wisconsin?
5. How important was involvement at the national level to the success of Wisconsin's aging programs?

Summary of Interviewee responses by question.

1. From your perspective, what was essential and key to building Wisconsin's aging programs?
 - The role of the specialist was identified by most interviewees
 - Relationship building was identified as key, at all levels
 - Quality tools, curricula, and training opportunities
2. What did you see happening in other states at the time we began to develop aging programs?
 - Budgets were extremely tight in most states at the time we were developing our program
 - Some other states were also in the process of creating curricula
 - The need for aging programs was clearly recognized in many states and many had even higher demographic needs than WI at the time
 - Even outside Extension, the realization of aging demographics and frailty was growing
3. What advice would you have for other states as they work to build capacity to meet the challenges of an aging society?

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- Create and nurture relationships
 - Identify a long term plan
 - Have a clear understanding of the local needs
 - Specialist support is key – must be able to relate to both county staff and academic/research colleagues
 - Work across state lines or a regional approach
 - Identify the specific niche which fits best for Extension
4. Was there any key success or event that helped to advance the aging programming in Wisconsin?
- Clarifying our role from the beginning
 - Powerful Tools was an excellent curriculum to start out with
 - Securing the specialist position was key
 - Careful attention to roles and program niches
 - Approaches such as the use of technology and the creation of Grandparents University
 - Recognition and esteem for state specialist among various state level coalitions and other relationships
5. How important was involvement at the national level to the success of Wisconsin's aging programs?
- Connecting across states was a huge benefit both sharing resources and thinking differently
 - Hosting national or regional conferences to share best practices was so helpful.
 - eXtension is one great way but it doesn't meet all learning styles, relationships, capacity, etc.
 - Dr. Montgomery's research project has been helpful – national credibility through this work also

Closing quote from one interviewee: "What I so appreciate about Wisconsin Extension – aging programs fit into the larger aspect of family life. Extension employees bring this to the picture. Lots of good skills but also the perspective on the whole family."