



Newsletter

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Waukesha Spring Fair Builds on Circus Theme

Circus wagons, animal puppets and clowns dominated the art displays, skits and musical performances at the annual Waukesha Region AFTER SCHOOL Spring 4-H Fair on March 28 at the county fairgrounds. The circus theme "Under the Big Top" was chosen in the fall as the annual Celebration of Art theme. Circus was also the theme for Wisconsin Youth Company's annual Celebrating Youth! event on January 22. Announcement of the theme in fall allowed AFTER SCHOOL sites to work on long term and short term projects throughout the winter.

The fair is also an opportunity to showcase other projects the children have been working on. All children entering projects in the fair

receive participation ribbons. Club age children (third through sixth grade) may enter their projects in 4-H competition to be judged.

Those projects may then be entered in the county fair for 4-H judging. A raffle at the fair brought in \$1358 for the scholarship fund.



Aaron Schneider, 10, from Orchard lane belts out a tune



Site Supervisor Tracy Loken-Weber and some of the kids from Poplar Creek show off their booth at the Waukesha Spring Fair.



Kindergartners from Merton wait to go onstage. Site specialist Brenda Trautman, right, gets them organized.

Did You Know?

- There are 958 children enrolled in AFTER SCHOOL programs in Dane County.
- There are 571 children enrolled in AFTER SCHOOL programs in Waukesha County

New Locations and Programs for Summer Camps

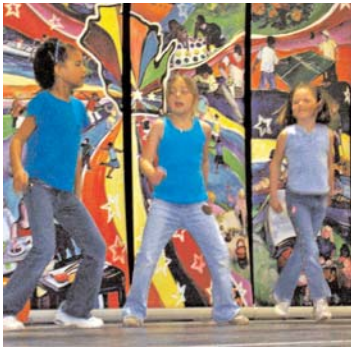
Five of AFTER SCHOOL's summer day camps in the Dane Region will be in new locations this summer and the Waukesha Region will have three camps with one at a new location.

The Verona day camp will move from the high school annex to Badger Ridge Middle School. In Waunakee the day camp will be located in the new Village Center in Village Park along with all the community and recreation services. The Middleton day camp will move from Sauk

Trails Elementary School to Kromery Middle School, a site they utilized two years ago. In Madison Camp Madventure for five to seven year olds will move from Thoreau to Stephens Elementary School. Camp Sunrise will move from Hawthorne to Franklin Elementary School. Camp of the Lakes for older children will remain at two sites: Van Hise and Crestwood Elementary Schools.

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Dane Spring 4-H Fair Has Lots of Dancing



Dancing was big at the Dane Regional Spring 4-H Fair

Four dance performances including a traditional Indian dance highlighted the Dane Region Spring 4-H Fair on April 11. There were dance performances from Chavez, West Middleton, Stephens and Elm Lawn AFTER SCHOOL programs. Chavez dancers were the “Wound Up Superstars”, Mariana Barcena, Tiara Vance and Kimberly Wild. The West Middleton Dance Team consisting of Christina Bouril, Garrett Buechner, Jane Mulkerin, Rachel Severson and Hannah Vandenburg performed and from Stephens Anupama Bhattacharya performed a traditional Indian dance.

The fair, which was held at the Alliant Energy Center, also had a performance by the AFTER

SCHOOL Girl Scouts and the Sugar Creek Spanish class. The AFTER SCHOOL Boy Scouts had an awards ceremony.

Each AFTER SCHOOL program had a booth displaying arts and crafts projects from the school year including Celebration of Art entries based on this year’s circus theme and 4-H Club Contest entries.

A raffle to raise money for the AFTER SCHOOL scholarship fund netted \$1323. Travis Collins from Chavez AFTER SCHOOL won a \$50 gift certificate for selling the most raffle tickets. The Chavez site won an ice cream party for selling the most tickets.

First Fridays Generate Interesting Discussions

Beginning in February Wisconsin Youth Company (WYC) employees including a number of AFTER SCHOOL staff began meeting on the first Friday of the month for informal discussions.

“I wanted a place where dialogue among employees could be promoted and encouraged,” said WYC Executive Director Nancy Goodell.

