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WYFC Holds Community Open House

An open house designed to draw seniors to the Wisconsin Youth & Family Center was held January 23. About 40 adults and 30 youth attended.

The open house was coordinated by WYFC community events coordinator Mariah Miller. Miller said she was very pleased with the turnout and the response to the event.

"Many seniors commented on how well-behaved the children were and how much we enjoyed spending time together" said Miller.

Madison Public Schools had the afternoon off so youth were free to attend. Children from the WYFC AFTER SCHOOL program also attended.

"This is something we will build on," said Miller. "We're planning another event on March 27."

Seven organizations either helped with the planning of the event or presented information or entertainment at the event.

Four members of Retired Senior Volunteer Program demonstrated their hobbies including fly-tying, banjo, yo-yo's and ethnic doll collection.

Attendees also heard music and poetry performances by Senior Idol competitors. WYFC Hip Hop class gave a demonstration

and some youth center members sang songs. Representatives from the Dane County Time Bank, Triad, Dane County Public Health, the CAC community gardens, Dane County RSVP and the Madison Police Department were also involved.



Dale Thompson, top photo, Retired Senior Volunteer, showed youth center children how to play a banjo. Bottom, youth center members sing a song at the open house.

New Equipment Purchased for Hip Hop Class

Speakers, turntables, a mixer, CD changer and microphones were purchased for use by the WYFC Hip Hop class in December. The equipment was purchased using money from the

City of Madison grant that helps fund the Middle School Drop In program.

The class is taught by WYFC assistant coordinator Tony Travis on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6-8 p.m.

"They each have a job," said Ellie Maier, center coordinator. "Some are MCs some are DJs and some are engineers."

Class members performed at Celebrating Youth! February 14 and the annual Juneteenth Festival.



Members of the WYFC Hip Hop class practice using the new equipment.

WYFC Youth Attend King Day Activities

About 15 Wisconsin Youth & Family Center youth attended the Martin Luther King Jr. birthday celebration activities at Monona Terrace on January 19.

The young people attended break out sessions especially designed for middle

school youth. Sessions included one on the achievement gap between students of color and white students, sports and academics and making middle school welcoming for all students.

Two WYFC youth, Sheila Lewis and Shakia Ellison, performed with their dance team



Youth from WYFC participated in a rally and march.

Geek Squad. Sheila attends Sennett Middle School and Shakia attends Toki. Both are in seventh grade.

After the breakout sessions and performances youth marched from the Terrace to the Capitol Square for a rally.

After lunch at the Terrace youth participated in an afternoon of community service. WYFC youth went to the Goodman Community Center where some helped sew quilts for the Linus Project. Other members of the group created music playlists which will be broadcast on a local radio station.



Sewing blankets for the Linus Project.

Wisconsin Youth Company Director Announces Retirement

Nancy Goodell, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Youth Company (WYC), has announced her retirement effective June 30, 2009. WYC is the fiscal manager and sponsor of the Wisconsin Youth & Family Center.

"I'm so pleased to have been a part of the growth of the center," said Goodell. "It's wonderful to see it being used as a community resource for youth and for adults."

Goodell has led WYC for 21 years. Under her leadership the youth center began as a summer program in the winter of 2003 and has grown steadily. It provides community meeting space, programs for seniors, families and youth as well as a licensed AFTER SCHOOL program and summer camp for elementary age children.

WYC provides enrichment programs for children and youth. It's largest division is AFTER SCHOOL which serves some 1500 children at 40 sites in Dane and Waukesha Counties.

Schedule Changes and Other Center News

The WYFC drop in program for middle and high school youth has been changed to better accommodate the large numbers of youth wanting to visit the center each afternoon and evening.

Middle school youth may now come to the center Monday through Friday from 3-6 p.m. High school youth may come Monday through Thursday, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

"We wanted each age group to have their own time to socialize and be with their friends," said Ellie Maier, center coordinator.

Maier is planning for some Friday night middle school gatherings with speakers from places like AIDS Network and the Rape Crisis Center.