
Summary of Professional Contributions and Scholarship

“I teach!” A decade and a half ago, that was my standard response to the never-ending question, “What does a family living educator do?” Although I knew my responsibilities were a bit more complicated than that, I truly felt that direct teaching was my primary function as a county-based faculty member. As I reflect upon my role and purpose today, my response would be quite different. It might sound something like, “I extend the knowledge of the University to the citizens of Pierce County by applying the concepts of transformational education to promote positive change in individuals, families and communities.” To what do I attribute this remarkable change in philosophy? It wasn’t a modification in my job description or administrative leaders dictating my path, but a subtle realization over time that teaching is so much more than lecturing about a topic in front of an audience.

So what is transformational education and how does it help direct the work that I do? According to former Dean and Director of UW-Extension Arlen Leholm, transformational education is the process of addressing complex issues by blending information, content transmission and facilitation in context resulting in high impact programs that produce positive outcomes, stronger organizations and system changes that alter communities in powerful and long-lasting ways. The Wisconsin Framework of Transformational Education allows for the scholarship of engagement including discovery, integration, application, and teaching; it connects any of these dimensions of scholarship to the understanding and solving of pressing social, civic or ethical problems.

The purpose of transformational education is to educate for community action, but before this can occur, one must build and nurture trust, the cornerstone of any meaningful and productive relationship. Building trusting relationships with clients, partners and collaborators combined with the utilization of research-based information and increased leadership capacity among individuals and organizations will ultimately result in improved quality of life. In addition to illustrating the concepts of transformational education through my professional contributions and scholarly work, I will also highlight a number of effective collaborations that have resulted from these trusting relationships since the scholarship of engagement often takes the form of multidisciplinary collaborations across institutional boundaries.

As a researcher, teacher, convener, facilitator, evaluator, community builder and scholar, I have discovered through research and experience that utilizing a comprehensive, multi-dimensional approach to addressing individual and community needs is more productive and effective. By applying Urie Bronfenbrenner’s social ecological model (SEM) of behavior change as a conceptual framework to my educational programming efforts, I have become more conscious about addressing the multiple levels that affect human behavior: individual, social network (family, peers), community (schools, workplace, and neighborhoods) and cultural or societal. Interventions or strategies for planned change should address all levels to be effective. In addition, it is essential to understand and manage barriers and constraints to behavior change as it is unrealistic to expect individuals to change if obstacles at higher levels are insurmountable. I have striven to apply these basic principles behind SEM to my work in Extension from developing timely parenting education curriculum to assisting the Hunger Prevention Council in identifying its mission and goals to guiding the River Falls Partnership for Youth (a drug-free community coalition) through its annual action plan.

At its most basic application, strategies for promoting behavior change can be categorized into individual or group level approaches and environmental approaches. Individual approaches focus on helping people develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills they need to change their behavior. An environmental approach shifts the focus from individual behavior to changes in the environment in which that person lives, which directly impacts behavior. The idea that altering the environment could affect individual behavior change was a bit of an epiphany for me. My early educational programming in Extension focused primarily on teaching individuals how to behave “the right way” in order to improve their lives. Along with this new awareness came the realization that working in the arena of environmental change would be much more time-consuming, relationship-intensive and altogether more challenging. Throughout this summary, I will highlight examples of both kinds of strategies along with documentation to support their value and efficacy.

Strengthening Individual Capacity to Raise Healthy, Competent Children

Raising children has become a complex and challenging responsibility due to a multitude of familial, social, economic and technological trends. These trends include the growing diversity of family forms in which children are raised, high rates of parental employment, greater diversity of social values, high costs of education and an increase in external influences such as the media and the internet. At the same time, traditional sources of family education and support have been diminishing. Consequently, there is a growing need among parents for information

and educational opportunities that can expand their knowledge and skills about child rearing in a variety of formats that complement their busy lifestyles. As I highlight my role in strengthening individual capacity through parenting education programs, I will also illustrate my scholarly work in program development, teaching and evaluation.

