

2025 Academy for Lifelong Learners

Course List

Session 1 | 10–11 a.m.

A Taste of the Farm: Culinary Tales and Seasonal Delights 25P6678A

Inga Witscher, Dairy farmer and PBS host

Discover the magic of farm-to-table living. While demonstrating a delicious seasonal recipe, Inga will share captivating stories from her farm life and her experiences filming PBS' Around the Farm Table. Indulge in nostalgia, feel inspired to connect with your roots, and embrace a simpler, more sustainable way of living.

Backyard Bocce Ball 25P6678B

Bruce Neeb

Get ready to roll! In this engaging, hands-on workshop, you'll learn the basics and strategies of this popular version of traditional Italian lawn bowling. Whether you're aiming for casual backyard fun or curious about tournament-level play, this session covers everything you need to enjoy this classic game. *This workshop will be held outdoors on the lawn; in case of inclement weather, the workshop will be cancelled, and participants will be re-assigned to an alternate workshop.*

Choosing HOPE 25P6678D

Mark Horbinski and Wendy Horbinski, WON80

As we age, taking care of our mental health has never been more important. Our state of mind plays a major role in our quality of life and overall outlook. In Choosing HOPE, you will explore the four actionable strategies of Happiness, Optimism, Passion, and Empowerment through stories, laughter, interaction, and reflection, highlighting the role each plays in helping us thrive.

Connect and Communicate: Building Stronger Relationships 25P6678E

Jean Jirovec, Retired Marriage and Family Therapist

Learn how assertive communication can build trust, encourage open dialogue, and enhance listening skills, ultimately strengthening your relationships. In this workshop, you'll learn practical techniques to improve your communication skills.

Flower Arranging 25P6678F

Brent Stelzer, Brent Douglas Flowers

In this hands-on workshop, you'll learn the basics of floral design and craft your own beautiful arrangement to take home and enjoy!

***Additional Fee: \$15**

Home Sweet Home: Stay Longer, Live Stronger and Be More Independent 25P6678G

Jen Miller, RN Director and Owner of Rellim Senior Day Care

"Home Sweet Home" explores aging gracefully and independently. You will dive into factors that influence aging and learn actionable tips to enhance longevity. From fun activities to nutritional guidance, discover how to creatively boost energy, health, and safety. Whether you are a senior or caregiver, this workshop aims to help you stay home, embracing a perspective where Care Meets Creativity.

Neurographic Drawing 25P6678H *Sold Out*

Geri Krause, Clinical Counselor and Artist

Neurographic art (NEURO - brain/body connections & GRAPHIC - images, shapes, and ideas) is a simple way to work with the mind through drawing. This simple but positively impactful technique requires no previous art experience or age limit. Neurographic Art lets your feelings and unconscious thoughts express themselves freely - from your brain, to your arm, to your hand, to the drawing in front of you. Capturing the art on paper creates new neural connections, which can help you view your thoughts and decisions through a new perspective. During the workshop, you will create a work of art that is guided, yet free and unplanned.

Steamboats on the Lower Chippewa River 25P6678I

Brian Gabriel, Historical Videographer-Remember When

Join Brian as he discusses the evolution of transportation along the Chippewa River. You will experience a virtual flyover of the Lower Chippewa River, highlighting several steamboat landings. He will discuss the roles of steamboats on the river, the different types of steamboats, the hazards involved, and the end of the steamboat era.

StrongBodies – Because Calcium and Walking Isn’t Enough! 25P6678J

Deb Bruning, Health Promotion Coordinator at Aging & Disability Resource Center of Eau Claire County

Osteoporosis—dangerous weakening of bones—develops invisibly. Strength training is especially important as we age. The StrongBodies program provides a safe environment for older adults to improve strength and balance with a fun group of peers. Learn about the research behind StrongBodies, how to begin strength training safely no matter what your age and ability, and where local classes are in Wisconsin.

The Poetry Habit: Awakening to Our Lives Through Poetry 25P6678K

Amy Segerstrom

Reading and writing poems as a mindfulness practice anchors us in surprise and wonder, giving rise to insight and compassion. This session explores the use of poetry as a unique tool for expanding our heart and mind. Join us to practice reading and writing poetry as a mindfulness tool!

