



Extension Connection

Monthly Highlights – July 2013

Two Fond du Lac County 4-H youth enjoy Niagara Falls, one of their stops on the American Spirit Experience.

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Parent Education for New Parents

The Fond du Lac County University of Wisconsin-Extension Family Living Program area and Agnesian HealthCare, in partnership with three Fond du Lac Kiwanis clubs have been distributing free parenting newsletters to parents which are timed to the monthly development of their child since 1993 (20 years). These age-paced newsletters include: *Parenting the First Year* which is received monthly, while *Parenting the Second and Third Years* is available bimonthly. Examples of newsletter content would be: information on the physical, intellectual and social skills being developed by children this exact age, and what parents can learn to promote optimal child development. The newsletters are available in English, Spanish, hard copy and by e-mail. In 2012, 827 new parents received the Parenting the First Year newsletters; to date, 436 new parents have received the newsletter.

The Parenting newsletter project has produced some important outcomes for families; one to note: as parents read the Parenting the First Year newsletter it roughly doubles the readership, as parents share the newsletters with others. The Fond du Lac County parenting newsletter project is part of a larger state project that has been operating for 22 years in Wisconsin. As far as statewide numbers, David Riley, UWEX Human Development Specialist, noted Parenting the First Year is distributed to over 25,000 Wisconsin households every month. Another 15,000 receive the 2nd and 3rd year series. Close to 1,000 families receive these educational publications in Spanish. Overall, 1/3 of Wisconsin families giving birth each year are reached. Over 10% of Wisconsin citizens have now been raised by parents who received this UWEX instructional program. According to Dave Riley, "Our studies show that parents receiving the newsletters actually do a better job of raising their children."

WNEP Partners with Youth for Christ

The Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program (WNEP) partners with Youth for Christ six times during our grant year. Youth for Christ works with pregnant teenagers and young adults who have children. In July, the topic was cooking in small spaces using a microwave oven. The group, which consisted of 6 women and 1 man, made microwave meatloaf and microwaved scrambled eggs. One of the teens commented that her microwave eggs never turn out and that the bowl is hard to clean so she just throws the bowl out! After the class had made the eggs she replied "There is hope in making eggs in the microwave and it could be good!" She also added with a smile "and I won't have to throw out my bowl." Another person at the class had been a previous participant of a WNEP youth program about ten years ago. This person participated in a youth program for several years and commented on how much he remembers and contributes

his food safety and love of cooking to being in our youth program! He replied "I still use the eggs in the microwave recipe from the youth program." WNEP supports families helping them feed their children healthy foods safely.

4-H Expands Opportunity to Learn

"The Citizen Washington Focus experience was amazing," says Rachel. This program takes part in Washington, DC, where participants learn about our federal government. She adds, "Traveling to our nation's capitol for a week made me appreciate our country in so many more ways. The workshops were very inspirational as we met people from all over the country. We are one big family together and together we make up the future of our world!"

During this year, forty-seven 4-H youth are experiencing new opportunities, while learning, increasing their confidence and developing skills for a lifetime of use. It all happens through traveling across the state, across the country, and to other nations.

Allison took part in the American Spirit Experience, a nine day journey to the east coast to learn about early American history. She reflects, "The experience of staying at the hostel made me realize that no matter what continent someone is from or how intimidating they may seem, there is always something in common you have with them. It doesn't matter if you are talking to a foreigner visiting the United States, or a new member at your 4-H club; you can find mutual interests and make unexpected friends."

Hanna was a participant at Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama. Along with other delegates she learned about space missions and how rockets are launched.

Olivia was a delegate to Wisconsin Youth Conference in Madison. Her favorite seminar was the Game of Life Simulation. Each person was given a job, a monthly salary, a credit card and college debt. She says, "It was a great experience to learn what parents do and tons of people even learned how to write checks and balance a checkbook." Also attending was Hattie. She adds, "I learned how to sail and windsurf. It made me nervous to do it because there was no one I knew in my group, but I very quickly made friends. Windsurfing is a lot harder than it looks. Without 4-H, I would have never been able to experience these awesome new things."

Zach attended National 4-H Congress in Atlanta, Georgia. He says, "I learned how to get to know people; how to relate to people. I learned how to pull out the best in people, and how to serve those I am leading. I am a better leader, and a better person, for going to 4-H Congress."

4-H youth also took part in Wisconsin Youth Leadership Academy held in central Wisconsin for a week, and New Horizons community service experience in Kentucky. Additionally, four families are hosting youth delegates from Japan and Korea for a month, while one young person travels to Argentina for a month.

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