The discussions are voluntary and last an hour. Many staff bring their lunch. Discussions are based on articles submitted by staff. Everyone gets a copy a week prior to the discussion so they can read it and think about it. Discussions are not structured but

mostly have people commenting on the ideas from the articles and how they pertain to working with children or other aspects of their job.

“My hope is that people get a better understanding of each other’s work and get to know each other better,” said Goodell.

The April discussion was based on chapters from two books, A Hidden Wholeness by Parker Palmer and My Grandfather’s Blessings by Rachel Naomi Remen. The Palmer chapter was so popular that staff decided to discuss another chapter from his book in May.

“ My hope is that people get a better understanding of each other’s work and get to know each other better. ”

Many Staff Attend Social Emotional Conference

More than 100 people attended the annual Social Emotional Conference sponsored by the Wisconsin Youth Company on February 25.

The conference serves as a training opportunity for AFTER SCHOOL staff.

The theme of the conference was “Growing Children: The Lasting Value of Play” and featured five speakers. Dr. Laura Berk, Professor of Psychology at Illinois State University, spoke on the role of make-believe in the lives of children. Susan Oliver, Executive Director of Playing for Keeps, an organization that promotes the role of play in our society, spoke on how healthy play helps

promote healthy development in children. Deidre Omahen from the Lekotek Institute in Chicago gave a workshop on how to make play accessible for children with special needs.

Also speaking were Dr. Jeffrey Lewis from the Human Development and Family Studies Department at UW-Madison and Wisconsin Youth Company Board President Laurie Frank. Lewis spoke on his research on the factors promoting positive social identities and academic behaviors in African American boys. Frank, an experiential educator, led an interactive session which helped participants get in touch with their own playfulness.



Wisconsin Youth Company Board President Laurie Frank interacts with conference participants

New Snack Cycles Have Kids Licking Their Lips

The days of milk and cookies are long gone but kids still have big appetites after the school day is done. At AFTER SCHOOL the goal is to provide snacks that are tasty and popular but also healthy.

Late last spring conversations between Joanne Bonesho, Division Director, Program Directors, along with supervisors and staff, began to evaluate the variety and nutritional value of the snacks served in response to the results of the parent survey. The new cycles have been gradually worked into the system since September. So far the feedback from kids, parents, and staff have been positive.

Cereal and milk is a standby in AFTER SCHOOL programs and most children like it. Low sugar cereals are served with two percent milk to keep it healthy. Children are offered fresh fruit and juice each week too. Kids also enjoy chips and salsa. New this winter are individually packaged breadsticks, flour tortillas which can be served hot with

cheese as quesadillas or as rollups with jelly and cream cheese. Snacks are arranged in four cycles. Each cycle has different foods but staff can mix and match and carry over foods from one week to the next to make the snacking more to the kids' liking. Snack is frequently supplemented by staff purchasing extra food for cooking projects or just for fun. Some sites buy big jars of sour pickles to serve along with other foods. A recent snack time at Thoreau AFTER SCHOOL had the kids gobbling up carrot sticks with low-fat ranch dressing and breadsticks. Judging from the pile of empty cellophane wrappers on the table, bread sticks were a definite hit. So were the carrot sticks.

"I can see really good at night because I eat so many carrots," declared one boy.

Vanilla yogurt, animal crackers, string cheese, pretzels, turkey bologna sandwiches, goldfish crackers and canned applesauce and fruit cocktail round out the menu.



Pam Lawless, Site Supervisor for Kegonsa and Yahara AFTER SCHOOL programs in Stoughton uses a cart to move snack from the distribution room at the administrative offices in Madison to her car.



Bob Cohen-Wichner, Site Supervisor at Franklin AFTER SCHOOL, gets snack for his site. Snack is placed in plastic baskets labeled with the site name to make pickup easier.

Conferences Provide Training Opportunities

Three administrative staff attended the annual Social Enterprise Alliance (SEA) conference in Atlanta in March and eight AFTER SCHOOL staff attended the Wisconsin Afterschool Association (WAA) Conference in Waukesha April 7 and 8.

This is the second year staff have attended the SEA conference. Executive Director Nancy Goodell, Director of Finance Mary McCarthy and writer/consultant Jean Colvin all attended SEA. The conference serves as a training and networking opportunity for non-profit organization staff, business consultants and funders.

