

LEADERSHIP & SCHOLARSHIP IN PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND TEACHING IN FAMILY LIVING

When UW-Extension Iowa County staff conducted our county needs assessment process in 2003, it was clear that the population of Iowa County was very concerned about “making ends meet”. Our needs assessment process included Iowa County city, town and farm residents, from all age and economic groups. Although only 7.3% of Iowa County residents were living in poverty in 2003 and our unemployment rate was 4.4%, we did have the second highest senior citizen poverty rate of all Wisconsin counties (12.6%) and many individuals and families were worried about money. At that time, we had 1,127 county residents on food stamps, 569 children a day receiving free or reduced-price school meals, and 547 WIC participants each year.

A common theme in our needs assessment was the need for employment and a “living wage” income. It was clear that lower prices for farm products at that time, lower wage jobs, increasing costs of living, and managing debt were affecting Iowa County residents’ confidence in their economic well-being. At the same time, many needs assessment respondents also expressed concern about both parents of young children needing to work away from home to make ends meet (82% of Iowa County parents of children under age 6 were in the labor force). Prior to the 2003 needs assessment, the priority for Family Living programs had been on parenting education and support with some emphasis on family financial education. Based on the 2003 needs assessment, family financial education and poverty awareness and education became the highest priorities. The following programs are examples of my effort to address the needs and interests of Iowa County residents:

Poverty Simulations Raise Awareness in Iowa County & Southwest Wisconsin

Situation & Response - Since fall of 2003, UW-Extension Iowa County staff (Peterson, Ivey, Ohlrogge, Gildersleeve, Weier, Buening and Schriefer) have facilitated eight local awareness programs reaching about 300 people, using a Poverty Simulation created by the Reform Organization of Welfare (ROWEL) Education Association of Missouri. This experience is designed to help participants begin to understand what it might be like to be part of a typical low-income family trying to survive from month to month. Participants in our simulations were staff and volunteers from agencies and organizations that serve low-income people, Extension colleagues, community leadership program participants, middle and high school faculty, clergy, teens and interested individuals. Sensitizing them to issues faced by families in poverty will likely result in better understanding, and ideally, in changes in programming, that can benefit low income families. Schriefer's role in the simulation programs included sharing localized follow-up data to the participants using Extension resources, serving as a simulation director or staffer, and coordinating logistics.

Results – For the participants, this program clearly played an important role in increasing awareness about the situation for individuals in poverty. Survey results show striking increases in the understanding of the difficulties and stresses faced by individuals in poverty. Participants express that the experience was “eye opening” and almost all say they are satisfied with the experience and would strongly recommend it to others. The first Iowa County poverty simulation done for professionals and volunteers who work with people in need led to an invitation to conduct the simulation for the Southwest Wisconsin Community Leadership

Alliance. Word of the success of our first simulation also led to invitations for our staff to facilitate the experience for a UW-Extension Southern District Faculty & Staff meeting and for the Platteville School District faculty. The UW-Extension Iowa County staff facilitated the poverty simulation again for the Community Leadership Alliance program in 2005, 2006 and 2007, co-facilitated a poverty simulation training for the Poverty & Food Insecurity Program Area Team, and offered the program to a collection of church youth and parishioners in Mineral Point. Schriefer also facilitated the poverty simulation with school-to-work staff in CESA #3 at Southwest Wisconsin Technical College.

Evidence – Post-simulation participant surveys were administered and summary results were collected from the first four programs conducted by UW-Extension Iowa County staff, with a total of 181 respondents. The evaluations show an increase in understanding of situations faced by low-income people. In a standard series of five evaluation questions, the average level of understanding prior to the experience was 2.8 on a 5-point scale. After the simulation, the average for participant understanding was 4.1 on a 5 point scale. Understanding on each question on each evaluation for each group increased more than 1 point between the before and after surveys.

Iowa County Connections - Resource Guide Aids Iowa County Families

Situation – Based on a 2003 needs assessment conducted by the United Fund of Iowa County, it was evident that there were many programs and resources available to Iowa County residents with limited incomes or special needs but no organized system of sharing that information between agencies or with potential beneficiaries. At the same time, the Iowa County Health Coalition was trying to develop a list of services and providers that could be shared with the public. The two groups had similar goals but were not aware of each other's work.

