

News Release

Faye Malek, Family Living Educator
Manitowoc County UW-Extension
P.O. Box 1150, 4319 Expo Drive
Manitowoc, WI 54221-1150

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Hispanic Consortium Meets Thursday

On Thursday of this week, the Manitowoc County Hispanic Consortium will meet at 12:15p.m. at the Manitowoc County Office Complex. Persons interested in attending need not register. The meeting will last one hour.

The consortium was initiated in 2000 when it was determined that the county was experiencing a growing Latino population. Since then, consortium members have worked to create an awareness of the culture and, have helped to establish numerous programs and services.

Currently, consortium members are involved in providing an educational program once-a-month after Mass at St. Thomas the Apostle Church. Topics scheduled for this year include: driver education instruction, medication safety, child safety seat instruction, healthy relationships in stressful times, volunteer needs and opportunities and, what children need to know before they stay home alone.

Several topics are already scheduled for 2005 including: understanding health insurance basics, how to understand a hospital bill and payment options, tax preparation assistance, programs that save money on home and apartment repairs, and, how families can get involved in 4-H.

In 2004, a Hispanic Consortium Advisory Group was formed and consists of St. Thomas the Apostle church members. These Latino men and women provide the consortium with insights on current issues faced by, particularly, non-English speaking Latino residents.

One of the topics covered at Thursday's meeting will be the work of the Manitowoc County Lakeshore Interfaith Hospitality Network and the partnerships they have formed with their initiative to help homeless families in our area.

Another event this week will be held on Friday at 1p.m. Volunteer First Book readers will assemble and make arrangements to read to Head Start children during the upcoming school year.

Any community member interested in participating in UW-Extension's First Book literacy program for 3-5 year olds can contact me at 683-4168. We need nearly 50 volunteers each year to read every three weeks at all Head Start sites throughout the county. Students are divided into groups of 4 - 5, are read to and, participate in a related hands-on activity. Funds are raised to purchase nine books for each student to take home. The literacy program is a collaborative effort with WI-Public Television and the Manitowoc County Association of Home and Community Education (HCE).

Building a child's brain power and increasing the enjoyment of reading are two First Book goals. Having wonderful adult role models who read to children has been a wonderful intergenerational experience for both children and the readers.

An EEO/Affirmative Action employer, University of Wisconsin-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and ADA requirements. Please make requests for reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to educational programs as early as possible preceding the scheduled program, service or activity.

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