



Newsletter

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Summer Fun Means Serious Training

Wisconsin Youth Company's summer day camps offer lots of fun for children but to ensure that the children are safe and everything runs smoothly, staff receive thorough training. Waukesha Region summer staff attended training on May 6 and 13. Dane Region staff had their orientation on June 3 and 10.

In addition to the usual topics such as personnel policies and job expectations and roles, staff also receive training on implementing program with children. That includes everything from what to do when it rains on your field trip to what kinds of activities are appropriate for the youngest campers.

A lot of emphasis is put on health and safety training including safe swimming procedures and field trip protocol.

Probably the most time is spent on guiding children's behavior. Staff learn how to handle transitions from one activity to the next, how to help campers resolve conflicts and how to deal with campers with special needs. They also receive training on child abuse and neglect as required by state child care licensing rules.

For some of WYC's staff this will all be review. Many of the school year staff in both regions also serve as directors, assistant directors or counselors in the summer program. There are also a number of returning summer only staff.

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Evin Rodkey, left, staff at Camp of the Lakes, goes over forms with Camp Programs Director Jason Anderson.



Rachel Manley, left, and Erin Adler, staff at Camp of the Lakes, talk over lesson plans at camp orientation June 10.

Did You Know?

- Some AFTER SCHOOL kids will work on long term projects such as paper mache, sewing or putting on a play.
- The largest full day summer day camps are Camp Wildcat in Verona and Camp of the Oaks in Stoughton with 60-70 participants.
- The smallest camp is in Merton with about 15 children enrolled weekly.

AFTER SCHOOL Adds Site; Considers Others

A new AFTER SCHOOL site in the Dane Region at Arboretum Elementary School in Waunakee is planned for this fall. One new site may be added and another expanded to accommodate more children in the Waukesha Region.

The program at Arboretum will serve about 35-40 children. AFTER SCHOOL already operates programs in Waunakee at Prairie and

Heritage Elementary Schools. Prairie is licensed for 60 and Heritage is licensed for 50 children.

Arboretum Elementary School was just completed. Some students from Prairie and Heritage will move to the new school. Several parents called AFTER SCHOOL to request that a program be established at Arboretum.

A Typical Day at AFTER SCHOOL Is Full of Fun



Club girls at Stephens AFTER SCHOOL (left) make ice cream and frozen fruit milkshakes for snack.



Boys at Crestwood ham it up for the camera. Crestwood is a small program, serving about a dozen kids.



Carol Genrich, left, the new morning receptionist, looks over fall registration forms with Pat Bigelow, the afternoon receptionist at the Waukesha Region office.

Parents may not always get a clear picture of what their kids actually do at AFTER SCHOOL. They may arrive at cleanup time when most of the equipment and projects are put away. Perhaps they come at the same time each day and the group is always in the gym or outside.

The activities pursued at each site are dependent upon the interests of the children and to some degree upon the interests and skills of the staff. But certain things happen most days at most sites.

Children are signed in by staff. If anyone is missing staff track them down through phone calls or a search of the school building. This first part of the day when kids are arriving is often dubbed “choice time” by staff. Kids greet their friends, put away their stuff and pick something to do—drawing, playing board games or cards or just talking with friends. After that some groups have a “circle time” or group meeting where the choices for the day are explained so kids can decide what they want to do. That’s usually followed by snack and then a choice of going outside, to

the gym or doing a staff led project such as baking cookies, tie dying shirts or building things out of wood. Some sites have access to computers and that may be a choice on certain days. Sometimes kids will work on long term projects such as paper mache or sewing or putting on a play.

Most programs have a clean up time that comes around 5 p.m. Some pull out what they call the “5 o’clock box,” a box filled with especially popular items like the light up “Simon Says” game or other things. The idea is to get everyone to help with clean up then the box comes out as a reward. After that it’s choice time while kids wait for their parents to arrive. Parents sign their children out and chat with staff about how the day went for their child or about upcoming activities.

It’s only about three hours but it’s packed with activities all designed to help children have fun and learn new skills.



Waukesha Region Office Has New Receptionist

Instead of answering children she’s answering the phone. Carol Genrich, former Site Supervisor at Holy Apostles AFTER SCHOOL in New Berlin, is the new morning receptionist at the Waukesha Region office.

“I loved working with the kids at Holy Apostles,” said Genrich. “They’re so respectful. But I wanted a change and to work half time so I could spend more time with my family.”

Genrich was the Site Supervisor at Holy Apostles for two years and for one year at Orchard Lane. Prior to that she worked in early childhood at a preschool in Elm Grove for 23 years.

“Infants used to be my favorite age to work with,” recalled Genrich. “But the lifting of young children got hard so I decided to try working with school-age children.”

Genrich said she grew to love the older children.

“It was like having another family at Holy Apostles,” said Genrich, “with 25 children.”

