



Newsletter

a WISCONSIN YOUTH COMPANY program

1201 MCKENNA BOULEVARD • MADISON, WISCONSIN 53719 • 608-276-9782 • 800-238-1174
 1800 DOLPHIN DRIVE, SUITE 200 • WAUKESHA, WISCONSIN 53186 • 262-547-8770 • 800-552-8878

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4-H Fairs Set for April 8, 29

The Waukesha Region of AFTER SCHOOL will have its annual 4-H Fair April 8 and the Dane Region will have its fair April 29. The fairs are opportunities for all AFTER SCHOOL programs to showcase 4-H projects and other activities they've been doing all year long.

Each of the 40 program sites will have a booth displaying art, science and craft projects. There will also be a Music and Drama Festival at both fairs where youth from AFTER SCHOOL programs perform skits and song and dance routines. Children may also enter the annual Celebration of Art contest. This year's theme for Celebration of Art is sculpture. All children receive participation ribbons. Third through fifth grade children can have their projects judged for entry in the county 4-H fair competition if they receive a blue ribbon at the AFTER SCHOOL fair.

The Dane Region 4-H Fair will be at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison. The Waukesha Region 4-H Fair will be at the

Waukesha County Fairgrounds. Both events are from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. and both feature a light supper for families. The Waukesha fair also features a Family Fun Zone where families can partake in many activities.

Each fair will also have a silent auction where participants can bid on themed "baskets" based on things like gardening, Bucky Badger, ice cream party or an entertainment package with DVDs, popcorn and other treats. All proceeds go to the scholarship fund.



These decorated shoes were part of an art display at a previous fair.

Middle School U Offers Fun, Skills for Older Kids

Courses in fencing, African dance and drumming and a new format for the video production class are some of the new things happening with Wisconsin Youth Company's Middle School U program this summer. The program is for youth sixth to eighth grade and operates out of Jefferson Middle School on Madison's west side.

According to program coordinator Georgene Pitzner fencing has not been offered for "three or four years" due to lack of an instructor. This year an instructor, Joe Monarski, is able to return and he has access to foils and protective equipment that participants will need.

"We're really pleased to be able to offer a fun, challenging course like fencing to kids this summer," said Pitzner, "and to have such an

accomplished drum and dance teacher to work with Middle School U."

The other new course is African Dance and Drumming. It will be taught by Tommy Nani Kwashi Agbeli, a native of the Ewe tribe of the Volta region of Ghana. He has been the lead drum and dance instructor at the Dagbe Cultural Center in Kopeyia, Ghana for nine years. The type of dance he will teach is performed by the youth of the Ewe's to tell their community that they are moving from childhood to adulthood.

Video production has been offered for the past five years at Middle School U. This year it will be run more like a live TV program. The shows developed by participants will be broadcast live on cable TV.



A student works on a woodworking project at a Middle School U course.

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Annual Conference Rated “Unique”

“Unique” was the verdict for many who attended Wisconsin Youth Company’s annual “Options and Alternatives in Education” conference January 26.

“People were impressed with the variety of workshops and speakers and the uniqueness of the event,” said conference coordinator Mariah Miller. “They felt that they had an opportunity to learn about things that they wouldn’t have otherwise.”

About 200 people attended the event which featured 24 sessions on many aspects of working with youth and helping them to realize their potential. Sessions included topics such as using Hip Hop music as a tool to empower young people, home schooling, reaching visual and kinesthetic learners through hands-on arts experiences, yoga, creative dance and outdoor experiences. About half of the conference attendees were Wisconsin Youth Company staff working in the AFTER SCHOOL division.

“Staff tell me that it was very valuable to them,” said Miller. “They learned about new ways of working with kids including kids who may learn differently.”

The conference was part of the WYC Celebrating Youth! weekend. Celebrating Youth! is the WYC annual event that showcases talents of young people and provides an opportunity for groups involved with youth to tell the community about their services (See article on page 3). Both events were at Monona Terrace.

“The best thing about the conference for me was getting feedback and knowing that people enjoyed it and found it valuable,” said Miller. “It’s good to help get people out of their boxes and thinking about the many different ways youth learn and how we can support that.”



Carmen Rivers, Playworks 4 Kids, presented on “Approaching the Outdoors with a Sense of Wonder.”

Summer Camp A Safe Way to Try New Things

Wisconsin Youth Company’s summer day camp programs offer opportunities for children to try new things in a safe environment.

“AFTER SCHOOL parents will be interested to know that we hire many summer staff from our AFTER SCHOOL staff,” said Jason Anderson, Camp Programs Director for the Madison Region. “Parents will see some familiar faces when they drop their kids off at camp.”

Anderson said the same holds true for the kids too.

“Some of their friends from AFTER SCHOOL will be there so everything won’t be unfamiliar to them,” said Anderson.

Anderson said about 50 percent of summer camp staff return each summer in Dane County. Waukesha County camps see over 85 percent of staff return.