A major challenge I have faced in Pierce County is the lack of available parent education opportunities, especially for families with school-age and adolescent children. As a respected Extension educator, I was often considered the primary source of parenting information for individuals and organizations in the county. On one hand it was quite flattering; on the other hand, it was extremely unrealistic to think that one person or one agency, for that matter, could meet the needs of an entire county. Therefore, a more recent goal has been forming critical partnerships with school districts, family service agencies and youth-risk prevention coalitions to increase the availability of parenting classes and other resources. This approach has produced a more extensive and inclusive family support system in the county. These environmental strategies of increasing access to and availability of programming complement the individual strategies of teaching classes, providing written material or other forms of content transmission.

One small part of that plan was to institutionalize the evidence-based *Strengthening Families Program for Parents and Youth 10–14* in each of the six school districts in Pierce County. After three years of marketing and recruitment efforts, the program is running only in the River Falls School District. I know that the agencies I have approached recognize the value in the program, they just don't have the personnel available (paid or volunteer) to organize and teach it. Once it was clear that my plan had been thwarted, I convinced the River Falls District to open it up to families across the entire county. Although I felt deflated that my original plan did not play out according to my script, I was reminded of a crucial lesson that I have become very familiar with through my 15-year tenure in UW-Extension, best summed up in an anonymous quote: "*For every problem, there is an opportunity.*" This new tactic did attract participants from outside of River Falls and actually led to a more diverse mixture of urban and rural families.

In addition to promoting and implementing evidence-based parenting programs, I have developed a number of successful research-based parenting programs in direct response to local needs around complex issues and concerns such as violence prevention (including child abuse), alcohol and drug abuse prevention and mental health. One of my concerns about programming in this arena was the fact that my formal educational training was not in human development or the social sciences. Fortunately, I have received good guidance from colleagues and state specialists in learning how to hone my research skills. UW-Extension administration has been extremely supportive in offering and funding appropriate educational and training opportunities to advance my professional development needs. These support mechanisms along with my intense need to learn how to make things make sense equal the scholarship of discovery at its best.

If someone were to ask me about my strengths as an Extension educator, I would reply without hesitation: curriculum development and teaching. Recent research-based parenting curriculums I have developed include *Overindulgence and Teaching Responsibility*, *Raising Your Spirited Child* (**Exhibit 1**), and *Bully Prevention* (**Exhibit 2**). I led the team that created the *Are You Ready? The College Transition* curriculum (**Exhibit 3**) recently highlighted in the 2007 winter edition of the UW-Colleges and UW-Extension News and Ideas publication (**Exhibit 4**). Intense research in each of the content areas was required to develop a product that was timely and valued by the audience. On a number of occasions, including the *College Transition* project, I have conducted local research (**Exhibit 5**) to confirm the literature review, help identify curriculum content or prioritize strategies for addressing an issue. The time-consuming task of sifting through the research, organizing key concepts, and giving new meaning to isolated facts (scholarship of integration) seems daunting to some, but I find it captivating.

Each curriculum was reviewed by at least one county colleague and one state or agency specialist. The final *Bully Prevention* materials were reviewed by Katherine Kocs from the Wisconsin Clearinghouse for Prevention Resources, creator of the *Sticks n' Stones* anti-bullying curriculum, who responded with, "This is an EXCELLENT piece of work. You should be very pleased with what you have developed! I would like to utilize some parts of this PowerPoint myself for the *Sticks 'n Stones* training with your permission." The *College Transition* project was reviewed by five Extension specialists nationally including Steve Small and Kathi Vos from Wisconsin. Planning for peer review is one of the most important pieces of advice I consistently give to my department mentees. We cannot be the experts on every family living topic area; we just need to know someone who is. Moreover, as I have learned from our own state specialists, it is much more effective to seek advice early in the project development phase rather than after the fact.