Wisconsin Birds of the Night 25P6678L

Heidi Conde, Retired Natural Resources Educator

Which Wisconsin birds are active at night? Owls, of course! You might be surprised to learn that many other bird species are active at night—singing, calling, and performing amazing, audible courtship displays. Learn about them from someone who has completed over 200 volunteer nocturnal wildlife surveys and reported her bird observations to the WDNR and eBird, the citizen science website of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Bats of Wisconsin 25P6678O

Heather Mishefske, WI Master Naturalist and Wisconsin DNR Bat Ambassador

Wisconsin bats are under threat due to an endemic fungal disease, loss of habitat, and misunderstandings about their lives. In this workshop, you will learn more about these nocturnal flying creatures that share the night sky with us, why we need to protect them, and what you can do to help.

Session 2 | 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Best Practices: Navigating and Staying Safe on the Internet 25P6678C

Stacy Martin and Jordan Garcia, United Way Greater Chippewa Valley

Learn how to be safe on the internet. Discuss best practices for creating and managing passwords, unsafe website links, safe internet browsing, and text message safety. Join this workshop and address any internet safety concerns you may have.

Always At Choice: Strategies for Moving On After the Death of a Spouse or Life Trauma 25P6678M

Larry Freeborg, Transformational Coach, founder of Stepping Through the Gate

At age forty, Larry lost his wife to leukemia. Along with other events, he found himself in a dire situation: no wife, no money, no job, and four young children to raise. Larry recounts what he's learned about dealing with major loss and moving on in life. He will share helpful tools to manage fear and anxiety, stay focused on the positive, and move forward with a hopeful and fulfilling life.

~~**Backyard Bocce Ball**~~ 25P6678N **Sold Out**

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Ending Life Differently with a Death Doula 25P6678Q

Dawn Briskey, End-of-life Doula and Community Educator – Wisconsin Death Doula | Deirdre Jenkins, Certified End-of-Life Coach and End-of-life Doula

Learn how Death Doulas, also known as End-of-Life Doulas, can help you plan for an end-of-life that is as meaningful and peaceful as possible. Understand the scope of services available from end-of-life doulas. Leave the session thinking about your own plans, or plans for a loved one, and whether working with a doula makes sense to you.

Flower Arranging 25P6678R

Brent Stelzer, Brent Douglas Flowers

In this hands-on workshop, you'll learn the basics of floral design and craft your own beautiful arrangement to take home and enjoy!

***Additional Fee: \$15**

Medicare Fraud: What's in a Statement? 25P6678S

Ingrid Kunder and Jim Tripp, Senior Medicare Patrol

Did you know that Medicare loses BILLIONS of dollars each year due to fraud, errors, and abuse? Do you know what you can do to help DETECT Medicare fraud? Join Senior Medicare Patrol to learn about the risks of Medicare fraud and the importance of reviewing your Medicare statements on a regular basis. You'll also learn some tips to make statement review a little easier.

Mind the Music 25P6678T

Cathy Reitz, Sharer of Music

Explore how singing, playing, and listening to music can boost your health and happiness. In this workshop, we'll uncover why music inspires, enlightens, and touches deep parts of us that words alone cannot describe. Discover why music stays in our memories longer than anything else and how it can improve your well-being. Join us to share in the joy of music, and leave feeling happier and healthier.

A Walk West: Rediscovering America's National Parks One Step at a Time

25P6678U Steve Betchkal, Ornithologist and Ecologist

America's National Parks are a national treasure, cherished for their singular natural beauty and rich history. Author Steve Betchkal — an ornithologist, environmentalist, and Emmy and Murrow Award-winning veteran journalist — has worked at three national parks and camped and backpacked 80 others. Join him as he journeys — in personal stories and images — through some of his (and your) favorites.

Organize Now to Move Later: Downsizing Stuff 25P6678V

Connie Kees, Consultant Organizer

We don't realize how much stuff we have. Preparing for a move to a smaller living space or just decluttering your home to reduce stress takes longer than you think. In this workshop, you'll learn practical strategies to start organizing your home.

Rediscovering American History with Inclusion of Black Inventors, Innovators, and Artisans 25P6678W

Dr. Dale Taylor, Professor at University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

This workshop offers a fresh perspective on history, focusing on significant Black figures who have made remarkable contributions across various fields. Join Dr. Dale Taylor as he highlights the achievements of Black inventors, innovators, artisans, and leaders, showcasing their impact in areas such as science, technology, engineering, arts, military, law, sports, and business. Prepare to discover new insights into their groundbreaking work.

Strategies for Navigating Hearing Loss: Sign Language and Visual Cues

25P6678X Rachel Kohn and Dawn Koplitz, Sign Language Interpreters

Learn strategies for navigating hearing loss that you can use at home and around the community. You will learn some basic sign language, body language, facial expressions, and natural gestures for keeping your communication clear and accessible with those around you. Basic information about the Deaf Community and local resources will also be included.

