

News and Ideas

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-EXTENSION'S NEWSPAPER

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Community partners help build strong Hmong families

By Mary Huser and Jo Futrell

Hmong families in Wisconsin struggle to preserve their cultural identity, while finding harmony within mainstream society. Their children are often torn between the traditional way of life and the way of their American peers. Through the Hmong Family Strengthening Project, Eau Claire Hmong families gain skills in communication, support, and setting limits and family rules.

UW-Extension a partner

The Partnership for Strong Hmong Families (PSHF) was formed in November 2000 to create a family-support program for Hmong families with early adolescents. Among the community partners are a state and county UW-Extension team, representatives from the Eau Claire schools, youth and family organizations, the police department, and respected members and leaders of the local Hmong community.

The UW-Extension Family Living team of Dianne Weber, Mary Huser, Steve Small and Ka Youa Kong provided leadership for the project implementation and evaluation. A two-year \$193,000 grant from the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) helped support the project.

Matching needs and resources

Based on a needs assessment with Hmong parents and youth, the Partnership selected a prevention program that best matched family needs and community resources. Sixteen partners were trained as facilitators and the curriculum was adapted to reflect Hmong beliefs and traditions. Three, six-week series of Hmong Family Strengthening classes were held, reaching 30 families. Classes included parent, youth and family sessions, as well as dinner. Parent and family sessions were conducted in Hmong.

Youth and parents benefit

Evaluation strategies, including pre- and post-program evaluations and parent interviews, found that:

- Parents reported a significant decrease in family conflict and significant increases in expressing affection and warmth towards their children.
- Youth also reported a significant decrease in family conflict, as well as a significant increase in parents' expression of praise and level of monitoring. They also reported that their parents now have a stricter attitude about drug use, have clearer



DIANNE WEBER

Family-community collaboration results in stronger families

Hmong families are working to bridge the differences between traditional and mainstream ways of life in the Hmong Family Strengthening Project in Eau Claire County.

family rules, and are more likely to enforce family rules.

When families graduated in May 2002, Hmong parents requested more classes. The PSHF continues to meet and a one-day "booster session" for all families was held in March 2003.

Community-wide ownership

The UW-Extension team used a community-based approach to develop and implement this family-oriented program. The program has also helped build awareness of Hmong cultural norms that

affect parent-child relations. The collaboration-based approach has made more resources available to Hmong families and created community-wide ownership to sustain the program.

UW-Extension team member Weber says, "To see the genuine interest and enthusiasm from the participating families and to hear them speak about how they are applying at home what they learned from the program has been extremely rewarding for everyone involved in the project."

\$900,000 grant to connect the uninsured to health coverage

The University of Wisconsin has received a \$900,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to help Wisconsin families enroll for health-care coverage through Medicaid and BadgerCare.

UW-Extension leads

The University of Wisconsin-Extension will serve as lead agency for a statewide coalition, the Wisconsin Covering Kids and Families Initiative (CKFI), funded by the RWJF grant. The grant is part of Covering Kids and Families, a four-year \$55-million national initiative of the foundation that funds statewide and local coalitions to increase the number of children and adults in federal and state health-care coverage programs.

Roberta Riportella-Muller, associate professor at UW-Madison and UW-Extension health policy specialist, will administer the grant.

"Access to health-care coverage helps children and families main-

tain better overall health, reduces their risk of serious and life-threatening illness, and takes pressure off more expensive parts of the health-care system," explains Riportella-Muller. "About one in four Wisconsin school children are income-eligible for coverage."

Improving access to health care

Wisconsin Covering Kids and Families is focusing on three specific areas to ensure families can enroll easily in the programs for which they qualify:

- Education about availability of Medicaid and BadgerCare
- Simplification of the application process to overcome enrollment barriers
- Coordination between eligibility programs.

Estimates indicate that Wisconsin has at least 70,000 uninsured low-income children and 30,000 unin-

sured adults. Medicaid is a federal entitlement program that provides health-care coverage for low-income adults and children. Eligibility for BadgerCare is determined by family size and household income.