Response – Schriefer was vice chair of the United Fund of Iowa County and assisted them with the design and implementation of their 2003 needs assessment. Because of other Extension relationships and networking, she also knew about the Health Coalition goal of producing a resource list. In December 2003, Schriefer convened a meeting of the United Fund and Health Coalition representatives and invited the directors of other agencies that might be included in a comprehensive directory. In addition to a collection of resource guides from many Iowa County agencies, Schriefer also shared the Wisconsin Connections Eligibility Guide that was developed by UW-Extension Family Living Specialist Judi Bartfeld and others. The program directors and organization representatives appreciated the Wisconsin Connections model and agreed to support a uniform Iowa County resource directory using the 19 programs listed in Wisconsin Connections as a starting point. The group agreed to share in the information collection, editing, cost of production, and distribution of Iowa County Connections by the summer of 2004. Schriefer worked closely with the United Fund volunteer who was leading the directory effort by identifying resources and contact people, acquiring printing bids, and editing directory pages. Schriefer also planned and co-facilitated the distribution meeting with 25 participants by providing family case studies to small groups who had to use the new Iowa County Connections to find resources for the families.

Results – About 200 Iowa County Connections directories were printed and distributed in June 2004. They contained information on 74 programs available to Iowa County residents from 28

agencies and 8 Iowa County departments. Each program has a page that lists a brief description, eligibility requirements, benefits, and application process. Contact information is specific to Iowa County rather than 1-800 numbers for the related state agency as was provided in Wisconsin Connections. The loose-leaf binder design of the directory was intentional as an empowerment tool in that staff could remove a specific page regarding a resource, copy it and give it directly to the person with the question or the need, allowing him/her to make the contact with the correct agency. Directories were distributed to all agencies and organizations included in the binder, to school guidance staff and administrators, churches, libraries, the area technical college, health care providers, Red Cross, our child care resource agency, etc. Plans for the future included annual revisions for existing resources and the addition of new ones. The 2005 Iowa County Connections was revised and reprinted, containing 98 programs and resources available to Iowa County families. There is also a new section with information on resources for Spanish-speaking individuals. The directory was revised and distributed again in 2006 and the 2007 edition is underway.

Evidence – The Family Resource Center of Iowa County (FRC) has a contract with the Iowa County Health Coalition to provide a staff person to answer calls regarding resources available in Iowa County. According to the FRC staff, they are using the directory daily in responding to requests for assistance. The Department of Social Services continues to acquire copies of the directory so that all staff have access from their desks and can provide timely referrals to their clients. A county board supervisor who is also a clergy person comes to our office every time a new clergy person begins work in Iowa County so he can personally provide them with their own directories. The social workers at our new Iowa County Community Connections Free Clinic also report that the directory is an asset to them in their work with Free Clinic patients. We get feedback continually from the agencies and organizations included in the directory that they use and value the resource. Programs and resources that were inadvertently overlooked during the development of the first directories have contacted us to be included in the future.

VITA Benefits Iowa County Families

Situation: Of the 22,000 people who call Iowa County home, about 1,500 receive Food Share, 560 school-aged children get free or reduced price school meals and 650 women and children participate in the WIC program. Even though our poverty rate of 7.3% is slightly lower than the state poverty rate, we have many families who struggle to make ends meet. The tax season brings additional stress to these individuals and families as they try to pay for tax preparation fees and are often enticed by refund anticipation loans to speed up the funds from their returns. The average cost of tax return preparation in Iowa County is \$110 per return.

Response: The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program is available through the IRS to help limited-income taxpayers (household income of \$40,000 or less) get their tax returns prepared free of charge and avoid high interest rates from refund anticipation loans. Following initial contact with the IRS about VITA in 2003 by Iowa County WNEP Coordinator Peterson, Family Living Agent Schriefer assumed leadership for the program in 2004 and we conducted our first tax return preparation during the tax season of 2005 with 47 returns. Although we had a year of experience in our favor heading into the 2006 tax season, the Iowa County Job Center, who had hosted our VITA site, was closed and a new location was needed. In addition, the computers and technical support provided by the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development

Board were no longer available either. We were able to relocate our VITA site to the Family Resource Center of Iowa County with Southwest Wisconsin Technical College (SWTC) joining the partnership with computers and technical support. We continued to work through the Southwest Wisconsin Community Action Program and our satellite Job Center to promote the VITA site and tax preparation services. A local credit union printed our VITA information on all of their monthly statement envelopes to assist with the promotion. Nine volunteers from the community and from SWTC staffed the site as screeners, preparers and quality reviewers. We all had to pass the IRS volunteer tax preparation tests and participate in training with the IRS to insure standard practices and quality assurance.