Why Gardening is Good for Us 25P6678Y

Margaret Murphy, Horticulture Educator – UW Madison Division Extension

Many studies support the benefits of plants in our lives. Being around plants can help improve your mood, increase concentration, and reduce stress. This program will explore the positive impact plants have on our lives and encourage incorporating gardening into one's lifestyle. Participants will plant their own potted sensory garden to take home. ***Additional Fee: \$15.**

This course will be held outdoors, weather permitting. In case of inclement weather, this workshop will be moved indoors.

Session Three | 1:45–2:45 p.m.

Daughters of the American Revolution and 250th Birthday of our Nation

25P6678Z *Nancy Davey, Daughters of the American Revolution*

Join us to explore the history of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and the upcoming 250th anniversary of the United States. Learn about the DAR—its mission, activities, and membership. Nancy will highlight the various community and national projects the DAR has contributed to and share examples of the DAR's historic preservation efforts. Learn the history of the American Revolution, with a focus on often-overlooked women and patriots. Attendees will view examples of flags and clothing from the Revolutionary era.

Ewe and Me Talking Sheep, Wool, and Growing Happy Plants 25P6678AA

Beth Ivankovic and Jannell Sworski, Ewe and Me Wool Company, LLC.

Did ewe know that shepherds have used wool in their gardens for thousands of years? Two local shepherds will discuss their environmental passions which led to their journeys with sheep and making wool pellets for use in the garden.

Monarch Parenting 101 25P6678BB

Ellen Wynkoop, Monarch Butterfly Enthusiast

Discover how easy it is to raise monarch butterflies with simple, inexpensive supplies and some milkweed leaves. Learn more than you ever imagined about monarchs and milkweed in this informative and energetic presentation. Connect with nature and gain confidence in your own citizen-science abilities. Be prepared to fall in love with a new summer hobby!

~~**Movement for your New Body: Qigong, Tai Chi and Nia 25P6678CC**~~ **Sold Out**

Sandra Mighell, Open Spaces Mindful Movement

Join Sandra as she shares the benefits of moving mindfully and introduces the movement practices of Qigong, Tai Chi, and Nia. In this workshop, participants will have the chance to either observe or engage in these calming and energizing modalities.

Stay Connected: Social Media 101 25P6678DD

Avery Shanahan, Marketing Specialist, UWEC Continuing Education

This presentation is a beginner's guide to social media, specifically Facebook and Instagram. Participants will learn how to stay connected with loved ones, share their experiences, and discover new interests. Learn the basics of creating accounts, posting and browsing content, and staying safe online.

The 1948 Eau Claire Country Club Murders – An In-depth Look 25P6678EE

Todd Johnson, retired Eau Claire Police Officer

In October of 1948, the murders of two teenagers shocked the City of Eau Claire. The crime gained the attention of the entire country. This presentation will examine the event itself as well as what happened to the people involved.

The Desires of Every Heart: Discovering Ways to Connect with Others

25P6678FF Lisa Wells, Dementia Care Specialist & Grief Support Specialist – Aging & Disability Resource Center of Eau Claire County

This workshop will explore the book *Seven Desires* by Mark and Debra Laaser, to uncover healthy ways to embody our core desires in relationships. By examining the basic needs we all share, we'll discover how they make us more alike than different. Lisa will share skills to enrich your relationships and connections with others, along with a few personal insights she's learned over the years.

Understanding The Different Types of Home Health Care 25P6678GG

Angela Kjellberg, Aveanna Home Health

Learn about the different types of home health care services: medical, non-medical, palliative care, and hospice. This workshop will explore how each service differs and provide information on how the services are financially covered. By the end of the session, you'll be better equipped to make informed decisions about your healthcare journey.

What Is Your Legacy? 25P6678HH

Renee Liming, Lessons for Tomorrow

In this workshop, Renee will take you through an exercise to help you identify your core values and what's important to you. Are you living your life the way you want to be remembered? Creating the legacy you want to leave behind? Everyone has a story to tell; it's time to write yours for future generations to enjoy.

~~Why Gardening is Good for Us 25P6678II~~ **Sold Out**

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Health Optimization Through Nutrition and Lifestyle Changes 25P6678JJ

Candis Hensgen, Registered Nurse and Certified Functional Nutrition Counselor – 2 the Root Nutrition

Join us for an inspiring session where a registered nurse shares how her passion for health inspired a path into functional nutrition and lifestyle optimization. This presentation will highlight the powerful link between nutrition, lifestyle, and overall well-being. Walk away with practical tips and actionable insights to boost your health and wellness starting today!

Return to the previous tab in your browser to register!