Another skill I have strengthened through training and experiential learning in Extension is evaluating the effectiveness and usefulness of programs and processes. As a new colleague, I was required to attend a core competency on program evaluation. In the beginning, the whole concept was overwhelming, to say the least. But for some reason, I caught on quickly and developed a great deal of proficiency in not only evaluating my programs,

but helping others develop their own evaluation skills. For each parent education curriculum I mentioned above, I created post-session evaluations to assess knowledge gain and intent to change behavior. I also collected civil rights information and occasionally self-assessment questions to appraise my teaching and facilitation skills (**Exhibit 6**). As researchers, we understand that the ultimate goal in education is engendering positive, long-term behavior change. Therefore, I also created and implemented long-term evaluation instruments for each of the parenting programs which played a significant role in measuring impacts that resulted from the effort. Two sample evaluation tools with corresponding results can be found in **Exhibits 7 and 8**. These evaluation results consistently document program value through behavior change and progress towards building individual capacity to raise healthy, competent children.

Ellen Taylor-Powell, UW-Extension Evaluation Specialist once told me, “Don’t evaluate a program if you don’t intend to use the information.” So, I utilize the data from evaluations to communicate value in a number of ways: program and professional improvement, reporting to stakeholders, sharing with colleagues, self-assessment, and marketing. I shared the results of the *Spirited Child* program through a Department of Family Development Research Paper (**Exhibit 9**). Examples of my evaluation tools were shared with mentees and other colleagues as a way to encourage them to evaluate their own programs. I applied and received state, regional and national awards for the parent education programs I developed citing data I collected from evaluations. See **Exhibits 10 and 11** for the NEAFCS Florence Hall Applications for the *Bully Prevention* and *Overindulgence* programs. With the continuous advancements in technology, I feel a renewed energy around the field of evaluation. Currently, I am exploring new avenues that require the use of the internet and text messaging. In addition, I am positioning myself, through continued professional development, to reinforce my own capacity to serve as a resource for helping local community coalitions define and measure organizational impact through evaluation.

Direct teaching is just one way to reach families. Other strategies I have implemented to improve local, statewide and national access to parenting information and programs include 1) sharing curricula statewide and nationally, 2) training Extension colleagues and other professionals, 3) assisting in the creation of a regional parenting website for parents and professionals, 4) writing grants to support local use of evidence-based curriculum, 5) building the parent education capacity of communities through coalition work, 6) providing leadership on local boards such as United Way’s Success by Six, and 7) through my participation and leadership in the state Parent Education Team (PET) which I currently co-chair with Gay Eastman, Early Childhood Education and Child Development Specialist.

So how have Pierce County families and communities benefited from family living Extension programming in the field of parent education? In addition to increased availability of parenting programs that promote positive behavior change, access to parenting support services has improved through an expanded resource and referral system. By building and strengthening partnerships with other family service agencies (e.g. Human Services, Family Resource Center, and Coordinated Community Response Team) and collaboratively planning programs, duplication has been minimized and gaps in services have been identified and addressed. As a result of my efforts to reduce barriers by providing research-based information in various formats, families are able to choose relevant information based on their learning styles and time constraints (e.g. self-study via the internet versus classroom study). I’ve gotten several e-mails and phone calls from parents in California, Michigan and other states as a result of sharing my curriculum and other materials on the Internet.

Some families find so much value in UW-Extension parenting programs that they attend every session offered and others return to the same class a year or so later for a refresher. Many continue to call or visit when new issues arise or thank me for helping their family through a tough time. New participants are often referred by others who have completed my classes. I consistently get calls inquiring about any new classes I might be teaching. This exemplifies how knowledge and trust can be combined to promote understanding and skill development to elicit positive family outcomes.

UW-Extension colleagues and other professionals have also profited from my research and curriculum development in parenting education. To date, I’ve documented approximately 20 colleagues statewide that have asked permission or reported utilizing or adapting my *Bully Prevention* materials. A family living educator from Penn State Cooperative Extension used the curriculum with a large school district in her county after attending a session I taught at a national conference. I’ve received numerous state-wide and national requests for the *Spirited Child* and *Overindulgence* curriculums as well. One colleague adapted the *Overindulgence* materials for a Native American audience. At a recent district in-service where I co-taught a session on the *College Transition* curriculum, 15 of 35 family living and 4-H youth development educators acknowledged that they planned to teach the program within the next year. In an effort to document the extent to which my scholarly work in curriculum development has been utilized by national audiences, I conducted a long-term survey with participants attending my concurrent session on *Overindulgence* at the 2006 NEAFCS Annual Conference (**Exhibit 12**).

