

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

4-H Volunteers Inspire by Example – Denise Retzleff

Inspiring by their example, 4-H volunteers across the United States, Wisconsin, and Fond du Lac County make a positive difference in young people's lives. They help youth to develop skills and to give back to their community. They serve as role models, teachers, and advisers. They plan, create, encourage, mentor, model values, build relationships, listen, and gather resources. They give their time, talent, energy, ideas, resources, and experience because they know that making a positive difference in our children helps the young person to be a more self confident, caring, and contributing individual. They know that it builds capacities that benefit our communities, families, schools, and work force.



Nationally, 4-H has 440,000 adult volunteers. Wisconsin has 14,000 and Fond du Lac County 4-H has 379 adult volunteers. The positive impact that these volunteers make on the youth in our communities is seen when the child is able to bake their own cake, repair an engine motor, develop a computer program, run a meeting, or any of the dozens of skills that are learned in 4-H. The positive impact is heard when a young person explains at an interview how a particular adult influenced their career path. It is felt from the glow on a child's face when the child meets others and builds a new friendship. It is witnessed when young people provide community service in response to an identified need. 4-H volunteers make it all possible by inspiring by example. They make the world a better place for all of us, one child at a time. A special salute goes out to 4-H volunteers in recognition of National Volunteer Appreciation Week.

Ready, Set, Credit: Understanding Credit Basics – Shelley Tidemann

Buy now, pay later! We are constantly urged to accept credit card offers or purchase items on credit. But what is credit? Credit lets you buy something now and pay for it later. Before using credit, consumers need to consider the costs of credit. Some costs are visible as they are seen as financial fees and some costs are not as visible, but are considered a cost, such as asking yourself the question: Is it worth the extra cost to buy on credit? Do I need this?

Understanding Credit has been a topic that the local Job Center and Marian College have requested educational sessions on as they have seen a need in their respective areas with their clients. UW-Extension has developed an educational presentation focused on and entitled "Understanding Credit Basics." The session addresses what Credit is and the opportunities associated with using credit. In addition, choosing and using credit cards and understanding credit reports complete the class focus. The session for the Job Center is regularly scheduled as a part of the JOBS LLC programming for Fond du Lac County residents. The sessions for Marian College are done with the Working Families Grant program, and are held during the college's semesters. Additional financial literacy classes will be added to the Marian College offering by UW-Extension in the fall of 2007. To date, 21 individuals have participated in the educational sessions held in January and March. The feedback from participants indicates that the levels of understanding regarding the choosing and using of credit cards is the area of largest gain from participating in class.

AGRICULTURAL PROFITABILITY

Reaching Out to the Equine Community – Paul Dyk

In Fond du Lac County, there have traditionally been great agriculture programs that have targeted production agriculture such as crop, dairy, beef, and swine enterprises. These programs have been traditionally to the same set of core clients, farm operators that have been in business for a number of years. There has been one segment of rural agriculture operators that has not been targeted directly by Extension, small/hobby farms. These operators have received helpful information from 4-H and other sources but not a lot of information directly from the agricultural agents. Small/hobby farms do not compare to traditional farm operators in economic impact but their increase in numbers is obvious when driving through Fond du Lac County. In order to improve that transfer of information to these operators, I have put together a Fond du Lac Equine College. This program for March 2007 is designed to reach equine owners of all ages (4-H and others). For 2007, this college has focused on nutrition, pasture development and the purchasing of hay for horses. This program will provide needed information for an underserved community.

FOND DU LAC COUNTY UW-EXTENSION

Room 227, Administration/Extension Building
400 University Drive
Fond du Lac, WI 54935
Phone: (920) 929-3170/748-7565/324-2879
Website: <http://fonddulac.uwex.edu>

Nan Baumgartner, Family Living Educator
Paul Dyk, Dairy and Livestock Agent
Position Vacant, Community Resource Dev. Agent
Mike Rankin, Crops and Soils Agent
Denise Retzleff, 4-H and Youth Agent
Shelley Tidemann, Family Living Educator