

Community Partner Advisory Group Meeting
MINUTES
Wednesday, June 29, 2005 Meeting—6:30 PM

Auditorium
County Courthouse Annex--Elkhorn, WI

James D'Alessandro, chairman of the Community Partner Advisory Group, called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Roll call—CPAG members present included Rollie Cooper, James D'Alessandro, Elton Feffer, Yvonne Fiskum, Dianne Kegley, Letha Kuecker, John Newhouse, Barb Papcke, Hoss Rehberg, and Mary Vander Veen. A quorum was declared.

Ag and Extension Education Committee present—None.

UWEX staff present—Carolyn L. Belczyk, Department Head, Jenny Wehmeier, Family Living Educator, Christine Register, Horticulture Educator, Maricela Quirino, WNEP Program Assistant, and Angie Recknagel, Recording Secretary.

Public in attendance—None

There were no withdrawals from the Agenda. **Feffer moved to approve the agenda as presented, with a second by Papcke. The motion carried 10-0.**

Feffer moved to approve the minutes of the May 16 Community Partner Advisory Group meeting, with a second by Rehberg. The motion carried 10-0.

Public comment—There was no public comment.

Belczyk introduced Register and Quirino to the group. Register gave a brief introduction on the role of the horticulture educator and indicated that her office hours are generally Monday mornings and all day on Thursdays and Fridays. Consumers may call anytime, and she will return the calls promptly. The Hort Hotline number is 741-3178.

Small group discussion on the key question: What educational outreach programming or collaborative efforts could Walworth County UW-Extension develop or lead to enhance the quality of life for the county's growing Latino community?—Belczyk distributed a hand-out regarding Latino outreach considerations and led a discussion of some concerns that have been identified by several group members. Belczyk asked the group to look at the direction they are heading and evaluate where they have been in the process.

The key question the group has been looking at is "What educational outreach programming or collaborative efforts could Walworth County UW-Extension develop or lead to enhance the quality of life or meets the needs of the county's growing Latino community?" Perhaps the key question has been framed too narrowly. We have focused on only one side of the Latino issue; examining what the needs and issues are which face the Latino community. We have not looked

at the impact of the increasing Latino population on County government services such as law enforcement and health and human services, on local school districts, and on local communities. Also, we have not looked at these issues from a broader, more general perspective. An example of this would be health issues such as affordability, availability, and the impact of increasing costs to employers and employees, which are concerns affecting all segments of the community.

Fiskum noted that she is concerned about the emphasis being placed on providing services to undocumented immigrants—illegals. There is no effort to screen those who cross the border into the United States, either legally or illegally, and the increase in immigrants has brought an increase in drug trafficking and crime. Newhouse stated that our issue is what we can do to help the Latinos, not how to stop them at the border. Stopping the illegal immigrants from crossing the border is something we have no control over—it is a larger societal issue. We just need to do what we can to help them once they are here. Belczyk stated that serving the illegals has associated costs and impacts. The group has heard from panelists (school district and agency representatives) about the services they provide, but we have not discussed related issues such as the costs of these services, the impact on taxpayers, or whether providing these services has detracted from the services and programs or the quality of education provided to other students or citizens. We did not ask the panelists to address these concerns.

Feffer noted that not all illegals are criminals. A lot of them are good hard workers, but because they do not have proper documentation, they have to steal identification, quit their jobs, or work for cash. They are valued employees working in jobs that other Walworth County residents do not want. If wages were raised to attract other employees, then companies would be forced to raise their prices, both consumers and business would be negatively impacted, and local businesses might be forced to close. Belczyk reminded participants that a related issue identified in previous discussions is that in some instances, parents have gone through the process of becoming legal, but have children who are not legal, which prevents the children from receiving some benefits and services.