Building Community Capacity to Address Complex Social and Economic Issues

Transformational education involves engaging a broad-based community of interest working on complex issues such as hunger, homelessness or drug abuse with the goal of developing a common vision and long-term plan for addressing the issue. Members of the community of interest build skills necessary to affect change around a problem by mastering content knowledge and cultivating individual and group leadership capacity. Effective collaborations periodically assess what is necessary in skills and abilities of group members in order to impact the issue. Transformational education also requires the on-going review of efforts by stakeholders who utilize evaluation results to change and improve programs. Success markers as well as projected long-term outcomes should be identified from the onset of the program and adjustments implemented based on relevant evaluation results. Based on these outcomes, comprehensive, multi-dimensional strategies must be employed at all social ecologic levels to create lasting change.

As my professional resume reflects, my formal educational training is in nutrition, so if I was anxious about working in the human development arena, one can imagine my original uneasiness working with coalitions on addressing these tremendously pressing social and economic issues. Once again, through research, professional development and on-the-job-training, I was able to increase my competency to a level that resulted in community members seeking my expertise in helping to build and sustain these collaborative efforts. I have been involved in varying degrees with most steps of the community-building process from partnership and human resource development to organizational development and sustainability. My role in building the capacity of local partnerships and coalitions in Pierce County has been multifaceted: grant writing, program development support, technical support, teaching, facilitation, strategic planning, media/public relations, evaluation specialist and cheerleader.

Scholarly work abounds in successfully guiding and supporting community-building processes, especially scholarship of application, in which scholars build collaborative relationships with other disciplines, decision-makers and communities in order to apply theory to solve every-day problems. I hope to illustrate this through my efforts in growing and sustaining three thriving coalitions in Pierce County.

Focusing on Assessment

It has been my experience that community groups frequently lack adequate organizational, administrative, and technical skills to design and implement long-term strategies for community change. Many coalition members are content specialists adept in their field of expertise. Some are passionate go-getters willing to blaze a trail while others excel in organizing, recruiting, or fundraising, but seldom are any of them trained in community development processes. Again and again, groups of individuals are convened around solving a specific dilemma and their first instinct is to develop a program or provide a service to fix the problem. One of the most crucial steps, community assessment, is often bypassed either because the process takes too long or because group members have a preconceived idea about what the community needs. This frequently leads to ineffective programming and frustration once they realize they have missed the target. The **Hunger Prevention Council of Pierce County, Inc.** (HPCPC), **Pierce-St. Croix Housing Resource Network** (PSCHRN), and **River Falls Partnership for Youth** (RFPFY) have all benefited from my skills in planning, implementing and interpreting the results of local community assessments.

The Hunger Prevention Council of Pierce County, Inc., a multi-stakeholder community group whose membership includes all five local food pantries as well as UW-Extension, WestCAP, Public Health, Human Services, churches, schools, domestic abuse shelter and a number of concerned citizens has been instrumental in bringing forth and implementing a number of educational and service-oriented programs to ensure food security for families living in Pierce County (**Exhibit 13**). The original members of the coalition were convened in 1997 by the Public Health WIC Director and me and supported financially by a Community-Based Hunger Prevention Program grant we co-wrote. In response to clientele complaining about their treatment at one of the food pantries, I took the lead in assisting HPCPC members in conducting a food pantry survey to identify the current levels of service as well as participant satisfaction. A number of outcomes occurred as a result of my role in implementing and educating about the results of the assessment: expanded food pantry hours, a shift from volunteers packing food items to participant choice and sensitivity training for food pantry staff and volunteers among others.

In 2002, I guided the Council through a more extensive Community Food Security Assessment to collect various types of data to provide information about the ability of existing community resources to supply sufficient amounts of nutritionally sound and culturally acceptable foods to local households. Components of the needs assessments included information on access to food; hunger, nutrition, and local agriculture data; an inventory of

community food resources; and policy perspectives. Approximately 200 copies of the final report (**Exhibit 14**) and an accompanying evaluation that I authored were distributed throughout the county, including county board members and local state legislators.