County-based professionals to contribute

According to Riportella-Muller, Covering Kids and Families Initiative strategies include using the statewide network of county-based UW-Extension professionals who will contribute their knowledge and expertise in local coalition building, and will facilitate information dissemination and outreach.

"It has always been critical that we identify and enroll children and families in these health-care safety nets, but now more than ever we need to make certain that eligible Wisconsinites know these programs are available. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant lets us bring together the University, advocates, health departments, health-

care providers, insurers, business, labor, faith communities and policy makers to ensure BadgerCare is reaching those in need," Riportella-Muller says.

For more information: Project director Roberta Riportella-Muller, rriporte@wisc.edu

INSIDE

2 FOR THE RECORD

Message from the Chancellor
• Online learning conference • Register for Outreach Scholarship 2003 • Kudos

3 PROGRAM NEWS

Hobby becomes a business • Midwest School for Women Workers

4 MORE PROGRAM NEWS

Cooperative Extension Media Collection • DPDI awards

MESSAGE FROM THE CHANCELLOR

Demonstrate your commitment to Extension's future

The UW System is now in the process of absorbing the largest one-time state funding reduction in history. This comes at a time when the need for education is growing, and more people are turning to the university as a source of knowledge, information and insight.

To continue connecting this university with the people it serves, we must diversify our revenue sources and identify funders who understand the connection between a healthy university and a prosperous state.

In addition to pursuing contracts and grants, we are appealing to individual donors to help build a base of philanthropic support for the university's outreach mission. While other institutions of higher education have a history of encouraging donations from alumni and stakeholders, this is a new model for UW-Extension as an institution.

Last year, we kicked off our inaugural Extension Annual Campaign, asking retirees, partners, faculty

and staff to consider a financial contribution. One of our successes has been the work of Epsilon Sigma Phi (ESP) members, including current and retired Cooperative Extension employees, who have established an endowment to fund professional development opportunities for their colleagues. This is exactly the kind of activity that would not otherwise be a top priority for our state or federal funders.

There are many other needs in UW-Extension, and opportunities for individual donors to make a positive difference in the quality and scope of our programs. Based on my frequent conversations with faculty, staff and retirees across the state, I know that all of you are deeply committed to the good work of this institution. This is one way to demonstrate that commitment.

I hope that you will consider making a tax-deductible gift to the UW Foundation in support of UW-Extension. You will never be pressured into anything, and only you can decide if this is the right time for you and



your family to make a contribution. Any gift will be greatly appreciated.

If you are able to support our Extension Annual Campaign, please know two things:

- First, you are helping to advance the vital mission of an organization that exists to improve peoples' lives through knowledge.
- Second, your voluntary gift will send an important message to those outside this institution who may be considering a similar gift, who want to see that our own faculty and staff members have reaffirmed their personal stake in UW-Extension's future by means of a donation.

Thank you for considering such an investment in the future of Wisconsin.

The Master of Engineering in Professional Practice (MEPP) degree program has received the U.S. Distance Learning Association's top award for higher education, the 2003 Award for Excellence in Distance Learning Programming. MEPP, an online degree program for mid-career engineers, is offered through the **UW-Madison College of Engineering Department of Professional Development**.

Roger Williams, professor of Professional Development and Applied Studies, Division of Continuing Studies, UW-Madison, has received one of the 2003 UW-Madison Distinguished Teaching Awards, the \$5,000 Van Hise Outreach Award. A UW-Madison faculty member for 17 years, Williams teaches classes in stress management, team building, conflict resolution, farm and rural issues, and men's issues.

Karen Joos, Cooperative Extension Family Living agent in Monroe County, has received the 2003 Leader Award from the Wisconsin Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. Joos received the annual award in recognition of the impact her work has had on the quality of life of others and for her contributions to the development of the profession.

UW-Extension has selected **Ileana Rodriguez** as its 2003 UW System Women of Color Honoree for her outreach work and education workshops for the Hispanic community offered through the UW-Madison Adult and Career Counseling, Division of Continuing Studies.

