



# Extension Connection

Monthly Highlights – October 2016

*Fond du Lac County 4-H teens  
make lunches for the homeless  
at New Orleans Mission.*

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## **4-H New Horizons**

The horizon is what we see in the distance. 4-H New Horizons is empowering young people to see in a new way. It is about teens interacting with those in need and taking part in addressing that need. It is delving into history and culture to explore what we believe and know, and to provide a new perspective on our experience. It is about meeting people where they are at.

This summer the youth traveled to New Orleans and worked at a mission for the homeless. They made sandwiches, packed lunches and delivered lunch to those on the street. The youth also worked at Second Harvest, sorting food to be taken to food pantries.

Cultural activities included a tour of a plantation and learning how people were enslaved, yet were survivors of great cruelty. Via a boat, youth experienced traveling through a swamp, learning about the habitat, and coming to a better understanding of the importance of America's wetlands. At the National WWII Museum teens saw the impact of war, the bravery of those who were enlisted, and the tremendous support from those at home, at factories and on farms.

This experience begins by youth applying and interviewing for this program. Upon selection they meet for several months to plan where to travel, how to get there, what sites to visit, and what service projects to undertake. Then they undertake fundraising.

Because of New Horizons, 4-H members indicated they developed skills in cooperation as they worked together to plan the program. They became more accepting of differences as they handed out food to the homeless. They experienced self-responsibility because they were held accountable to the group to complete their individual planning tasks. One youth commented that she developed her social skills in talking to and working with others.

4-H New Horizons is a powerful experience to get out of your comfort zone and broaden the participant's worldview, and at the same time develop life changing skills.

## **Farm Succession Planning One-on-One**

Farmers make decisions every day to improve their farm business and provide their family with a home and lifestyle they want for them. However, many of them have not planned for the family's and/or farm operation's long term sustainability regarding farm succession and retirement. Based on USDA numbers, there are about 8,400 farms with

operators between the ages of 45 and 64. Unfortunately it is estimated only one-third of these farms have a business succession plan in place. That means of the 8,400 farms, 5,600 farms will need some type of business succession or exit plan over the next few years.

Farm succession from one generation to the next can be overwhelming for families when added to the daily decisions necessary to run the farm. If a farmer is lucky, succession will be something experienced just twice in a lifetime: once when first taking over the business and again when passing it down to the next generation.

We recognize there are many issues and challenges for farmers when it comes to retirement and farm succession: attachment to the land, both financially and emotionally; attachment to farming; variable income due to high and low commodity prices; and the farm business operation itself.

Farm succession requires early planning and good communication. It does not happen overnight and not only do we have to address the actual transfer of assets, but address issues relating to retirement for the older generation and an estate plan regarding the farm operation. Farm succession planning focuses on five major components, all of which intertwine with each other: estate planning, transition planning, business planning, land use, and retirement planning.

UW-Extension Dairy & Livestock Agent Tina Kohlman developed this past spring a three-day farm succession series focusing on farm transfer, farm retirement and estate planning. Fifty-one different individuals attended one, two or three days of the meeting series.

Based on those meetings, Tina currently is working with four farm families, one-on-one, to help provide guidance and resources for farm business succession. Meetings involve individual meetings with the transitioning and retiring farmers, as well as a meeting with both. Meetings are facilitated to help individuals develop their personal and business goals, both long term and short term. Based on the goals developed, guidance is provided to the families on how to best achieve those goals while maintaining positive and open communication.

Also, to help better serve farm families going through farm succession, Tina has recently attended several professional development opportunities including "Partnership Taxation Issues," and "Coaching Your Clients."

With the aging population, farm succession planning and coaching farm families through the process will continue to be a major programming effort for Tina.

### **Co-Parenting Education in Fond du Lac County**

Divorce and separation are real in families -- about 40% of all first marriages end in divorce, but they still have serious impacts on families. Children, especially, are affected when a parental relationship ends. One major way that children are affected by a break-up is when they are exposed to conflict between their parents. In fact, parental conflict affects children negatively regardless of whether their parents divorce or not. Problems brought on by parental disagreements can appear in different ways -- a drop in school performance, behavior problems at school, anxiety, and depression. Research has identified the skills needed to make co-parenting (parenting together while living apart) relationships cooperative, and many parents are very receptive to helpful co-parenting programs that minimize the effects of the divorce/separation on their children.

For more than 15 years, UW Extension Family Living Education in Fond du Lac County and the Fond du Lac County Family Court Commissioner office have collaborated to conduct monthly co-parenting workshops for divorcing/separating parents of minor children. On average, 300 individuals attend these classes annually. Michelle Tidemann, Fond du Lac County Family Living Educator, co-teacher, additionally offered 8 weeks of positive co-parenting text messages to parents who attended the classes. As a result of being a pilot testing county for the 8 week follow up of positive co-parent text messages in 2015, Fond du Lac County participating co-parents are included in the statewide impact report which shared the results. Participating parents liked the reinforcing positive co-parenting messages and very few dropped from the 8 week offering. In 2016, funding was secured so co-parent class participants (both co-parent and

paternity classes) could have access to the follow up text messages to aid their co-parenting needs. The impact report can be found at the following link: <https://blogs.ces.uwex.edu/flp/files/2016/04/Final-co-parenting-texts.pdf>

### Allen Buechel Receives Chancellor's Friend & Advocate Award

Fond du Lac County Executive Allen Buechel is the recipient of the [2016 Chancellor's Friend and Advocate Award](#). This award honors individuals or organizations outside the UW Colleges & UW-Extension for support to the outreach mission of one or both institutions.

Photo: Allen Buechel with UW Colleges and UW-Extension Chancellor Cathy Sandeen at the recent awards ceremony.



#### Tap Into It

UW College and UW-Extension's impacts are felt deeply in every corner of our state, but are often not shared beyond our classrooms, offices, or immediate communities. Today, we are changing that.

[Tap Into It](#) is our effort to facilitate telling our story through our positive impacts. **Tap Into It** will help us bring awareness to the work we do as well as build a database of stories and impacts told in the words of those we serve.

To follow our progress or submit your own story, please visit the [Tap Into It](#) website.

Thank you for your continued support of UW Colleges and UW-Extension, and we look forward to hearing about how you **Tap Into It**.

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