

## News Release

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### Eight 'Standing Up for Rural Wisconsin' recipients named

MADISON – Projects that have students learning maple syrup production and career and independent living skills, and encouraging them to consider careers in education are among eight receiving 2018 Standing Up for Rural Wisconsin Schools, Libraries, and Communities awards.

Nominated by educators throughout the state, the projects will be recognized during the 10th Annual Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance Conference Oct. 29-30 in Wisconsin Dells. The projects are

- Bringing the Barn to School Project, Medford Agriculture Department;
- F.I.E.L.D. Corps and Youth Summit, Wisconsin Green Schools Network;
- Building a Teacher Candidate Pipeline, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh;
- Oneida Community Integrated Food System, Oneida;
- Special Need Students Building Career Skills through Small Rural School-based Businesses, New Auburn;
- Independent Living Enrichment Project, Grantsburg;
- Empty Bowls School and Community Service Project, Black River Falls; and
- Owen-Withee School Forest Maple Project.

“These programs are born from the collaboration among schools, libraries, and communities that is vital to keeping rural Wisconsin strong,” said State Superintendent Tony Evers. “Recognizing these efforts showcases the innovation and involvement that define vibrant communities and make them great places to raise kids.”

The awards program begins at 11:45 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 30, at the Glacier Canyon Conference Center in Wisconsin Dells. Additional information about each project receiving an award follows.

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**NOTE:** This news release is available electronically at <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2018-92.pdf>.

# 2018 Standing Up for Rural Wisconsin Schools, Libraries, and Communities Awards

*October 30, 2018 – Wisconsin Dells*

## **Medford Agriculture Department's "Bringing the Barn to School"**

The Bringing the Barn to School project involved purchasing three acres adjoining the school district to construct a farm facility with room for animals, classroom, and shop workspace. The new barn joined an existing barn on the land that the agriculture department used the prior school year to house animals. The expanded structure, which opened in summer of 2018, will provide a sustainable agriculture educational facility that provides hands-on instruction and enhances curriculum as well as fostering collaboration among departments, disciplines, and grade levels.

- Elementary students have visited the barn for agricultural literacy days and education tours.
- Students with disabilities help collect eggs and sweep the barn daily.
- Technical Education classes helped install insulation and build a wood accent wall in the classroom.
- Waste from the high school lunch program is collected and fed to hogs to reduce school lunch waste.

Additional goals include helping Medford students achieve high levels of math, science, and technology skills by applying these subjects to real-life agri-science situations. The project also will allow the community to become more involved in the school through the invitation of guest speakers, such as veterinarians, animal nutritionists, and animal breeders.

## **F.I.E.L.D. Corps and Youth Summit, Wisconsin Green Schools Network**

F.I.E.L.D. Corps, which stands for Fostering Inquiry and Empowering Learners through Discovery, is an educational model that delivers high quality professional development for teachers and innovative learning and leadership opportunities for students. Through F.I.E.L.D. Corps, Wisconsin Green Schools Network's educational coaches and local community partners mentor classroom teachers and students directly in standards-based learning experiences that take place outside the classroom, often in local natural areas. Approximately a dozen schools participate in initiatives and the nominating school, **High Marq Environmental Charter School in the Montello School District**, reported that because of its participation in the F.I.E.L.D. Corps model students receive instruction that is relevant, meaningful, and honors their rural heritage every week of the year. Other participating F.I.E.L.D. Corps schools include

- Badger-Rock Middle School, Madison Metropolitan School District
- Denmark Community School, Denmark School District
- Discovery Charter School, Columbus School District
- Escuela Verde, City of Milwaukee Charter School
- Fox River Academy, Appleton Area School District
- Hartland School of Community Learning, Hartland-Lakeside School District

- Highland Community School, Highland School District
- Island City Academy, Cumberland School District
- Northern Waters Environmental School, Hayward Community School District
- Red Cedar Environmental School, Chetek-Weyerhaeuser Area School District
- SAGES School, Fox Lake, Waupun Area School District
- Wildlands Science Research School, Augusta School District

To counter the isolation that many rural school teachers and students feel, the Wisconsin Green Schools Network has also developed a Youth Summit to bring students from F.I.E.L.D. Corps schools together to share environmental and sustainability projects and network with, learn from, and be inspired by their peers. In addition, the Wisconsin Green Schools Network worked with the state's Envirothon planning team to host the Youth Summit and the Wisconsin Envirothon on back-to-back dates at the same location, enabling rural schools to participate in both events at a tremendous savings in mileage and associated costs.

### **Building a Teacher Candidate Pipeline**

Using Educators Rising, a student organization for aspiring teachers, as its starting point, the Building a Teacher Candidate Pipeline, nominated by the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh College of Education, seeks to inspire students to consider careers in education. Students learn about Wisconsin's standards for teachers and teacher preparation, get tutoring experiences in their home districts, and receive coursework in lesson planning, instructional strategies, and assessment. In addition to classroom tutoring experiences, both Adams-Friendship and Mauston offer paid internships for high school students who assist with the K-5 summer school program, after school enrichment program, and the local library summer reading program.

Once each spring, high school students visit UW-Oshkosh to learn about the teacher preparation program and licensure areas. They meet current teacher candidates, have lunch with Oshkosh faculty, and tour the campus. Many of the high school students have not previously considered college, and for some, the trip is their first experience outside their communities.