Carla Lenk, director of the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at UW-Whitewater, has received a Wisconsin District Director's Award from the U.S. Small Business Administration for her advocacy of international trade practices in Wisconsin for more than 20 years.

Bruce Jones, professor of agricultural and applied economics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension, has been appointed director of the UW Center for Dairy Profitability. Jones served as director of the Center previously, from 1995 through 2000.

Kent Weigel, assistant professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension, has received the 2003 American Dairy Science Association Foundation Dairy Production Award. As an Extension genetics specialist, Weigel is recognized internationally for his research on genetic improvement of dairy cattle.

UW-Extension hosts national online learning conference

By Pat Takemoto

On April 28-29, University of Wisconsin-Extension hosted a national conference on the major economic issues and barriers facing the field of online learning. Online higher education is becoming a significant part of the mainstream of higher education, affecting key institutional decisions regarding financing, organization, and governance of distance education operations and entities.

Invited participants from a dozen major public U.S. universities with significant online learning programs met at the Fluno Center in Madison to discuss current trends and

needs of distance-education operations, viable public university organizational and business models, and technological efficiencies.

Funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the symposium was convened by UW-Extension Chancellor Kevin Reilly, moderated by Dean of Outreach and E-Learning Barbara Emil, and facilitated by David J. Ward of Northstar Economics and former interim director of UW Learning Innovations. Joining the UW at the symposium were Kentucky Virtual University; The Pennsylvania State University; the State University of New York; University

of California, Berkeley; University of California, Irvine; University of Illinois Online; University of Illinois at Springfield; University of Washington; University of Texas TeleCampus; Washington State University and the Sloan Foundation.

Proceedings of the symposium will be shared with a wider audience of practitioners and policy-makers with the aim of facilitating broader development and implementation of online learning.

For more information: Dean Barbara Emil, emil@learn.uwsa.edu

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BEATING THE ODDS: Cafe Chilí transforms a hobby into a business

By Christine Javid

Dan Kitzrow well remembers the small-business seminar sponsored by his company after he was laid off due to downsizing. An imperious-sounding president of Wells Fargo bank told the employees, "You know, you can't start a business just because you have a good chili recipe." Kitzrow nearly fell off his chair because that very question was brewing in his mind. He smiled as he thought to himself, "Wanna bet?"

Five kinds of chili

Today, he and his wife are owners of Cafe Chilí, a small chili parlor on Howard Avenue and 51st in Milwaukee that features five kinds of homemade chili, Chicago-style hot dogs, sandwiches, gourmet coffees and teas. Determined to defy "expert" predictions that most food-service businesses fail within a year or two, Kitzrow opened the door to his new restaurant late last fall. "I hope we do really well so I can contact him," he says, anticipating the last laugh with the bank president.

SBDC training crucial to success

Yet Kitzrow knew there is a kernel of truth in what the bank president was saying. According to the Small Business Association, a high number of food industry startups fail

within the first year. To boost chances of success, his wife Jodi and Dan enrolled in the Entrepreneurial Training Grant Program, jointly sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Extension's Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and the Wisconsin Department of Commerce. The SBDC class offers sound fundamentals in good planning, budgeting, management and many other aspects of running a business. Kitzrow confirms the value of the program: "We use what was taught in class every day," he says. "I don't think we could have done it without them."

Living a dream

Owning a small business has always been his dream. His parents owned a bar and a beauty shop, so he knew the amount of dedication it would take to succeed. His wife Jodi, however, was a little less sure of success. Dan finally convinced her by reminding her that every restaurant failed for a concrete reason. "I asked her to think about why each of them had closed – it was always bad service or bad food." Knowing they could control these reasons, success seemed possible.

He also knows there are many die-hard chili fans like himself who look for the hot stuff even in summer.



Open for business

Entrepreneurs Jodi and Dan Kitzrow are on their way to business success, thanks to the Entrepreneurial Training Grant Program, jointly sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Extension's Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and the Wisconsin Department of Commerce.