She has two adult sons 28 and 24, who live nearby, and plans to spend more time with them now that she will be working half days.

Genrich will open the office at 6:30 a.m. and work until 12:30 p.m. when Pat Bigelow, the afternoon receptionist takes over.

Her duties will include doing mailings, answering the phone, helping with registration, greeting people, giving directions and serving as a support staff for Site Supervisors.

“No day is the same,” said Genrich. “I like to greet people and see people come and go. I’m a people person.”

AFTER SCHOOL Staff Honored at Dinner

Diane Benz, a program specialist in the Dane Region at Franklin AFTER SCHOOL, and Brenda Trautman, who was in charge of the K-4 program at Merton School in the Waukesha region, were given the Julie Kent Memorial Award for the 2005-2006 school year. The award is given annually to an AFTER SCHOOL staff member who exhibits “exceptional commitment to the program, professionalism with staff and parents, creativity, warmth and the ability to be child-like while being a supportive adult to children.” The award was announced at the annual staff recognition dinners May 3 in Madison and April 30 in Waukesha.

The award is named for Julie Kent who was a program specialist at Midvale AFTER SCHOOL from August 1986 to June 1990. She died unexpectedly in June 1990.

Staff were also recognized for their service to AFTER SCHOOL for the school year programs and for their longevity. Dane Region’s longest serving staff are: Barb Townsend, Shorewood Supervisor, 17 years and Janet Bangs, former Supervisor and now specialist and substitute, 27 years. Waukesha Region’s longevity champs are Cherrill Flitz, Wales Supervisor, 15 years and Charlene Sieracki, Magee Supervisor, 11 years

MSU Gives Older Kids Chance to Try New Things

Deanne Lensert, Director of Wisconsin Youth Company’s Middle School U summer camp isn’t at all surprised at the number of 6th, 7th, 8th and even 9th graders in her camp this summer.

“These kids want to try out all areas of life,” said Lensert. “They’re capable of taking in so much more than we give them credit for.”

Not surprisingly, the food related classes are popular: cake decorating, candy making, baking, appetizers and snacks and entrée cooking. But these kids also want to tackle some serious stuff like “Mock Court” where they learn about how the court system works and rocketry where they learn how to build and launch model rockets. Lensert said it wasn’t unusual for youth to take a quilting class in the morning and a rock climbing class in the afternoon.

“It’s a chance to try new things and to come back and do things again that they really like,” she said. “We even have 15 year olds who come back each summer for the classes they really like.”

Lensert has directed the Middle School U camp for the past five years.

“I love the opportunity to watch them grow,” she said. “These kids are so open. They just can’t get enough information.”

Lensert has taught middle school social studies so she’s familiar with the needs of this age group.

“Our staff needs to be fairly laid back. You can’t get up in arms over every little thing,” she said.

In addition to being flexible, staff must be capable of giving up some control to the kids, giving them autonomy.”

For the most part kids are at Middle School U because they really want to try new things.

“There’s a few kids who come because their parents don’t want them home alone but by the end of summer they’ve found their niche and are into a sport or activity,” said Lensert.

Kids meet other youth from other schools and form close friendships too.

“It’s a chance for them to hang out with kids they wouldn’t normally meet because they come from all over the city,” said Lensert.

“There are kids who come back every summer and renew their friendships with kids they only see at Middle School U.”

The schedule is divided into morning classes from 8:30-11:30 a.m. and afternoon classes from 1-4 p.m. Some more involved classes like kayaking and orienteering run all day. Staff are there to teach the classes and keep an eye on things over the lunch break. But kids are allowed to sign themselves in and out.

“These kids really appreciate the trust we have in them,” said Lensert.



These girls are learning all about making snacks and appetizers.



Learning the court system involves lots of group discussions. Director Deanne Lensert, right, teaches the Mock Court class.

Seeing Double: Twins Are Assistant Directors



Stephanie Wampole is the assistant director at Camp Pleasant Valley in Waunakee.



Jennifer is the assistant director at Camp of the Trails in Middleton. Denise Peltier, left, is the director. They worked together at Camp of the Trails for three summers.

They're fraternal twins, not identical, but if you saw them side by side you'd probably have trouble telling them apart. To add to the confusion, both are assistant camp directors at Wisconsin Youth Company Summer Day Camps this summer. Stephanie Wampole is at Camp Pleasant Valley in Waunakee and her sister, Jennifer, is at Camp of the Trails in Middleton. Last year if your kids went to the Middleton camp you could be forgiven for calling Jennifer "Stephanie" and vice versa. Both worked at Trails last summer!

They're alike in some other ways too: both graduated from UW-Whitewater this year in Elementary Education. Not surprisingly, both are great at working with kids.

"Kids are very enthusiastic," said Stephanie. "They have a lot of ideas and they're very creative."

"The things they say are so funny," added her sister.

Both enjoy doing arts and crafts with kids.