Long-term community changes have transpired as a consequence of this assessment effort. The small townships of Elmwood and Plum City were identified as being resource-poor so a mobile food pantry was created by the HPCPC to fill gaps in availability. Citizens in each of these two communities are now coming forward in attempts to create a more permanent food distribution site in their respective towns. In addition, resources in the county became more equitable as the pantries started sharing surplus food and household items. County-wide access to free food occurred as a result of the HPCPC sponsoring quarterly surplus food distribution events through a partnership with Second Harvest Heartland and United Way. Furthermore, families have increased access to information about existing food resources through a directory developed by UW-Extension, Public Health and the HPCPC. Lastly, the assessment acted as a recruitment tool as several volunteers came forward after reading the materials.

In June 2001, the Pierce-St. Croix Housing Resource Network (PSCHRN) was formed to address issues of homelessness and affordable housing in the two counties. As one of the founding members, I helped guide the group in identifying its mission to assist families and individuals in obtaining emergency, transitional, accessible and affordable housing and attaining self-sufficiency by providing a network of services through collaborated community efforts. One immediate goal and outcome of this group's grass-root effort was to establish a new transitional housing facility. Located in Somerset, Grace Place (**Exhibit 15**) opened its doors to homeless individuals and families in October 2002. The renovated three-story brick convent overlooking the Apple River was filled to capacity (15 people) within days of opening its doors and a waiting list remains to this day.

After this initial triumph over homelessness, members floundered as they realized they still needed to tackle the affordable housing needs of even greater numbers of families in their communities. To confirm the need and provide much needed direction, a sub-committee researched and published the Polk, St. Croix and Pierce County Housing Assessment (**Exhibit 16**) which helped the group think more broadly about options for securing affording housing. As a result of the assessment, the Housing Resource Network utilized a multi-pronged effort to increase the stock of safe, affordable housing by supporting efforts by Habitat for Humanity and promoting new models such as the community land trust (CLT). **Exhibit 17** is a copy of a grant application I wrote to help cover the cost of a consultant to assist in planning a pilot land trust project. This first step was instrumental in helping PSCHRN members make a decision to move forward with the CLT concept and partner with the Minnesota-based Two Rivers Community Land Trust. The first home was purchased, rehabilitated and sold to a family in New Richmond in 2007.

Due to my growing proficiency in responding to local housing issues, I was recruited by the family living program director as interim co-chair for the Affordable Housing Team from 2004 to 2005. In that role, I helped develop and implement a web-based survey to quantify the number of people programming in housing, identify program support and professional development needs, and update the state housing team plan of work. Increased networking and professional development opportunities were two byproducts of that survey. Along with other team members, I presented *There's No Place Like Home* at the state Extension conference in September 2005, where colleagues learned about housing initiatives in Pierce County and across the state. Most recently, I am focusing educational and community outreach efforts on the foreclosure crisis in our region.

The River Falls Partnership for Youth (RFPFY) has been addressing alcohol and other drug abuse issues in the River Falls School District for a number of years. The Partnership has evolved from a small school-based alcohol and drug-abuse prevention committee to a more influential multi-sector collaboration. In February, 2008 a forum entitled *Your House or Mine? Substance Abuse in Our Community* was conducted in an attempt to increase awareness of the local issues related to alcohol and drug abuse and to educate the Partnership and other community stakeholders about the need to implement community-focused, environmental approaches that have proven to transform communities. The River Falls School District *Risk and Protective Factor Questionnaire* and *Community Readiness Survey* results were interpreted and presented by the Leadership Team of which I am a member. I also led the committee in utilizing a Community Café process to identify local youth risk behaviors, discuss possible strategies and assess the community's willingness to provide human capital to advance the utilization of environmental strategies to address youth drug/alcohol use (**Exhibit 18**).