Entrepreneurial training: real-world impacts

- According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, small businesses provide about 75 percent of the net new jobs and represent more than 99 percent of all employers.
- According to the U.S. Department of Labor, there were 12,025 business startups in Wisconsin in 2001.
- The UW-Extension Small Business Development Centers, located on 13 campuses in the state, help by providing education, research and development to this significant sector of the economy.
- For more information: www.wisconsin/sbdc.org

Midwest School for Women Workers increases skills and unity

By Amy Pikalek

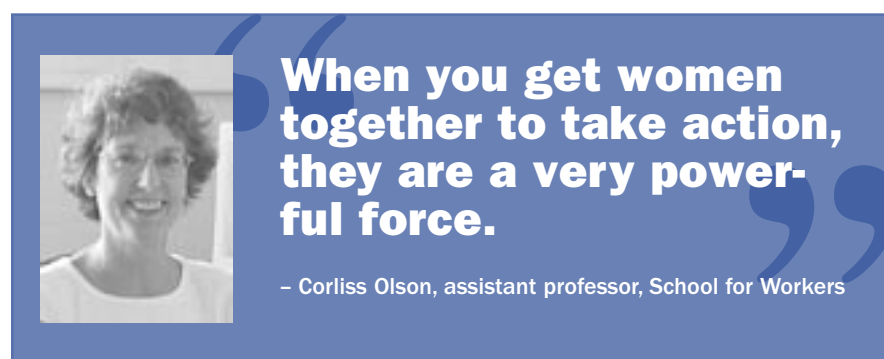
Working women confront life-altering issues on the job. They are concerned about affordable health care, equal pay and retirement benefits. According to the AFL-CIO 2002 *Ask a Working Woman Survey*, two in three working mothers work 40 or more hours every week; 28 percent work nights or weekends; and 40 percent work different schedules than their spouse or partner. Women of color are more likely than white women to work a different schedule than their spouse.

Affordable health care a concern

With health-care costs rising faster than inflation, concern about health care has surged in recent years. Ninety-one percent of women surveyed rated affordable health care as an important legislative priority.

SFW hosts labor seminars

With these issues in mind, approximately 100 union women from around the Midwest came to Madison in June for the 2003 Mid-



west School for Women Workers. Sponsored by the United Association for Labor Education and the AFL-CIO and hosted this year by the University of Wisconsin-Extension School for Workers (SFW), the labor education unit of the Division of Continuing Education Extension, the Midwest School for Women Workers helps union women hone their skills, share experiences, and take political action. Since 1976, rank-and-file union members, stewards, committee members, local officers, activists, union staff and labor-studies students from across the Midwest have participated in the schools.

Women learn to work together

"Whether your top concern is equal pay or flexible hours, child care or elder care, or training for a new job, one thing is clear: It's more effective for working women to unite, to work together to make positive changes in the workplace than if they try to do it alone," says Corliss Olson, SFW assistant professor. "When you get women together to take action, they are a very powerful force."

...and learn new skills

This year topics included politics and the future of health care along

with presentations designed to provide basic union skills such as bargaining, steward training, union leadership, worker's rights and organizing. Scholarships are available each year, Olson says.

Ellen LaLuzerne, a union representative for Capitol Area UniServ South who works with school employees, attended the 1984 Detroit conference. "I got a wonderful sense of solidarity with other women in the labor movement," she says. "The vast majority of people in leadership positions at the time – and still today – are men. So it was wonderful to feel the strong sense of solidarity with other women with like interests."

For more information:

www.uwex.edu/ce/sfw.cfm

UW-EXTENSION *fact*

Founded in 1925, the School for Workers is the oldest university-based labor education program in North America.

Media Collection complements face-to-face programs

By Meg Gores

Mary O'Connor's desk is stacked with new items waiting to be cataloged. Nearby, an assistant logs in materials that arrived in the day's mail. As the librarian for Cooperative Extension's Media Collection, O'Connor oversees the ebb and flow of more than 2,800 educational resources, including videos, CDs, PowerPoint presentations, displays, slide sets, audiotapes and interactive teaching kits known as "skillathons."