As less government and foundation money is available to non-profit organizations many are looking to starting businesses that will earn profits to help them further their mission, social enterprises. Wisconsin Youth Company has been investigating the possibility of a social enterprise to earn funds to support scholarships for low income children and youth to attend AFTER SCHOOL and summer camp programs. The organization is also looking into starting a social enterprise business that would help support the

Wisconsin Youth and Family Center, the community center that WYC houses in its Madison administrative building.

WAA formerly WISACA, Wisconsin School Age Care Alliance, sponsors an annual conference. This year seven staff attended and one presented.

The theme of this year's conference was "My World: Listening to Kids" and featured more than 25 workshops. Jeffrey Lewis, professor from the School of Human Ecology at UW-Madison was the featured speaker. He also spoke at Wisconsin Youth Company's social emotional conference in February.

Attending were Lena Carlstadt, Frank Hilliard, Anita Lempberger, Sara Staszak, Rebekah Steidl and Brenda Trautmann. Jean Colvin presented on "Mentoring Staff to Give Their Best". Joanne Bonesho is on the Board of Directors for the WAA organization which planned and presented the conference.



AFTER SCHOOL Builds Friendship Skills



Friendships are extremely important to school-age children and being with friends is often the highlight of their AFTER SCHOOL experience. Some children are noticeably popular and seem to always be surrounded by a group of friends. Other children spend lots of time with one special friend. Some children don't make friends as easily or may prefer to spend time alone.

Whatever the case, children sometimes need help learning how to initiate and maintain friendships and to deal with the inevitable conflicts that happen between friends. At AFTER SCHOOL we try to support children's friendships by noticing and commenting on positive friendship behaviors. "You guys are doing a great job taking turns with the computer", or "Thanks for including Anita. She hasn't had a chance to learn that game yet". We encourage children to be polite to everyone.

In spite of all the positive things staff tries to do at AFTER SCHOOL sites children still have conflicts. They still get their feelings hurt. They are sometimes left out. Research has shown that having friends is vital to children's healthy development. There is a lot that parents can do to help too:

- Develop and maintain a loving, accepting and respectful relationship with your child. This will set the stage for his or her future relationships and give them self-confidence.

- Role model empathy and sensitivity for your child and discuss with them why they are important. Parents have a huge influence on their children's lives by being their first and most important teachers.
- Welcome your child's friends into your home and take an interest in them. This will show your child that you appreciate that she or he has found other children to enjoy spending time with.
- Help your child understand and cope with negative feelings. We all get angry or sad sometimes. Being able to deal with and express those kinds of feelings appropriately will help your child understand him or herself and others better.
- Talk to your child's AFTER SCHOOL staff if you have any concern about your child and her or his friendship group or his or her ability to make friends. They may have suggestions that you have not thought of.

Sometimes it's easy to forget that children aren't born with social skills and that they depend on the trusted adults in their lives to teach them those skills and support them as they try them out. AFTER SCHOOL is a part of learning how to interact with all kinds of people, a very necessary skill for life in the working world and for building and keeping healthy relationships.

Summer Camps in New Locations

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Some of the moves are to accommodate school building maintenance projects.

In the Waukesha region camps will be located at Dousman Middle School, Glen Park Elementary and for the first time in several summers, Merton Primary School.

Another change for summer programming in the Dane Region is restructuring day camp for 5-7 year olds from focus area choices to activity units. In the past children signing up for a week-long unit had to choose from one of three concentrations.

"We heard from parents, staff and children that they wanted the opportunity to try all three choices and not be limited to one," said Jason Anderson, Camp Programs Director.

For the five to seven year olds in the Dane Region there are 10 themes and 30 activity units. Themes include "Around the World" and

"County Fair" and activity units vary from water games to a talent show. Older children have a choice of 59 specialty units covering things like science, jewelry making, cooking and camping. Not all units will be available each session.

In the Waukesha Region camps there will be 35 different theme units offered although not all will be offered each session. Most are offered at all three camps. They include summer favorites like "Make A Splash!", "Sports Around the World," and "Circus Days."