Several significant outcomes occurred as a result of facilitating the forum including recruiting the mayor as a member of the RFPFY, increasing youth involvement in program direction and identifying a focus based on the assessment. Most importantly, two major environmental strategies, advertising/promotion regulation and undercover outlet compliance checks, were selected and written into the 2009 Drug-Free Communities grant proposal. Stop Underage Drinking Soon (SUDS), a Social Norms Campaign, was also born out of some ideas from

the forum. Since underage alcohol consumption was identified as the major risk factor among youth in River Falls, Partnership members planned a follow-up town hall meeting, *Underage Drinking in Our Community (Exhibit 19)*, to keep up the momentum and elicit community involvement in carrying out the strategic plan. A task force was initiated during the event and they continue to advance the mission of reducing underage drinking in River Falls.

One valuable lesson I've learned about conducting community needs assessments is the significance of including clientele in the process. Early in my career, most of the information I garnered on behalf of these coalitions was from research, key stakeholders and agency leaders. I expected that their knowledge of the community and proficiency in providing services was justification for moving in a certain direction. Not only did this limit individual perspectives related to the issue, but it restricted the potential for identifying and implementing creative strategies that promote community change. As time passed, I also became more adept at helping coalitions apply the social ecological approach to needs assessment in order to draw out concerns that might otherwise be lost in a one-dimensional methodology. Lastly, I have moved away from taking on the responsibility of conducting the assessment to training community leaders on how to implement it themselves as part of a larger program planning process – transformational education in action.

Investing in Human Capital to Promote Positive Community Change

The goal of transformational education is to stimulate community action to produce long-term impacts. The objective is not only to solve a problem, but to build human capacity and leadership in that community of interest. The acquisition of new knowledge (education) and new competencies (training) such as analyzing, strategizing and problem-solving are critical when mobilizing citizens and coalition members to help operationalize goals and objectives around a specific concern. When organizations succeed in attracting talented people and unleashing their full potential, good things happen to influence positive community change.

I have been highly involved with planning, implementing and evaluating a number of educational events to help engage community members around the intricate issues related to hunger, homelessness and youth drug abuse prevention with the purpose of recruiting new coalition members and coaching potential leaders. The Pierce-St. Croix Housing Resource Network sponsored a *Hidden Homeless in Pierce and St. Croix Counties* workshop in Baldwin and River Falls in 2003 that my St. Croix County colleague and I planned and facilitated. In addition to increasing awareness about food security issues of limited income families in the counties, participants gained information about how they could provide assistance and leadership in helping local communities combat hunger. Evaluation results documented an improved understanding about what they could do to help as a result of participating in the workshop (**Exhibit 20**). In an attempt to involve key stakeholders from the community, the River Falls Partnership for Youth along with UW-Extension and the Pierce/St. Croix Tobacco Free Coalition sponsored a workshop, *Community Partnerships: Are You on Board? (Exhibit 21)*. A retrospective evaluation that I developed measured an increased understanding of several key concepts including the local concerns related to substance abuse among youth and the benefit of their organization collaborating with others in the community. Both workshops resulted in volunteers joining the respective coalition sponsoring the event.

Leadership development is a critical element of any successful coalition. Since most local coalitions working to improve social and economic conditions in a community are volunteer driven, they seldom comprise of members who are trained in the wide variety of skills required to perform effective leadership functions. More commonly, people bring different leadership strengths and prefer serving in some functions over others. This is certainly the case with the coalitions I work with in Pierce County. Therefore, a distributed (shared) leadership model is essential so no one person has to “carry the torch.” I have witnessed how this model fosters ongoing commitment to the coalition by allowing individuals to work with their own strengths. Sharing core leadership tasks also decreases the chance of any one leader burning out and stabilizes the coalition in the face of turnover. So what roles have I played in supporting leadership development within local coalitions, how have those roles changed over time and how has this work contributed to success in impacting community change?

Developing human capital within community partnerships and coalitions is an indispensable skill I have sharpened over time, but not without great effort and occasional failure. Early in my career, my work with coalition building was based on an expert model where I essentially told the members what they needed to do and how they should do it. When progress was slow I suggested what they needed to change. They eventually became dependent on my “leadership” and I became overwhelmed with the minuscule details of running the organization. It didn't take long for me to realize that I wasn't leading people, but managing them. I have taken great strides throughout my career to overcome my tendency to take control, and instead, empower community leaders by creating awareness, providing technical assistance and training as well as acting as a coach and mentor.

