



Newsletter

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Hoopla Circus Has Something for Everyone

With four stages and nearly 40 youth performing groups there was something for everyone at the eighth annual Celebrating Youth! event January 28. This year's event, known as Hoopla Circus was coordinated by WYC's Spyder Carneol.

"Everything went very smoothly," said Carneol. "All I had to do during the event was order a broom, make a lost child announcement and talk to a performing group about a logistical problem."

Not bad when you consider that around 10,000 people attended the free event.

This is the eighth year that Celebrating Youth! has been presented. It is sponsored by Wisconsin Youth Company as a way to showcase the positive things young people in the community are doing. This is the second year that the event has had a circus theme.

"We're planning on doing the circus theme again next year," said Carneol. "We feel it still has a lot of life in it."

Carneol is already working on Celebrating Youth! for 2008.

"We're thinking of other ways to involve youth besides arts performance," said Carneol. "We want to represent youth with other skills and interests too."

Carneol noted that the caliber of the performances keeps improving from year to year.

"That shows that the event is a catalyst for the growth of the groups that participate in Celebrating Youth!," said Carneol, "and each year more groups want to participate."



Hoop Dancer at Celebrating Youth.

Waukesha Staff Writes, Illustrates Children's Book

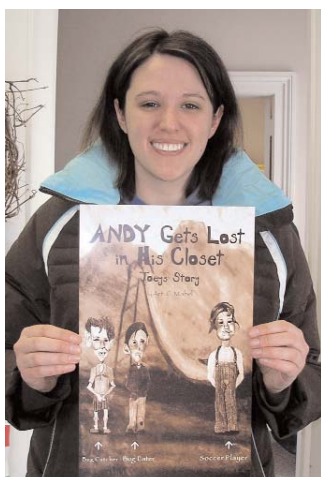
AFTER SCHOOL site supervisor Stacy Ball has written and illustrated a children's book. *Andy Gets Lost in His Closet: Joey's Story* is the story of a young boy who disappears in his closet and the adventures he has. The black and white illustrations and fantasy-based story are quirky and designed to appeal to five to eight year olds.

"I read the story to the kids at my center to get their feedback," said Ball.

Ball originally wrote the story in high school then went back to it recently. She graduated from the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design in 2004 as a drawing major.

"This is something I've always liked doing," said Ball. "It would be nice to make a career out of it down the road."

She's working on a sequel while searching for a publisher for the book. Stacy is the supervisor at the Orchard Lane AFTER SCHOOL program.



Stacy Ball is looking for a publisher for her children's book.

New Coordinator for WYC Trip Programs



Kathy Smith is the new coordinator for Wander Wisconsin and Generation Tours.

She's been working at summer camps since she was 16 years old so it's not surprising that Kathy Smith found her way to Wisconsin Youth Company. She's the new program director for Wander Wisconsin replacing Jason Coleman who took a job with the YMCA in Hawaii last month. She will also be in charge of WYC's intergenerational travel program, Generation Tours.

"Camping and outdoor programming have always been a love of mine," said Smith.

She grew up in the Chicago area and attended camps in Illinois and Wisconsin as a child. She graduated with a degree in Education from Indiana University and worked for the Girl Scouts. She later moved to Michigan and became active in the American Camp Association (ACA) as a volunteer. She was soon serving on the Michigan ACA board as president for six years and later as standards chair. She taught the camp visitor class which is the class that trains people to visit ACA camps and evaluate them. Her husband's job brought them from Michigan to Wisconsin.

"I felt at this time in my life that I really wanted to deliver quality programs to youth and families," said Smith.

She found the job opening posted on the ACA website and decided to apply. Jason Anderson,

WYC Camp Programs Director, and Smith's new supervisor is also active in ACA serving on the Wisconsin board. All Wisconsin Youth Company summer day camps are accredited by the ACA. He and Smith attended many of the same conferences but never crossed paths until she applied for the position. Now Smith has the phone to her head most days making campsite reservations and organizing other aspects of the Wander Wisconsin and Generation Tour trips.

"I want our trips to build kids' self confidence, teach them to respect each other and give them an appreciation of the outdoors," said Smith. "I know all this can happen because I've seen kids come in on a Sunday and go home a different kid on Friday."

Wander trips are designed to both introduce younger children to camping for the first time and to offer greater challenges to older, more experienced campers. Trips range from one or two nights at a nearby state park to two weeks backpacking out west.

"What we're trying to do is create an environment where everyone - youth, staff and families - can grow to their greatest potential," Smith said. "We want to make it possible for kids to have those 'Aha' moments where they grow by solving their own problems."

“ We want to make it possible for kids to have those 'Aha' moments where they grow by solving their own problems. ”

Fun at AFTER SCHOOL 4-H Fairs

The annual AFTER SCHOOL 4-H Fair was held March 27 for the Waukesha Region and April 10 for the Dane Region. The Waukesha Fair was at the Waukesha County Expo Center and the Dane Fair was at the Alliant Energy Center. The fairs are opportunities for AFTER SCHOOL children to show what

they have been working on all year and feature art displays, skits, dancing and singing. 4-H Club projects are shown and judged. Families are provided a free light supper and there is also a raffle and silent auction to benefit the AFTER SCHOOL Scholarship Fund.