Families whose children attended summer day camp last summer automatically received a camp booklet with registration information. Families with children currently enrolled in AFTER SCHOOL also received booklets. Anyone else may call the Dane or Waukesha offices to request that a booklet be mailed to them. A full listing of summer camp choices is posted online at www.wisconsinyouthcompany.org



QAP Process Helps Sites Improve Programming

Designed to “get the creative juices flowing,” QAP is also helping improve the quality of AFTER SCHOOL programs according to Dane Region Program Director Andrew Stuht. QAP stands for Quality Assessment Program and it is a way for staff to take a comprehensive look at their programs.

“It’s a tool that gets people thinking,” said Stuht. “They can look at it and say, ‘This is what I’m doing really well but I don’t (for example) offer enough science so I need to add that.’”

All programs in the City of Madison must be city accredited, a process that follows the National Association for the Education of Young Children standards closely and includes visits from city child care specialists. Though not required outside the City of Madison all AFTER SCHOOL programs follow similar strict quality standards. AFTER SCHOOL has programs in three private schools as well as in surrounding Dane County and Waukesha County communities. All go through the QAP process which begins each fall. Once school and after school is underway community directors make their initial visits to program sites.

“At that time they’re just making a ‘sketch’ of the site,” said Stuht. “They note the strengths.”

After that staff at each site embarks on a self study which is more specific. They look at adult child interactions, the physical environment, the number and types of activity choices offered each day to children and much more. Every aspect of programming is examined.

Self assessment is next with staff, parents and children filling out evaluation forms on their experience of AFTER SCHOOL at their particular site.

Part four of QAP involves a peer visit and evaluation.

“It’s a real learning experience for both sides,” said Stuht. “We try to pair up sites that have similar challenges.

He gave an example: “Elm Lawn and Van Hise both have about 50 kids. Both have programs in gyms with groups of kids that have to be divided into younger and club.”

Stuht explained that in the peer visits supervisors look at “black and white things” like the environment or room set-up. They also look at the “gray areas” or non-checklist kinds of things such as how it feels when you walk into the program.

Reports are compiled and shared with staff so they can give attention to those areas needing improvement and begin to make changes. Community directors make a follow-up visit to make sure staff has taken care of areas of concern.

“What I see among staff is a heightened awareness of quality programming as a result of QAP,” said Stuht. “People genuinely want their sites to be high quality.

In addition to city accreditation (in Madison) and QAP all AFTER SCHOOL programs serving children under the age of eight are licensed by the State of Wisconsin and inspected regularly.

“ This is a tool that gets people thinking. ”

Silly Putty Fun at Lindbergh



Silly putty is a favorite activity at many AFTER SCHOOL sites. This past winter Lindbergh AFTER SCHOOL has made quite a few batches of it. You can color it with food coloring (right) or even decorate your face with it (left). Site Supervisor Gail Tomich (right) pours the liquid glue that, along with liquid starch, are the only two ingredients needed to make silly putty.



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Two Buses Added to Transportation Fleet

Wisconsin Youth Company (WYC) has purchased a 19-passenger bus and a 14-passenger bus to use in transporting children in Wander Wisconsin, summer day camp and AFTER SCHOOL field trip programs. The buses will also be used to carry adults and children on Generation Tours trips, Middle School U groups and Wisconsin Youth and Family Center participants.

The organization is phasing out its current fleet of six 15-passenger vans. Two additional buses are planned for purchase next year and two more the year after that.

“Transporting children in vans has become more complicated as the state has implemented new restrictions to improve safety,” said WYC Executive Director Nancy Goodell. “The safety of children being transported is our primary focus.”

The 19-passenger bus is also equipped with televisions and DVD players and has seats that

can be moved to make travel more roomy and comfortable for adults.

“The bus was built for a trade show to show off special features,” said Goodell.

No special driver's license is needed to drive 14-passenger buses but a special license will be required for the 19-passenger bus. All staff assigned to drive WYC vans take a safety course and are processed through a comprehensive driver decision making analysis prior to being allowed to drive the vehicles. They will also receive safety training for driving the buses.

Two vans will be retained to move equipment and supplies but after the transition to buses is complete, they will no longer carry passengers.



New 19-passenger WYC bus