Students who enroll in the teacher preparation program at UW-Oshkosh receive support in returning to their home districts to complete their field placements (especially student teaching). A measure of its success is that the program has expanded to Nekoosa and is being considered in Baraboo.

### **Oneida Community Integrated Food System**

The Oneida Nation of Wisconsin is developing food sovereignty for the community, especially youth, through Oneida Community Integrated Food System by

- building a community mindset for healthy foods,
- increasing local agriculture and food production,
- developing local food economies,
- integrating local food into community outlets, and
- ensuring sustainable development and practices.

The nation has farms that produce bison and Black Angus beef, an apple orchard, an organic farm, and an aquaponics system that all feed schoolchildren. Originally funded by a U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm-to-School grant, the aquaponics lab produces herbs, greens, 6,000 heads of lettuce, and 800 pounds of tilapia a year. Senior students work in the lab and earn college credit. By helping help grow the food, they learn about

how it grows and why it is good to eat. In the cafeteria lines, student servers share nutrition information along with the food to younger students.

The project builds an atmosphere that educates the Oneida community and surrounding communities about Oneida tribal heritage and the importance of good nutrition.

### **Special Need Students Building Career Skills through Small Rural School-Based Businesses**

New businesses that serve the New Auburn School district and community are the foundation of “Special Need Students Building Career Skills Through Small Rural School-Based Businesses.” The project develops and expands career skills into life skills for students with disabilities. In the process, they increase their potential for employment while reducing the challenges that come with the transition to adulthood, building soft skills that support the movement from school to work and independent living. The businesses, developed through the Career Skills class, include: Healthy Snack Cart, Buttons and Balloons, and the newest, NA Café.

Career Skills students build personal knowledge, while respecting and strengthening relationships with their peers who have special needs. Students also get to meet with local businesses, apply business etiquette, participate in mock interviews, and recognize employment options through the program. In addition, Job Shadow Sessions provide students with detailed tours of participating businesses. Since 2012, 49 special needs students (assisted by 22 general education students) have been influenced by this program.

### **Independent Living Enrichment Project**

Through the Independent Living Enrichment Project students learn the importance of being part of a community and the role giving back plays in community life and successful independent living. The project provides student experiences with people of multiple age groups and abilities in the Grantsburg community through community partners: the Grantsburg Public Library and the Continuing Care Center at the Burnett Medical Center.

Students plan and teach monthly lessons as part of the library’s preschool story time, which promotes literacy for children birth to age 5. The Independent Living students plan age-appropriate lessons with clear learning objectives. They must choose and read books aloud, prepare an instructional activity to promote learning, and provide enrichment materials for families that attend.

At the Continuing Care Center, students plan monthly activities such as crafts, cooking, reading, playing games, or sharing conversation time with the residents. Students and residents are paired so that over the course of the semester bonds and friendships can develop. This experience provides welcome interaction for Care Center residents and provides perspective for students in the class.

Both activities help students to understand the life cycle of the community by touching the lives of small children, the students themselves who are soon-to-be adults, and the elderly who have worked and given to the community for years.

### **Empty Bowls School and Community Service Project**

The Black River Falls Career and Technical Education Department collaborated last year with community partners to create the Empty Bowls School and Community Service Project to address rural food shortages in the area. Cooperation by the school, community, and local businesses enabled families to enjoy a variety of hearty soups and do some holiday craft shopping, all while raising funds for the Jackson County Food Pantry. The groups involved include:

- Students in the Art Department made ceramic bowls for the event.
- FCCLA members prepared and served the soup.
- Music students performed during the event.
- FCE made pillows, baked goods, dried soup, bread mixes, and homemade soaps.

- The Tech Ed/Skills USA made metal art and holiday ornaments.
- The Ag Department made wreaths.
- Special Ed students made homemade cards and bookmarks.
- The Business and Marketing (FBLA) groups made photo frames, cocoa mixes, and sold Black River Falls Tiger apparel.
- Various community businesses donated supplies that helped to reduce costs.

Many products were displayed in the cafeteria, LMC, and display cases prior to the event. The effort to “fill bowls of people who have empty bowls” raised \$1,900 for the food pantry and is expected to expand this year.

### **Owen-Withee Forest Maple Project**

Two years ago, the Owen-Withee School Board asked the Ag-Tech program and the FFA chapter to strategize on better use of the school’s forests, of which many acres went unused and were unknown to district students. After a fall walk-through, the groups and some FFA alumni suggested a maple sap collecting operation that would give students real-world experiences in agribusiness.

Students and FFA alumni volunteers set up the 1,800 tap collection system over a 10-day period in October 2017. Several miles of tubing connects each maple tree on a 30-acre property and a high capacity vacuum pump pulls the maple sap to collection tanks, where two local producers collect the raw material to process it into maple syrup. The system also features a cloud-based monitoring system that tracks production and reports leaks or other problems that need repair.

This past March, the FFA and FFA alumni welcomed more than 60 guests to a school forest open house where guests saw the technologies used, learned about the Wisconsin maple syrup industry, and toured the Forest Maple Project. Additionally, FFA members toured maple processing facilities during the spring season and have spent multiple weekends this past summer at area farmers’ markets selling their finished product. The syrup is also sold at a local apple orchard, grocery store, and is featured in the school’s breakfast program.