"Painting and crafty stuff," said Stephanie. "That's what I'm good at."

One of Jennifer's favorite memories of summer camp is from two summer's ago when her camp group created a haunted house.

"I didn't know if it was going to work but it turned out great," she said.

This year she's planning to create a ghost pirate ship with the campers.

Both sisters have welcomed the opportunity to move from being a camp counselor to an assistant director.

"I have more responsibility for the group as a whole," said Jennifer. "There's more variety and I enjoy being a support person for other staff."

Both women say they will be looking for teaching jobs this fall. Could they end up at the same elementary school? It's not likely but if they do parents can rest assured that their kids are with experienced teachers - even if they can't tell them apart.

Playground Policy Revised to Prevent Injuries

Children attending AFTER SCHOOL programs where the playground has "twirling monkey bars" will no longer be able to play on that equipment.

The Playground and Playground Equipment Use and Safety policy was revised to include the ban on the equipment after Wisconsin Youth Company Risk Manager Bonnie Carlson noted several injuries to children. Carlson regularly reviews injury reports from all AFTER SCHOOL sites and makes recommendations.

"Staff have to be so vigilant with the children and some of the equipment just isn't appropriate for the age and ability of the children," said Carlson.

The policy also covers supervision of children, checking the playground and equipment for hazards and safe practices for playing ball and other games. To see a copy of the policy, contact the administrative office, 608-276-9782.

Many Summer Staff Also Work School Year

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In the Dane Region all the camp directors and assistant directors except for two are veterans. The new staff are Lisa Cavern, director at Camp Madventure which is located at Crestwood School and Kristine Ihle-Sprecher who is camp director at Camp Wildcat in Verona. WYC operates eight summer day camps in the Dane Region, three in Madison, one in Stoughton, one in Waunakee, one in Middleton and one in Verona. Weekly enrollment varies with the

smallest camp being Camp Madventure at Crestwood with about 45 children to the largest which are Camp Wildcat in Verona and Camp of the Oaks in Stoughton with 60-70 campers.

In the Waukesha Region, WYC operates three summer day camps, one in Dousman, one in New Berlin and one in Merton.

Merton is the smallest camp with about 10-15 children enrolled weekly. The New Berlin site serves 25-30 and the Dousman site serves 40-80. The three directors are all veterans.



Summer camp staff share ideas for activities at summer orientation June 10

Eagle AFTER SCHOOL Wins Trivia Contest

Eagle AFTER SCHOOL won the trivia contest scoring 160 out of a possible 211 points.

Eleven Dane Region AFTER SCHOOL sites participated in the contest. They were in order of finish after Eagle: Wingra, Waubesa, Muir, West Middleton, Van Hise, Prairie, Crestwood, Leopold, Randall and Stephens.

Dane Region Program Director Andrew Stuht came up with the trivia questions.

“I used the Internet to research questions for the competition,” said Stuht.

“It got harder and harder as time went on to find categories that we hadn’t done.”

Stuht said that what will be organized for next year will be based on the interests of the children and staff.

“We may do something else,” he said, “but the trivia contest did have broad appeal. Each of the varied categories drew from a wide knowledge base, allowing for the participation of many different children.”

“ The trivia contest had broad appeal.”

Dousman Summer Camp Program Grows

The AFTER SCHOOL summer camp program located at Kettle Moraine School in Dousman more than doubled enrollment from the first week of camp to the second week. The program went from about 35 children enrolled to about 80.

One reason is that the summer school run by the school district is growing in popularity and their program works in cooperation with AFTER SCHOOL’s summer day camp. Children attend summer school in the morning. At 12:30 they come to summer camp for lunch and an afternoon of fun activities. Camp ends at 4:30 with around camp care lasting until 6:00 p.m.

“Last year the Kettle Moraine School District had a total summer school enrollment of about 1800,” said Cindy Sue Nielsen, Program Director for Waukesha Region AFTER

SCHOOL. “This year they expect to have 2500.”

For the first time the summer camp has an independent 4-K program that serves about 12 kids.

The camp, known as Glacier Creek, is directed by Tina Fintak. She serves as a community director during the school year. A number of other experienced staff are also working there this summer: Stacy Ball, Site Supervisor for Orchard Lane, Andrea Ormson, Site Supervisor at Cushing, Anita Lemperger, Site Supervisor at Summitview, Judy Christianson, Site Supervisor at Meadowbrook along with school year staff Rebekah Steidl, Jeff Murphy and Jodi Bonesho. Summer camp has the use of three classrooms and an open space area as well as the cafeteria for eating lunch and the spacious playground for games and free play.



Kids demonstrate how to play “Toilet Tag” at Glacier Creek. (When someone “flushes” your arm, you’re no longer out.)



Staff Stacy Ball relaxes with three of her campers from the five to seven year old group.



The older kids hydrate before starting to play games on the school soccer field.

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