More than 125 subjects

Media Collection resources are purchased or produced by Extension specialists to enhance programs and provide information on more than 125 subjects such as animal nutrition, child care, government, Native American culture, plant diseases, volunteerism and wildlife, to name just some.

"We can save agents a lot of time and effort if we have material focus-

ing on a specific topic; they don't need to reinvent the wheel," says O'Connor. "And when they can't make it to an event, they can offer to send a resource. It's a good supplement for face-to-face programming."

Easy to find

Before the Media Collection existed, audiovisual and three-dimensional resources were often lost, unavailable or difficult to track down. Keeping them in a centralized location makes them accessible to specialists, counties and occasionally, other organizations. For example, county highway, street and engineering departments use special training materials they request through county offices. Extension's Local Government Center provides newly elected officials with the how-tos of conducting boards of review, town and other civic meetings.

SUSAN ANDERSON



Media Collection provides learning resources

Librarian Mary O'Connor makes sure that Extension agents and specialists and others get the resources they need to bring effective educational opportunities to Wisconsin's people.

What's in demand right now?

"We can barely keep up with the requests for information about horses," says O'Connor. "The 3-D animal learning labs also get heavy use. Videos on choosing a day-care provider, family-estate planning, gardening and dairy issues are also popular."

Easy to use

Each order comes with a return mailing label and box to make the service as easy to use as possible.

For the complete listing of Media Collection resources and ordering information:

www.uwex.edu/ces/media or
(800) 353-3514

Continuing Education Extension names DPDI grant recipients

By Amy Pikalek

The Division of Continuing Education Extension has announced four recipients of Diversity Program Development Initiative (DPDI) funding for the 2003-04 fiscal year. The DPDI provides funds for UW institutions to develop and implement new diversity ventures that are consistent with the goals and initiatives of UW-Extension's Plan 2008 (see www.uwex.edu/diversity/resources/plan2008). The 2003-04 DPDI recipients are:

Assessing Options for Training Employees of Tribal Tourism Businesses – UW-Stout, Stout Solutions

This project will determine the need for and most efficient methods of providing training in hospitality, tourism and restaurant management for Native American employees and

potential employees of Wisconsin's tribal businesses. The goal is to ultimately strengthen individual and community economic opportunities. Tribal representatives on the Wisconsin Indian Education Association Board are partners in the assessment.

A Framework for Understanding Poverty and Learning Structures – UW-Fond du Lac Office of Continuing Education

This project will train Fond du Lac School District employees how to improve teaching outcomes for low-income minority students. A long-term goal is to impact the community-at-large by reaching students and their families at an earlier age and closing the educational achievement gap of low-income minority students.

Leadership Development Among African American Trade Unionists – UW-Extension Continuing Education School for Workers

This program will develop a series of conferences on leadership and models of leadership development for African American labor leaders to improve employment opportunities and living and working conditions in the Black community. Partners are the Milwaukee County Labor Council, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists in Milwaukee and the A. Philip Randolph Institute, Milwaukee Chapter.

Native American Voices – UW-Baraboo/Sauk County Office of Continuing Education

In collaboration with the Ho-Chunk Nation Education Department,

Native American and award-winning filmmaker Chris Eyre will visit Baraboo to show his film, "Skins," and meet with Native American students at UW-Baraboo/Sauk County. A project goal is to build awareness of and appreciation for the role Native Americans play in society.

This is the fourth year the Division of Continuing Education Extension has made this special funding available. UW-Extension is committed to providing programs and services with a positive impact on clientele, services and communities, and requires applicants to demonstrate the impact of their proposed projects.

For more information:

www.uwex.edu/ics/cegrant/cefp.html

Extension News and Ideas is a publication of the University of Wisconsin-Extension. It features articles and information about UW-Extension and extension activities carried out through the 26 UW System campuses and 72 counties. An EEO/Affirmative Action employer, UW-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and ADA requirements. If you would like this material in another format, please contact Margaret E. (Peg) Davis.

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Extension employees should contact their payroll office. Others should send changes to the above address.

Extension News and Ideas online:
www.uwex.edu/ni

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