As a member of the River Falls Partnership for Youth, I have had the opportunity to provide input into program direction. Since funding agencies are requiring more accountability, I have been educating partnership members about the efficacy of utilizing evidence-based prevention programs and implementing environmental strategies for community change. One result has been their in-kind and financial support of the *Strengthening Families Program for Parents and Youth 10-14* which I implemented with the middle school counselor for the first time in 2005. In addition, the Partnership helped re-evaluate prevention curriculum already in place in the school district, eliminating one ineffective program and implementing a new evidence-based alcohol and other drug prevention program at the ninth grade-level.

Environmental strategies, such as policy and enforcement, which focus on creating environments that support positive behaviors are appealing for several reasons: they are far-reaching, cost-effective, and, when used to reinforce prevention messages already directed at individuals, can produce substantial reductions in substance use. Unfortunately, coalitions like the RFPFY focused mainly on individual-based programs as primary prevention tools. They struggled with how to help local citizens recognize the potential benefits as well as how to plan for successful implementation of these strategies. In order to move the Partnership forward, I utilized a number of approaches to educate partnership members about the value of these environmental strategies as effective tools to preventing drug use (**Exhibit 22**). As a result of these consistent messages, the RFPFY has recently selected a number of environmental strategies they plan to implement within the next year.

Local coalition leaders are often visionary thinkers and can easily identify the long-term outcome they hope to achieve. Yet, many are challenged with what they need to do to get there. One of my strengths in building human capital is to provide these leaders with the technical tools and skills necessary to create a successful plan of action. I have assisted the afore mentioned coalitions in developing mission and vision statements, identifying and implementing strategies that create change, evaluating programs for effectiveness and grant writing for sustainability. The logic model for program planning has proven to be an effective tool for assisting coalition leaders with these tasks. A few years ago, the RFPFY leadership team required each project leader to submit their proposal for funding in a logic model format. Since most of them were unfamiliar with the model, I facilitated an educational session to teach them how to apply the model and provided personal consultation for individuals requiring more detailed information. Each year I also work with members of the leadership team to develop an overall logic model on behalf of the Partnership (**Exhibit 23**). One significant unintended outcome of training leaders how to apply this model was their increased understanding of the benefits of developing an evaluation plan. Therefore, I have also provided extensive informal training and support to build capacity in evaluating outcomes.

Through this investment in human capital, I have personally witnessed a transformation in several local leaders who started out as concerned bystanders but now lead with clear purpose and direction. These leaders have gained the knowledge and skills they needed to increase their confidence and effectiveness in creating the change that strengthens families and communities. My new role with these colleagues is that of coach and mentor. They are less likely to seek me out to teach a program or write a grant, but to share ideas, seek reassurance or report on an accomplishment. These trusting relationships are mutually satisfying both professionally and personally. In an effort to assess the value of my contributions in building community capacity I solicited letters from three community and coalition leaders (**Exhibit 24**).

In recognition of my leadership skills, Rick Osterhaus, River Falls School District Director of Academic Services (and member of the RFPFY) asked me to present at a Non-Profit Summit sponsored by the River Falls School District and Chamber of Commerce (**Exhibit 25**). The workshop, *Are We Making a Difference? Defining and Measuring Organizational Impact*, is one in a series designed to help local non-profit agencies strengthen their organizational capacity. Mr. Osterhaus also asked me to facilitate a similar workshop with the River Falls School District Administrative Team. This latest venture has provided an opportunity for me to demonstrate the value of UW-Extension to new audiences in the county.

Additional Leadership Contributions and Future Direction

Family living colleagues and state specialists regularly invite me to review their scholarly work. Examples include *Hunger Close To Home* (Kadi Row); *Thriving With Your Spirited Child* (Faden Fulleylove-Krause and Donna Doll-Yogerst); *Teen Brain: A Work in Progress* (Dianne Weber and Karen Hintz); *Whose Kids Our Kids* fact sheets (Mary Huser); *Teen Talk Curriculum on Bullying and Peer Relationships and What's New With Teens and Their Families? Research Update for Professionals* (Kathy Olson, Minnesota Extension). Most recently, I have committed to being a reviewer for the eXtension *Just in Time Parenting* Initiative. Reviewing other scholars' materials creates a relationship in which both parties benefit from the knowledge and expertise of the other. I, too,

seek peer input into my own scholarly work with the eventual goal of sharing the final product with colleagues more broadly.

