



Extension Connection

Monthly Highlights – February 2015

*Master Gardeners
provided nearly 5800
hours of volunteer service
in 2014.*

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4-H Enables Members to Stretch Their Boundaries

“Camp” may conjure up memories of s’mores roasting over a campfire on a starry summer night. That is true for 4-H camp and family outings. But we are still in the depth of winter, and yet young people are engaged in camp adventures. Two middle school 4-H members recently took part in Winter Leadership Camp in Mishicot. Erica says, *“We learned about giving speeches, communication and had an activity where we got to know about each other. We had campfires, sang songs, and also went snowshoeing and sledding. By doing activities I learned how hard it was to work as a team. While I was there I made leadership goals to bring back to my club. I am very glad I went to this camp.”*

Zak, a member of Brandon Tanagers 4-H, was one of 15 youth selected to attend Advanced Space Academy held in Huntsville, AL. This was the first year Wisconsin 4-H sponsored the experience. Zak writes, *“While there, we learned about space history, completed engineering challenges, and got to experience multiple simulations. The most entertaining opportunity was a chance to compete in engineering challenges. Some we had to perform were heat shielding an egg, filtering lemonade into water, and designing and building our own rocket to safely launch an egg up into the air. We learned a lot about the engineering challenges real rocket scientists face. Another great experience was the simulators. From a neutral buoyancy scuba tank to a multi-axis trainer, most of the simulators were very similar to what real astronauts use. We even got to participate in a shuttle mission simulation! Each camper got a position, in Mission Control, on the shuttle, or on the International Space Station. Then we all got to do the things people in those positions would normally do. I greatly enjoyed this opportunity.”*

4-H members are encouraged and supported to delve into new opportunities such as these in order to increase their awareness, self-confidence, and competence as they develop new skills.

Community Service is Foundation of Master Gardeners

The Master Gardener Volunteer Association is a group of committed individuals with a passion for horticulture, education, and public service. Members are required to maintain an annual commitment of 24 hours of community volunteer time and 10 hours of continuing education. They maintain a number of the gardens on the UW-Fond du Lac campus and various gardens in the community. They also work on garden projects at several of the area elementary schools and answer many of the horticultural questions that come into the UW-Extension office. Their commitment to the community and UW-Extension resulted in nearly 5800 hours of volunteer service provided in 2014.

Twenty-four individuals completed the 12 week, Level 1 Master Gardener training in fall, 2014. This is the first step to becoming a certified Master Gardener. Trainees learn basic horticultural concepts and how to diagnose plant problems and recommend solutions. Each participant took a written test in order to attain intern status as a member of the Fond

du Lac County Master Gardener Volunteer Association. They obtain full certification once they meet their volunteer hour requirement in 2015.

E-Parenting? Reaching Out with Social Media Support for Parents of Tweens

Being a parent requires an investment of time, finances and knowledge while coupled with children who are digital natives in a constant changing world! Reaching the needs of parents requires use of multiple resources and methods - <http://myparenthetical.com> is an online parent education community, sponsored by University of Wisconsin/Extension, for parents of children ages 10–16 years of age. Parenthetical is a combination website, blog and social network site which provides information and discussion on a range of topics of interest to parents with children in their emerging teen years. Additionally, the site gives parents opportunities for support from other parents experiencing many of the same needs and issues 24/7 and the site works on any web-accessible device. Family Living Educator Shelley Tidemann has incorporated the Parenthetical community of information for Fond du Lac County parents through the Fond du Lac County UW-Extension Facebook social media site, as well as through partnerships with the Fond du Lac County Family Courts and Fond du Lac Library system. Parenthetical use by Fond du Lac County parents of “tweens” ranks fifth in Wisconsin for use as parents gain new insights when connected to Parenthetical and other parents.

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