Results: Iowa County VITA volunteers successfully prepared 55 tax returns in 2006 and according to the IRS, we achieved a 100% accuracy rate. Half of the taxpayers were returning for a second year and the other half were new clients. To achieve the fastest possible refund, we strongly encouraged all of our taxpayers to have the IRS and the Wisconsin Department of Revenue do a direct deposit into a savings or checking account and we doubled the number of taxpayers using direct deposit at our site in 2006. VITA participants who claimed Earned Income Tax Credit received on average an additional \$1,800 for their tax refund. Those who qualified for the Child Tax Credit and the Education Credits got an additional \$1,000 each. Our 55 taxpayers got a total of \$83,726 in federal refunds and \$39,482 in state refunds. Although we only promoted our VITA site in Iowa County, we ended up serving clients from 20 zip codes, 16 school districts and seven counties. In 2007, we prepared 63 tax returns and the federal refunds totaled \$94,506 with an additional \$31,419 in state refunds and 73% of the taxpayers used direct deposit. In 2007, our taxpayers came from 23 zip codes, 19 school districts and six counties.

In a written survey conducted as clients left our VITA site in 2006 with an 80% response rate (44 respondents out of 55 participants), and a 74% response rate (47 respondents out of 63 participants) in 2007, we learned that 1/3 of our clients were interested in learning more about money management so we organized a series of classes that was offered in February 2007 by a partnership representing UW-Extension, a local bank, our satellite Job Center, our Department of Social Services, SWTC and Southwest Wisconsin Community Action Program. Schriefer co-taught the classes and evaluation results indicate that all 13 participants increased their knowledge by at least two points on a 10-point scale on each of the three topics – Banking 101, Check it Out, and Credit. The partnership, now named FLIC (Financial Literacy in Iowa County), plans to continue a financial education series in the fall of 2007 with topics related to back-to-school spending, money for food, utilities and weatherization, and holiday spending.

In an effort to share the work we've done in Iowa County related to helping families make the most of their resources, Schriefer, Peterson, Ivey and Weier offered a presentation on Poverty Awareness & Education via the Family Living Scholarship Wisline Web in March 2007. We used the Logic Model to frame our work including a situation analysis, inputs and outputs, and our outcomes to date. Our Family Living colleagues had the opportunity to participate in this interactive presentation and critique our work using the elements of scholarship. One colleague wrote in a follow-up e-mail, "I especially like the way your team organized your presentation using the logic model. The outcomes are quite impressive covering a broad range and showing real community change." Feedback on the work and the presentation was very positive and several colleagues called or e-mailed for more information.

LEADERSHIP & SCHOLARSHIP IN PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND TEACHING IN 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

A core belief of 4-H is Health, as evidenced by the four H's in the 4-H clover: Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. 4-H is committed to the physical, mental and emotional health of our nation's youth so they may lead healthy and productive lives into adulthood. 4-H has become a national leader in health-related educational issues including chemical health, mental and emotional health, foods and nutrition, physical health and safety. Healthy Living is one of the three "Mission Mandates" from the National 4-H Council and I've been actively involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of 4-H programs related to the 4th "H".

4-H Bike and Fitness Challenge Addresses Physical Activity

Situation: In Wisconsin, 22% of adults are considered obese, up 13% since 1991. Data for Wisconsin children are limited, but in 2001, 25% of low-income 2 to 4 year-olds and 24% of high school students were either overweight or at risk of overweight. As a result of rising obesity and sedentary lifestyles, Wisconsin residents are experiencing increased risks for a number of chronic diseases. Nutrition and physical activity are two components that contribute to good health. When it comes to physical activity Wisconsin residents need to be more active. Less than half (40%) of adults and only 28% of high school age youth reported being physically active for 30 minutes or more at least 5 days per week in 2001.

Because UW-Extension has a youth development presence in every county in the state and is known for promoting positive youth development, the State 4-H Adventures Committee identified their niche in encouraging people to incorporate physical activity into their daily lifestyle. Surveys of participants from past 4-H Adventures efforts expressed interest in a bicycling program because it allows participation by people with varying abilities.