“Parents can take comfort in knowing that many experienced camp counselors return each summer,” said Anderson.

Campers are divided by age and interest area into groups of ten to 12. About 1000 families in both regions send their children to WYC’s summer camps with enrollment reaching up to 500 each week in 12 camp locations.

“The big thing with summer camp is that kids learn to work and play in a small group,” said Anderson, “so they have the opportunity to build stronger relationships.”

Wisconsin Youth Company’s AFTER SCHOOL Division operates eight summer day camps in the Madison Region. All are located in schools except for the Waunakee site which is located in the village center. The Waukesha Region will operate four summer day camps, three in schools and one at the administrative office.

For more information call Jason Anderson, 608-276-9782 ext. 21 or CindySue Nielsen, 262-547-8770, ext. 13 or visit www.afterschoolwi.org.



Canoeing is a popular summer day camp activity.

Service Projects Part of Fox Prairie Programming

Fox Prairie AFTER SCHOOL made holiday and Valentine cards for the residents of Nazareth Health and Rehabilitation Center in Stoughton.

“We do it every holiday season,” said Site Supervisor Pam Lawless. “It’s good for the kids to think of others at the holidays.”

Lawless said she delivered 50-60 cards to Nazareth. The children recycled old holiday cards and wrote their own messages on them.

Custodial staff, the principal, school secretary and the gym teacher also received holiday

greetings and thanks from the AFTER SCHOOL group in the form of chocolate pretzels and other treats.

“We wanted to thank everyone at the school that we work closely with,” said Lawless. The group meets in the gym and overlaps at times with the school gym teacher. “We talk about what a service project is and what you can do for your community,” said Lawless.

Lawless has been affiliated with Stoughton AFTER SCHOOL programs for twelve years.



Service projects are fun when you do them with friends.

Finale Circus A Big Draw at Celebrating Youth!

The finale circus performance at this year’s Celebrating Youth! event had the largest attendance ever, according to event organizer Ilana Caplan. “It was fabulous,” said Caplan. “It was standing room only.”

The finale performance featured clowns, giant puppets, dancers, trapeze performers, jugglers, unicyclists and acrobats. The finale capped a full day of youth performances, family activities and resource booths at the free annual event January 27.

This is the third year the event has had a circus theme. This year’s theme was “The Other Worldly Circus.”

“The Other Worldly theme allowed us to really branch out,” said Caplan. “We had everything from the world of insects to a variety of cultural worlds.”

There were four stages, eight activity areas and 28 exhibit booths. Twenty-four youth performance groups with about 450 members participated in dance, music, drama and other skills throughout the day.

In addition to being a day of entertainment for kids and families, the event also gives those who offer services and enrichment programs to children and youth a chance to connect.



Finale Circus photo by Nataraj Hauser.

Middle School U Offers New Courses, Old Favorites

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Each participant will get their own DVD copy of the shows. WYOU staff will instruct the course.

Many of the ever-popular cooking courses will be available again this summer. Baking, Cake Decorating, and Soups and Sandwiches will be taught by Van Hise AFTER SCHOOL site supervisor Diane Haas. She will also teach Paper Arts, Tie Dye and Batik and Kitchen Chemistry. Another site supervisor, Tracie Zoll, from the Elm Lawn AFTER SCHOOL program will teach Breakfast Anytime and Sculpture, Non-Clay.

Michael Graveen, Site Supervisor at Leopold will be the director of Middle School U. He

replaces Deanne Lensert who is returning to teach two courses: Mock Court and Bowling. Andrea McMillen, Site Supervisor at Conrad Elvehjem in McFarland, will be the Assistant Director.

Two additional AFTER SCHOOL staff will teach courses for Middle School U: AFTER SCHOOL Program Director Andrew Stuht will teach two weeks of Rocketry and Aviation and writer/consultant Jean Colvin will teach Buying, Cooking and Eating Locally Grown Food.

Other popular active courses are back including rock climbing, sailing, hiking and exploring. For more information contact Jason Anderson, Camp Programs Director, 608-276-9782 ext. 21 or MSU Coordinator Georgene Pitzner at 608-276-9782, ext. 13.

www.wisconsinyouthcompany.org

800-552-8878

262-547-8770

Waukesha, WI 531868

1800 Dolphin Drive, Suite 200

800-238-1174

608-276-9782

Madison, WI 53719

1201 McKenna Blvd.

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MADISON, WI

it's Fair Time!

✓ Save the Date!

Be our guest for an evening of fun and celebration!

AFTER SCHOOL 4-H Fair

Waukesha Expo 4-H Forum • April 8, 2008

Alliant Energy Center in Madison • April 29, 2008

View artwork & 4-H exhibits created by your children at their AFTER SCHOOL sites, enjoy the Music & Drama Festival, bid on gift baskets in the Silent Auction, learn about our summer and special programs, and visit with staff & friends. A light dinner will be served.



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