

University of WI-Extension

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July 2009 Edition

**Extension Education & Recycling
Committee – Douglas County**

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FAMILY LIVING PROGRAM

Linda Bruce

FINANCIAL LITERACY TRAINING

Financial instability is reported to be the number one obstacle for someone escaping domestic violence, and the reason most often given by survivors for why they stay or return to their abuser. At the request of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WCADV), Bruce led a regional train-the-trainer event for domestic violence shelter staff working in northwest Wisconsin and upper Michigan to help survivors become more economically self-sufficient. Similar trainings were held earlier this spring across the state co-sponsored by UW-Extension and WCADV.

Training content included benefits of budgeting and goal setting; understanding credit and using it wisely; accessing credit reports and improving credit scores; financial traps to avoid, such as payday or car title loans; understanding spending habits; and finding local community resources.

All of the participants (100%) reported feeling confident of their ability to help their shelter clients develop more effective spending and money management plans, and to help others analyze their financial situation and generate action strategies as a result of this training.

WHAT WORKS WISCONSIN: PREVENTING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY FORUMS

Bruce co-facilitated a forum on Juvenile Delinquency for over 85 participants, which she also helped organize. A one-page summary of this very successful event is available from her.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Fariba Pendleton

ATTRACTING AND RETAINING YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE AREA

Duluth and Superior's numbers of 25-34 year olds is way below what it should be given historical trends and comparisons with other communities of our size. The data indicates that the exodus of this age group is motivated by economic reasons and by a lack of connection to the community.

TWO NEW INITIATIVES:

YOUNG LEADERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND FUND was created to focus on engaging young adults in leadership and philanthropy. The fund is managed by a diverse group of Duluth and Superior residents ranging from the ages of 21 to 35. Together, they provide grant recommendations to the Community Foundation Board that assist other young leaders in pursuing training or other professional development opportunities they might not otherwise receive.

A ONE-STOP-SHOP COMMUNICATION VEHICLE is being created. The DuSu.com will be a comprehensive, interactive portal aimed at promoting and providing information to young people attempting to survive and thrive in the Twin Ports, focusing on working, living, playing and connecting. The DuSu will highlight ways for young people to find jobs, unique places to live, connect with their peers, discover the breadth and depth of arts, culture and outdoor activities in the Twin Ports and get involved in their community. This project targets building social capital among young people in this community.

COMMUNITY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Joan Wimme

Superior, A Community for Youth (SCFY) sponsored the fourth Lake Superior Day Celebration held at Barkers Island Festival Park on July 19. SCFY partnered with the Lake Superior BiNational Forum, Douglas County Land Conservation, UW-Superior, City of Superior, Wisconsin Coastal Management Agency, Super One, McDonalds, Upper Lakes Foods and local citizens to offer 400+ youth, adults and families an afternoon celebration of Lake Superior. Lake Superior Day is held the third Sunday in June all around the lake and helps raise awareness of threats to the lake and watershed - and what each of us can do to help the lake.



The Superior celebration included educational displays, a free reusable shopping bag for each family, live music, free kites and kite flying, fishing activities, moonwalk, badminton, free hot dog lunch, awards ceremony, face painting, and drawings for a composter and rain barrel. Comments collected included:

- ❖ *"All those invasive species are gross – what can I do to protect lake I live on?"*
- ❖ *"This is a great event for local people."*
- ❖ *"This is our event...we make sure it happens." (SCFY member)*
- ❖ *"We've done this for 4 years and I think we've finally reached the place we want to be with it."*

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Sarah Wilcox

4-H Inspires Future Scientists & Engineers

The United States is falling dangerously behind other nations in developing its future workforce of scientists, engineers, and technology experts. To ensure global competitiveness, we must act now to prepare the next generation of science, engineering, and technology leaders. The Douglas County 4-H Youth Development Program and the Superior School District coordinated a fully grant-funded "4-H Gateway Academy" this summer to introduce middle school students to engineering concepts and careers. Twenty students participated in the nine-day Academy, where they built rockets, solar cars, and wind generators and designed bridges, cars, and houses. Students also learned GPS and took a field trip to Cirrus Design.

When asked for feedback, 84% of the students said they would recommend the 4-H Gateway Academy to their friends. Almost all the students said they hope to have a career in a science or engineering field. Comments included: "I was going to be an architect but now I'm going to be an engineer." "[The Academy] has furthered my knowledge of the different paths of an engineer." Many parents indicated that the 4-H Gateway Academy increased or reinforced their child's interest in science and engineering. Comments also included: "[The Academy] presents science, technology, and math through fun, engaging, challenging learning." "[My son] wishes it were more than nine days!" A teacher said, "It's the perfect way to get students interested in pursuing further classes in engineering."

WI NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

Grace Gee and Toni Britton



The Wisconsin Food Security Consortium has been sponsoring regional hunger summits to increase awareness of hunger and to look at ways a community can decrease hunger in local communities. A Douglas County Hunger Summit was held on June 3, 2009, coordinated by the UW-Extension Nutrition Education Program in partnership with Health and Human Services, NWCSA, and WI Food Security Consortium. The 49 attendees were introduced to the "**Four Legs of Hunger**" by Nick Heckman from WI Hunger Consortium. Linda Bruce, led activity on First Leg - Family Economic Security. Breakout sessions addressed Second Leg - Access to Local & Healthy Food, Third Leg - Federal Nutrition Programs & Fourth Leg - Emergency Food Assistance.

The summit ended with a question "Considering what you heard today, what can you do on a personal, workplace, & community level to help reduce hunger in our region and our state?" Answers centered on community gardening, staying connected with the group via e-mail, spreading the word about expanded benefits of the Food Stamp program, sustainability issues, and continuing to network with others that work with food insecure people. Evaluations indicated that 78% had an increase in the understanding of the hunger problem in Douglas County.

AMERICORPS*VISTA

Sheila Fillmore

Sheila Fillmore is working with the 4-H and Community Youth Development Programs at UW-Extension this year as a volunteer through the federally funded AmeriCorps*VISTA program. One of Fillmore's assignments is to develop a group which will involve youth in gaining leadership skills and result in a project that benefits youth. To help determine what the project might be, Fillmore has completed 33 community assessment interviews and surveyed 65 young people and 44 adults.

Frequently mentioned project ideas include a youth recreation center, improving equipment in local playgrounds or sports areas, a mentoring program, a bike trail, a skate park in the North End of Superior and a free public swimming pool.

Further suggestions were support for families so they are able to be more involved in their children's lives and enroll them in activities, providing scholarships or ways for youth to raise or earn money so they can access programs, improving communication about available opportunities and offering healthy activities that increase exercise, improve nutrition and lessen obesity.

In mid-July a community meeting was held to begin reviewing this data, determine a project and develop a project planning group. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 29, 2009 from 4:30-6:00 p.m. at the Superior Public Library. Interested community leaders, parents and youth are invited to attend. We will focus on a project goal and plan the next steps to direct the project.