

## Calendar

### October 10

Camping trip to Governor Dodge State Park

### October 16

Halloween Party, 6-8 p.m.

### November 13

Good Grade Movie Day

### November 20

Ice Cream & Deserts Social, 6-8 p.m.

### November 26-27

Closed for Thanksgiving holidays.

## Teens Will Try Camping for First Time

A group of youth center teens have their first overnight camping experience in October.

Wisconsin Youth & Family Center (WYFC) Coordinator Ellie Maier and Wander Wisconsin Coordinator Cheri Wilson are taking a group of WYFC teens on an overnight to Governor Dodge State Park.

"I always wanted our kids to have the opportunity to do something like this," said Maier, "and we have the equipment and resources in-house."

Wander Wisconsin is a program division of Wisconsin Youth Company (WYC) and provides

year-round travel camp experiences. WYC also sponsors WYFC.

Maier said the youth would have an opportunity to go fishing and hiking and have campfires. She said the group would have a trial run first at the center and learn how to pitch tents before they went on the trip. They will borrow sleeping bags from REI, a local camping store, and the rest of the equipment will come from Wander Wisconsin.

Maier said she thought the camping experience would be good for youth and would give them a different perspective on life.

"Everyday they go to school

and they go home where they may have a lot of stress and responsibilities," she said. "This will get them away from all of that and maybe spark a new interest in their lives."

Americorp staff Anne Vulpas will accompany the group. A male staff will also go with the group. They will travel by van from the youth and family center. Maier hopes about 10 youth will participate.

"There's something about an experience where you have to work together and rely on each other," said Maier. "If you don't, the fire doesn't get built and the tents don't get pitched and there's no dinner."

## New AmeriCorps Staff Drawn to Youth Work

Anne Vulpas, the new AmeriCorps staff at Wisconsin Youth & Family Center, majored in French and African Language and Literature in college but her true calling may be working with youth.

"I just really enjoy spending time with kids," she said.

Vulpas graduated from UW in May. She became interested in working with youth after participating in the People Program at UW which offers classes and tutoring to youth. That experience taught her a lot about what young people need.

"They need us not to make judgments about them because they will always surprise you," said Vulpas. "They are way smarter than they think they are."

Vulpas started working at the center this fall and is still getting to know the kids and their needs.

"For now I try to listen to them and ask them about things they want to talk about," she said. "I want to be someone who is consistently there for them."

Vulpas works 35 hours a week at the center.



Anne Vulpas, AmeriCorps staff, helps Anthony, 13, with his homework.

## Family Gatherings, Movie Trip Planned

Two family gatherings and a movie trip are planned for WYFC families in the next two months.

There will be a Halloween Party on October 16, 6-8 p.m. It is being organized by the middle and high school youth for younger children. Children kindergarten through fifth grade may attend but must be accompanied by someone from their family at least 18 years of age. There will be games and refreshments.

On November 13 middle and high school youth who earned a 2.5 grade average or higher will get to go to a movie.

The November family gathering will be an ice cream and desert social. It will be November 20, 6-8 p.m.



Jaleighya, 12, and Danaejuh, 11, like to use the computers at the center.

## Permaculture Class Creates Design

The Wisconsin Youth & Family Center, was the site of a Permaculture Design Certification Course August 22-29.

The idea behind “permaculture” is to create spaces in cities where food can be ecologically produced and outdoor spaces beautified and where neighbors can come together. The class taught participants how to help design and develop these kinds of spaces.

Class members created a design for the space behind the youth center building. The design included a children’s garden which the group started and natural solutions to an erosion problem. Teens from the center painted cinder blocks to serve as planters for the garden. The cinder blocks were donated by County Materials Corporation, 6399 Nesbitt Road. About 25 people attended the class.

## Fitness Program Started for Youth

About 10 WYFC youth participated in a center-sponsored Elver Hill Fitness Program. The program was started by former neighborhood police officer Mike Hanson who secured a grant from Project Safe Neighborhoods. The grant helped pay for t-shirts and athletic shoes for participants. Youth who attended everyday earned a pair of shoes. Movin’ Shoes, a Park St. running store, donated energy bars and drinks and socks for participants.



Class members built a swale to absorb rainwater from the building’s roof.



Cinderblocks were placed to serve as planters and a retaining wall.



From left, Ellie Maier, Tony Travis and Officer Mike Hanson.

## Center Coordinators Honored

Wisconsin Youth & Family Center Coordinator Ellie Maier and Assistant Coordinator Tony Travis were given Outstanding Support Awards from the Madison Police Department. The two received their awards for service to their community through their work of providing programming to youth at the center.

They were nominated by former neighborhood police officer Mike Hanson. They received their awards at a ceremony on May 14.