As one of six family living educators working with state specialists Heather Harvey and Gayle Coleman, I piloted a parent education program aimed at increasing parents' knowledge, skills and confidence related to helping their children develop healthy eating habits with a grant from the Center for Disease Control: *Raising a Healthy Eater*. I provided expertise in parenting and nutrition content, offered feedback and assisted with revisions. The revised curriculum was later shared state-wide. I also worked with Amy Rettammel to pilot and make recommendations for the revision of the *Nutrition for the Young at Heart* curriculum with the elderly population. I've discovered that piloting a project not only allows for the "expert" advice of the trained reviewer, but the practical and often insightful contributions from participants.

"Teamwork is the quintessential contradiction of a society grounded in individual achievement" (Marvin Weisbord). Throughout this portfolio I have repeatedly described my own roles and accomplishments to validate the scholarly work that I do, but much of my professional growth and programming success has resulted from working with teams. Previously, I co-chaired the state Affordable Housing Team and currently co-chair the Parent Education Team. These state-wide opportunities have allowed me to expand my own leadership competency by working alongside practiced teachers and mentors. In addition, I have worked cooperatively with other family living teams as well as teams across program areas to explore ways to create synergy around complex issues that cross program lines. In the future, I hope to expand my leadership skills by participating in the UW-Extension Leadership Academy and the National Extension Leadership Program.

In October, I was elected chair-elect of the Department of Family Development Vice-Chairs Committee. An important role of a Vice-chair is to assist new faculty through tenure by helping them identify mentors to guide them through the process. As a mentor myself, I feel privileged to offer support and guidance, formal or informal, to new Department members and office colleagues as they live and learn the complexities of becoming successful faculty members in the UW-Extension system. I believe my experience and instinct to nurture enables me to fulfill this role with relative ease. Although, credit has to be given to those who have provided leadership and cultivated my own personal and professional growth in my role as family living educator and Department of Family Development member.

Last May, I represented WEAFCs at the Public Issues Leadership Development (PILD) Conference in Washington D.C. where I learned how to improve communication with public decision makers. I have applied much of what I learned at the conference to helping local community organizations execute more effective and efficient planning and decision making processes. In addition, I have integrated what I learned from my experience into new methods of communicating the value of UW-Extension to local officials and other key community leaders. In order to further improve my competencies in community and leadership development, I plan to attend the Strategic Planning training offered through UW-Extension next year.

Flexibility and adaptability are essential attributes for any UW-Extension Educator. Fourteen years ago, one of the main reasons I was hired was to grow and sustain the newly established Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program in Pierce County. I continued to manage that program until October, 2008 when, upon my request, coordination was relinquished to another multi-county coordinator due to my increased efforts in other identified areas of need. Over the years, my programming has progressed from working primarily to generate individual behavior change to collaborating at the community and societal level to induce environmental change to enhance family well-being. While a strong need for parent education programming still exists in Pierce County, I will be focusing more of my time on community development issues as they relate to strengthening families and youth. As I move forward, I plan to provide more formal systems planning training for family service agencies and organizations including program development and evaluating outcomes.

In conclusion, throughout my career in UW-Extension I have learned to embrace the tenets of transformational education in my effort to provide relevant, research-based educational programming to build and sustain strong community environments that support positive family development. By applying a social ecological perspective to program planning, I am better prepared to assist families and communities in identifying specific individual and environmental strategies that promote positive, long-lasting change. This work cannot be accomplished without building trust-based relationships with partners who's unique but complementary missions lead to far-reaching impact unattainable by one individual or agency alone. Lastly, because I am passionate about what I do, I feel confident that clientele, partners, key stakeholders and colleagues alike will continue to recognize the value of my work and benefit from my commitment and future contributions to the community, department and profession.