Response: In May of 2004 the 4-H Adventures Committee discussed the potential to address obesity issues with a statewide activity. Contacts were made with the Family Living Eat Well Be Active team and others to discuss project feasibility. In fall of 2004 a planning committee with the Richland/Sauk WNEP Coordinator, UW-Extension 4-H staff from Sauk, Douglas, Oneida, and Burnett counties and Schriefer was formed under the leadership of Rosanne Schleif, Price County. This group named the project (RetroFit Yourself: 4-H Bike & Fitness Challenge), set goals, identified components and wrote various pieces that were published via a project website. Website design was done primarily by Schleif and Schriefer in partnership with Jason Lemahieu, Interactive Web Specialist with UW-Extension. Schriefer worked on funding proposals for team and 4-H Foundation program funds and secured incentives for RetroFit participants including three Trek bicycles. Schriefer also worked with Ellen Taylor-Powell on the evaluation component. The Challenge encouraged 4-H participants to set and work toward daily physical activity goals recommended by the Centers for Disease Control of 30 minutes per day for adults and 60 minutes per day for youth. To be eligible for incentives, the participants had to log at least that amount of physical activity for five days each week for six consecutive weeks. The website illustrated miles at a conversion rate of 15 minutes of physical activity per mile and advanced a bicycle to show progress made by participants statewide. The project was launched in May 2005.

Results: In the 18 months of the Challenge (May 2005-September 2006), 504 4-H youth, parents, volunteers and Extension staff from 41 counties registered on the web-based system and logged physical activity time which was converted into miles. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of the registered participants pledged to be physically active 30 or more minutes each day, at least five days per week. Participants included 246 4-Hers (48%), 178 parents and volunteer leaders (35%) and 118 Extension staff (23%).

Participants logged 1,315,170 minutes of physical activity or the equivalent of 87,678 miles! Average participation was 174 miles or 2,610 minutes per participant. Fifty-five (55) of the participants met their physical activity goal at least once during the Challenge and four participants met their 5 days/week for 6 weeks goal eleven times.

Evidence: According to the web-based registration survey, 52% of Challenge participants knew that youth needed 60 minutes or more of physical activity at least five days each week and 89% of the participants knew that adults should get 30 minutes each day at least five days each week. However, only 48% of youth and 44% of adults were getting the recommended amount of physical activity.

To further promote the Challenge, Schriefer planned a Bicycle Adventure seminar for the 2006 State 4-H & Youth Conference that involved a tour of the Trek Bicycle Plant in Waterloo, WI to learn about bike-related careers and a bike trip through the UW Arboretum on rented bicycles. On the post-seminar evaluation, all 25 participants indicated that “I gained knowledge I can use in programs in my own community” and “I have a plan for one or more ways to use this knowledge in my 4-H club, neighborhood, school or community”. The seminar will be offered again in 2007.

In the pre-Challenge survey, participants were asked what makes them want to be physically active. The main reasons were “to feel better” (74%) and “to have a healthy lifestyle” (65%). On the post-Challenge survey, the primary response was “stress release” (84%) which was double that response on the pre-survey. Reasons for not being physically active were consistent on the pre and post-surveys: “not enough time” (62%/69%), “don’t feel like it” (47%/38%), and “weather” (44%/38%).

Our Challenge goals were designed to match the Eat Well Be Active team plan and all the results were reported in the Planning & Results System with their team impact indicators.

Schleif and Schriefer co-taught an introductory session on RetroFit Yourself: 4-H Bike & Fitness Challenge at the State 4-H Youth Development in-service in May 2005 for 20 colleagues. On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree”, the average responses gauging understanding of health issues related to overweight and obesity based on the presentation was 4.2 and understanding actions that 4-H youth development staff could take to combat the issue was 4.4. Schleif and Schriefer co-taught a seminar at the NAE4-HA Annual Meeting in October 2006 and shared results of the Challenge and ideas for replicating it with 4-H staff from around the country. Schriefer also taught a seminar on the Challenge for the Wisconsin Afterschool Childcare Network conference in March 2007.

CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2007

- Children, Youth & Families At Risk Annual Conference, Chicago, IL
- Family Living State Program Area Conference, Madison, WI

2006

- National Association of Extension 4-H Agents National Conference, Milwaukee, WI (concurrent session co-presenter on RetroFit Yourself: 4-H Bike & Fitness Challenge)
- National Extension Association of Family & Consumer Sciences Annual Session, Denver, CO (Wisconsin Distinguished Service Award recipient)

2005

- Program Impacts Workshop – Evaluating Mass Media, Wisconsin Dells, WI
- 4-H Youth Development State Program Area Conference, Wausau, WI (breakout session co-presenter on RetroFit Yourself: 4-H Bike & Fitness Challenge)
- Action for Healthy Kids School Wellness Conference, Madison, WI
- Wisconsin Dept. of Ag, Trade & Consumer Protection Latinos as Consumers Conference, Madison, WI
- Trust & Transformation Cooperative Extension Conference, Madison, WI (breakout session co-presenter on Poverty Education & Awareness)
- Family Living Education Pathways to Financial Success Conference, Wausau, WI (resource fair presenter on 4-H Financial Champions)
- Wisconsin Health Education Network Conference on Youth Obesity, Madison, WI
- Regional Extension Conference on Youth Obesity, Ames, IA, 2005 (poster session co-presenter on Eating Well & Being Active)

2005, 2006, 2007

- IRS Link & Learn Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Certification, on-line

2004

- Family Living Programs Parent Educator Institute, Oconomowoc, WI (breakout session co-presenter on Southwest Wisconsin Youth Survey)
- Outreach Scholarship Conference, Madison, WI (poster session co-presenter on Southwest Wisconsin Youth Survey)

2003

- Family Living State Program Area Conference, Madison, WI
- Galaxy Conference, Salt Lake City, UT (concurrent session co-presenter on Southwest Wisconsin Youth Survey)
- Family Living Education Parent Educator Institute, Wisconsin Dells, WI
- Cooperative Extension Evaluating Collaboratives In-service, Madison, WI

2000-2004

- Cooperative Extension Department Heads Conference

Annually

- Joint Council of Extension Professionals Conference/Wisconsin Association of Extension Professionals (occasional concurrent session co-presenter)

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PROFESSION AND/OR THE UNIVERSITY

Program Area

Team Memberships – Family Financial Education, 2003-Present and Eating Well Being Active, 2005-Present

Team Leadership – Family Financial Education Co-chair, 2003-2005

Team Coach – Parent Education and Families in Stress & Transition, 2006-Present

Family Living Scholarship Wisline Web on Poverty Education & Awareness, 2007

Family Living Program Area Overview for Chancellor Wilson, 2006

CUNA Thrive by Five Curriculum Development Team, 2004

Family Economic Security Issue Team 1999-2003

Screen & Interview Committees for Futrell, Harvey, and vice-Goebel

Department of Family Development

Tenured Faculty Review Committee 2003-2006

Chair 2004-2006

Past Mentoring Team for Kathy Hetzel

Current Mentoring Teams for Joan Laurion & Angie Flickinger

Associations

Wisconsin Extension Association of Family & Consumer Sciences 1995-Present

Awards Committee 1996-2006

Secretary 1999-2001

National Extension Association of Family & Consumer Sciences 1995-Present

National Conference In-depth Seminars Committee 2006-2007

Epsilon Sigma Phi Alpha Sigma Chapter 1992-2006

Awards & Recognition/Member Services Committee 2000-2006

Awards Committee Chair 2001-02, 2004-05

Cooperative Extension

Trust & Transformation Conference Coordinating Committee, 2005 (breakout session chair)

Cooperative Extension Department Heads Conference, 2004 (planning committee)

Faculty Senate 2001-2002

Administration of Educational & Research Programs

- Creating 4-H Learning Experiences via D2L Lesson Study (SoTL), 2007, with Vos, Brabender, Immendorf, Taylor-Powell and Ng
- Search Survey of Iowa County Student Resources and Assets, 2005, with Ivey and Weier
- United for Students – River Valley School District, 2004, with Bogenschneider, Nagelkerk and Olive
- Southwest Wisconsin Youth Survey, 2001, with Schmitz, Stoutenborough-Brooks, Kinney and Ivey (recipient of three WEAFCS team awards in 2003 - Team Effort-External, Program Excellence through Research, and Communication-Educational Publication; recipient of two Communication-Newsletter team awards in 2004 from WEAFCS and WAE4-HYDP)