



a WISCONSIN YOUTH COMPANY program

# Newsletter

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## Calendar of Events

- April 2, Spring Fair, Waukesha Region, Waukesha Expo Center, Waukesha
- April 4, Easter Egg Hunt from 1-3 pm at Elver Park, Madison
- April 25, Celebrate Urban Birds Day. Wisconsin Youth & Family Center, Madison
- April 29, Spring Fair, Dane Region, Aliant Energy Center, Madison



*Nancy Goodell*

## Wisconsin Youth Company Exec Retiring

Much like a sailor on a long ocean voyage Nancy Goodell has her eyes on the horizon.

“I like to look forward to things, to learn things, to be open to things,” said Goodell. “I’m very much a process person. I don’t need completion to be satisfied.”

Goodell is retiring as executive director of Wisconsin Youth Company effective July, 2009. Her desire to look forward and learn new things has driven the organization’s growth for the past 21 years. In 1988 the organization was called the After School Day Care Association and it had 14 sites in Dane County. Today AFTER SCHOOL is one division of the Wisconsin Youth Company. It has 40 sites in Dane and Waukesha County.

“Care and nurturing of the individual child has to be a component of after school care. I believe we also have to offer enrichment,” she said, “because informal education is just as significant as formal education.”

With that model in mind Goodell set out to transform the organization.

“Right away I could see that we needed a camp program so the first model we changed was summer day camp to make it very different from after school,” she said.

Next the week-long summer unit known as Wander Wisconsin was launched and became a full summer program and then a year-round program. The model was applied to family vacations with the Generation Tours division offering educational family field trips.

“It kept growing and expanding and I got more and more invested in the organization as time went on,” said Goodell.

Leading WYC for 21 years wasn’t part of the original plan. Goodell began her non-profit career in Baltimore, MD.

“Looking back, I don’t know how I did it,” she laughed. “I had five kids at home and for awhile I was going to school full time and working full time.”

Goodell completed her master’s degree in organizational development from the Johns

Hopkins School of Behavior Science. She was employed by Campfire Inc. as the Baltimore Council Executive Director during this time. As more and more women entered the work force concerns about “latchkey” children as they were called then grew. The Campfire organization began to develop ways for young people to take care of themselves when they needed to stay home alone.

“Then Campfire decided that the way to handle the problem was to provide care for these children, not to teach them how to stay by themselves,” Goodell recalled.

Goodell helped write, receive and manage a federal grant to develop an after school model for Campfire. She also served on the University of Maryland School Age Consortium and wrote and taught school age care classes in Maryland. Then she and her husband Tom decided their aging parents needed support and they moved back to Wisconsin and purchased the farm near Oconomowoc where they still live. Originally they had planned to move to California and even had jobs lined up there. But something about the ad for the small non-profit called After School Day Care Association caught her eye. She’s never looked back. “I stayed because they were very receptive to change and improvement and they continue to be supportive of me and my ideas,” said Goodell. “An organization can’t stay static. It has to change to meet the needs of the community.”

The broader community has become the focus for Wisconsin Youth Company in recent years under Goodell’s leadership. Besides organizing the non-profit around the six programs—AFTER SCHOOL, Summer Day Camp, Middle School U, World Language program, Wander Wisconsin and Generation Tours—Goodell spearheaded the founding of a youth and family center at the WYC administrative offices in southwest Madison. “I have real concern for middle school children. It’s always been my favorite age,” said Goodell. “There is a lot of talk and concern for early childhood about children getting a good start and that focus is very appropriate. But it seems that the middle school years are often neglected.”

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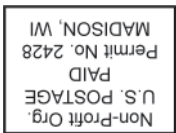
Wisconsin Youth Company exists so that the children of Wisconsin benefit from communities that nurture them at a sustainable cost.

[www.wisconsinyouthcompany.org](http://www.wisconsinyouthcompany.org)

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## Executive Director Looks Back

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The Wisconsin Youth & Family Center began with a few programs in the winter of 2003. Now, with the help of funding from the City of Madison, Dane County, the Madison Community Foundation and Community Development Block Grant money it operates year round. It offers drop in after school and Saturday programming for middle and high school youth and a free licensed AFTER SCHOOL program and summer day camp for qualifying low income neighborhood residents. The building serves

as a community resource for families too offering programs for seniors, job fairs and free meeting space for non-profits.

It's a lot to have accomplished in 21 years and Goodell is justifiably proud. But more than the new programs and the new services she finds the people she's worked with to be the most meaningful to her career.

"The most rewarding thing for me is helping people have the opportunity to develop their skills. Watching the young employees grow is very satisfying," she said. "We have tended to keep people who have grown in their

careers with the organization. That is a good feeling."

Not surprisingly, Goodell is an avid gardener. Wisconsin Youth Company has been fertile ground for her visionary ideas. Even as she prepares to leave her eyes are on the horizon as she looks ahead to more time to garden and spend time with her seven grandchildren age two to 12.

"You know life is all about the process," she mused. "That's why I like to garden. You plant, you water, you weed, you harvest. But it's really never finished."

## Input to Help Choose New ED

Input from customers, employees, volunteers, funders and other stakeholders is at the core of the process for selecting a new executive director for Wisconsin Youth Company according to board president Carolyn Hogg.

"We thought it was important to have a solid foundation of what staff, community members, parents and customers thought both about Wisconsin Youth Company's new ends (mission statement) and about the type of person who could take Wisconsin Youth Company into the future," said Hogg. "Parents and families

can rest assured that the person the board selects will be committed to the core values and mission of Wisconsin Youth Company--that children fully experience their childhood in a playful, creative, connected, safe and nurturing environment. After all that is what Wisconsin Youth Company is all about."

Hogg said information is being gathered from a community survey as well as a survey of employees and volunteers. This information will be used by the board transition committee as part of its process to create a profile of the

skills, abilities and attributes that the new executive director will need.

"It is the board's intention that this be a seamless transition and that we have a new executive director in place by July," she said.

Hogg noted that in addition to being a time to find the right person to become the next executive director this transition period is also a time to "celebrate Nancy and honor her for her great contributions to Wisconsin Youth Company and the children of Dane and Waukesha Counties."