A Family Fun Basket, one of 17 silent auction packages offered at Waukesha's fair.



Lake Country Supervisor Rebekah Steidl displays colorful jewelry crafted from macaroni.



Linda Vlasak from the Mad Science exhibit makes slime with a Waukesha fair participant.

Madison Mayor Dave Cieslewicz Visits

City of Madison Mayor Dave Cieslewicz visited the Wisconsin Youth and Family Center on February 21. Accompanied by his assistant Enis Ragland, the mayor spent nearly two hours touring the building and visiting with the children and staff taking part in Wisconsin Youth & Family Center (WYFC) programs. WYFC is sponsored by WYC on McKenna Blvd. in Madison.

The mayor viewed a video of WYC's Hoopla Circus Celebrating Youth! event, stopped by an art class and visited a meeting of Girl Neighborhood Power. He also sat in on a World Civilization class and one of the students explained how they learn about history by playing the challenging computer game.

The City of Madison Human Services Commission has helped to fund the center for the past two years. In September an after school program for neighborhood city children will begin at the center. It will be modeled on WYC's AFTER SCHOOL programs and will receive administrative support in the form of snack and supply ordering, staff hiring and training and other services from WYC.

Mayor Cieslewicz said the city hopes to continue funding for the center. He said the center needs to show the city council how it has served additional youth and families in southwest Madison with the increased funding the center received this year.



Dave Cieslewicz with WYC Executive Director Nancy Goodell.

Bones Discovered Under Floor at Waukesha Office

When your office is in a building that was built in 1843 you never know what may turn up. The Waukesha Region offices are located in the historic Hodgson House on Bluemound Road in Waukesha. Recently, one of the first floor restrooms was remodeled and a surprising discovery was made: bones!

"I think it was just whatever the dogs took and chewed under the house," said Kelly

Kobes, owner of Kelly's Home Improvement. His company did the work on the bathroom and made the discovery. Luckily for us, he knows his bones.

"It was a pig shank, you know, a femur, and a round steak bone," said Kobes.

It was a good mystery story for awhile though.

AFTER SCHOOL Director Reads CLC Grants

Joanne Bonesho, Division Director for AFTER SCHOOL served as a grant reader for the Community Learning Center grant process last month.

The grants are given out through the state Department of Public Instruction to help support out of school opportunities for children and youth. Many different groups applied according to Bonesho.

"We read applications by groups from across the state from a variety of programs," she said. "Some were from traditional after school

programs, some from family enrichment programs, some from school districts."

Bonesho's team read 34 grants. She said there were about 15 teams of readers with each team reading between 15 and 40 grant applications.

"One priority was to look for ways the applicants were proposing to implement programs concentrating on math, science and literacy," said Bonesho.



AFTER SCHOOL Staff Study Terrorism Plan

AFTER SCHOOL's Terrorism/War Emergency Plan was the focus of study by program staff for the month of February. Each month AFTER SCHOOL staff focus on a different health, safety or emergency plan to make sure they are familiar with the policies and procedures they need to follow to keep children safe.

The Terrorism/War Emergency Plan was drafted by Wisconsin Youth Company's Risk Manager Bonnie Carlson.

"My first day of work at Wisconsin Youth Company was September 10, 2001," said Carlson. "As you might expect, the first emergency plan I was asked to write was the War and Terrorism Emergency Plan."

The plan covers events that may cause damage to buildings where AFTER SCHOOL programs are located, what to do if an event occurs while on a field trip and lists the emergency materials to carry including the attendance clipboard, flashlight, battery-operated radio, cell phone and first aid kits.

"We want staff to be prepared so that they will feel calm and confident in any type of crisis," said Carlson.

Carlson worked in the insurance industry for more than 30 years. She inspects all AFTER SCHOOL programs regularly for risk management procedure compliance.

“ My first day at Wisconsin Youth Company was Sept. 10, 2001.”



Weekly Meals are available for older adults each week at WYC.

Seniors Lunching at WYC Offices Every Week

A weekly hot meal for older adults (over age 60) is being offered weekly at the Wisconsin Youth Company through the Wisconsin Youth & Family Center. The meals began February 13. The meal is sponsored by the West Madison Senior Coalition (WMSC).

According to Kate Shaw, director of WMSC, about 60 percent of all older adults in

Madison live on the West side. WMSC currently serves about 13,000 older adults. The organization sponsors two other meal sites and has wanted to open a third to reach even more seniors.

"People like going to meals in their own neighborhood," said Shaw, "so this is a great opportunity for us."

Education Conference Gets Positive Reviews

The keynote speaker and the many choices of workshops were a big part of the positive response of attendees at the "Options and Alternatives in Education" conference held January 27.

Evaluations from the conference rated keynote speaker Jonathan Mooney very high. Mooney is an author and activist who shares his experiences as a learning disabled child in an effort to inspire others to reach out to children who need extra support or who learn differently.