Fiskum clarified her earlier statements. Clearly, not all illegals are bad. However, undocumented aliens have broken the law to come into our country. It is her view that they should become legal before immigrating. Cooper asked if the illegals are being sent back to Mexico. Belczyk responded that UW-Extension has no control over the border issues. The group needs to look at the Walworth County issues and concerns. Cooper suggested the group look at the broader community and its issues, keeping the issues and needs of the Latino community in mind throughout the discussion. Kuecker agreed that the group has had tunnel vision and has a concern that the issues of the broader community should be addressed by UW-Extension.

Belczyk stated that the role of the group is to help develop a plan of action. It is the staff role to develop specific programming to address the needs. D'Alessandro stated that CPAG should gather information and supply the UW-Extension with recommendations. He asked if the group wants to continue to use the panel discussion format to identify and explore issues. Feffer asked if the group is capable of solving any of these issues. D'Alessandro responded that we should use an economic term such as macro/micro in looking at issues. On the micro level of Walworth County, some of the issues can be addressed. We cannot deal with issues that are more national or international in scope, such as the issue of crossing the border illegally. Belczyk noted the group should keep in mind the issue areas in which UW-Extension has expertise and is able to address.

D'Alessandro suggested that the group develop a list of recommendations regarding the Latino issues from the previous meetings. He noted that there are several recommendations that come readily to mind, such as working with Latinos on-site (at food pantries, etc. which are readily accessible and user friendly to that population) and continuing to communicate and network with potential partners, including agencies and schools.

Feffer asked if anyone in the group has had the opportunity to go to the immigration office and witness what really happens. This is a really good learning experience to see just what the illegals have to go through to become legal. Belczyk noted that immigration is a concern shared by many, but an issue area in which extension has limited expertise.

D'Alessandro said the question is where does the group go from here? Does the group want more panelists to come in and speak on new and different topics, does the group want to make some recommendations at this time regarding programming to meet the needs of the Latino community, or should the group look at these or other issues more broadly and keep in mind the Latino community's needs in doing so? Newhouse would like to obtain further information to be able to make recommendations on the five bulleted issues listed on the handout. He also believes the group needs to make a broader approach.

Newhouse moved that the group take a broader approach in examining issues, keeping in mind the needs of the Latino population in doing so, with a second by Cooper. Discussion followed. Newhouse did not want to eliminate the findings on the Latino community. He believes there is a definite need in this area, but does not believe it can be isolated. Belczyk responded that if the group agrees on how to best achieve their goal and if they can identify other key questions or issues, then they can prioritize those and recommend that UW-Extension take action on them. **The motion carried 10-0.**

Kuecker would like to see the group discuss issues with residents within their communities and bring back this information to the next meeting. We could address an issue more efficiently if we did such homework prior to the meeting. This would enable the group to identify the major areas of concerns and make recommendations from there. D'Alessandro suggested the group prepare a document addressing the issues for the Ag and Extension Education Committee and the Board. Two recommendations he believes that should be on this document are those of networking and on-site programming, identified earlier in the discussion. Belczyk asked if this should be done as a group or if a subcommittee should report back to the group with a set of recommendations for approval and forwarding to other bodies. No action was taken.

D'Alessandro suggested he would like to have representatives from the Sheriff's Department to come and speak to the committee.

Belczyk asked the group what the agenda should be at their next meeting. Cooper would like to see more information in the upcoming meetings on health and transportation issues. **The group came to the consensus that they will explore health issues at their next meeting.** The group recommended that representatives from the Department of Health and Human Services be invited.

Next Meeting Date—Belczyk proposed that the group set a regular meeting schedule. For example, CPAG might meet every other month on the even-numbered months, which would be opposite the Ag and Extension Education Committee's meetings. The 4th Tuesday of the month was suggested as a possible meeting night. **Consensus of the group was to try meeting on the 4th Tuesdays of even-numbered months. There will be no December meeting.** The group will next meet on August 23, 2005, at 6:30 p.m.

Adjournment— **Cooper moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 p.m., and Feffer seconded the motion. The motion carried 10-0.**

Submitted by Angie Recknagel, recording secretary. Minutes approved by Ag and Extension Education Committee on August 23, 2005.