



Extension Connection

Monthly Highlights – February 2014

Exposure to parental conflict is one of the major ways a break-up affects children.

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Supporting Children when Parents Divorce or Separate

Divorce and separation are common today – 40% of all first marriages end in divorce – but they still have serious impacts on families, especially on children. Exposure to parental conflict is one of the major ways a break-up affects children. Even after the divorce, the parents' relationship continues to affect their children. Research in this area has identified the skills parents need to make their co-parenting relationship cooperative. (Supporting children when parents' divorce or separate, 2013 Impact Report, UW Extension Family Living Education) Michelle Tidemann, UW Extension Family Living Educator, collaborates with Fond du Lac County Family Court Services to conduct the monthly program "*Living Apart-Parenting Together*" for individuals who are separating/divorcing with children. *Living Apart-Parenting Together* program objectives are focused towards helping parents understand the impact of divorce on their children, acknowledge the important role both parents continue to play in their children's lives and build the skills needed to successfully co-parent in the years ahead. Annually the program works with 300 participants. Through self-reported evaluation, significant gains were found in the participants' commitment to supporting the parenting role of the other parent, as well as their commitment to a written parenting plan with the other parent.

To reach the needs of parents who are involved with paternity cases, Tidemann, the Fond du Lac County Family Courts and Fond du Lac County Birth to Three have developed the program, "*It's All about the Kids*" and this will be offered quarterly beginning in 2014. The objectives for the program emphasize the role both parents play in their children's lives, while building upon skills needed to successfully co-parent in the years ahead. Additionally in 2014, follow up evaluation will be conducted to measure use of the skills learned in class, are they being used and helpful.

Fond du Lac County 4-H Joins Statewide Efforts to Make the Wisconsin 4-H Centennial Celebration a Success

During recent months, Carmelo Dávila has continued his work coordinating our efforts to promote greater participation in the Wisconsin 4-H Centennial celebration among our 4-H members and families. This initiative is part of our ongoing efforts to encourage 4-H members to incorporate the Centennial theme in their 4-H projects, club activities, and events, in ways that could raise public awareness about the historical legacy of 4-H in our state and our communities. Since last October, Carmelo Dávila has been giving 4-H members and leaders a number of ideas and suggestions for boosting the Centennial celebration in our area. These ideas are part of an integrated plan to establish new tools to market and promote 4-H. By emphasizing one or more aspects about rich history of 4-H in Fond du Lac County, and of our county's local history and heritage, as well, 4-H members are actively contributing to our efforts of using our institutional history as a marketing device to better promote 4-H in our area.

4-H projects and other activities focusing on the Centennial theme will become an integral part of the *Wisconsin 4-H Centennial Time Machine*, a proposed traveling exhibit we are planning to create for displaying 4-H memorabilia, art

projects about 4-H history, vintage or documentary photographs, audio-visual oral history interviews, and other entries focusing on disseminating the history of 4-H in Fond du Lac County. This exhibit is meant to be temporarily displayed at several public libraries, schools, and the 2014 Fond du Lac County Fair.

Several clubs are organizing projects, events, and activities for the celebration. These are some examples of how our members are incorporating the Centennial theme in their club agendas:

Green Valley 4-H – is creating a new club banner to be displayed during the Fair. They are planning to have 4-H members, leaders and alumni contribute ideas that trace their club's history.

Weeping Willow 4-H – members are planning to have one alumnus or more attend a meeting.

Campbellsport, Forest Hills and Welcome 4-H – members will write an article about 4-H, interview alumni or promote current events that will be featured each week in the Campbellsport News.

Welcome 4-H – will include the 4-H Centennial theme in most of their activities throughout the year.

Forest Hills 4-H – members plan to have 100 combined community service efforts this year.

Alto All Stars 4-H – members have begun a brainstorming process for their Centennial project.

To enhance our efforts, we are extending an open invitation to potential volunteers to join the Fond du Lac County 4-H Centennial Planning Committee. Members of this committee will take leadership in our efforts to encourage our 4-H community to be proactive in the Wisconsin 4-H Centennial celebration. Volunteers joining the committee will envision, advise, and coordinate several strategies to promote greater participation and engagement among our 4-H members, to make the proposed 4-H traveling public exhibit a reality. Members of the committee will also help us identify how to better market and promote both this year's celebration of the Wisconsin 4-H Centennial and the Fond du Lac County Fair.

Planning for Your Group's Future

UW-Extension routinely works with area non-profits and community groups to assist with conversations on future planning. We take an educational approach as we both teach groups about organizational development and facilitate group meetings to accomplish their goals. If you haven't done a review of your organizational principles and guiding documents lately, these questions could help you determine if it is time to do this again.

Mission Statement: Is it memorable? Does it describe what you do every day in a way that makes sense to the public?

Vision Statement: Does this describe what you are in business to do? What is the future goal that you are striving for with your daily work (mission)?

Strategic Issues: Does everyone in your organization have a sense of what the most important organizational priorities are for the next year? Are these different from what they were the last few years?

Annual Goals: Do your goals for the year get you closer to addressing or resolving the Strategic Issues? Are they specific?

Evaluation: How do you really know that your organization's work makes a difference? What do you measure? How? How often? How do you share your results? How do you use evaluation results to change the way you work?

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