The conference was sponsored by Wisconsin Youth Company as a way to expand the Celebrating Youth! weekend into a networking and

learning experience for parents and educators. It also serves as a training experience for AFTER SCHOOL staff. About 200 people attended, half of them AFTER SCHOOL staff.

Attendees also commented favorably on the many choices of workshops at the conference which included information on many ways to reach out to children who may not always learn easily in traditional classrooms.

Topics included: collaborative artmaking, charter schools, education for gifted children, hip hop in the schools, juggling as a way to develop leadership, home schooling and Montessori.



New Manager Hired for Madison Offices

Brandy Raley is the new manager of customer service and front office operations for Wisconsin Youth Company’s Madison offices. She held a similar position with the YMCA in Bellville, IL for six years.

“I really enjoy being able to work with people,” said Raley. “I especially enjoy being able to help them solve their dilemmas and to make them happy.”

Raley is confident she can do that for WYC. Her previous job had her guiding her office

through major changes like a computer system upgrade and two rate increases.

Raley has a BA in Administration of Justice and a BS in Political Science from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL.

After growing up in Georgia and Alabama Raley says she’s eager to take advantage of Wisconsin’s outdoor opportunities like sledding and snowshoeing.

“I really like cold weather,” said Raley.



Brandy Raley

Waukesha Program Director, Son Visit Guatemala

Waukesha Program Director CindySue Nielsen and her son Devin will spend three weeks in Guatemala in June as part of the Guatemala Service Exchange Program. The program brings volunteers to Guatemala where they help build schools and bridges. The program began in 1983 and has since built over 50 schools. The Milwaukee School of Engineering is also involved and provides design support and direction.

“Initially I got involved because Devin wanted to go,” said Nielsen. Her son is a fourth year honors Spanish student at Waukesha High School.

The more Nielsen thought about it, the more she realized that this kind of trip was a natural extension of her work at AFTER SCHOOL.

“I always wanted to change the world,” she said, smiling. “I know I can change the world through AFTER SCHOOL by working with

kids and staff. This is just expanding my reach.”

Between 15 and 20 people will go June 16 to July 3. They will spend a week working on a school building in Antigua then spend a second week staying in the homes of families in the city of Chichi near where the school is being built. The third week they will visit a school and spend time with the children helping out in the classroom and playing games with them and teaching them songs.

Nielsen is no stranger to chaperoning trips. She went with her son’s band to the Tournament of Roses Parade in California in December and helped look after 188 kids. This trip will be smaller in numbers but just as important to Nielsen.

“I believe in giving back,” she said. “That’s why I coach my football team. I think it’s the thing to do.”



CindySue Nielsen and son Devin are going to Guatemala in June.

Calendar

■ **May 1**

Dane Region Staff Recognition Dinner

■ **May 5**

Waukesha Region Staff Recognition Dinner

■ **May 10**

Wisconsin Youth Company Board Meeting

■ **May 13**

Mother’s Day

■ **June 11**

First Day of Summer Day Camp, Dane Region and Kettle Moraine and Merton, Waukesha Region

■ **June 13**

First Day of Summer Camp, New Berlin, Waukesha Region

■ **June 21**

Summer Solstice

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a WISCONSIN YOUTH COMPANY program



Summer Camps Offer Many Opportunities

From a Spanish language immersion camp to canoeing in the Boundary waters to your everyday packed with fun summer day camp, the opportunities are many for children and youth this summer at Wisconsin Youth Company's summer programs.

Wander Wisconsin, WYC's adventure camping program, is offering a program to introduce kids to camping. The program is called Kid Campouts and there will be nine week-long sessions beginning June 18. Children attend Monday and Tuesday and are picked up at the end of both days. Then on Wednesday they leave for a two-night overnight where they get to sleep in tents, cook over a fire and learn other camp skills.

"It's a good introduction to camping," said Kathy Smith, Wander Wisconsin director. "We want to give them an opportunity to do something they might not get to do with their family."

The program is for children age eight to 10. Each week is based at a Wisconsin state park or forest such as Devil's Lake, Blue Mounds or Kettle Moraine. Some weeks will also include a visit to a nearby attraction like a water park but the emphasis will be on camping.

"We are an outdoor-focused program," said Smith, "and to have an opportunity to learn skills and do things with a group in the out of doors really helps children grow."

Wander Wisconsin is also offering a Boundary Waters canoe trip this year to be led by long time Wander trip leader Dave Weber. The trip can only accommodate seven and will run from August 12-21.

Two immersion camps, one on circus arts and one on Spanish language are also being offered through AFTER SCHOOL day camps. These camp sessions last two weeks to give participants time to thoroughly explore the focus topic.

The usual complement of Waukesha and Dane County summer day camps with weekly themes and activity units for five to seven year olds will also be offered, along with specialty units for eight to 12 year olds. Waukesha County also offers theme based Camp Cubs for four to 5 year olds. Parents can register their children by the week based on the activities their children are interested in.

Middle School U in Madison and Stoughton provides enrichment and recreational courses for youth going into sixth grade (fifth grade in Stoughton). These classes help youth develop new skills, explore new ideas and perhaps develop a lifelong hobby.

For more information about any of WYC's summer offerings visit the website at www.wisconsinyouthcompany.org.

